

Summary of the Evaluation Survey

The Country-focused Training Program

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1. Outline of Evaluation Survey

1-1 Background and Objectives of Evaluation Study

In order to meet various development needs, which differ in each developing country, and pursue effective cooperation, JICA has a strategy to promote country approach¹. As for training programs, JICA has increased a number of the courses based on the scheme of Country-focused Training programs, in which JICA accepts multiple participants (i.e., trainees) from one country, and which is aimed at coping with particular development issues of the country at a given point in time.

Although JICA has a policy to utilize the program, to date, it has not conducted evaluation on its achievements and the status quo. Under the circumstance, for the effective utilization of the program to promote country-focused approach, JICA decided to implement this evaluation and analyze the current program implementation status, the effects, and the promoting and impediment factors. The lessons and recommendations of this evaluation study will be fed backed to Domestic Partnership and Training Departments, Regional Departments, Domestic Offices, and Overseas Offices of JICA.

¹ An approach to plan and implement projects in line with the individual countries' specific features, in order to ensure the effectiveness of JICA's cooperation, based on its knowledge of social and economic conditions as well as of its organizational and institutional structures.

1-2 Evaluation Team

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1-3 Period of Survey

October 2001 - January 2002

October 2001 - January 2002

Preparatory Study in Japan

1 December 2001 – 8 December 2001

Field Study in South Africa

9 December 2001 – 15 December 2001

Field Study in Vietnam

2. Evaluation Methods

2-1 Evaluated Training Programs

This evaluation team took all the Country-focused Training courses carried out since FY1996 as its target. It also conducted field studies in South Africa and Vietnam. These are the countries which have the largest number of Country-focused Training courses conducted by JICA. Among the 688 Country-focused Training courses (between FY 1996 and FY 2000), 48 courses (563 participants) were for South Africa and 49 (444 participants) for Vietnam.

2-2 Evaluation Framework

In order to evaluate the Country-focused Training programs and to derive lessons, it was necessary to compare the actual achievements with the effects which JICA had originally expected. However, JICA had not clearly set 'the expected effects' in a form such as project prerequisites, and hence there was no basis for evaluation. Therefore, the evaluation team divided the study in two steps. Firstly, the team conducted an attitude survey in JICA and defined "the effects a Country-focused Training course should aim at" based on the results of the survey. Secondly, it compared the above-defined "effects" and the current status from the following points of view:

- (1) What are the characteristics, particularly the merits and demerits of Country-focused Training programs, which the JICA staff recognizes? What are the effects that should be achieved in a Country-focused Training course?
- (2) What are the actual effects of the past Country-focused Training courses?
- (3) What are the implementation processes for Country-focused Training courses? Is it possible to realize the effects described in (1)?
- (4) How should a Country-focused Training course be evaluated?

2-3 Evaluation Methods

The study examined existing documents, utilizing the existing reports and related materials, and then conducted the questionnaire survey and interviewed JICA staff (staff belonging to Regional Departments and Domestic Partnership and Training Departments in Japan) and implementing organizations (organizations that accepted the trainees). In the on-site survey for countries in South Africa and Vietnam, the questionnaire survey and interviews were conducted to the concerned parties and personnel, such as the agencies in charge of international cooperation, the ex-participants of the training courses and the organizations the ex-participants worked for.

3. Perception to Country-focused Training Program and its Aim

3-1 Perception of the JICA Staff

As described in section 2-2, the Evaluation investigated whether the JICA staff had a common recognition of ‘the effects of Country-focused Training courses’, and, if so is, what was it. The result of the questionnaire survey and interviews to the JICA staff shows that more than a half of the respondents regard Country-focused Training programs as programs aimed at (i) “enhancing the cooperation effect in the linkage with other cooperation schemes” and (ii) “fulfilling the intensive needs for human resources in a certain field, caused by system changes and/or the geographic conditions”. More than a half of the respondents also regard the reason for conducting trainings in Japan as (i) “superior implementation system in Japan” and (ii) “to show the organization/system in the field in Japan, which is a critical element to achieving program effects”. Judging from these results, the JICA staff has a shared understanding of certain characteristics of the Country-focused Training program. Hence, it is possible to interpret that they have selected the scheme based on the common recognition, although there have been no guidelines which would have a binding authority.

As shown below, the JICA staff also finds various advantages in the Country-focused Training programs, such as ease of setting up the focus of course contents and its strategic usability.

Advantages	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The training course can be planned strategically. The contents of training can be easily narrowed down and deepened.2. The training can be utilized strategically for the development issues.3. The training can be linked with other cooperation schemes, and the synergy is significant.4. To attain certain objectives, it is often the case that a certain amount of human resources are needed. The Country-focused Training courses enable the participants to form a network within their country. If it is developed after the course, the effect will be larger.5. The training effects will be sustained (the effects are measurable by Short-term Experts, in case of Country-focused Training or in-country training).6. A realistic action plan can be developed during the training courses.
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Disadvantages	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The contents of the courses for some countries may become poor, because of the difficulties in gathering information. 2. There is no communication (information exchange) with other countries, which makes it difficult to refer to other countries' examples. 3. It is difficult to arrange translators in case the lectures should be given in particular languages.
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On the other hand, the interview results from the JICA Domestic Offices indicate that there is no difference in the management of the Country-focused Training program and that of other training programs such as the group training program, in which JICA gathers trainees from multiple countries. This implies that there is no implementation system that would enable taking full advantage of the Country-focused Training program.

Therefore, most of the JICA staff members engaged in the training program seem to be selecting the Country-focused Training program with an understanding of its characteristics. However, the program is not necessarily implemented in a form that maximizes the program's advantages.

3-2 What to Expect of the Country-focused Training Program

The evaluation team came to the following conclusions during discussion and review of the information gained through the survey conducted in Japan and through field studies.

Training courses, regardless of their form, always bring to individual participants various benefits which add a new value ("the Personal Effects") to what he or she does. In case of Country-focused Training, there should be additional effects. The training can foster a relatively large number of personnel from one country, who are working for organizations related to each other simultaneously and in line with the country's development policy and accompanying human development needs. Thus, in their country, these personnel can utilize the acquired skills and knowledge and tackle issues as a group. This is different from the case of other training schemes, where a few ex-trainees have to work individually. The most distinctive characteristics and the effect of the Country-focused Training scheme is achievements such as new projects, their development, policies, law proposals and managerial improvements by the group or through the network of the ex-trainees, i.e., the changes caused by the common understanding on the training contents. This is referred to as "the Group Effects" in this paper.

4. Effects of Country-focused Training Program

This chapter compares the effects that should be achieved through Country-focused Training courses identified in the previous section and actual performance of past training courses. In so doing, first we look at the cases in South Africa and Vietnam and consider whether the Personal Effect, which is the prerequisite to implement a training course and then the Group Effect.

4-1 The Personal Effects

The evaluation team had local consultants conduct questionnaire surveys to ex-participants and received answers from 80 ex-participants out of 400 in South Africa, and 120 out of 564 in Vietnam. In both countries, most of the ex-participants in the courses said that they “fully understood the contents of training” or “mostly understood the contents of training”. As for the achievement of course objectives, all the courses are rated as 3.8 or higher on the average, on a 5-point scale, where the “accomplishment of objectives” is graded as ‘5’. Regarding the application of the transferred skills and/or knowledge, most respondents answered that they had utilized these in their work (South Africa; 80%, Vietnam; 86%). This indicates that the training courses are useful in some form.

4-2 Group Effects

At the on-site survey, the evaluation team identified some cases where the Group Effects were to be realized; although the number of those identified cases are relatively few in comparison with the number of evaluated training courses. Hence, their characteristics can not necessarily be generalized as the promoting factors of the Group Effect of the Country-focused Training courses. However, it is important to analyze these cases to assure the Group Effects in planning future training courses.

“In Service Teacher Education and Training in Science and Mathematics” in South Africa and “Legal and Judicial Cooperation” in Vietnam are linked to the team dispatch of experts in the projects “Mpumalanga Secondary Science Initiative” and “The Japanese Cooperation to Support the Formulation of Key Government Policies on Legal System”, respectively. In these cases, the Group Effects can be recognized as the actual outputs of these courses.

“In Service Teacher Education and Training in Science and Mathematics” the “focuses are on support to educational reform with emphasis on secondary school education,” which is part of attempt to reduce the various regional or racial disparities that have been the foremost development issues for South Africa. This training is combined with the team dispatch of experts and aimed at preparing instruction for the science and mathematics teachers

in the State of Mpumalanga. The training course targeted instructors for in-service teachers called “Curriculum Implementers” in Mpumalanga, and presented the current status of science and mathematics education in Japan, and helped them to develop an action plan on the curriculum of teachers’ training. The action plan, which was the group output of the training in Japan, was used as the basis for discussions in workshops after the instructors returned to South Africa and further developed for actual implementation in collaboration with the team of dispatched experts. The plan was implemented at pilot schools and retrained the local science and mathematics teachers. It contributed to a change of their awareness and attitude and improved student performance.

“ The Japanese Cooperation to Support the Formulation of Key Government Policies of the Legal System” is carried out through a combination of Country-focused Training programs. The process was as follows: (i) In-country seminar in Vietnam; (ii) First draft preparation; (iii) Development of the draft in the Country-focused Training course in Japan; (iv) Second draft preparation; (v) On-site seminar. In tandem with the enactment schedule in Vietnam, it was decided at the annual consultations which bill should be dealt with in the training courses for that year.

The effects of the program could be observed in the process of the discussions within the Ministry of Justice of Vietnam. The ex-participants have referred to the experience in Japan in cases such as the consideration on real property registration for the amendment of the Civil Code, on the indemnity in criminal law, the development of legal systems related to corporate organization, and the establishment of summary courts. The training provided the participants with an opportunity to see actual law applications in the non-socialist society, which they had never seen. Thus, participating in the courses and sharing the experience as a group, they have the advantage in applying what they have learned to their work. These examples show that the Country-focused Training program on development of legal systems has some impacts at the practical level.

These changes and achievements can be regarded as effects not of the training courses but of projects which are in collaboration with the training courses. However, the credit for the accumulation of acquired knowledge and techniques must go to each participant and thus the training courses have played significant roles.

4-3 Factors that Promoted Realization of Group Effects

The evaluation team extracted the factors that could have promoted realization of the Group Effect from the cases described in 4-2, as follows.

The first group of those factors is about the environment and the system to understand the needs; the courses which materialized the Group Effect have had a system that clarifies what

to cover in the course, taking the cooperation as a whole into consideration.

- (1) The implementing organization of the training course in Japan was also one of the supporting organizations of the project in collaboration with the training course and featured the dispatched of experts. Thus, information was accumulated through various activities related to the project. Therefore, the gap between training needs and training contents was easily minimized, and the appropriate system of cooperation was established.
- (2) JICA had a comprehensive plan of the cooperation which includes both the Country-focused Training course and the collaborative projects.
- (3) The supporting system centered by the Japanese experts was well established (the existence of leadership).

The other factors refer to a condition that enables utilization of the transferred skills and knowledge. In the above-mentioned cases, the participants were well concentrated in a certain organization or area. In addition, the following factors were assured by the collaborative projects.

- (1) The needs of the participants and those of the organization coincided.
- (2) The ex-participants share the concerns and awareness towards the same issues.
- (3) The ex-participants were located within a proximal area, such as in same organization, or are linked by a network. Alternatively, the course dealt with the issues that should be addressed by the government and the organization to which the ex-participants belong.

5. Implementation Process

The evaluation team collated the results of the questionnaire survey and interviewed JICA staff and the training implementing organizations in Japan, and identified the status quo and issues concerning the process from preparation to implementation (e.g., formulation of training courses, preliminary study, consideration of course contents and curriculum, participants selection, evaluation, follow-up) of the Country-focus Training Program. The above analysis was aimed at extracting crucial points in assuring the Group Effects. The results were as follows.

5-1 The Current Status of Selection of the Training Courses

This section presents survey results on information gathering at the decision-making stage. There is some difficulty at the Headquarter in Tokyo in judging whether the contents of a course can contribute to solving the prioritized development issue of the recipient country (i.e., the relevance of the course), because the information provided by Overseas Offices is often insufficient, even though it is enough to judge consistency with the JICA Country Program.

There is also difficulty for the Overseas Offices in charge of gathering information. These offices don't have access to resources information on Japanese supply side, such as the best time for the Japanese side to accept participants and the range of the techniques offered in Japan. This makes it difficult for the Overseas Offices to select and gather information on candidates of the courses and to consider feasibility.

The related documents such as the Implementation Outline, which should set the contents of training, do not clearly define the purpose of the Country-focused Training program. That is, the Group Effects, which the participants should accomplish after their return, have not been identified, even though it is an advantage of the scheme.

5-2 Information Gathering for Project Preparation

The development of training contents or curriculum requires more accurate information than adoption of the courses. However, the respondents to the questionnaire survey and interviewees from the JICA Domestic Offices in charge of actual formulation of the courses contents, pointed out that they rely more on the implementing organizations, related mission results and dispatched experts, than on the JICA oversea offices or the information used at the adoption stage. Many respondents pointed out the difficulty in gathering information in the countries where there is no JICA Office or where the implementing organization does not have experience or a network. In the cases without any related projects, only 40 percent of the respondents answered that they did not have adequate information to plan the course contents, whereas 80 percent answered so in the case of training courses with related projects. This

indicates that the latter have fewer problems in acquiring information.

The interviewees from the implementing organization in Japan pointed out that JICA did not systematically cope with information gathering as an organization. This might result from the difference in the resources allocated to a country, such as regional department or overseas office differences, or the conditions of expert-dispatch in each country. In many cases, the implementing organizations are dependent on the information accumulated by themselves and/or their own network. Many implementing organizations recognize the shortage of information on training needs and would like JICA to provide the opportunity of a field study prior to project implementation.

5-3 Selection of Participants

The following are the main points that JICA Domestic Offices pointed out as a problem in selecting trainees.

- (1) In some cases, the target group in the original plan unclear.
- (2) There are cases that suffer from a large difference in the capabilities of participants, though they have been selected by the same standard.
- (3) In some cases, the government of the recipient country has difficulties in selecting participants within their country and has disqualified persons applying to take the course.

To cope with these issues, JICA Domestic Offices have made efforts such as having the recipient country present additional information necessary to select trainees other than those under the existing application format. The Overseas Offices are also making efforts in this regard, such as interviews with applicants before sending the applications to Japan. However, there are cases where participant-selection is in the hands of recipient countries and JICA is not involved. This is one of the factors that impede the strategic use of the Country-focused Training program.

JICA Domestic Offices pointed out that those courses with projects in collaboration and those with experts' involvement in the contents planning tend to be consistent with the trainees' need, compared with the projects without related projects or experts.

5-4 Evaluation and Feedback

JICA Domestic Offices gather comments from trainees at evaluation meetings held at the end of the courses and/or the questionnaire survey and feeds back the information for use in the course the next year. At the completion of a project, JICA Domestic Offices prepare a report on the course and circulate it to the regional departments in the Headquarters as well as to the overseas offices. According to the regional departments, there is no difference between the

evaluation and feedback of the Country-focused Training and other training programs.

6. Recommendations

As pointed out in the Section 3., the most significant advantage of the Country-focused Training program is the “Group Effects”. However, this recognition is not formally shared in JICA, hence, there is no concrete guidance to help a training course practically realize the ‘Effect’ through better design and management. Currently, this results in unsatisfactory attainment of the ”Effect”. In this Section, the necessary measures to achieve the “Group Effects” are discussed.

6-1 The Concept and Shape of the Country-focused Training Program

In order to ensure the realization of Group Effects, the evaluation team has identified following three program types. These are to appropriately position a Country-focused Training course among the components of cooperation as a whole. They should be used depending on the purpose of the cooperation.

Program Linkage Type

In this type, a Country-focused Training course is combined as an element of a program (a combination of multiple projects and/or schemes) to cope with the development issues of the recipient country. This form is effective in cases such as: many counterparts need to be trained within a relatively short period of time; it is necessary to show the counterparts how systems or techniques work in real world; it is difficult to dispatch personnel from Japan for a lengthy period.

Technical Cooperation Project Linkage Type

In this form, a training course is linked with a technical cooperation project with dispatch of an expert as its main activity, and it supports the activities of the expert. In this sense, this can be included into the first type. A Country-focused Training course can improve the efficiency of the project, by supporting the expert to proceed to the next stage by transferring a variety of skills and knowledge in a short period, which is hardly possible by an expert.

Technical Cooperation Promotion Type

This type is identified as a preparation for the main stage in the cooperation in countries or sector where JICA does not have sufficient experience and that it is difficult or ineffective to input huge aid resources from the beginning. JICA can utilize the scheme to let the recipient country personnel visit Japan and understand its cooperation system and see how the technical field in Japan deals with issues. By inviting people from the recipient country to Japan, JICA can help the counterparts examine the future cooperation with a clear understanding of these issues.

6-2 Implementation Process

(1) Adoption of a Course /Finalizing Course Specification

Comprehensive Planning including the Country-focused Training Program

Beside the relevance of a program or a technical cooperation project itself, the following must be made clear and a Country-focused Training course must be positioned in the whole context: Whether there is a reasonable linkage between the program and the constituting technical cooperation projects including the training course; whether the training course is essential to achieve the Purpose of the program or the project.

Clarification of Purpose

To tackle the development issues, a plan for a Country-focus Training course must clarify the profile and the number of the human resources to foster, their technical level and the role they should play after their return. The following check points should be given due attention in this process.

Is it necessary to foster a large number of human resources at once to solve the issue?

Is it clarified what kind of personnel should be fostered? (Who should be able to do what in how many years by the training course?)

How many personnel who need the training course are working for what kind of organizations?

Is the assignment or commitment that the participants should accomplish as a group after finishing the course clear? Is it essential for the attainment of the program purpose?

What are the necessity and merits of implementing the training in Japan?

Is it possible for the implementing organization in Japan to cope with the training needs with its resources?

In order to use the training results in the program/project, it is necessary to review the training plan according as the program/project advances. That is, the purpose, contents, timing and duration of the training must be revised every year in line with the purpose of each technical cooperation project and project progress. It is also necessary to assure and confirm the linkage between the ex-ante and ex-post activity plan of the ex-participants, and other activities of the program carried out by other players.

Participants Selection

Some developing countries have decentralized their governmental structure. The priority of their policies may differ in each region and potential trainees may be scattered all over the country, in such cases. As a result, trainees may belong to many different organizations, which may hamper the realization of the Group Effects. To cope with this problem, it is necessary to narrow down the target area and the group.

Information gathering to adopt and develop course curriculum

A large amount of information on local conditions of the targeted field is necessary to adopt a training course and prepare a curriculum. However, it is difficult for JICA Overseas Offices to gather the technical information or country information or sector information where JICA has limited experience. Also, some recipient countries may not have the capacity to transform the development issue into training needs. To cope with these problems, the following methods should be considered and promoted.

- (1) The Project Formulation Study should cover the Country-focused Training courses as well.
- (2) Information of the implementing organizations in Japan should become accessible to JICA Regional Departments at the HDQ and Overseas Offices.
- (3) JICA should accept offers and proposals by implementing an organization in adopting training courses.
- (4) The training implementing cycle should be diversified in terms of time, cost and personnel and factored into the survey for consideration, if necessary.
- (5) The first fiscal year may be regarded as a test period to settle the contents of the training courses and formulate a mutual understanding by related organizations.

Demarcation of Responsibilities among Related Organizations

Many departments of JICA are involved in a Country-focused Training course. However, the division of duties among them is not necessarily clear. Essentially Regional Departments should be responsible for the Overall Goal and Project Purpose stated in the PDM, the Domestic Offices for Outputs, and implementing organizations for activities. In case a related project has already been implemented in the country, the implementing organization may exchange information with those involved in the related project.

(2) Selection of Participants

Clarifying the Profile of Participants

In implementing a Country-focused Training program, JICA should have a common understanding of the purpose of the training course and the profile of the human resources to foster. It is advantageous to exchange the minutes or any consensus document.

Recruitment and Selection of Participants

As in case of other training courses, the participants of Country-focused Training courses have been selected through public offering by distributing guidelines for applicants. To achieve the Group Effects, however, the target group should naturally be limited. The qualification of applicants or the organizations they belong to should carefully be studied depending on the training purpose. The traditional method is sometimes not suitable for selecting trainees for Country-focused Training courses. It is preferable to select participants from limited applicants by showing the targeted organizations detailed information, such as more detailed course contents, purpose, what should be prepared before coming to Japan, and the Group Effects that should be attained after the course.

6-3 Evaluation

(1) Sharing Objective and Evaluation Standard

If the purpose or evaluation standard is not appropriately settled, the attainment of the purpose cannot be judged. Therefore, the purpose/contents of the project should be made clear at the planning stage. The evaluation standard for the purpose must be clarified and shared with the government of the recipient country as well.

(2) Establishing Consistent Evaluation System

A consistent evaluation system should be introduced to the Country-focused Training program, and each course should be evaluated as part of a technical cooperation project prior to the implementation. At the stage of ex-ante evaluation, it should be clarified if the plan can sufficiently fulfill the checklist showed in section 5-2 (1).

(3) Evaluation Method

- 1) At the termination of each training course, it is necessary to make sure whether the expected outputs are accomplished, with examinations and/or reports.
- 2) It is useful to have the participants evaluate and make recommendation about the course contents in a group as well as individually. They should discuss the points for improvement and the plan to utilize what they have learned in their home country, taking the agreement with their government on the training course and its purpose into consideration. These increase the impact of the training course.

3) JICA Domestic Offices and implementing organizations should judge whether they should feed the information obtained at the evaluation meetings back to the collaborative projects, Overseas Offices and Regional Offices and ask them for comments. JICA needs to structure a system that passes such information on immediately.