

JICA

VOLUNTEER
PROGRAM



Leading the world with trust

About the Volunteer Program

JICA's volunteer program is one of Japan's technical cooperation schemes operated as part of its Official Development Assistance (ODA).

The program dispatches eager Japanese citizens who wish to participate in assisting developing countries and also have the calls for assistance from their governments.

The program has three objectives:

- (1) To cooperate in the economic and social development, as well as the reconstruction of developing countries
- (2) To deepen mutual understanding and coexistence in cross-cultural societies
- (3) To give back the volunteer experience to society



First batch of volunteers departing for their assignments (1965)

Since its first dispatch to Laos in 1965, more than 54,000 JICA volunteers have worked alongside local communities in 98 countries and regions. As summarized by the phrase "together with the local community", JICA volunteers live and work at the grassroots level, speaking the same language as the local communities and carrying out activities with an emphasis on fostering self-reliance for sustainable change.

Volunteers are generally dispatched for two years, in various fields from education, nursing to auto mechanics, IT and sports.

Types of Volunteer Programs

Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs)

One of the oldest volunteer programs in the world. This is the category for those with a strong commitment to utilizing their own skills and knowledge for people in developing countries, by selecting the job type.

Senior Volunteers

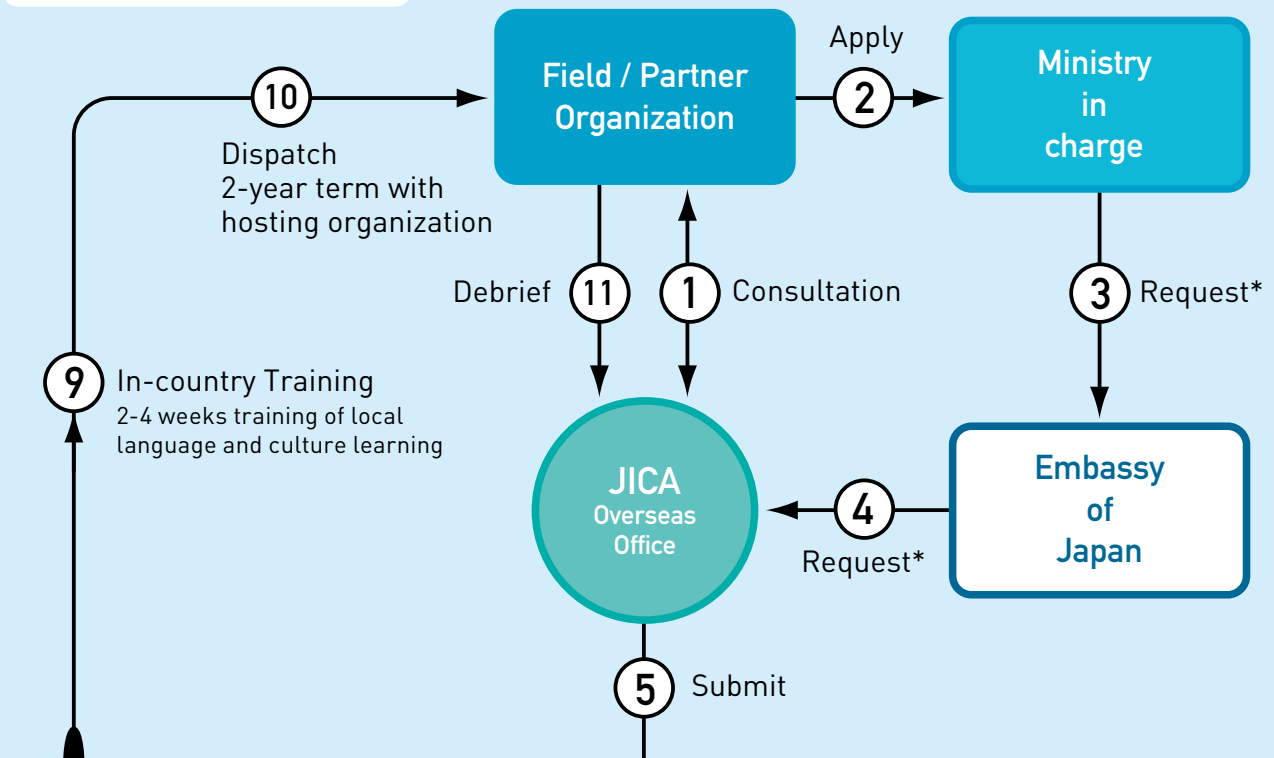
This is the category for those with a strong commitment to utilize their specialized skills and knowledge for people in developing countries, by selecting a project that requires expertise.

Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers for Nikkei Communities / Senior Volunteers for Nikkei Communities

This program sends volunteers to assist in the development of Nikkei (Japanese Descendant) communities in Latin America. Many volunteers cooperate in Japanese Language Education and Social Welfare Services, while also fostering further understanding of Japanese culture.

How to Request Volunteers

Partner Country



JAPAN

8 Departure

6 Recruitment

- Twice a year (Spring, Fall)
- Selection based on communication skills/ technical skills/ experience and knowledge/ health condition through documents, interviews and tests.
- Applicants who pass the screening have basic communication skills, good health, and relevant skills/ experience needed for the requests.

7 Pre-departure Training

A training program of approximately 70 days includes lectures on volunteerism, cross-cultural understanding, cooperation methods, health management, safety and security, as well as intensive language training appropriate for each dispatch country.

* Regarding Volunteers for Nikkei Communities, Organizations for Overseas Japanese in Latin America submit their requests to JICA Overseas Offices directly.

Volunteers contribute to the Sustainable

Administration / Business / Tourism



Volunteers help facilitate community development using various approaches such as establishing small income-generation projects with local groups to create additional income. Additionally, volunteers with knowledge and experience public administration work in municipal governments or other organizations to provide better services to its citizens and customers.

Categories

Community Development, Public Administration, Disaster Prevention and Disaster Relief, Statistics, Computer Technology, Marketing, Tourism, and others.

Education



The activities of volunteers in Education may expand from assisting the learners to improve their scholastic proficiency in various subjects or working with regional educational departments to organize teacher training programs to introduce alternative or new teaching methods.

Categories

Youth Activities, Environmental Education, Science Education, Physical Education, Primary School Education, and others.

Medical Care / Health Care / Social Welfare



Volunteers work to provide better health care and increased access to information through assisting in skills development of local health care professionals as well as promoting awareness of various health-related issues.

Categories

Nursing, Public Health Nursing, Midwifery, Physical Therapy, Infection and HIV/AIDS Control, and others.

Sports



Many volunteers help coach and train national sports teams of developing countries, but sports can also be utilized to promote better health and social skills for children as well. Volunteers provide technical advice and training know-how to teams and players at all levels.

Categories

Baseball, Judo, Table Tennis , Gymnastics, Water Polo, and others.



Development Goals



Agriculture / Forestry / Fisheries

Volunteers contribute to improve productivity, food security, and increase profitability by introducing best practices, management systems and new techniques in each field.

Categories

Food Crops & Rice Culture, Vegetable Growing, Animal Husbandry, Forestry and Afforestation, Aquaculture, and others.

Public Works / Utilities

State-of-the-art technologies of Japan are in great demand all over the world. Supervision and advice from volunteers with advanced skills and practical experience help partner institutions to improve the quality and efficiency of their projects.

Categories

Civil Engineering, Landscape Architecture, Architecture, Surveying, Telecommunications, and others.

Manufacturing / Energy

Volunteers with upgraded technical skills provide direct supervision and advice to their local counterparts/ students in municipal governments of vocational training facilities to help train technicians in each field.

Categories

Machine Tools, Electric and Electronic Apparatus, Electric and Electronic Equipment, Automobile Maintenance, Chinaware, and others.

Japanese Language Education

Volunteers assist to improve Japanese language skills of those who aspire to become Japanese language teachers or seek employment opportunities in areas such as tourism. Volunteers are also dispatched to Nikkei communities in Latin America to teach Japanese language as well as culture to those of Japanese descent.

Categories

Japanese Language Education, Nikkei School Teacher (Japanese Language)

Together with the local community

Toward the Future, Side by Side Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs)



Masae Okura, Speciality: Primary School Education Country: Zambia

Mission

Teaching reading, writing and arithmetic lessons as well as practical subjects such as physical education, music, fine arts, and homemaking to students in an elementary school

I was assigned to an elementary school in a settlement of refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, Burundi and Rwanda. I teach practical subjects such as physical education, music, fine arts, and homemaking for 5th to 7th grade students, and work on extracurricular club activities together with local teachers.

The school has the longest history in the area and a large number of enrollment. And the school faces several problems. There are not enough teachers compared to the number of the students. Due to shortage of teaching materials, the teachers need to craft teaching materials by creatively making use of familiar materials in our environment. A lot of students drop out from the school because they cannot afford the school expenses. Another concern is that there is a large disparity of academic ability among students.

Issue

A large disparity of academic ability among students. Some not capable to do multiplication

Although I was a teacher in charge of the reading and writing classes for 5th to 7th grade students, several teachers misunderstood that I was an assistant teacher who took over their lessons. And main teachers began to be frequently absent from school.

As a result, I could not choose but conducted lessons that were not included in the initial request to me. I was stunned by the situation. Since arithmetic was the only subject I could teach right away, I started to teach it sparing some time of the classes I was originally assigned. It turned out that many students had troubles with arithmetic, especially multiplication. And I decided to tackle this issue.

Solution

Using songs in lessons or handmade congratulation card for those who passed tests. Succeeded to raise the interest and motivation of students in the lessons

It was difficult to attract the interest of students just by teaching methods like calculating numbers using a table. Therefore, I tried a method of memorizing the multiplication table along with an English song, which I found via the internet. First, I put a stamp on a student's card when the student sang the song alone. Then, I pinned up the name of the students who were able to memorize by rows, such as the row of 2 or row of 3, and gave another stamp to those who passed the test. Stickers were also given every week. Finally, to those who memorized the entire table, I gave my handmade congratulation card. The students liked this method and reward. And they came to practice the multiplication song by themselves, led by a class leader standing in front, even when I was absent.

Other teachers were also surprised with the positive effects of my method. And they asked me how to do it since they also wanted to try it in their classes.



Yuri Ito, Speciality: Rugby Country: Sri Lanka

Mission

Diffusion of rugby and development of ability to think and judge through playing rugby

My mission is diffusion and development of rugby in the Central Province of Sri Lanka. Diffusion means raising the basic competition level and increasing the level of safety in the game. Meanwhile, development means fostering players' and coaches' ability to think and judge by themselves through playing rugby.

Initially, I was planning to train young players and their coaches from grass-root to the national team level. My actual activities target children and their coaches only at the school level. The players are aged from twelve to nineteen years old. Currently, I instruct ten schools in total, including the integrated school from elementary to high school level in Sri Lanka.

Issue

Playing with no confidence, team that cannot win the game, children unable to enjoy rugby

What I first noticed was that players did not really attend trainings. Even if they did show up, they wasted time chatting and did not train. I realized that this was a manifestation of the players' negative attitude caused by a vicious cycle--passively instructed by the coach, not capable to do as they are instructed, losing confidence, losing enthusiasm, and remaining uncompetitive. Thus, I started to try breaking this vicious cycle by telling the players to change their mindset. I have encouraged them to use their own initiatives whilst at training and at the games.

Technically, I prioritized practicing tackles. The players preferred to make high tackles from the ground. Such high tackles are not only dangerous but also can cost a penalty, which results in losing the game. Although their coaches repeatedly taught them to avoid high tackles, they did not fully comprehend why they should avoid high tackles. Naturally, they did not modify their style.

Solution

Teaching safe tackles by involving local coaches. Also, inviting top-class players from Japan for an event where children can watch and learn

After having learned how to do low tackles, the players compete in a position lower than the contender's balance, which means even a small player can knock down a larger player. They now play with confidence. In order to ensure that the same instruction is kept even after I return to Japan, I work with local coaches to improve training methods in addition to teaching the players.

Moreover, I planned an event where children learned by watching top-class players with their eyes. With support from the Japan Rugby Football Union, we held a rugby clinic session by the players of the Japan national women team, Rugby sevens. Participated players seemed particularly impressed with the captain, Chiharu Nakamura. They observed her attitude of leading the training by talking to other players, and trying to raise the quality of training even more by discussing the points to be improved.

Bringing Lifelong Experience Senior Volunteers



Risa Shimono, Speciality:Midwifery Country:Papua New Guinea

Mission

To further increase the knowledge and skills of key persons to ensure safe delivery that saves lives of mothers and babies

In Papua New Guinea, where there are only a limited number of medical practitioners including midwives and obstetricians, CHWs are in charge of prenatal, labor, postnatal care for expectant women at the village level as well as district hospitals and health centers. In most cases, CHWs are not adequately trained as medical obstetricians and birthing assistants, hence they face many challenges in terms of being equipped with the relevant skills on childbirth. My mission is to contribute to build the capacity of CHWs in terms of having relevant and updated knowledge and skills required to perform their duties in ensuring safe childbirth for both mothers and babies in local communities.

Issue

The limited amount of basic knowledge on prenatal, labor and postnatal care is common for expectant parents as well as CHWs

Working at a hospital, I noticed that it was not only the CHWs but also expectant mothers with their partners who lack the necessary knowledge on childbirth. It is not enough just to instruct and train CHWs in order to promote safe delivery for both mothers and babies.

Expectant mothers also require knowledge on pregnancy and labor and need to avoid mistakes as such as visiting a doctor too late into their pregnancy.

Furthermore, opportunities for fathers to learn how to participate in childrearing are quite limited in Papua New Guinea compared to Japan. There are challenges also with fathers. Not like in Japan, fathers do not come together to medical examinations with expectant mothers, nor are they present at childbirth. There is also no culture of lessons for parents, where expectant mothers and fathers receive guidance together.

Solution

Providing a handmade model of fetus and placenta for expectant women. Using a handmade jacket to virtually experience being heavy in pregnancy.

In order to convey accurate knowledge in an easy-to-understand manner, handmade models were created from coconut husks and leaves displaying a fetus and placenta. The models were used during prenatal classes. For fathers, I also made a jacket to virtually experience what it is like to be an expectant mothers, which is a familiar device used in Japan. I affixed a large pocket to an apron, and put many rocks inside. Fathers began to realize the toughness an expectant mothers' experiences. And some started to actively support their pregnant wives.

As a result of implementing participatory activities using these materials, positive changes also started to appear among CHWs, such as those encouraging participation of fathers by saying, "bring your husband to prenatal checkup," or those who revised their style of one-sided instructions to expectant women and tried to introduce a discussion style.



Akira Fujitaka, Speciality:Refrigeration&air Conditioning Country:Paraguay

Mission

Providing an opportunity to learn about industry to those who cannot go to university

My mission is to support the classes and teaching of air-conditioning and refrigerating courses at a vocational training school in Paraguay, which is a traditional agricultural country.

The general policy of the country aims to securely promote industry from now on. The students of this vocational training school are not so wealthy in general. And many of them cannot afford to attend university. I believe that the vocational training school is a great system to provide economically disadvantaged students with an opportunity to study various vocational courses while working, with reasonable tuition fees.

Issue

Practical classes are disrupted due to scarce resources and materials required for lessons. Basic tools handling care is also lacking.

Although the top priority of my mission was to support the practical classes, it was impossible because the basic materials and equipment needed for the classes were unavailable.

For example, although there was a practical session on air conditioners, there were only a few, incomplete and separated parts. The school also did not have equipment to measure pressure or temperature, or ones to understand the mechanisms of cooling and heating. The tools were also not neatly stored and nor cleaned up after practices. There was no 5S (meaning keeping things neatly and orderly, cleaning up, hygiene, and discipline), which is a common practice in the Japanese industry. And even basic handling methods for tools were non-existent.

Solution

Handmade air-conditioning simulator and education on "5S activities"

I created a simulator to understand the mechanisms of air conditioners and refrigerators. Using commercially available air conditioners and refrigerators, I handmade other necessary parts by purchasing spare parts to measure temperature and pressure, cutting boards, and painting colors.

An air conditioner radiates heat by raising the pressure of a refrigerant, and cools the space by absorbing heat from the air by lowering the pressure. I made visual-aid to help students understand such mechanism by seeing it. I did it because I believed that students understood better by actually observing the process and objects than obtaining knowledge only from textbooks. I also posted the 5S slogan used in Japan on the wall of classrooms and encouraged students to clean up together after practical classes. Now the students put the tools back neatly and clean up the place after the practical classes.

Half a Century of Cross-Border Collaborations

- 1965 Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers program inaugurated. / Five volunteers sent to Laos.
- 1966 Kenya becomes the first African country to receive JOCVs.
- 1968 El Salvador receives JOCVs as the first Central American country to do so.
- 1972 Western Samoa is the first country in the Oceania region to receive JOCVs.
- 1978 The first JOCVs in South America go to Paraguay.
- 1981 JOCVs are dispatched to Thailand, the thirtieth nation to receive volunteers.
- 1990 JOCV program reaches 10,000 volunteers dispatched; JICA Senior Volunteers program initiated.
- 1992 Hungary becomes the first Eastern European JOCV recipient.
- 2000 JOCV program reaches 20,000 volunteers dispatched.
- 2010 JICA volunteer programs reach a cumulative total of 40,000 volunteers dispatched.
- 2015 JOCV program celebrates its 50th anniversary.

