JICA's WORLD

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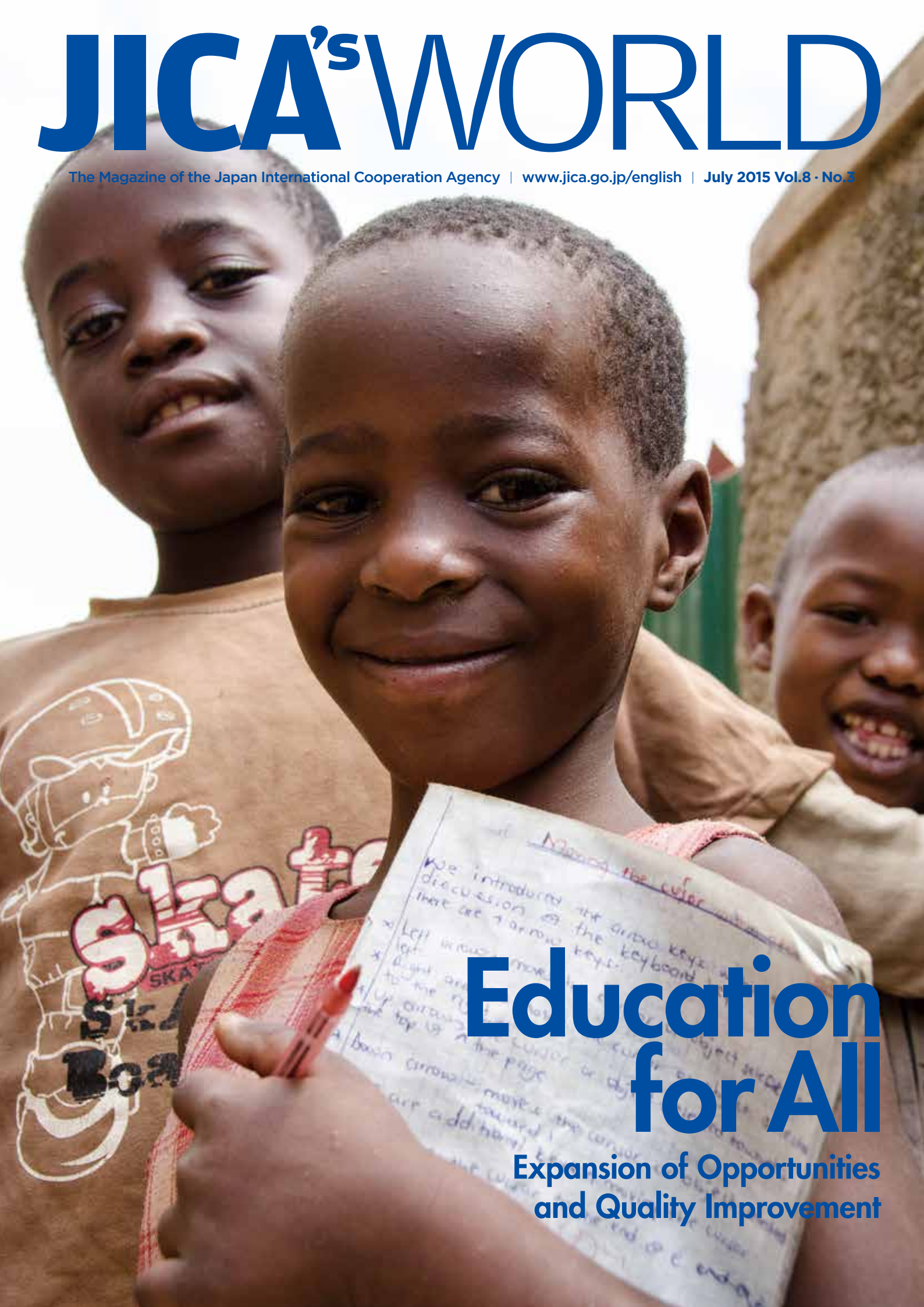


Education for All

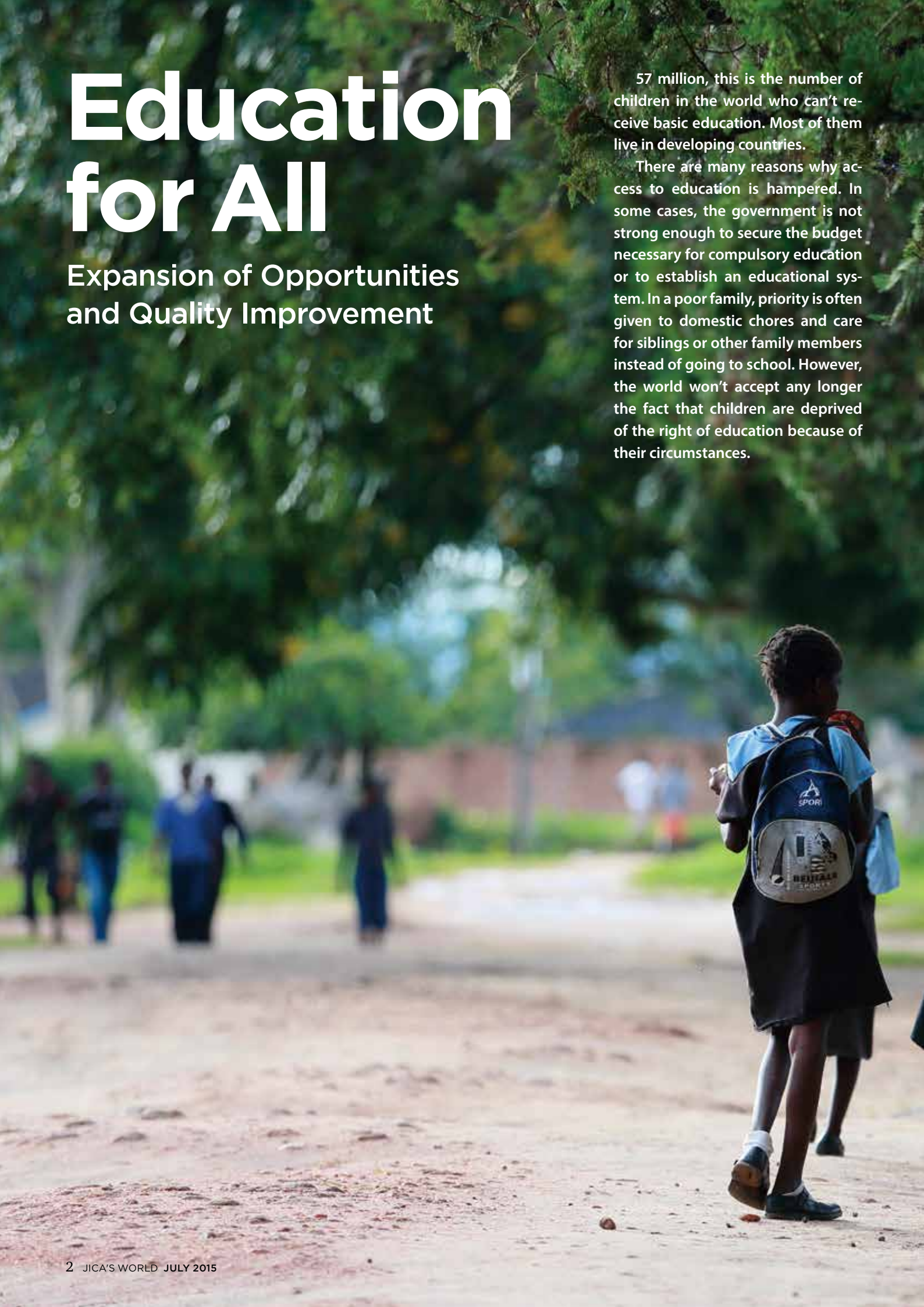
Expansion of Opportunities and Quality Improvement

Education for All

Expansion of Opportunities and Quality Improvement

57 million, this is the number of children in the world who can't receive basic education. Most of them live in developing countries.

There are many reasons why access to education is hampered. In some cases, the government is not strong enough to secure the budget necessary for compulsory education or to establish an educational system. In a poor family, priority is often given to domestic chores and care for siblings or other family members instead of going to school. However, the world won't accept any longer the fact that children are deprived of the right of education because of their circumstances.

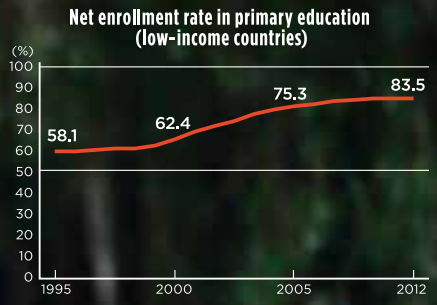


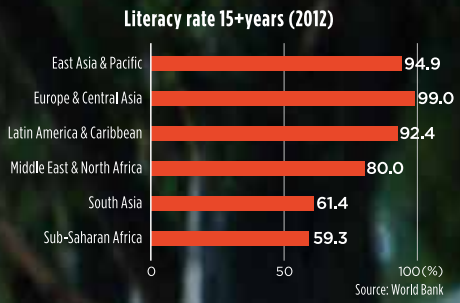
In 1990, UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank and UNDP held the "World Conference on Education for All (EFA)" in Jomtien, Thailand, which launched activities for spreading basic education in the international society. In 2000, the "Dakar Framework for Action" defining specific goals was adopted, and Universal Primary Education was adopted as one of the "Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)", which enhanced the trend of promoting education by the international society as a whole. According to a survey in 2014, enrollment rate in primary education in all developing countries has reached 90%.

Meanwhile, another issue has emerged: quality of education. Quite a few children quit school before graduation because some untrained teachers don't have enough teaching skills or classes are taught in a language other than their mother tongue.

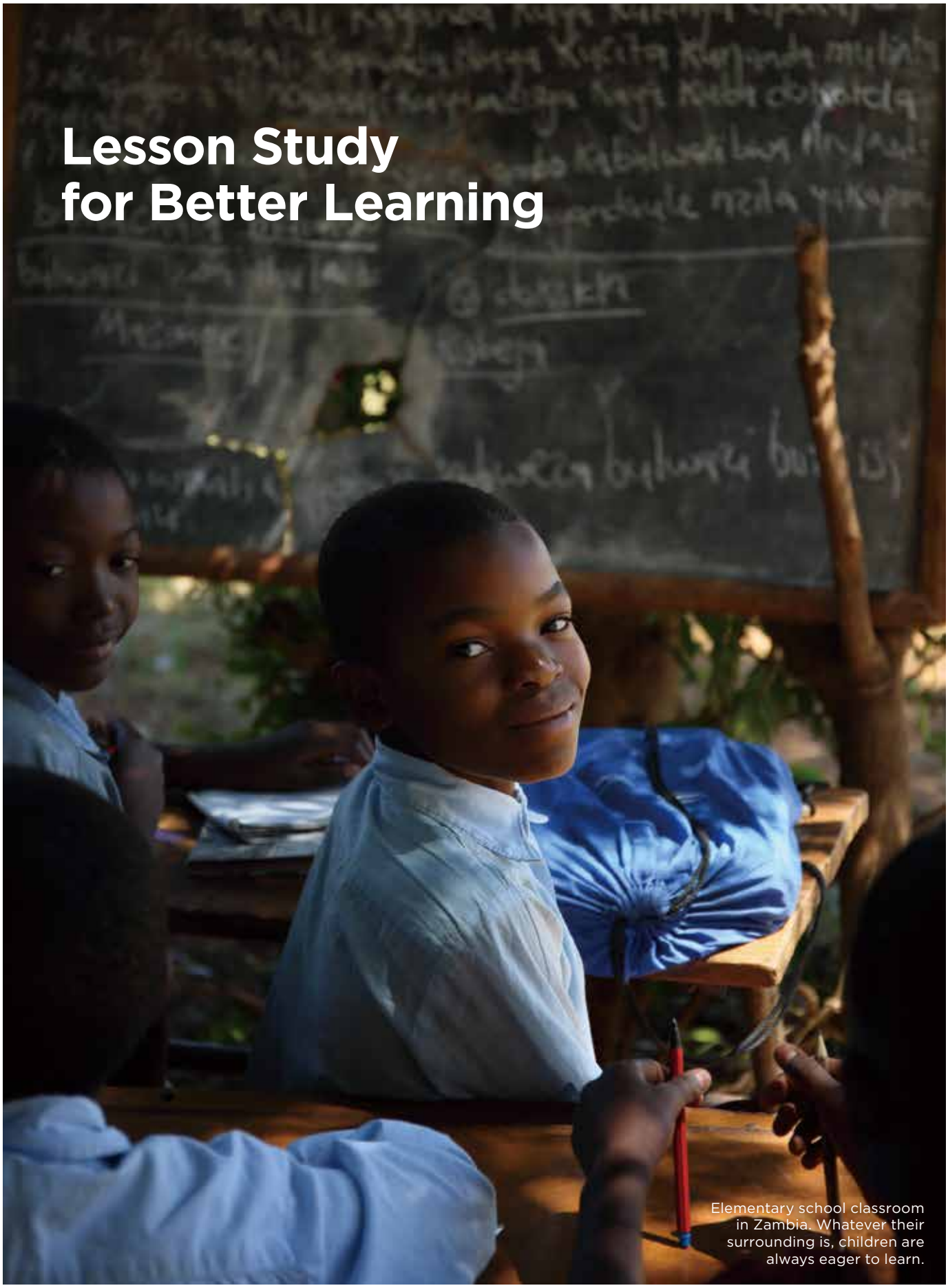
In order to spread education satisfying the needs of each and every student, Japan provides assistance for promoting education in developing countries.

Science and mathematics are less dependent on language and culture than other subjects. Knowing the high performance of Japanese students in science and mathematics in international academic ability surveys, many developing countries consider it as the foundation of Japan's economic success. Science and mathematics education can improve livelihoods by developing individual capacity based on scientific thinking and acquirement of skills, support understanding about public hygiene and environmental issues, and thereby promote economic, social and cultural development of the nation. Japan actively promotes educational support on a continuous basis taking advantage of the wisdom accumulated by cooperation through educational programs and lesson study based on the experiences in Japan.





Lesson Study for Better Learning



Elementary school classroom in Zambia. Whatever their surrounding is, children are always eager to learn.

In Zambia, school teachers are recently trying to improve the quality of education by incorporating Japan's "lesson study". Lesson study is a mechanism in which teachers observe classes with related persons inside and outside of school and consider approaches to improve classes and their own teaching skills. In Japan, it has spread gradually since the Meiji Era, and is now commonly practiced at schools. Japan's experience is being used in faraway countries in order to provide children with better education.

Bulungu Secondary School is huge; each class has more than 40 students.

IDEAS FOR DIFFICULT LESSONS OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

Bulungu Secondary School is located in the town of Mumbwa, a 2-hour drive from Lusaka, the capital of Zambia. It is a large school with more than 40 students per class. Njekwa Mumdia who teaches science to third graders of junior high school writes today's theme, "Density", on the blackboard.

The leader of each of six groups takes a graduated cylinder with water, a pebble, a string and a scale. Mumdia instructs them: "Sink the pebble in the graduated cylinder, check the scale and record how much the water surface is raised." The students started to discuss with each other in low voices.

It seems like an ordinary lesson, except for lines of teachers of other classes in the rear and sides of the classroom. One of the teachers explains, "This is a lesson study". They are checking in Mumdia's class if their ideas are effective.

When the lesson is over and the students have left for lunch, the teachers move their desks together and start reviewing the lesson. "Incorporating the experiment makes it easier to understand." "But only a few students really understood the concept of density." "We should have given them more time to think before showing the answer." They exchange opinions referring to the evaluation chart. Head teacher Annie M. Njovu also joins the discussion, "It is meaningless unless the children can apply what they have learned to outside of the classroom."

LESSON STUDY BY TEACHERS FOR TEACHERS

"Zambia is one of the few countries in Africa where the lesson study is incorporated as a system", says Expert Kazuyoshi Nakai who has been supporting educational reform in the country for more than 10 years. He was a teacher at a public junior high school in Shizuoka Prefecture before taking a step into the world of international cooperation 22 years ago. He taught science in the Solomon Islands as a member of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers, and then made efforts to improve science and mathematics education in Kenya and the Philippines. What Nakai now tries to develop in Zambia is "lesson study" that he worked on in Japan.

Although the school enrollment rate has exceeded 90%, the issue in Zambia is that many students fail to keep up with lessons and drop out. One of the causes is the lack of teaching skills. There is no budget for assembling teachers from remote areas for training. If that is the case, why not establish opportunities for teachers to learn mutually at their schools? The lesson study for which Japanese teachers have worked hard was optimal for solving this issue.

Once the lesson is over, teachers gather to review their experimental session.

Mundia and his students learn about density. Exercise follows explanation.

PHOTOS: ATSUSHI SHIBUYA

A teacher supervising individually walking through the students. One of the efficient teaching methods.

Nakai has been in Zambia for 10 years. He is relied on by his partners for his experience in Japan as a teacher.

Banda aligns the experiment kit with technicians of his centre.

However, Nakai says, "At first, it was difficult to change their way of thinking." Because the teachers had been stuck with the environment where training was something that should be planned by the Minister of Education and daily allowance was supposed to be paid, Nakai has been prepared to confront the difficulties in persuading teachers that it was possible to carry out training at school even without money if they actively exchange ideas.

HANDMADE EXPERIMENT KIT

However, as if to eliminate such worry, there were school teachers who found lesson study significant. One of them is Benson Banda who taught science for many years and currently is the Principal Education Officer of National Science Centre in Lusaka. The Centre is under control of the Minister of Education and engaged in training for science and mathematics teachers and development of teaching materials.

When Banda opened the door to the room that he was eager to show us, the entire room echoed with a sound like construction noise. Many workers were sawing lumber and joining large iron plates. "The accumulation of lesson study has revealed that practical lessons would be difficult without the minimum experiment equipment. However, it was not realistic to establish a science room when there were not even enough regular classrooms. Therefore, "mobile experiment kit" was developed with JICA Senior Volunteers." It is a movable shelf containing beakers, alcohol lamps, electrical wiring components, test tube stands, etc., virtually a "mobile science room". The device is distributed to and used at schools throughout the nation, and highly appreciated by teachers.

Banda says, "I was impressed by the passion of Japanese teachers when working with Nakai and earning a master's degree at Graduate School of Hiroshima University as a long-term trainee of JICA. I was totally determined to promote the same passion in Zambia through the lesson study."

Here is an episode in which Nakai witnessed such determination. One day, they were about to leave for monitoring of a school which is practicing the lesson study. When Nakai and his group offered to accompany them, Banda confidently declared, "We are going on our own today, because the teachers would expect more than they should if the Japanese came. We have fully acquired the know-how of the lesson study, so you don't have to worry." This convinced Nakai that this country will have a great potential once the lesson study is established as a system. Since then, he has provided assistance strictly as a behind-the-scenes supporter.

Some schools organize morning sessions and afternoon sessions apart to satisfy the necessity of classrooms for all the students. They sometimes give lessons outside.

Linda West Secondary school: Yoshie Hama taking part in a post-classroom discussion. She is an advisor of the Ministry of Education of Zambia and working for educational policy including Lesson Studies

OPPORTUNITY TO THINK TOGETHER AND SHARE INFORMATION

Victoria Falls, an hour flight from Lusaka, is one of Zambia's famous tourist spots. In Livingstone where it is located, professionals engaged in education in each province of Zambia are having a meeting in the conference room of a public facility. They assemble four times each year in order to share approaches including the lesson study and find solutions for issues. Chief Education Officer Esvah Chizambe of the Teacher Education insists, "An opportunity to share opinions like this is valuable. Education should exist for the sake of children. In order for that, we must do our best to improve it."

Next day, at Linda West Elementary/Junior High School in the vicinity where children welcomed guests with cheerful greeting and dancing. In a mathematics class, they were learning root calculation. They copied the questions written on the blackboard in their notebooks and solved them, and Mekiwe P. Mutambo checked the answers. Teachers of other classes were observing in the rear of the classroom again.

"It was good to summon students to the blackboard and have them write answers." "It seems like students didn't have enough time to finish calculation. Maybe it's better to give less number of questions." After the lesson, the teachers had a heated discussion. They unanimously said, "There used to be no opportunity for sharing information, and we were often struggling alone. Sharing ideas can improve our lessons."

Thus, the lesson study has spread throughout Zambia and will be incorporated among teacher training schools for further establishment. Nakai emphasizes, "The Zambian people have realized the necessity and incorporated the lesson study on their own instead of just being cooperated by Japan, which was the key to success. The motivated teachers are the assets of Zambia's education."

Children genuinely want to "learn", and teachers make their utmost efforts to make it come true. Zambia's field of education will achieve dramatic progress in the near future.

Teachers' training school at Tela uses the new teachers' manual created in collaboration with Japan. They say it is especially useful for teaching practice.

Textbooks that Make Mathematics Fun

The Republic of Honduras is a Central American country on the Caribbean Sea. When you hear cheerful and lively voices of children at a local primary school, you cannot imagine that only about 30% of them can complete primary education within the official duration of six years without repeating a grade. To resolve the situation, Japan's know-how for textbook development is widely used in Honduras.

THE IMPORTANCE THAT TEACHING MATERIALS HAVE

Scene from a math class: the teacher is holding a paper cube in his hand and asks the children, "Imagine a development of this cube". The fifth graders in the class like it. They say "It's easier to imagine when we can see an actual paper cube". This is a primary school in Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras. The math class at this school is full of ingenuous ideas to help the children enjoy mathematics.

When the Honduran Ministry of Education conducted a survey of school children on their favorite subject in 2010, nearly 50% of them said math was their favorite. In the 2007 survey, however, it dropped to less than 30%. "In Honduras, students who perform poorly in the examination for promotion have to repeat the grade, and math and Spanish are the main obstacles for them", says Norihiro Nishikata, JICA's Senior Advisor. Nishikata had been a teacher at primary school in Japan for nearly ten years when he decided to leave the job to pursue his dream to be involved in academic assistance in developing countries. He has since worked in several different countries including Honduras.

To deal with the situation where many children are facing a risk of being held back/dropping out, the Honduran government made a decision more than ten years ago to re-create a math textbook from scratch, because the textbook previously used was mostly written in text and seemed to turn children off learning. Besides the textbook, the Government was also aiming to revise the teachers' manual to improve their teaching abilities.

However, Honduras has little know-how for textbook development, and the Honduran government therefore officially requested Japan to provide technical assistance. Nishikata explains the strength of Japan's teaching material development technique, saying, "Japan is great at making teaching materials with much ingenuity to conduct more effective

Left: Workshop for the development of textbooks in Nicaragua. They came up with various ideas to develop textbooks based on their own country's system and culture.
Right: People who are involved in the development of textbooks. They are from 5 different countries of Central America. Mr. Nishikata worked as a leader.

teaching."

Senior Advisor Nishikata and other experts from Japan started working on the project in collaboration with the Honduran Ministry of Education and the staff of Universidad Pedagógica Nacional (National Pedagogic University), and have provided training programs for them with a focus on their weaknesses. As they learn about Japanese textbook design such as using figures and tables besides the main text, the Honduran project members started to recognize the importance of creating an easy-to-understand textbook for children. One of the members, Mr. Luis Soto from Universidad Pedagógica Nacional called on other members to review all the problems that they had had thoroughly, following which they started come up with a number of creative ideas. For example, teaching young children how to use money and control spending is regarded as very important in Honduras as opposed to Japan. On the back of this, they suggested enriching the quality and quantity of practical calculation problems in first-grader's textbooks. Thus, a more child-oriented textbook was created.

JAPANESE KNOW-HOW PREVAILING THE WORLD

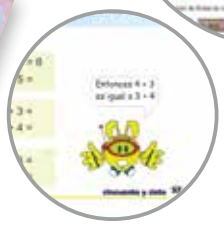
Two years after the start of the project, the new textbook and the revised teachers' manual have finally been completed. Highly praised for usability for both children and teachers, they have been approved as government-designated educational materials and distributed to primary schools nationwide. The project and its result caught the attention of other Central American countries such as El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic, which also launched similar projects to create textbooks in collaboration with the Japanese experts.

Nishikata looks back on the days, saying, "It was so hard. I continued to work in Honduras on a training program for teachers for effective use of the new materials. So I would work on it during the daytime, after which I would fly to El Salvador and check their materials in my hotel room".

"The most significant change is improvement of teacher's motivation", says Atsushi Nakahara, policy advisor for the Honduran Ministry of Education, who also recognizes the positive impact of the newly-developed math textbook. It has produced some tangible effects as well including an increase in graduation rate at primary school level. The Ministry of Education recognizes the importance of textbook development and has created new Spanish and science textbooks on its own. Changes are definitely happening.

Furthermore, the teachers' training school has added acquisition of the content of new teachers' manual, created with the support of Japan, to requirements for graduation from the training school; thus an environment for fostering really competent teachers has been created. However, there still remain a lot of issues to be tackled. Nakahara expresses his enthusiasm for the project's sustainability. "A number of competent teachers can't get a teaching job and remain unemployed in this country. We need further improvement measures at the policy level, such as development of a plan to recruit of teachers. We will continue our efforts to support the educational system in Honduras".

Japanese know-how for development of educational materials has gained the attention of other countries beyond Central America. It seems it has much potential for providing better learning opportunities for children around the world.



Textbooks for the first-graders in Honduras. It includes how to count money and practical calculations. The characters used are gender-friendly.

Children learning basic education. It is said that more than 70% of the students receiving non-formal education are girls and women.

Joy of "Reading and Writing" for All

Poverty and limited access to basic education: In Pakistan, children are unable to attend school for various reasons. Japan has continued to support those who do not have a chance to learn, and the results of such efforts have come into bloom little by little.

"My book" which is used as an educational material. One can learn how to read with fun, as if they keep a journal.

FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NO ACCESS TO SCHOOL EDUCATION

In Punjab, the most populous province of Pakistan, something is now attracting the attention of especially women. That is "My Book," in which a user can write down things such as one's own name, birthday, and family. It is fun to "write down" and "record" something. It is only recently that many people found this joy of writing.

"Education for all children". The message of Malala Yousafzai, a 17-year-old girl who is the youngest-ever Nobel Peace Prize laureate, gave inspiration and touched the hearts of people all over the world. Following Nigeria, Pakistan has the world's second highest number of children out of school. About 50% of the population cannot read and write. Malala continued to attend school in such environment.

"It will take time until everyone has access to school education in an environment where people are unable to pay school uniform and understanding about education is insufficient. Therefore, the movement to enrich 'non-formal education' that enables people to obtain qualification equivalent to that of school education and to be literate, which is necessary in people's lives, has grown," said Project Advisor Chiho Ohashi, who has been working on educational support in this area for many years. The Literacy and Non Formal Basic Education Department(LNFBED) of Punjab has aimed to improve the literacy rate through "Non-Formal Basic Education" which is for children aged 5-14 who are out of school and "Literacy" which is for adults aged 15-35 who had no chance

to receive educational opportunities.

Thanks also to the effort of local people, non-formal education has shown signs of spreading little by little. However, there is much room for improvement in terms of the quality of education, since many teachers are unqualified and their teaching know-how is insufficient. Therefore, Japan has cooperated for these ten years in the areas including preparation of teaching materials and training for the staff of the LNFBED.

What Ohashi has kept in mind is the "initiative of the people who work at the site." Based on her belief that things would not go well without a sense of perticipation among the people who work at the site, she decided to involve the people who can consider from the viewpoint of the local people, from the early stage of decision making on learning items in the process of creating a textbook. "I had a hard time finding an eligible person. There were also many people who opposed this new effort."

Moreover, when the project actually began, things did not proceed smoothly. "Traditional teaching methods in Pakistan is rather promoting memorization. Using Japanese interactive materials as a reference, I tried to show how to develop teaching-learning materials which are easy to understand and practical." Literacy mobilizers and officers used to be passive, not proactive to meet the needs of learners; however, inspired by new methods, they started to communicate with other departments including Health and Hygiene Department and Agriculture Department and prepare lessons that can give practical knowledge that would be useful in the participants' lives.

LIVES CHANGED THROUGH LEARNING

Gradually, changes emerged on the side of learners. One of such fields is a brick kiln where socially excluded poor people work. The lives of the children who could not attend school as they had to work in the factory as assistants have changed so that now they learn at a non-formal primary school near the factory in the morning and work as assistants in the afternoon. Since the hours of lessons can be arranged according to the situation of each household, parents started to show understanding even though they used to worry about reduction of the children's working hours.

By having a chance to learn, children can do more by themselves. "I saw parents who boasted to their neighbors how their child happily can read electricity bills now. It has also been a big change that children's attitude towards their elders improved and they now take care of their health and hygiene," said Ohashi. They started to have big future dreams of becoming a professional such as a doctor and a teacher, and the expressions of the children are very lively as they look into their future.

Project Adviser Ohashi (left) supporting a class at a non-formal primary school in Okara district.

This year, a curriculum of non-formal education which was created through Japanese cooperation was officially approved in Punjab province. The new form of education, which is securely taking root, is planned to be developed nationwide. "First of all, we need to encourage local governments to begin with the improvement of infrastructure such as school buildings," said Yoshitaka Inagaki of JICA Pakistan Office. The severe reality that it is difficult for the students to continue into secondary schools after finishing their primary school education, as there is no secondary school nearby, is also an issue. Furthermore, it is also required to create a system that connects school education to job opportunities. "I would like to promote these initiatives so that Pakistan will be a country where anyone can develop the ability to create a new path on one's own," Inagaki said.

In Pakistan, the joy of reading and writing has started to light up the future. They are moving forward step by step towards creation of a society in which all children can receive education.

Left: In a classroom for adults, they also teach life skills such as sewing and home kitchen gardening which would generate income.
Right: A brick kiln in which many people work in Punjab province. The job is low-paying and hard work; however, people are being vitalized as they gained a chance to receive education.

Children in the world

Acquah Dadzie Louis (11 years old)

What I like to do:	Playing with friends, studying, using a PC and taking pictures
What if I could have a wish come true:	No more blackouts, it messes up my PC
My future dream:	Join the army and protect the country

I am a third grader at a school for the deaf. The time I like the most at school is after classes. We take turns at using the PC room, and I look forward to the turn of third graders every week. It was difficult to hold the mouse at first, but I'm getting better. I can now use the typing software and am learning games faster than older pupils, which makes me confident.

I met Ms. Maruyama in a PC class. She always checks our grades and teaches us how to use the PC, so I go to the classroom to help her even when it is not my turn. Recently, I am gradually learning how to search for what I want to know on a PC, but I still need her help in choosing keywords. I would like to acquire more skills and grow to be an adult who has all the information of the world.

Louis eats waakye, his favorite school lunch (second from right)

Chisato Maruyama
(Youth Activities of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers)
encountered in Ghana!

Hidenori Tachizuka
(Baseball, Youth Volunteers for Nikkei Communities)
encountered in Argentina!

Leandro Yamawaki (11 years old)

What I like to do:	Baseball
What if I could have a wish come true:	I want to be a millionaire
My future dream:	MLB player

I am a member of the boys' baseball team of La Plata Japanese Association in the State of Buenos Aires. The most unforgettable game is the final of last year's city tournament. In the last inning, we were 3 points behind, and I was in the batter box. My absolute desire to win the tournament made me capture and hit the eighth ball from the pitcher. It was connected to the following lineup, and the team won the come-from-behind victory. Coach Tachizuka was as happy as we were.

Coach Tachizuka teaches us not only baseball skills but also the aspects of mentality and courtesy. I used to think "I'm happy if I'm happy", but I have gradually grown to consider the feelings of others and take care of younger children. In addition, all of us are now treating our gloves and bats more carefully than before. I was appointed captain this year. Our team will participate in World Children's Baseball Fair to be held in July in Tokyo. I will lead the team and play without giving up to the last minute.

Leandro likes to practice. He is the cleanup batter of the team.

Otgonbayar Tuvshinbayar (5 years old)

What I like to do:	Playing with RC airplane
What if I could have a wish come true:	I want a big car with studless tires
My future dream:	Employee of a large company

I love chatting with friends and teachers at kindergarten. I was happy when I met Mr. Aso for the first time, and I told him about my family and many other things.

I am very competitive. One day, when I lost a game, I was so disappointed that I didn't want to talk to anybody and stayed in the corner of the classroom even when it was lunch time. I was afraid of being beaten by the homeroom teacher as usual, but I wasn't on that particular day. The teacher just watched over me from a distance instead of scolding me. Apparently, Mr. Aso talked to the homeroom teacher about how I felt. After a while, I calmed down and went back to my seat to eat my lunch, Next day, before playing some other game, Mr. Aso said to me, "Don't cry today even if you lose", and I answered "I won't cry today!" I now enjoy playing games more than I used to. Whenever I lose, I'm determined to do better the next time.

Tuvshinbayar (left) is kind in nature and likes to play with his friends.

Yutaro Aso
(Early Child Education of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers)
encountered in Mongolia!

Children are the future of their countries. How did they grow through their encounter with JICA volunteers who are working all over the world?

whom JICA volunteers encountered

Yumi Takai
(Primary School Education of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers)
encountered in Samoa!

Alisa Keni (14 years old)

What I like to do:	"Netball", popular sport in Samoa
What if I could have a wish come true:	I want to live in Australia
My future dream:	Scientist

I go to elementary school on Savaii Island, Samoa. Now that I'm a senior, I take care of younger pupils. I also do household chores and take care of my siblings at home when my parents leave the island to visit the capital city.

On the day when Ms. Yumi came to live on the island two years ago, I was already excited when I woke up. I ran up to her as soon as she got off the bus. We became friends quickly. She helps with my homework, and sometimes I confide "just between us" things to her. In class, she often asks us "Why so? Why do you think so?" I was surprised, because all we used to do in class was memorize. It was difficult to explain at first, but as I started to think "Why" whenever I know something new, I gradually learned to express myself. I would like to study many different things in order to make my future dream come true.

Alisa (right) loves netball. The picture was taken after a game with another team.

· TRENDS ·

Sudan

JICA Provides Support for Ebola Preparedness in Sudan

The Ebola outbreak in West Africa since last year is the largest and most complex since the virus was first discovered in 1976 in Nzara, Sudan. In response to the outbreak, the Government of Japan through JICA has provided additional funding to Sudan to prevent the spread of the disease.

The Preparedness and Response to Epidemic Diseases Directorate in the Federal Ministry of Health in Sudan has spearheaded efforts to train clinicians on early detection and control of Ebola at the point of entry in the capital city of Khartoum.

An advanced workshop was conducted from March 8 to 9 at Khartoum International Airport, where 31 medical and public health professionals working at the airport participated. Another workshop was held from March 11 to 12 at the Khartoum Teaching Hospital for 19 medical team members working at the isolation centers. These trainings were supported by JICA with technical expertise from Medicins Sans Frontieres (MSF) as part of helping national efforts on Ebola preparedness in Sudan.

The training highlighted hands-on practice outside the lecture hall. Participants fully equipped with Personal Protective Equipment(PPE) engaged in a virtual situation where a suspected case in a landed airplane was notified. Their mission was to properly handle passengers, and transport the patient by ambulance to an isolation centre located about 3 km away from the airport.

In addition to the workshops described above, JICA has supported the printing of existing materials for mass distribution in the country, such as "Ebola disease Guideline", "Raising Awareness about Ebola", "Prevention from Ebola" and "Protect yourself from Ebola".

Personal Protective Equipment was newly provided by the Government of Japan through JICA.

Japan

JAXA Astronaut Noguchi to support REDD+

On April 13, Soichi Noguchi, an astronaut for the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), assumed the position of "Official Supporter" of a project called the Japan Public-Private Platform for REDD+ that JICA is jointly promoting with other partners.

The REDD+ Platform is an effort to promote the REDD+ climate change initiative through an all-Japan effort including the private sector, organizations, research institutes and government agencies. It was established in November 2014 in response to a call from JICA and the Forestry and Forest Products Research Institute (FFPRI) of Japan. Its activities include developing new business models that make use of REDD+, sharing expertise on international trends surrounding REDD+ and disseminating information to increase the name recognition of and understanding on REDD+. As an official supporter, Noguchi promotes REDD+ Platform from the unique viewpoint of an astronaut.

On the occasion of Noguchi's assuming the position of official supporter, JICA President Akihiko Tanaka said it is important to promote understanding of REDD+ by a broader range of the public.

In response to this, Noguchi talked about JAXA's expertise in observing the earth using the latest technologies such as satellites, and said he aspires to deepen understanding of JICA's initiatives in the forest sector around the world and to convey the importance of conservation of the earth's atmosphere to the people of Japan in an easy-to-understand manner.

In addition, Noguchi and Tanaka affirmed that JICA and JAXA will partner to further improve understanding of REDD+.

Astronaut Soichi Noguchi, left, who took on the job of official supporter, and JICA President Akihiko Tanaka.

Kenya

The 20th anniversary of JKUAT

On March 27, 2015, the 20th anniversary of JKUAT was celebrated at the Juja campus in the Republic of Kenya, attended by President Uhuru Kenyatta. The former Jomo Kenyatta College of Agriculture and Technology (JKCAT) was promoted to a university and renamed JKUAT in 1994. JICA's cooperation started in the late 1970s when a plan to establish the College was proposed to Japan. Subsequently, JICA has extended various support to help the college operate independently.

The lavish ceremony was held in the presence of not only around 5,000 JKUAT professors and students, but also approximately 300 guests including President Kenyatta and other officials from Kenya, Japan was represented by Ambassador Tatsushi Terada, Hiroji Nakagawa, professor emeritus of Kyoto University who has assisted the university since the 1970s, Junkichi Iwasa, professor emeritus of Okayama University, and Yutaka Fukui, professor emeritus of Tottori University. In addition, Izumi Ushiyama, president of Ashikaga Institute of Technology, JICA Vice President Kae Yanagisawa and Hideo Eguchi chief representative of JICA Kenya Office also took part in the ceremony.

The Kenyan guests repeatedly expressed their gratitude to Japanese guests for their huge contribution to establish JKUAT, in particular, the AFRICA-ai-JAPAN project and BRIGHT project

Ambassador Terada stated that the JKUAT project was one of the most important efforts representing the cordial relationship between Kenya and Japan. In addition, on the 50th anniversary of JOCA's projects this year, he noted that JOCA staff dispatched to Kenya had contributed significantly to social development and building the bilateral relationship.

The twentieth anniversary monument

Providing Assistance to Areas Affected by Nepal Earthquake

A 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck Nepal on April 25 causing massive damage, leaving many dead and injured. JICA dispatched a Rescue Team and Medical Teams of the Japan Disaster Relief Team (JDR) to Nepal in response to a request from the Government of Nepal.

The Rescue Team, which was dispatched on April 26, conducted search and rescue activities at Krishna Mandir Temple near the Old Royal Palace (Hanuman Dhoka) in the capital city of Kathmandu. From April 30 onward, the ancient capital city of Bhaktapur was assigned as Japan's operating site and they persevered with strenuous search operations using rescue dogs.

Meanwhile, for the first time for Japan, the Medical Team dispatched an Expanded Function Team which would meet the needs for advanced medical care such as surgical operations and dialyses in addition to conventional medical care. After providing support for surgery at a hospital in Kathmandu, they moved to Bahrabise Village in Sindhupalchowk District and opened a field clinic equipped with expanded functions. The Japanese Medical Team served as a medical hub for providing treatment for the severely injured patients. The first and second teams treated 987 patients and operated on 22 patients in total.

Moreover, a Reconstruction Support Survey Team consisting of experts from the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) and universities was dispatched on May 20. JICA will continue to investigate the extent of damage caused by the earthquake, and to examine the direction of concrete reconstruction plans and the possibility of Japan's further assistance toward Nepal's restoration and reconstruction through further consultations with the Government of Nepal, aid agencies of other countries and international organizations.

Rescue Team conducts search activities in a concerted effort with the Nepalese Army

The medical team provides support including medical consultations and surgeries in Bahrabise Village.

Dr. Jiro Oba

Senri Critical Care Medical Center, Saiseikai Senri Hospital

medical specialist, Japanese Association for Acute Medicine and The Japanese Orthopaedic Association

I provided support including medical consultations and conducted surgeries at a field clinic established in Bahrabise Village, Nepal as a member of the second Japan Disaster Relief Medical Team. Beside injured patients, there were persons who were suffering from upper respiratory tract infection and diarrhea because of the poor sanitary conditions. As Bahrabise Village is located in a mountainous area with poor medical conditions and the only hospital capable of performing surgeries was damaged, it took as long as 6 hours to carry in a patient in some cases.

The happiest moment for me was when I saw smiles on the faces of a patient and his/her family on the morning after surgery. On the other hand, I was once forced to evacuate to Katmandu because of an aftershock when I was about to start an operation on an 11-year-old boy. The operation was performed after evacuation, and I could see the boy's smile after all, but the experience reminded me of the difficulties of medical activities in times of disaster as well as the weight of our responsibilities.

The duration of our emergency relief activities is limited, but it is necessary to provide support so that patients can rehabilitate into society after our activities are completed. For that purpose, we are making constant efforts to build mutual trust with local medical facilities and provide sufficient explanation to patients and their families. I believe that we need to establish a system to follow up patients' conditions on a regular basis after providing support such as medical consultations and surgeries.

Voices

FROM THE FIELD

Najibullah Kohistani

Program Officer (Education), JICA Afghanistan Office

Najibullah Kohistani got to know more about JICA when he worked as an office assistant/translator for a JICA project called "Strengthening Special Education" at Kabul Education University in 2007. "I was inspired by JICA projects supporting the improvement and expansion of inclusive education and gender equality for war-affected children in the country," he explains.

According to Kohistani, over 72% of teachers in Afghanistan are unqualified; they are either school graduates or school students. To improve the situation, JICA started to develop the Teacher Guides for grades 1-6 from 2007 to 2010. "It was challenging to convince our counterparts of its importance," he says. However, the impact of these efforts were significant. Teachers were impressed with newly introduced guides and were able to develop effective teaching plans and have active classes.

Kohistani also witnessed JICA's efforts to develop a special needs education system. Afghanistan has experienced decades of war since the late 1970s. The damage to the country has been cumulative. "Of 1.5 million disabled, more than 300,000 were children," he explains. After 2001, again, Afghans suffered from the war and more have become disabled. It was under these circumstances that JICA, for the first time in Afghanistan, established a special needs education faculty in 2007 at higher education level. Technical cooperation projects with The Ministry of Education followed whereby Kohistani had a chance to help people with disabilities and found himself motivated supporting them. "Also, I am proud to be part of JICA's challenge to increase the literacy rate, estimated to be as low as 32% and which will require a national movement to change," he adds.

Looking ahead, Kohistani sees JICA playing a crucial role in assisting local community development, which serves as the foundation for people's daily lives. "While focusing on the education sector, I want to contribute in strengthening the effective relationship among donors and the Afghanistan government, aiming at peace building in the country."

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Cover:
A boy holding a notebook smiles at the camera in Kigali, Rwanda. (Photo: Kenshiro Imamura)

Photo on pages 2-3:
Girls on their way to school in Zambia. (Photo: Atsushi Shibuya)

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is the world's largest bilateral development organization, operating in some 150 countries to help some of the globe's Most vulnerable people.