

Summary of the Evaluation Survey
JICA-NGO Collaboration Work Review (Vietnam)

Table of Contents

1. Outline of the Evaluation Study	3
1-1 Background and Objectives of the Evaluation Studies	3
1-2 View of the Evaluation.....	3
1-3 Evaluation Team.....	4
1-4 Period of Evaluation.....	4
2. Evaluation Method	5
2-1 Projects to be Evaluated	5
2-2 Evaluation Methodology	6
(1) Measures to Obtain Data.....	6
(2) Evaluation Method.....	6
3. Results of Evaluation	7
3-1 Project (a): Project for Promotion of Adult Literacy in the Northern Mountainous Region.....	7
3-2 Project (b): Integrated Child Nutrition Project.....	7
3-3 Project (c): Improvement of Preservation and Restoration Technology for Traditional Folk Houses in Vietnam.....	7
4. Results of Evaluation	8
4-1 Factors for Success.....	8
(1) Involvement of the Government of the Recipient Country.....	8
(2) A clear Withdrawal Strategy and Motivation for the Counterparts	8
(3) The NGOs' Own Activities as the Basis of JICA Projects.....	8
4-2 Lessons to Improve and Develop NGO-JICA Collaboration.....	8
(1) Developed Partnership and Expanded Impact.....	9
(2) Discretion in Activities by Complete Entrustment of the Project Management.....	9
(3) Discovery of New Themes through "Offer-basis" Project Planning.....	9
5. Recommendations	11
5-1 Reflect Project Experience in the Recipient Country's Policy	11
5-2 Ensure the Sustainability of Activities.....	11
5-3 Promote Participation of the Government of the Recipient Country	11
6. The Basic Perspective for Further Development of JICA-NGO Collaboration	12
6-1 Collaboration at Various Levels.....	12
6-2 Information Sharing.....	12

6-3 Presence of Japan in Cooperation.....	12
6-4 The Merit of Packaging Proposal and Implementation.....	12

1. Outline of the Evaluation Study

1-1 Background and Objectives of the Evaluation Studies

In order to meet the diverse needs of developing countries, JICA has provided direct support for local people, as well as indirect support through technical cooperation to the government agencies, to improve their quality of life and the quality of services for them, such as education, health and environment protection. To develop effective cooperation in these fields, JICA strongly acknowledges the importance of collaboration with NGOs, which have grassroots networks and expertise managing small-scale community activities. As a practical instrument for promoting more active participation of non-governmental bodies and private citizens in international cooperation, JICA introduced Community Empowerment Programs (herein after referred to as “CEP”) and JICA Partnership Programs (hereinafter referred to as “JPP”) in 1999. In the former, JICA collaborates with NGOs in the recipient country, whereas with Japanese NGOs in the latter. These are distinctive from the other cooperation schemes in the following points: (1) JICA implements projects in collaboration with NGOs, (2) JICA entrusts NGOs with the whole project operation including the management and administration as a blanket contract, and (3) in the Partnership Programs, JICA “offers” project plans to the recipient countries, based on the proposals submitted by Japanese NGOs¹.

As three and five years have passed since the introduction of these two schemes, this Evaluation was conducted to verify the extent to which the objective of these schemes had been achieved, their advantages and disadvantages, and the lessons for future improvement and development of similar projects. Three of these JICA-NGO collaboration projects implemented in Vietnam, were selected as study cases. As members of the evaluation team, JICA assigned Professor Kazunori AKAISHI, who had been an advisor to JICA and who has a profound knowledge of NGOs, and Mr. Hirohisa SEIKE from Japan International Food for the Hungry, a member of the JICA-NGO Partnership Committee to represent NGOs. Both of them provided comments to the report.

1-2 View of the Evaluation

In this evaluation, two projects on the JICA Partnership Program and one project on the Community Empowerment Program in Vietnam were studied. In order to obtain lessons to improve and develop NGO collaboration schemes, the evaluation team assessed the progress of each project, overviewed and compared them, and analyzed them from the following three perspectives:

- (1) Could NGOs and JICA develop partnership and expand the impacts through the

¹ In principle, JICA's cooperation is planned and implemented based on the requests submitted by the government of recipient countries.

project?

- (2) Did the blanket contract of the project enable the NGOs to have more discretion in project management?
- (3) Did the “offer” system enable JICA to discover new themes for cooperation?

The following three projects were selected for this evaluation.

- Partnership scheme (collaboration with Japanese NGOs)
 - (a) Project for Promotion of Adult Literacy in the Northern Mountainous Region
Implementing organization : UNESCO Associations in Japan
 - (b) Improvement of Preservation and Restoration Technology for Traditional Folk Houses in Vietnam
Implementing organization : Showa Women's University International Culture Research Center
- Community Empowerment scheme (collaboration with local NGOs)
 - (c) Integrated Child Nutrition Project
Implementing organization : Save the Children Japan

1-3 Evaluation Team

Hiroshi KATO	Leader, Director, Planning Division, Regional Department I
Kazunori AKAISHI	Professor, International Education Research Center, Towa University
Hirokazu SEIKE	Superintendent, Japan International Food for the Hungry
Sachio YASUMI	Assistant Section Chief, Technology Cooperation Section, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ritsuko YAMAGATA	Staff, Planning Division, Regional Department I

1-4 Period of Evaluation

6 March 2002 - 16 March 2002 (the period of field survey)

The evaluation team conducted preparation in Japan through regular meetings of the NGO–JICA Partnership Committee, which is a sub-committee of the NGO-JICA Council. After the field survey, the team made a report at the Partnership Committee on 26 April 2002 and at the NGO-JICA Council on 20 May 2002, and to NGOs and other private interested organizations (21 June 2002).

2. Evaluation Method

2-1 Projects to be Evaluated

Project title				
	Country	Field	Cooperation Scheme	Period
Contents of Cooperation				
Project (a): Project for Promotion of Adult Literacy in the Northern Mountainous Region				
	Vietnam	Literacy education	Partnership Program	April 2001 - 2004 (Continuing)
UNESCO Associations in Japan is collaborating with JICA and providing literacy education for the illiterate adults of the ethnic minority group in the Northern Mountainous region. The activities include construction of schoolrooms and training of teachers.				
Project (b): Integrated Child Nutrition Project				
	Vietnam	Nutrition Improvement	Community Empowerment Program	1998 ~ 2001
Save the Children Japan had been working on activities for nutrition improvement since 1995. Employing the framework of Community Empowerment Programs of JICA, they expanded the target area to 26 villages in two provinces and in the Northern district. This project aims at improvement of the nutrition of children under the age of three and pregnant women. Training and guidance were given to the local government officers and health nurses in charge of these areas. The activities also included medical examination for infants and pregnant women, nutrition recovery education, and the extension of backyard gardening.				
Project (c): Improvement of preservation and Restoration Technology for Traditional Folk Houses in Vietnam				
	Vietnam	Protecting Cultural assets	Partnership Program	July 2001 – 2004 (Continuing)
Showa Women's University is collaborating with JICA and preserving and revising the folk houses valued as cultural assets. It is also aimed at transferring related technologies to local people and cultivating recognition towards the protection of cultural assets.				

2-2 Evaluation Methodology

(1) Measures to Obtain Data

The data for evaluation was obtained through interviews with the implementing organizations, the concerned persons in the recipient country, the beneficiaries such as the local people, and the government officials of the recipient country, as well as project site observation.

(2) Evaluation Method

As described in sections 1-1 and 1-2, this reevaluation focused on two projects under the JICA Partnership Programs and one project under the Community Empowerment Programs considering the following points:

- (1) Could NGOs and JICA develop a partnership and expand the impacts through the project?
- (2) Did the blanket contract of the project enable the NGOs to have more discretion in project management?
- (3) Did the “offer” system enable JICA to discover new themes for cooperation?

The two Partnership projects were evaluated in terms of DAC’s Five Evaluation Criteria, since the projects had a Project Design Matrix (PDM). However, the submitted PDMs had not been revised as the plan changed, and many of the set indicators were not suitable for quantitative analysis. Also, because of the time constraints, the evaluation team had to rely mainly on site observation and interviews with the concerned personnel.

As for the Community Empowerment Program, the evaluation team restructured the logic of the project plan and assessed the progress of the project with DAC’s Five Evaluation Criteria, before conducting site inspections and interviews.

3. Results of Evaluation

As for the three projects reviewed in this evaluation, the implementing organizations (two NGOs and a University) utilized their own know-how and philosophy to carry out the activities. It has been confirmed that expected outputs had been achieved or likely to be achieved. The following is the summary of the evaluation for each.

3-1 Project (a): Project for Promotion of Adult Literacy in the Northern Mountainous Region

This Project has been aimed at introducing “temple schools” (literacy schools for adults) for the minority ethnic group in the Northern Mountainous regions. The project has been steadily making progress with sufficient consideration given to organizing people’s groups and involving government organizations that support the activities and the construction of schoolrooms. The Government of Vietnam has been making efforts to incorporate the literacy education model, which was proven to be practical in this project, in the country's education policy. Hence, it can be evaluated that the project not only will achieve the expected outputs, but may possibly lead to further impacts.

3-2 Project (b): Integrated Child Nutrition Project

As this Project has already been completed, the focus of the evaluation was whether the effects of the Project had been maintained. The follow-up survey implemented a year after the end of the project, revealed that the project effect had been maintained in the area, and that the nutrition of the local people had also been improved. Thus, it is considered that the Project was successful.

3-3 Project (c): Improvement of Preservation and Restoration Technology for Traditional Folk Houses in Vietnam

This Project was aimed at transferring technology to the counterparts such as Government officers, in the process of preserving and rehabilitating the folk houses valued as cultural assets. The Project also fostered recognition of the importance of protecting cultural assets among the government officers and the local people. The Project team took suggestions from the Central Government, the administrative institutions of the ministries, and the local people into consideration. This evaluation, conducted as the halfway point of the Project term was about to end, found that the Project was making progress as planned and achievement of the Project Purpose was expected.

4. Results of Evaluation

4-1 Factors for Success

The three Projects have achieved or are likely to achieve the expected goals. The common key to success is “to make the most of the know-how and philosophy of the implementing organizations”. As JICA entrusted the projects to the organizations which proposed them, the implementing organizations could effectively utilize their own experiences, methodologies, human network and the philosophy which they had acquired in the past. The success factors are detailed as follows.

(1) Involvement of the Government of the Recipient Country

In order to ensure running after termination of the project, it is necessary for the government of the recipient country be involved in the Project from the perspective of sustainability. The UNESCO Associations in Japan (Project (a)) and Save the Children Japan (Project (b)) have been effectively collaborating with and utilizing the resources of the Vietnamese government offices.

(2) A clear Withdrawal Strategy and Motivation for the Counterparts

The implementing organizations of the Project (a) and (b) displayed clear “withdrawal strategies” to the recipient country. They have set the time of their withdrawal (the end of the project) and have tried to establish a system and structure in which the local people learn to continue the activities independently and autonomously.

(3) The NGOs’ Own Activities as the Basis of JICA Projects

Each of the three implementing organizations had conducted similar activities before JICA started to support them, based on which they developed and expanded these projects. This enabled the smooth start up, implementation, and follow up of the Projects. Therefore, it is desirable for NGO-JICA collaboration to incorporate the NGO’s independent activity into a JICA project.

4-2 Lessons to Improve and Develop NGO-JICA Collaboration

The following are the lessons obtained through analysis from three points of view: i.e., (1) whether the NGOs and JICA could develop a partnership and expand the impacts through the project, (2) whether the blanket contract of the project could enable the NGOs to have more discretion in project management, and (3) whether the offer system enabled JICA to discover new themes for cooperation.

(1) Developed Partnership and Expanded Impact

The collaboration with NGOs enabled JICA to pursue projects with the participation of the local people. This can be clearly seen in cases such as Projects (a) and (b). For NGOs, collaboration with JICA enabled the projects to cover broader areas.

The “Promotion of adult literacy” (project (a)), which was implemented in collaboration with UNESCO Associations in Japan, shows this characteristic most typically. In this case, the pilot project, which had been implemented in Vietnam from 1998, was developed and expanded in collaboration with JICA. The literacy education model, developed in the project, is about to be expanded to the whole country by the Agency of Education and Training in Vietnam.

Integrated Child Nutrition Project, implemented in collaboration with Save the Children Japan (project (b)), was also developed on the basis of the NGO’s own activities which had started in 1995. The collaboration with JICA expanded the target areas and the range of the activities to fields such as nutrition management.

(2) Discretion in Activities by Complete Entrustment of the Project Management

It has been common practice for JICA to oversee projects directly, but in the cases of the Partnership scheme and the Community Empowerment scheme, JICA entrusts projects to implementing organizations as a blanket contract. This enables the implementing organizations to manage the project in a more flexible manner, in accordance with the circumstances and form the details of the activity plan within a certain range.

The three implementing organizations have made the most of this merit. The UNESCO Associations in Japan (Project (a)) and Save the Children Japan (Project (b)) have original experience and know-how and could fully apply the merit. Although Showa Women's University (Project (c)) implemented the project with a flexible organizational system with the Project manager (a professor of the University) at the center, the merit was recognized in this Project as well.

(3) Discovery of New Themes through “Offer-basis” Project Planning

Following the principle of “request-basis” project planning, a project needs to be put high on the agenda in the recipient country and also clearly placed in the national policy before it is adopted as an ODA project. However, the issues tackled in these three projects (literacy education, nutrition improvement, preservation of cultural assets) are important, but not always highly placed on development agendas. For example, the adult literacy rate in Vietnam has reached 98 percent and it is not a high priority area from the macro perspective. Thus, Such politically sensitive issues as the literacy education for minority groups which this Project was

focusing on, could not have been covered without the initiative of the NGO.

5. Recommendations

5-1 Reflect Project Experience in the Recipient Country's Policy

These Projects can be acknowledged as a model project presenting good practical experience. The experience gained from these projects should be reflected at the policy level of the recipient country. For promoting understanding of the recipient country, JICA and the NGOs must cooperate to explain and encourage the recipient country together.

5-2 Ensure the Sustainability of Activities

Although the implementing organizations have been making efforts to minimize the running cost for activities, a certain budget is necessary to maintain the activities after the project period. The recipient country and the beneficiaries should assume the burden, but in case of a shortage, Japan should also be prepared to consider flexible support.

5-3 Promote Participation of the Government of the Recipient Country

As the benefits of official development assistance cannot be limited to a specific group of people, the activities for a target group must be regarded as a model case to be expanded to a wider range of people. In this process, and to ensure the sustainability of the project activity, the participation of the Government of the recipient country is vital, although grassroots projects with popular participation tend to focus on collaboration with the people's organizations and Government participation tends to be regarded as subsidiary.

6. The Basic Perspective for Further Development of JICA-NGO Collaboration

This section shows the summary of the basic perspectives for further development of JICA/NGO collaboration.

6-1 Collaboration at Various Levels

The collaboration between JICA and NGOs should not be limited to the project level. It is desirable for Japan's ODA to expand its horizons and potentials, by pursuing more flexible collaboration and demarcation.

6-2 Information Sharing

To promote collaboration between JICA and NGOs, exchange of information must be pushed forward. If JICA enthusiastically releases information, it will make it possible to construct a basis for broader collaboration.

6-3 Presence of Japan in Cooperation

JICA have been making efforts to promote "Aid with a face", i.e., the visibility of Japanese aid, and to have the beneficiaries recognize that it is cooperation from Japan. However, it may risk causing the beneficiaries to regard the activity as a given benefit and hinder the development of their sense of ownership. In Project (a) and (b), the implementing organizations always put the Vietnamese staff up front, involved the local people, planned not to overly highlight Japan, and promoted participation of the people. Such individual experiences must be accumulated if the visibility of Japanese aid is not to degrade the beneficiaries' ownership.

6-4 The Merit of Packaging Proposal and Implementation

The characteristic of the Partnership scheme is that the proposal and implementation are a set, in order to utilize the know-how and knowledge of the implementing organizations in development cooperation. Its merit is significant when pursuing a project in a field where JICA and other governmental bodies in Japan do not have sufficient experience, such as grassroots projects with the participation of the local people. It is also useful to stimulate proposing organizations to explore ideas, collaborate with JICA and recognize their accountability.

In order to take advantage of the proposal-implementation package, JICA must collect good proposals from various parties. JICA must strengthen the function of selecting projects of good quality, as an organization specialized in development assistance.