



TOHOKU × WORLD

Tohoku, Uniting with the World

Japanese version

● English version



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Message from JICA Tohoku

Any country including Japan cannot prosper by itself without helping each other to overcome the current difficulties faced by the world.

We, JICA Tohoku, have accepted a number of technical cooperation trainees from various developing countries every year, and have worked together with regional partners such as local governments to provide numerous training programs to share their historically accumulated technologies, know-how and social mechanisms with the trainees. In return, the trainees also contributed toward bringing revitalization to the Tohoku area by providing regional people with a boost of encouragement and stimulation.

We are also able to recognize the mutual learning opportunities in the total of 3,417 Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs) and Senior Volunteers from Tohoku (as of January, 2015), and in the growing number of grass root level JICA partnership programs in Asia and Africa.

In the JICA partnership programs, Tohoku communities affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake (GEJE) and facing depopulation and aging problems are making efforts to create a new society by mutually learning with developing countries beyond national boundaries.

In the course of reconstruction from GEJE, we realized that there is need for us to reevaluate our sense of value. Although people of developing countries have different cultural backgrounds, this might be the time for us to redesign our society by learning and working with such people, since they possess a set of practical skill that can overcome various difficulties of life.

Each region must rediscover its available resource and use their respective uniqueness to achieve a sustainable development. JICA Tohoku would like to continue to contribute toward the global effort in realizing a society that allows for various enrichment of life.

March 2015

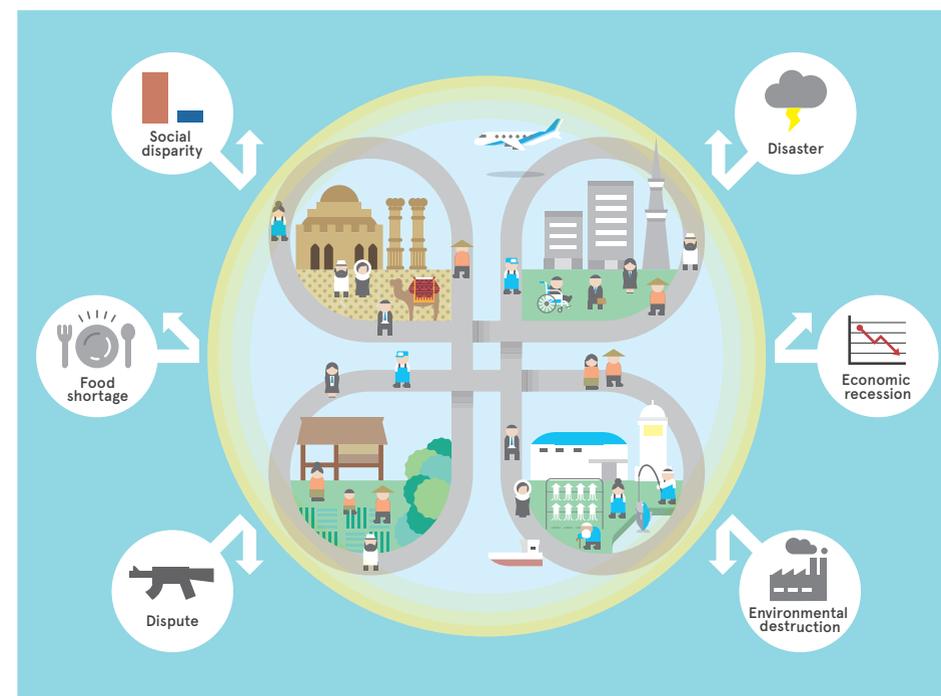
Director General,
Tohoku Branch Office, JICA
HANYA Ryoza

Striving Toward “Resilience through Resonance among Diversified Societies”

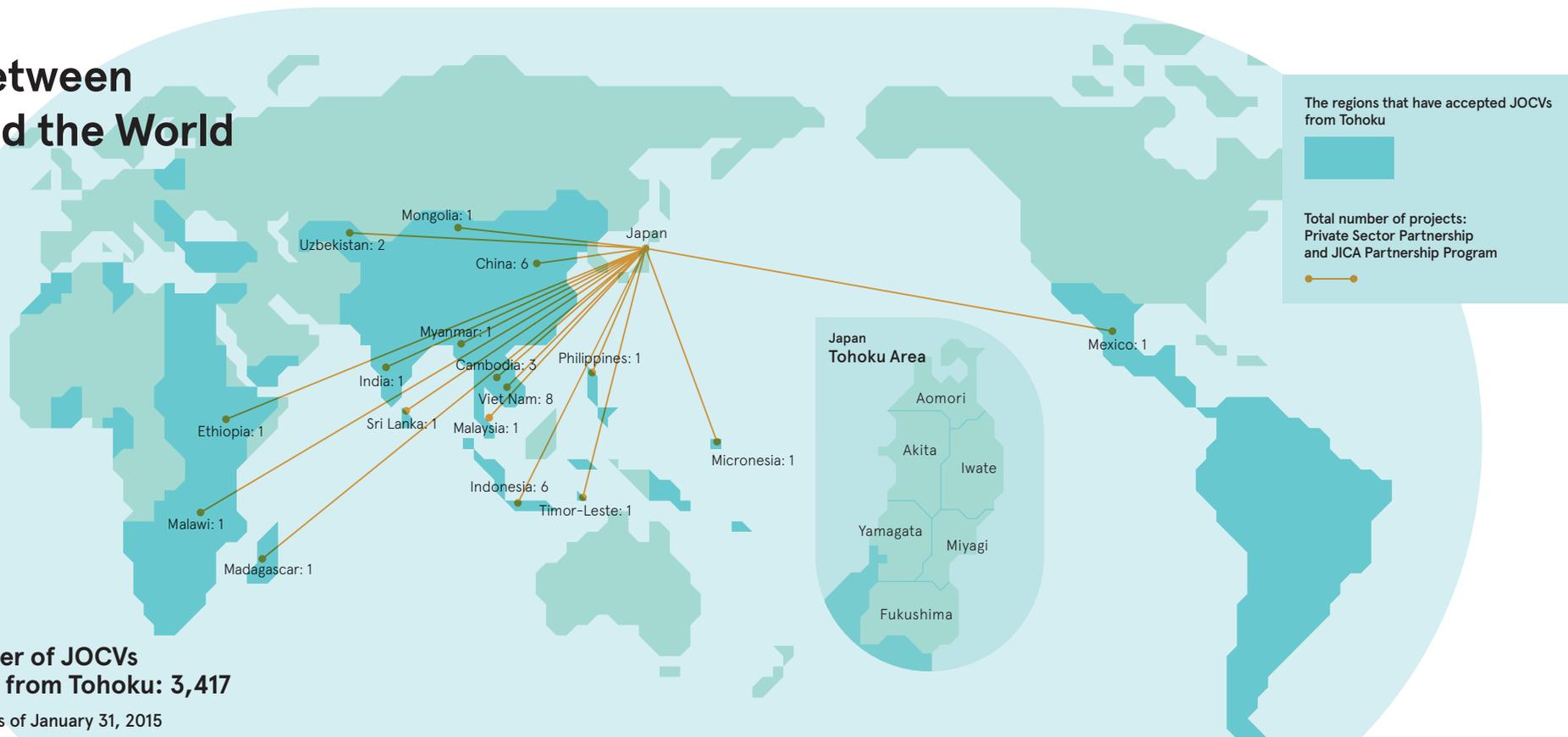
On March 11, 2011, Tohoku area was met with the unprecedented crisis due to the GEJE. However, thanks to the considerable support from all over the world, Tohoku has started to make its step toward reconstruction. In the course of reconstruction, it is highly important to consider the future of the region and society. When we reconstruct our society from the disaster, we must pursue a kind of society that allows for various enrichment of life. Reconstruction cannot be achieved through application of uniformed process, but rather must be attained by a development path that can bring out the uniqueness of individual region.

The world including Tohoku is comprised of various local regions where each region possesses a distinctive feature in terms of people, culture, tradition, value system, nature, disaster, etc. We can share knowledge and perspective to acquire clues for creating a new society when interacting with other likewise unique people with different value systems.

We believe that real resilience against various risks such as disasters, recessions, disputes and climate change can be collectively achieved when respective regions autonomously proceed toward inclusive societies that mobilize the full potential of the people.



Linkage between Tohoku and the World



Total Number of JOCVs Dispatched from Tohoku: 3,417

Statistical data as of January 31, 2015

Asia: 1,068

India	21	Viet Nam	29
Indonesia	73	Malaysia	146
Uzbekistan	15	Maldives	22
Cambodia	50	Mongolia	32
Kyrgyzstan	19	Laos	59
Sri Lanka	85	China	46
Thailand	56	Timor-Leste	2
Tajikistan	1		
Nepal	107		
Pakistan	8		
Bangladesh	114		
Philippines	144		
Bhutan	39		

Africa: 1,012

Uganda	52	Namibia	8
Ethiopia	53	Niger	36
Ghana	95	Burkina Faso	34
Gabon	4	Burundi	1
Cameroon	3	Benin	22
Kenya	126	Botswana	13
Côte d'Ivoire	11	Madagascar	11
Zambia	106	Malawi	142
Djibouti	9	Mozambique	14
Zimbabwe	38	Liberia	18
Sudan	2	Rwanda	17
Senegal	67	South Africa	7
Tanzania	123		

Latin America: 773

Argentina	17	Dominican Republic	57
Uruguay	15	Nicaragua	31
Ecuador	38	Panama	27
El Salvador	43	Paraguay	118
Guyana	3	Brazil	40
Guatemala	46	Venezuela	12
Costa Rica	35	Belize	3
Colombia	30	Peru	22
Jamaica	22	Bolivia	68
Saint Vincent	5	Honduras	85
Saint Lucia	7	Mexico	26
Chile	21		
Dominica	2		

Oceania: 280

Kiribati	3
Samoa	45
Solomon Islands	32
Tonga	35
Vanuatu	23
Papua New Guinea	45
Palau	19
Fiji	33
Marshall Islands	19
Micronesia	26

Middle East: 238

Yemen	5
Egypt	19
Syria	46
Tunisia	37
Morocco	90
Jordan	41

Europe: 46

Serbia	1
Turkey	6
Hungary	7
Bulgaria	16
Poland	9
Romania	7

Motomochi Sachiko / Costa Rica

Akiyama Chie / Rwanda

Saito Hiroki / Ethiopia

Hitachi Naoko / Senegal

Hatakeyama Makoto NPO Mori wa Umi no Koibito / Philippines

Tsuruoka Shintaro HOPE / Indonesia

Kawaguchi Takafumi Higashimatsuhima City / Indonesia

Shimada Masayuki Familiar Co., Ltd. / Cambodia

Otsuki Takahiro / Indonesia

Yashima Yumi / Brazil

Corazon Tecson Jimenez / Philippines

Tomy Mulia Hasan / Indonesia

Humberto Enrique Marin Uribe / Chile

Nuchada Charoenpanich / Thailand

Khalil Moussaoui / Morocco

Ghislain Sedote Degla / Benin

Steps Forward to and from Tohoku

A great number of people from Tohoku have worked with JICA engaged in technical cooperation programs. At the same time, plenty of people from overseas have also visited Tohoku to participate in JICA programs.

Although you may feel like you are far away from activities related to volunteers or developing countries, people who have been involved in JICA programs may actually be nearer than you think.

They can be volunteers sent to Africa or Latin America. Or they can be corporations, non-profit organizations (NPOs) or local governments who work together in Asian countries. They can also be trainees who have visited disaster affected areas in Tohoku from the Middle East.

We looked into people who have become active in Tohoku and/or in the world being driven by their experience of working on JICA Tohoku programs. The following show their “First Steps” and “Present and Future” with JICA.

MOTOMOCHI Sachiko

Secretary General of the NPO "Tsudoi" (meaning "gathering"). As a JOCV, she was engaged in a project that promoted the social participation of persons with disabilities in Costa Rica. She is currently focusing on enhancing the revitalization of the local community of Otsuchi Town, Iwate Prefecture.

I decided to participate in JOCV with the aim to create a society where people can live their lives naturally for themselves. Through the volunteer activity, I faced various problems, and because there was not any single solution to tackle them, I had to come up with ideas that can correspond depending on individual situations. This philosophy gained from Costa Rica turned out to be something that is equally useful in the revitalization of the local community in the post-earthquake disaster reconstruction. When considering the past four years in Otsuchi Town after GEJE, what is required at this stage is the spontaneous initiatives of the local residents. Through the activity of NPO Tsudoi, I am placing values on those local initiatives while I am taking a background role. I would like to devote myself to continue to do what I can do in the hope of creating my hometown Otsuchi to be a better place to live for all, regardless of having disabilities or not.



AKIYAMA Chie, SAITO Hiroki



Left: AKIYAMA, Right: SAITO

JICA Reconstruction Facilitator

AKIYAMA Chie: Participated in JOCV and engaged in rice cultivation instruction in Rwanda. She is currently working on rebuilding the local community on Miyato Island in Higashimatsushima City, Miyagi Prefecture, through cooperation with the community business, "Genchan House" which the local residents started with the hope of bringing revitalization into the area.

SAITO Hiroki: Participated in JOCV and worked as a computer instructor at a school in Ethiopia. He is currently focusing on local community reformation in Nobiru district in Higashimatsushima City, Miyagi Prefecture. Through his work, he is supporting the publication of "Nobiru Reconstruction Newspaper" in order to share information with the local residents on what is new in Nobiru.

AKIYAMA: A very visible challenge in Miyato district is the declining birthrate coupled with the aging population. I am hoping to support the residents who are proud to live in this area to retain an environment where they can be fully motivated and enjoy themselves. For example, we can make our community restaurant "Genchan House" into a PR hub to showcase the cuisine of Miyato women which has great richness in variety and taste.

SAITO: In Nobiru, there are people who are relocating to higher ground and those who are remaining in the same place regardless of disaster damage. Since these people have different needs, the reconstruction process is progressing in different ways. Such situations could easily incur a gap in information about reconstruction progress between the two parties. To solve the problems, I am supporting the publication of "Nobiru Reconstruction Newspaper" in the hope of promoting the smooth formation of a new community. In addition, we have added a new column to the newspaper on the history of Nobiru. Sometimes local people do not know much about their own. I would like to make use of my viewpoint as an outsider, to disseminate what to appreciate about Nobiru for future generations.

HITACHI Naoko

A member of Kamaishi Regional Coordinators' Council "Kamaentai" of Kamaishi City, Iwate Prefecture. She participated in JOCV and was engaged in the improvement of the lives of women and children in a fishing village in Senegal. After returning to Japan, she has started to work on reconstruction support in her hometown, Kamaishi.

The earthquake struck two weeks before I was to leave for Senegal. I thought deeply about whether I should go or not, but I finally decided to go and was determined to contribute to my hometown after two years in Senegal. We always have to provide careful assistance for local residents so that they can sustain what they have attained even after the assistance ends. Keeping this in mind, I endeavoured to "report, contact and consult" and made sure that I worked not just with one person but with multiple people. I am currently working on community formation at temporary housing sites in my hometown, Kamaishi City. I am also organizing activities that show photographs to convey the lessons learned from the disaster and feelings about the disaster to future generations. As I have learned in overseas volunteering, the important thing in reconstruction is to create a mechanism with initiatives involving local people to sustain the effects of assistance even after it ends.



HATAKEYAMA Makoto

NPO Mori wa Umi no Koibito

Vice president of the NPO "Mori wa Umi no Koibito" which has its origin in afforestation by fishermen in Kesenuma, Miyagi Prefecture. He has been actively engaged in activities such as environmental conservation, environmental education, forest and community building. He is working on "the Environmental Awareness-Raising project for Symbiosis between Forests, Human and the Ocean" in the Philippines through the JICA Partnership Program.

In the Philippines, there is a difference in awareness of the environment between people engaged in primary industries and those engaged in secondary and tertiary industries. It is not effective to provide them with the same education program, but we need to approach each group differently depending on their livelihood. In that sense, I am placing importance on nurturing people who have a well-balanced perspective in terms of the environmental protection and livelihood improvement. There is a possibility that the fishing industry may not be able to sustain itself due to changes in the natural environment. Therefore, it is necessary to switch to an amalgamation of primary, secondary and tertiary industries, which is called "sixth-order industrialization" in Japan. We are currently constructing a café that will sell freshly-caught seafood and processed goods in our activity site in Kesenuma. And we are also planning eco-tourism programs. People do not just come to oyster farms but they do come to cafés - the important thing is the creation of a "sustainable" framework. In both Kesenuma and the Philippines, a common ideal is "the more we protect nature, the more affluently we can live."



TSURUOKA Shintaro

Higashimatsushima Organization for Progress and Economy, Education, Energy

KAWAGUCHI Takafumi

Reconstruction Policy Division, Higashimatsushima City

TSURUOKA Shintaro: Affiliated with HOPE (Higashimatsushima Organization for Progress and Economy, Education, Energy). He is currently carrying out "the Community Based Mutual Reconstruction Acceleration Program by Utilization of Local Resources in Banda Aceh City (Indonesia) and Higashimatsushima City"

KAWAGUCHI Takafumi: Chief Administrator of Reconstruction Policy Division of Higashimatsushima City, Miyagi Prefecture. He is engaged in promoting a sustainable and safe city building by coordinating with HOPE.

TSURUOKA: Although it is obviously important to provide hard infrastructure for recovery, it is also important to simultaneously think about the concept of local community and how to mobilize the local residents. I believe that unless local residents are being motivated and inspired, it is meaningless regardless of how much support is being provided by the external resource. The reconstruction plan should take much longer time until the implementation is fully completed. It is important to make sure that the local residents are having a sense of satisfaction with their daily lives. The long term goal of reconstruction can only be achieved through the accumulation of day to day small efforts. I believe our (HOPE) role is to figure

out a way to accumulate such daily actions and to realize them through strategic and systematic way.

KAWAGUCHI: In regards to the recent disaster, we have received many supports not just from the people in Japan, but also the people from all over the world. Due to such supports, Higashimatsushima City came up with the idea of coordinating with overseas. We are sharing experience and providing support to each other with Banda Aceh City that has been recovering from a similar type of tsunami disaster. By learning from the various initiatives being implemented in both cities, we can carry out respective disaster reconstruction, while we increase our knowledge in improving the quality of our reconstruction.



Left: KAWAGUCHI, Right: TSURUOKA



SHIMADA Masayuki

Familiar Co., Ltd.

CEO of Familiar Co., Ltd. He is engaged in various business development activities ranging from promotion for amalgamation of primary, secondary and tertiary industries that are very selective about "food ingredients" to consultation for regional revitalization. He is engaged in JICA partnership program that develops a business model where persons with disabilities are generally employed.

I am currently engaged in a project in Cambodia to establish a business model for the agricultural product process and distribution system through employing local persons with disabilities. The length of expiration period is the big bottleneck for the primary industry. However, we can solve such constraint by turning the agricultural crops into powder forms while they are still fresh. By doing so, the expiration period is extended and product variety is expanded. The cost can also be reduced when crops harvested at fields are directly dry-powdered right away. We are coming up with gelato and sweets made by our own drying technique. We received many supports from various countries for recovering from the GEJE. I believe we can accomplish our reconstruction only when we can express our sincere gratitude by supporting other countries after we will have revived from the disaster. This is the reason why we have started the project in Cambodia.



YASHIMA Yumi

A Senior Volunteer for Japanese Communities Overseas currently engaged in Brazil. She is working as a nursing care assistant in the elderly nursing home "Beneficência Nipo-Brasileira São Paulo Casa de Repouso-Santos Kosei Home" where most of the residents are the first and second generation of Japanese immigrants.

Over 90% of residents at "Beneficência Nipo-Brasileira São Paulo Casa de Repouso-Santos Kosei Home" are the first and second generation of Japanese immigrants. Having an opportunity to work under such environment has helped me to realize how important to carry a conversation in ones' mother language. I remember witnessing a scene that an elderly resident who only had a short remaining time to live was having a hard time finishing a meal, and the nurse was telling her in Portuguese "you must eat". I cannot forget her response saying "it is hard to be talked in Portuguese in such a time". Based on this experience, I intentionally talk with them in their mother language, whether in Japanese or my poor Portuguese. Coming to Brazil has made me be aware of such issues, and I believe providing these kinds of help will make a tremendous amount of contribution toward their peace-of-mind.

OTSUKI Takahiro

A school teacher at Hachiman Elementary School in Sendai City, Miyagi Prefecture. He got an opportunity to think about how to conduct disaster education at his school through JICA Development Education Study Tour for Teachers (December 21 to 30, 2013) in Indonesia. He visited the capital Jakarta and Banda Aceh City hit by the 2004 Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunami together with other teachers in Tohoku.

I became very concerned about how children will grow up to be in 10 years after experiencing the GEJE. It is truly important for teachers in Miyagi to think about the disaster and disaster education. In order to search for a clue to understand the necessary education program on disasters from this point on and what we should convey to children, I participated in this study tour in Indonesia where people have the similar experiences. The tour not only served as a trigger to rethink about the disaster risk reduction (DRR) and reconstruction, but it also stirred children's interests toward overseas with me sharing some of my findings at overseas. My hope is to find opportunities to go overseas proactively and to be engaged in active communications with the local people. And then, I would like to share such experiences with children through classes and think about what we can do together through global understanding.



Left: YASHIMA

Disaster reconstruction process contains useful clues for the community building in developing countries. With the purpose of introducing useful reconstruction challenges to the developing countries and connecting them with the disaster affected areas, JICA Tohoku has accepted 2,948 trainees from 111 countries by January, 2015. Among such training programs, "Case Studies on Reconstruction Process from the GEJE" that has been implemented since FY2012, is introducing inspiring reconstruction challenges. We interviewed those trainees what they learned in Tohoku and how they are utilizing them in their countries.



Corazon Tecson JIMENEZ

Country of origin: The Philippines
 Affiliation: Metropolitan Manila Development Authority
 Participated in FY2012

I learned that it is important to involve the local residents in the reconstruction process from the planning stage rather than from the implementation stage. I felt the way of proceeding with reconstruction in Japan was very thorough in terms of community involvement. I also learned the importance of giving children education on regular basis for disaster prevention. Eight months after I participated in this training, Typhoon Yolanda hit Tacloban, the Philippines. In the operation for this disaster, I was able to use what I had learned in Tohoku as a great support in my activities.



Tomy Mulia HASAN

Country of Origin: Indonesia
 Affiliation: Special Staff to Head of President Delivery Unit of Indonesia
 Participated in FY2012

Reconstruction was rather swift after the 2004 Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunami but we could not reconsider the necessity of structural measures such as seawalls. By attending this training course, I learned that in formulating a reconstruction plan, it is most important to take a plenty of time and carefully formulate the plan. This point has given me a good reference when I consider the prior reconstruction planning process and the way to build trust and cooperative relationships between local governments and residents. In addition, I have held a number of seminars in our governments in order to share the knowledge with a view of establishing a cross-sectional secretariat in the government.



Humberto Enrique MARIN URIBE

Country of Origin: Chile
 Affiliation: National Research Center for Integrated Natural Disaster Management
 Participated in FY2013

I learned, to achieve the "real reconstruction", supporting local initiatives and livelihood is indispensable in addition to the physical recovery such as infrastructure rehabilitation and construction. During this training, I focused on the importance of the mental support for victims. After being damaged by a disaster, local residents have to recover their lives and livelihood by themselves. In the course of the recovery, it is very important to provide mental support to the local residents so that they can maintain and improve their motivation and clear thinking. I am currently proposing a framework for this support.



Nuchada CHAROENPANICH

Country of Origin: Thailand
 Affiliation: Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board
 Participated in FY2013

I learned the importance of the disaster response plans being divided in three stages such as pre-disaster, emergency relief and reconstruction. In addition, establishing civic collaboration systems between local residents and the government, and emergency operation under the public-private partnership is also essential for disaster management. In order to put into practice what I learned in Japan, I have been proposing to launch a permanent disaster response bureau in the government. Furthermore, I am also introducing disaster education programs from primary schools like teaching kids to hide under the desks in time of earthquakes, and disseminating the importance of renewable energy development, and promoting knowledge sharing among citizens such as local traditions and wisdoms of the elderly.

Under the training program, JICA is inviting people from developing countries and providing them with opportunities to learn technology and knowledge in Japan. Most of the trainees are already engaged in positions taking a central role in social and economic affairs of their respective countries, and they are contributing to the development of their countries making use of what they learned in Japan. We interviewed trainees who participated in "Medical Equipment Maintenance" at Medisun Co., Ltd in Koriyama City, Fukushima Prefecture.



Khalil MOUSSAOUI

Country of Origin: Morocco / Affiliation: Equipment Management and Maintenance Department, Ministry of Health
 Participated in FY2014

In Morocco, there is overwhelmingly little training on medical equipment compared to training for medical doctors. My mission is to disseminate knowledge about the medical equipment to the people who are in need. During this training, I was able to visit a manufacturing factory and was able to directly question engineers about Japanese-made equipment actually being used in Morocco. I was able to further my technical knowledge through this experience, which could not be attained in other countries. In addition, many people in Morocco are willing to visit Japan to learn from Japanese who are known for their diligence and hard work. Thus, we are able to learn the advantage of Japan through the training program as well. This is extremely significant both for me and for Morocco.



Ghislain Sedote DEGLA

Country of origin: Benin / Affiliation: National University Hospital, Ministry of Health
 Participated in FY2014

Along with expertise on medical equipment, I learned the importance of fulfilling 5Ss which are composed of Seiri (Sorting), Seiton (Setting-in-Order), Seiso (Shining), Seiketsu (Standardizing) and Shitsuke (Sustaining the Discipline). It is important to maintain adherence to such standard over and over on a daily basis. Although we cannot start the full scale 5Ss in Benin, we can put into practice little by little starting with the 2Ss which are Seiri and Seiton. By introducing the 5Ss concept, the behaviors of my colleagues have started to change in terms of cleanliness and punctuality. I would personally like to incorporate this into my family as well. On top of that, I became interested in the way that Japanese people work as a team and how they stick to the deadlines. It is my hope that I can continuously help out people and contribute toward world peace through connecting with Japan.



JICA

JAPAN
INTERNATIONAL
COOPERATION
AGENCY

ODA and JICA

JICA, as the executing agency of Japanese ODA (Official Development Assistance), is working with developing countries to solve the current global issues that we face. JICA's assistance is conducted in various ways to make optimal use of rich human resources and experience of Japan.

The concept behind ODA includes not only humanitarian assistance but also "otogaisama" (mutuality) and "okagesama" (gratitude). In particular, since Japan relies on imports for much of its natural resources and food, our dependence on other countries is very high. Japan can attain its own benefits through ODA in contributing to global stability and peace by supporting the further development of developing countries.

The role of JICA Tohoku

The Tohoku region, which has a rich and sometimes harsh natural environment, has fostered great wisdom over long years in co-existence with nature in industries and livelihoods such as farming, fishing, forestry and mining. In addition to this wisdom, after the GEJE, there are a number of regions where vigorous reconstruction is in progress. Making use of the characteristics, strengths, wisdom, technologies, people and culture of Tohoku, we are working to solve issues both in developing countries and in Tohoku. The people of the world meet "Tohoku", and the knowledge of Tohoku spreads throughout the "world". JICA Tohoku hopes to be the point of contact between Tohoku and the world.

JICA Tohoku Programs

Group and region /country-focused training

Acceptance of Trainees is one of JICA's technical cooperation programs. It implements training in Japan for administrators and technicians from developing countries. There is "group training" and "region/country-focused training", and the training courses make use of the rich knowledge and experience of Tohoku in industries and livelihoods such as agriculture and mining.

Training program for young leaders

This is also one of JICA's technical cooperation programs inviting young leaders from developing countries who will be responsible for future nation building. In Japan, these young leaders are given basic training in their field of expertise to improve knowledge and awareness for future nation building.

Great East Japan Earthquake reconstruction assistance

While valuing the connection and trust that has been nurtured in Tohoku up until now, JICA Tohoku supports initiatives for even better reconstruction of the affected area utilizing its experience of overseas reconstruction assistance, human resources and global networks.

Private sector partnership

We are aiming to solve development issues in developing countries and revitalize Japan's regional economy by promoting excellent products and technologies from small and medium-sized enterprises in Tohoku. A variety of support programs to facilitate overseas operation are available depending on plan maturity.

JICA partnership program

JICA supports and jointly implements cooperation projects for developing countries based on the experience and technology accumulated by NGOs, local governments and universities. These projects are implemented in order to directly benefit the lives of local residents in developing countries.

Volunteers

There are two types of volunteers: JOCV and Senior Volunteers. They are dispatched as government volunteers who want to contribute in developing countries based on their individual knowledge and expertise. 2015 is the 50th anniversary of JOCV. Up to the present, 3,417 people from Tohoku have participated (as of 31st January, 2015).

Development education support

Development education cultivates knowledge of the various issues surrounding development and their connection with our lives, and encourages us to consider what we can do ourselves in order to solve these issues. We provide opportunities to the children, students and citizens of Tohoku to take another look at the current situation in developing countries and Japan through Development Education Study Tour for Teachers and visiting classes, etc.

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JICA Plaza Tohoku

JICA Tohoku shares a plaza at its entrance which is open to the public with books and pamphlets related to developing countries and international cooperation. Public lectures and events also call the public interest and the Plaza aims to be a crossing point between Tohoku and world.
Open hours: Weekdays 9:30-17:30

Public event



JICAfe Tohoku

JICA Plaza Tohoku changes into a small lounge for international understandings whenever we have guest speakers (JICA training participants from overseas, ex-JICA volunteers who spent their wonderful 2 years in their assigned countries and our staff journeyed back from various missions). Local coffees are often being served to visitors in this "café" like atmosphere.

Photo gallery

We host exhibitions of photos on people, activities, culture of various countries taken by JICA volunteers and experts to promote people's interest toward international cooperation.

