

JICA's WORLD

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Africa: Takeoff?



A Bright New Dawn



These 11-year-old students attended their first ever physics class at the Nelson Mandela secondary school near the Mozambique capital of Maputo recently, under the watchful eye of Japanese volunteer Satoshi Kubota. The classroom represented the major challenge facing Africa—how to better educate millions and millions of boys and girls. But their very enthusiasm, sense of wonder and joy also underlined the great promise of a new generation once they are given the chance to learn.



PHOTOGRAPHS: JICA/R.WILKINSON



A Major Milestone for Africa

A vibrant market scene in Sierra Leone.

Japan has increasingly turned its attention to a continent which until recently it largely ignored

IT MAY HAVE HAPPENED IN ONE OF THE world's fastest growing cities such as Lagos or Cairo or on a vast savannah plain in one of the most inaccessible spots on earth. The baby's name, nationality and specific birthplace will never be known, but the United Nations says in recent months that a newly-born child became the one billionth person in Africa.

This population threshold is a major milestone for a continent which was the birthplace of mankind, boasts some of the world's greatest rivers, rainforests, minerals and potential agricultural wealth, but finds itself classed as the world's poorest region mired in upheaval, poverty and disease.

Pessimists claim an exploding population—having only recently passed one billion—will almost double to 1.9 billion by 2050—and overwhelm already limited health, education, agricultural and economic re-

sources. Optimists say an area covering 20.4% of the world's landmass is ready to fulfill its full potential.

By any measure, many official statistics are discouraging. Thirty-one of the 33 poorest countries in terms of life expectancy, literacy, education and standard of living as measured by the UN Development Index are in Africa.

Niger is officially the world's poorest nation. It has the highest fertility rate where women have on average 7.4 children and the lowest literacy rate for girls of 14.2%. Life expectancy in Zambia is 41 and the infant mortality rate in Mali is 129 per 1,000.

Africa accounts for 90% of the annual one million deaths from malaria, 1.4 million Africans died in 2008 from HIV-AIDS and an additional 1.9 million became infected, according to the UN. Some 41% of the population of sub-Saharan Africa survives on the equivalent of one American dollar per day.

Challenges and Hope for the Continent

In addition to these long-term scourges, conflicts such as that in Sudan's Darfur region and political instability in other countries, Africa faces new international challenges: recent food, energy and financial crises, mass movements from rural to urban areas and the effects of climate change on a region which has been least responsible but which is likely to be possibly the worst affected.

The UN estimated that as many as 250 million Africans will soon face severe water shortages and 70 million people could be at risk from rising sea levels, while droughts in such areas as the Horn of Africa are likely to increase and agricultural yields could be severely curtailed in some countries.

A New Era?

BUT AFRICA HAS THE WORLD'S MOST YOUTHFUL population and is expected to have 349 million

people aged between 15-24 by 2050, a massive pool of young workers at a time when many industrialized regions such as Japan and Europe are already grappling with rapidly aging populations.

Even the poorest nations such as Ethiopia, Mozambique and Sierra Leone have enjoyed double-digit economic growth in recent years. Huge flower farms exporting daily to Europe are blossoming on the floor of Africa's Great Rift Valley. Mozambique has pretensions of turning itself into an 'agricultural breadbasket to the world' according to that country's agricultural minister. And even in rural backwaters of Sierra Leone women talk loudly into mobile phones as they draw fresh water from newly built wells. All are signs of buoyant activity.

Japan increasingly has turned its attention—and assistance—to a continent which has been in desperate need. Two years ago at the fourth Tokyo In-

Providing health care, learning computer skills, vocational training



Photo: Atsushi SHIBUYA/JICA

Photo: Mika TANIMOTO/JICA

PHOTOGRAPHS: JICA/R. WILKINSON

Africa's Next Breadbasket?

It should have been the best of times for Soares Nhaca as independence for his southern African nation of Mozambique approached in 1975. Instead, he remembers the period as “nightmare at ground zero.”

Nationalists had fought an 11-year war of independence, but worse followed once the Portuguese colonial flag was lowered and a 17-year civil war began. Hundreds of thousands of people were killed, more than four million people abandoned their homes and Mozambique's economy and infrastructure was destroyed.

When a peace agreement was finally signed in 1992 the country was prostrate. Even today it is still ranked 172 out of 182 nations on the 2009 UN Development Index, a measure of a country's general standard of living, literacy, life expectancy and education.

Nhaca worked in a battery factory at independence and later became a trades union leader. Today, he is Mozambique's agriculture minister and the ‘nightmare’ he experienced at independence has been replaced by what he calls “a new dawn.”

International development agencies such as JICA recognize both Mozambique's potential but also its continued need for technical assistance, financial aid and greater pri-

vate investment.

Seventy-five percent of Mozambique's 20 million population work in agriculture which will be key to the country's prosperity. The future is bright. The future is green according to Minister Nhaca.

“Currently, we are cultivating 4.5 million hectares of land, but 36 million hectares is possible,” he said with enthusiasm at a recent interview in his office. Last year he signed a tripartite agreement with Brazil and JICA, which opened an office in Mozambique in 2003, to develop a massive area of northern Mozambique savannah into productive agricultural land.

AN AGRICULTURAL MIRACLE

Beginning in the 1970s Japanese experts and financial assistance helped transform Brazil's own so-called *cerrados* or ‘closed land’ into a farming bonanza growing huge harvests of soybeans, corn, rice,



A Japanese business delegation meets Mozambique's Premier JICA/R. Wilkinson

cassava and sugar. It was hailed as “one of the great achievements of agricultural science in the 20th century”



Floods battered Mozambique in 2000, but JICA experts are helping the rice growing region recover and prosper.

and the idea is to replicate its success in Mozambique.

A basic cooperation framework has been completed and ground operations including soil research will begin in the current fiscal year.

In the same area of northern Mozambique JICA is also involved in infrastructure projects to develop the so-called Nacala Corridor. An overall blueprint calls for the development of the Nacala deep water port and from there an up-graded roads system stretching from the coast west to land-locked Malawi.

The road system will open up the agricultural areas to be developed in the tripartite Mozambique-Brazil-Japanese project as well as providing access for imports and exports to such neighboring countries as Malawi, Zambia

and Zimbabwe and for the export of huge coal reserves from north-west Mozambique.

In southern Mozambique, Japan has already provided funding for the rehabilitation and upgrading of what one official described as “the largest irrigation scheme in southern Africa.”

When the Portuguese began to develop the Chokwe project in the 1950s it eventually covered 33,000 hectares devoted mainly to rice production. Devastating wars and natural disasters such as drought and floods in 2000 reduced the effective productive area to less than 10,000 hectares.

Japanese assistance has rehabilitated the main irrigation canal running from the Limpopo river into more than 300 kilometers of irrigation canals. Technical experts are now instructing some of the regional 12,000 farming households how to improve their rice

yields, in some cases from little more than one ton per hectare to more than five tons. A JICA financed rice milling plant allows them to more efficiently market their crop.

ROADS. ROADS. ROADS.

“Infrastructure. New infrastructure. Roads. Roads. Roads. That is what we need,” Prime Minister Aires Bonifacio Ali enthused in an interview shortly after greeting a trade delegation from some of Japan's leading private companies exploring opportunities to invest in the southern African state.

“Currently children cannot go to school because of lack of roads in many parts of the country,” he said. “Farmers may grow their food but then can't sell the produce because there are no access roads. We are the weakest link in the entire region because of lack of infrastructure. This problem is



strangling Mozambique.”

Infrastructure. Roads. And of course other ‘human security’ needs such as better education and health services.

“We have made tremendous efforts in education,” the Prime Minister said. “Within three years we have doubled the number of students from three to six million. We have reached a target of training 10,000 teachers a year.” JICA helped in that process by constructing four teacher training centers and sending experts and volunteers to both teach in the classroom and improve all aspects of the teacher training system.

In health education, the

agency financed the building of a new health-science institute and rehabilitated five similar centers, at the same time providing such basic equipment as laboratory items.

Working for JICA, Brazilian researcher and teacher Dr. Lucy Ito from Sao Paulo will stay for two years in a “support and coordination role, preparing new curriculum and text books for teacher training.” She previously worked in a similar capacity in Paraguay and Peru.

EMBRACING NEW CONCEPTS

The range of JICA projects in Mozambique embraces many of the development concepts which have received renewed emphasis in the last few years. The 2008 TICAD meeting for instance recognized the need for major infrastructure projects, such as the Nacala Corridor in northern Mozambique, to fight

ingrained poverty. Such projects, however, had to be fully integrated into other schemes, such as the tripartite agricultural plan.

JICA has championed closer ties between Asia, which has already achieved its own ‘green revolution,’ and Africa. In that vein the development agency is working with experts from Viet Nam to improve overall rice production in Mozambique.

It also favors increased international cooperation, including with newly emerging donor countries, a fact underlined by its cooperation with Brazil.

Mozambique may still be beset with huge problems. But it is a country of optimism.

“If we can successfully exploit all of our agricultural potential we can become a breadbasket not only for southern Africa but many other parts of the world,” says agri-



Brazilian professor Lucy Ito helps to improve the education system.

culture minister Nhaca.

“We are in a far better position today than we ever thought we would be 20 years ago,” Prime Minister Aires Bonifacio Ali said. “We must work harder and faster than

ternational Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) then Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda underlined his country's commitment.

He promised to double Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) by 2012, provide up to \$4 billion in soft loans to improve infrastructure such as roads, bridges and ports, \$10 billion during five

years to fight the adverse affects of climate change, \$560 million to the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria, launch other projects in such fields as agriculture, health and encourage wider private business involvement.

Forthcoming decades, he told the conference, would herald the “Century of African Growth” with

the country's development agency, JICA, playing a central role in helping Africa develop into “a powerful engine driving the growth of the world.”

JICA, which since a major reorganization in 2008 can now provide technical assistance, yen loans and grant aid to developing countries, has increased its exposure to Africa, expanding its project budget from

15.5% to 24.5% in recent years and increasing the number of offices in Africa to around 30.

A Blend of Projects

The agency is involved in a judicious blend of large-scale infrastructure programs and grassroots people-to-people projects in such areas as health and

Forget the Show Biz

Foreign assistance is often about glamour and show biz. Gleaming new soccer stadiums or a new airport can easily be explained to taxpayers in donor countries and gratefully embraced by governments in developing nations.

Deep in the bowels of the main power station serving Sierra Leone's capital city, Freetown, there is a different dynamic at work. The plant, built in the 1970s, looks old beyond its years—dark, sullen, caked with seemingly centuries of grime, oil and decay.

As part of a US\$17million project to help rehabilitate the plant and jump-start Sierra Leone's economy after years of devastating civil war, teams of Japanese technical consultants and engineers have installed two five megawatt diesel generators, as gleaming and modern as most of the rest of the station is decrepit.

The Japanese technical consultants and the local experts and technicians were excited as the time approached recently for the official inauguration of the new power plant, but they were equally occupied by another part of the program.

"If you give me a Rolls Royce, you must teach me how to drive and maintain it," project coordinator Jon Kabia told his Japanese co-workers. "If you don't do that, then don't blame me if I crash the Rolls."

"The key to success," agreed Japanese consulting engineer Noboru Matsumura, "is what happens after the generators are

turned on and when we leave. We have to teach and train these local staff to maintain and repair them."

Kabia pointed to a nearby generator which was installed several years ago. "Look what happens when we don't get the correct training," he said. That generator had been installed by one donor and a second donor was tasked with maintaining it.



Villagers enjoy clean water via a new filtration plant.

Local officials had not received any on-the-job training. The generator is permanently disabled with a huge hole blown into its side by an internal malfunction, of no use now in providing electricity to Freetown's 1.4 million people and powering industry.



The country's education system is recovering after being destroyed by years of civil war.

OFFICIAL JARGON

In official jargon it is known as 'capacity building' or 'human resource development,' an unglamorous side to the aid business, difficult to explain and quantify to restless taxpayers or populations in developing countries who often need basics such as food, classrooms and health care—and right now.

It means drawing up guidelines, developing textbooks or administrative blueprints and training teachers, health officials or administrators to better run their schools, hospitals and factories and maintain equipment such as the two new generators in Freetown once the foreign experts leave. JICA terms the system 'local ownership.'

Sierra Leone seems particularly receptive to this kind of assistance perhaps because the country lost virtually everything, including many of its skilled management class, during an 11-year civil war when some 75,000 persons were killed and two million people, more than one-third of the population, fled their homes.

By the late 1990s, Sierra Leone was officially classed as the world's poorest nation though it has rebounded somewhat since the war officially ended in 2002. In 2005 JICA opened a field office in Freetown, part of an overall strategy to help countries recently devastated by conflict to recover as quickly as possible.

JICA has concentrated its efforts on re-

viving the country's energy sector as a vital ingredient to reviving the overall economy and on community development projects embracing agriculture, health care and water in Kambia and Port Loko districts in the country's northern province. Those areas suffered massive human and infrastructure losses during the war.

"We had to start from nothing," says Atsutoshi Hirabayashi, regional development project leader who has also worked in a similar capacity in Kenya, Tanzania and Nepal. "There was little infrastructure...water, schools, health. There are so many challenges."

"I am a very strong believer in developing human resources," said Ahmid Munirr Fofanah, chairman of the Port Loko District Council. "Japan has few natural resources but look what you have done by harnessing your human resources. With the right training we too can rebuild our country. JICA has given us a very fine model. Without the correctly trained people nothing will work."

Sierra Leone's education system was destroyed during the conflict, but in Kambia following the theme of self help and widespread community involvement, JICA helped establish education and community development committees, similar to parent-teacher associations in Japan or the United States, to build up a whole new grassroots education structure virtually

from scratch.

An agricultural project was launched in 2006 up to 2009 to teach farmers how to increase rice and crop production.

A US\$1.6 million 'slow sand filtration' water treatment plant has been built to pro-



A new power plant

vide 14,000 people with clean and safe water, water management unions established and local operators and maintenance personnel trained. The same model will be replicated in some 10 other towns.

A DIFFICULT SITUATION

In her mid-30s Chiemi Fujii abandoned a job as a travel agent in Switzerland, South Africa and Japan to fulfill a long-standing passion to become a nurse.

She is working as a rural health improvement expert with the district health management team at the Kambia hospital, building up expertise among local health

officials including enhancing the skills of so-called peripheral health units (PHUs), grass-roots nurses who can administer basic health care.

Personally and professionally, life is tough in a district where there is no regular water or electricity. When she returned from Japan recently she found even the hospital generator out of order. It took three weeks to repair because the nearest repairmen were in Freetown, several hours commute away.

There was only one doctor in the hospital until recently. Other personnel are volunteers at the only government facility in the region which shows desperate wear and tear. The grounds of the hospital remain littered with destroyed vehicles and hospital beds. "These could be used by someone for scrap metal, but there is no one even to haul them away," district doctor Francis Jayah said resignedly on a recent tour.

"There is so much stress here sometimes," says Chiemi Fujii. "It can be overwhelming." But she said she will soldier on in the difficult conditions because "I really love West Africa."

"So, we have started at the very lowest base in Sierra Leone," concluded Atsutoshi Hirabayashi, the regional development project leader. "But the region has some of the highest potential I have witnessed."

education across the continent.

The TICAD conference recognized the renewed need for major infrastructure projects as one of the key ways to tackle centuries-old poverty 'from the top down.'

JICA has been helping Egypt to better harness the waters of the Nile River by rehabilitating dams and building new irrigation systems. In southern Su-

dan Japanese experts and money rebuilt the main river port at Juba to open up a vast area of East Africa after years of war destroyed the region.

In southern Africa's Mozambique it is helping to rehabilitate road and port facilities (pages 6-7) to open up a huge new area for agriculture. To speed trade and people movements, the concept of one-stop border crossings is being introduced to eliminate

notorious bureaucratic and time-consuming bottlenecks at frontier posts between countries.

In perhaps the agency's largest agricultural initiative in Africa, JICA has joined with other international donors, African countries and organizations in a Coalition for African Rice Development, CARD, which aims to double production in sub-Saharan Africa to 28 million tons by 2018 with a series of

measures such as introducing new, hardy strains of rice and improving irrigation systems.

In Mozambique, JICA teamed with the host country and Brazil in an ambitious project to develop a huge swathe of virgin savannah into a potential agricultural breadbasket similar to a 1970s scheme with JICA's help which transformed Brazil's own 'cerrados' or 'closed land' into productive agricultural use.

Development activities in Mozambique underline many of JICA's basic concepts including: linking major new infrastructure to other development areas, in this case agriculture; working closely with international donors including newly emerging countries such as Brazil; promoting closer cooperation between Asia and Africa. Vietnamese experts are cooperating with JICA and Mozambique on a rice project and promoting foreign and domestic private investment. A Japanese business delegation recently toured Mozambique to explore investment opportunities.

Thirty-three countries are now participating in a project, Strengthening of Mathematics and Science Education, or SMASE, which works on a 'cascade'

principle whereby experienced trainers instruct local secondary and primary teachers in sciences and mathematics who in turn become trainers to teach more teachers at lower levels.

There are a myriad of other education programs across Africa. In Niger, for instance, JICA helped create an additional 100 kindergartens for an expanding school population and Japanese experts have introduced new management techniques and structures throughout the school system. It is helping establish and then involve local communities in running schools in parts of Ethiopia where children have rarely ever attended school before.

Hospitals and clinics have been financed and the

training of thousands of medical personnel, doctors, nurses and administrative personnel has been particularly emphasized.

With climate change increasingly evident attention is being paid to help combat flood, drought and desertification, exploiting the continent's abundant natural resources and promoting hydro and solar energy. JICA has helped in the establishment of Africa's largest wind farm on Egypt's Red Sea coast.

Much of the continent has suffered the ravages of major conflict and a variety of programs help countries' recovery process. In Sierra Leone orphaned children, former child soldiers and the physically and mentally disabled have been reintegrated into society.

Africa is at another crossroads promising both massive challenge but also renewed hope

Police officers have been trained to try to restore stability in the Democratic Republic of Congo where several million people have died as a result of years of ongoing strife. Rwanda, scene of a 1990s genocide in which nearly one million people were killed, has benefitted from a series of projects to enhance economic and social stability.

And so with its billionth citizen recently born, Africa is at another crossroads promising both massive challenge but also renewed hope.

"Africa has achieved significant changes," JICA President Sadako Ogata told the African Union on a visit to the region. "But the continent remains fragile and much work remains to be done." ■

Poverty Amid the Splendor. Providing more food, safer water and better education in Ethiopia

ETHIOPIA

Forty-five-year-old Jibo Shetu has lived her entire life surrounded both by Africa's splendid bounty and its enduring poverty.

Her village of Kongo lies in southern Ethiopia on the floor of the rift valley, a huge gash in the earth's surface stretching from southern Africa to the Middle East. There are purple jacaranda trees, blazing red flame trees, groves of 'false' bananas, magnificent lakes teeming with wildlife and rare bird populations nearby. Some of the world's best and most rare coffee beans are grown here.

But initial impressions of splendor can be deceptive. The nearby hillsides are coated with forest, but the tops have been denuded of tree cover because of the incessant demands for fuel from an ever expanding population. Water may be theoretically plentiful, but its supply is capricious and, at times, deadly.

Jibo Shetu tells a visitor that she has suffered most of her life from a variety of water-borne diseases such as giardia, a common but debilitating ailment, as have most of the 'many' children she has borne. Rural Ethiopian women and children in particular spend much of their day hauling water from faraway rivers and water points for domestic and agricultural use resulting in economic stagnation, an increase in disease and a serious problem with school attendance.

When JICA helped to sink a simple 'shallow well' into the hillside, it changed the lives of Mrs. Shetu and the other 1,000 vil-



A new well brings new life to the village.

cluding large swathes of virtual desert or inaccessible mountains, poverty and poor infrastructure, millions of people don't have access to safe water supplies and agricultural progress has been hobbled.

Water, education, health, agricultural development and strengthening the country's socioeconomic infrastructure are major areas of JICA's assistance.

lagers in Kongo. For the equivalent of 1 Ethiopian birr per month (12 birr equal 1 American dollar) she can now draw 80 litres per day of water for her family.

That is a modest amount, the equivalent of some 15 litres per person which is the minimum daily requirement recognized by the U.N. But the water supply is clean and consistent.

"I do not have any disease now," Mrs. Jibo Shetu says. "And for the first time my family, my children also do not have disease."

Ethiopia is one of the oldest, poorest and most diverse nations in the world with at least 84 indigenous languages. The country has enjoyed impressive economic growth in the last few years, but its population has also doubled in two decades to more than 70 million people, absorbing much of that economic progress.

Ethiopia's potential water resources are among the most abundant in Africa, but because of geographical anomalies, in-

In the Oromia region of Ethiopia where Kongo village is located, the agency has helped sink more than 200 wells for village use. Experts and volunteers from the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (jocv) work with regional water authorities to provide equipment and train local personnel in such areas as planning and administration.

"I admire JICA's approach to the problem," says local water official Abraham Ashe. "Its project design is very good. It uses its own experts and consultants and



Japanese volunteers and experts teach water management and water engineering skills.

designs its programs for long-term sustainability" in contrast to other donors who offer development assistance mainly in the form of budgetary support.

The agency has undertaken similar projects in other parts of Ethiopia in recent years.

It has also helped establish the Ethiopian Water Technology Center Project in the capital, Addis Ababa, which has trained around 2,200 engineers with the help of Japanese experts.

According to course coordinator Endris Mohammed, this assistance has resulted in a remarkable success story. In 2006 according to the UN, only 42% of Ethiopia's population had access to safe water. This increased to 66.2% currently, he told visitors recently, and Ethiopia is on course to achieve virtual universal access by 2012.

FOOD AND EDUCATION

Along the floor of the Rift Valley around the shore of Lake Ziway, an experiment is underway to implement another key JICA aim by providing increased food security to poor farming families.

Water is channeled from the lake and with two water pumps provided by JICA, 19 local farmers including three women are now able to irrigate and intensively farm several hectares of land. After undergoing instruction in advanced crop production and marketing they are able to grow not only traditional crops such as maize and beans but also tomatoes, onions, peppers and other vegetables which they have begun selling as far away as neighboring Djibouti and hopefully, in the near future, Europe.

The benefits have been impressive. The farmers have purchased several additional pumps privately. They have built new homes and one now owns a hotel. "I used to send my kids to school, but only in the good times, after a good harvest," said one farmer, Balcha Bensa. "But if the rains are erratic and the crop bad, they used to drop out."

Poor school attendance because of such rural concerns is a problem plaguing the country's education system where the dropout rate often reaches 22%.

In the village of Edo Kontola, Japanese experts and local officials recently were trying to solve the problem.

Under the watchful eye of an instructor and two Japanese experts, local community leaders were invited to partici-

pate in a simple game involving instruction cards and a floor chart which highlighted the various problems and consequences of school dropouts. Participants drew various cards and then gathered around the floor chart amid giggles and cries of surprise.

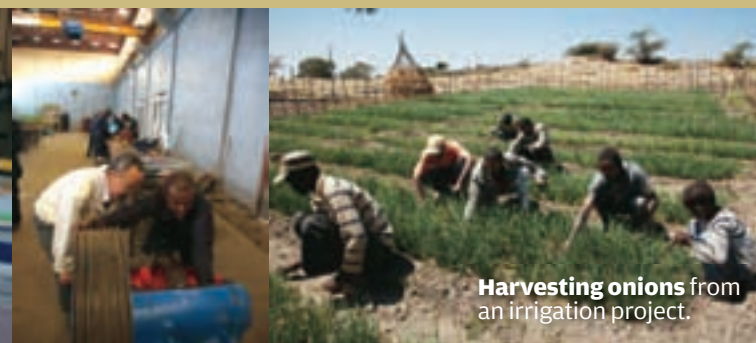
The village game is part of the Ho! ManaBU project involving JICA experts, government officials, teachers and administrators and, importantly, key community leaders across a wide area of central Ethiopia.

"Ho" means 'management' in the Oromo language. ManaBU means 'community based' local and also means 'to learn' in Japanese. In the first phase of the project launched several years ago, chief advisor Takashi Nobe said the aim was to bring 'affordable and sustainable education' particularly to areas of Ethiopia where many children had never attended school.

A basic and cheap design for schools was created. Then, as now, the full participation of local community leaders was sought to encourage their children to attend school, and also to take part in the administration and running of school centers themselves which was considered critical to the success of the whole scheme.

In this latest phase, the emphasis has been placed on three areas: improving girls' education, improving the overall school curriculum and tackling the still alarming dropout rate of students.

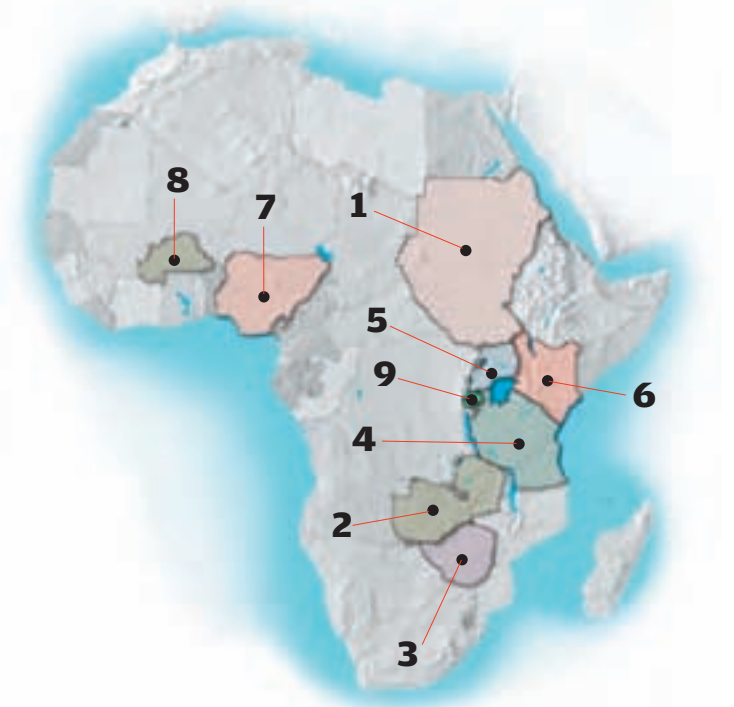
"We are making progress," said Nobe, who has been associated with the project since its inception. "But there is still lots and lots of work to do." ■



Harvesting onions from an irrigation project.

Around Africa

JICA provides technical assistance, yen loans and grants for major infrastructure projects, a multi-nation program to double Africa's rice production and other environmental and climate change programs and grassroots health, education and micro finance schemes.



1 | SUDAN

Helping Africa's Fastest Growing City



Rebuilding Juba

During decades of civil war southern Sudan's capital, Juba, became a ghost town. Today it is reputedly Africa's fastest growing city. After rehabilitating its Nile River port and its major hospital, JICA is now involved in a series of vocational training, water and health projects there.



Photo: Atsushi SHIBUYA/JICA

Science and Maths

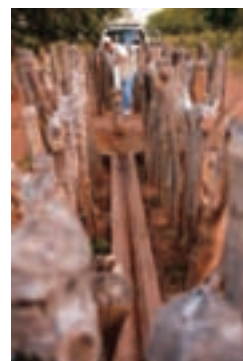
Thirty-three nations have joined a project known as SMASE to improve the curriculum and the skills of primary and secondary teachers in science and mathematics, subjects which are considered key to healthy economic growth.

2 | ZAMBIA

Safeguarding a Brighter Future

For centuries African females have spent many of their working hours lugging water over vast distances, leaving little time for anything else. Even then the water is often contaminated and the United Nations estimates that nearly 90% of all diseases are caused by unsafe water and inadequate sanitation.

A hand pump can alleviate many of those problems and bring both greater health safety and better economic prospects to a rural community.



New waterpumps greatly enhance village life.

When a pump breaks down the problem does not sound insurmountable, but in isolated communities it can quickly escalate.

A vicious circle may ensue. The pump breaks down. There are no village funds for spare parts or the nearest supplies are in distant towns. The community lacks the money to go to town and there are no repairmen near at hand. The community begins once more to collect water from nearby rivers or lakes. Disease returns and economic activity slows.

It may take weeks or even months to get the pump working again. Many are simply abandoned by communities

Zambia is already struggling to extend safe water in rural areas from the current 37% to 75% by 2015. Japan has helped drill an estimated 1,200 boreholes but Zambia cannot afford to see the modest gains already made jeopardized.

A current JICA project in six rural districts aims to short-circuit the deadly spiral by several simple expedients: helping to train local repairmen and district officials, providing toolkits and helping establish a supply chain of spare parts.

Some of the results have been impressive with the average 'downtime' reduced from 12 months to around three days, and lessons learned will now be extended to other districts.

One Billion

Africa's population recently topped one billion for the first time in history. The continental population will almost double by 2050.

1,000 Languages

Africa covers 20% of the world's landmass, the second largest of the earth's seven continents, and accounts for around 14% of the global population who speak more than 1,000 languages.

Least Industrialized

It is the world's least industrialized continent, but for the last several years many countries have enjoyed some of the highest economic growth rates, including the fastest spread of mobile phones in the world.

3 | ZAMBIA-ZIMBABWE

Breaking Border Bottlenecks

It is a problem travelers and businessmen face in Africa—"The Frontier Nightmare" of interminable customs, immigration and traffic logjams. The African Development Bank estimates such bottlenecks help make African transportation 2 ½ times more expensive than in Asia.

Japan has helped develop a concept known as the One Stop Border Post which aims to ensure that frontier crossings become faster and more efficient.

One such post was recently opened between Zambia and Zimbabwe at Chirundu where, earlier, Japanese grant aid had helped build a bridge over the Zambezi River and a new border post in Zambia. JICA subsequently helped train border officials in customs and immigration procedures and drew up common guidelines.

Frontiers also become the economic and social focal points of entire regions and Japanese volunteers are helping local communities in rural development programs.

Truck drivers helped spread HIV-AIDS across regions of Africa and JICA President Sadako Ogata has noted that "In order to prevent infection in surrounding communities, this project enhances awareness among drivers who tend to stay for extended periods in border areas."

4 | TANZANIA

Bitten by One Bug—Helping to Fight Another One

Nobuhiro Kadoi remembers an old African saying, "People who drink the water of Africa always come back to Africa." The 49-year-old from Kureha in Toyama Prefecture first went to Kenya as a JICA volunteer in 1983, teaching judo and self-defense and became enraptured by Africa's allure.

He subsequently obtained a master's degree in public health and has involved himself virtually ever since in helping to fight HIV-AIDS and other diseases, working first with a Japanese NGO in Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia and since 2008 as a chief JICA medical adviser in Tanzania.



5 | UGANDA

Helping to Double Africa's Rice Harvest

It is probably JICA's most ambitious agricultural program in Africa. Together with key growing countries and other organizations, the Coalition of African Rice Development, CARD, aims to double rice production to 28 million tons by 2018, enhancing continental food security.

A four-year project involving long-term and short-term Japanese experts helped draw up national guidelines, training materials, job aids and administrative materials to help improve voluntary counseling and testing services (vcts). A corps of trainers, who in turn teach other personnel, has been developed. A global fund, to which Japan is a major contributor, uses project materials in its own program.

Kadoi portrays his role as a kind of 'fixer' or the 'person who uses the glue to put all the pieces together.' "What is critically weak in Tanzania," he says, "is the linkage between all the pieces to pursue a common goal." In other words, making the various health sections of government, national, regional and local officials, donors and foreign experts all work together.

AIDS has ravaged Africa more than any other region, 1.4 million people dying in sub-Saharan Africa in 2008 and a further 1.9 million newly infected.

In Tanzania, the project is showing promising results. Infection among 15-49 year olds dropped from 7% to 5.7% but, "the most encouraging finding for me is that the percentage of people being tested has increased from 15% overall to 27% for males and 37% for women. Even more people will be tested in the coming few years, but AIDS is still a big burden for Tanzania."



Photo: Koji SATO/JICA

6 | KENYA

Mount Kenyan Silk

High up on the slopes of Mount Kenya mulberry bushes grow in profusion, which has enabled a group of local young people to launch an unusual project and beat the unemployment trap which devastates many of the country's rural communities.

Twelve men and women of the Kiamahuri Youth Group led by 31-year-old Wanjohi Wambugu have carved out a local success story in the last three years with a project in sericulture, the cultivation of silkworms and the resultant fine thread.

The project has been developed under a Japanese concept known as one-village, one-product. The idea is simple—by concentrating on specific local resources and skills, communities can produce marketable products and reduce poverty. OVO is now part of JICA's overall economic approach and has been officially embraced by governments across the continent.

The mulberry trees are central to the sericulture project. The leaves are a favorite food for the worms which form cocoons which are then harvested, cleaned and processed for sale as silk thread.

Wambugu studied sericulture at university and because of the abundance of the mulberry trees around their village of Kieni East on the slopes of Mount Kenya "it was an obvious thing to think about" when they formed their youth club three years ago. They leased four acres of land and are now looking to expand, even contemplating growing mulberry plants along river banks, both for their sericulture business and to help reduce erosion.

The group sells mulberry seedlings to farmers, charges consultancy fees for their expertise and small fees for university and secondary school visits. The group markets its products directly to dealers, eliminating the 'middleman.'

The youth group has a final message for Kenya's unemployed. "I tell them if they wait in the villages for the government to give them jobs in the big city, they will wait until God knows when," Wambugu said. "It would be advisable if the government could use employment creating groups and cottage industries such as ours to help the youth of this country."



A silk harvest

One Dollar Per Day

Around 41% of the world's poorest people are African, surviving on less than \$1 per day. Around 87% of the population live on around \$2 per day.

World's Poorest

According to the 2009 UN Human Development Index, 31 of the least developed countries in terms of literacy, life expectancy, education and standard of living are in Africa. Niger is the world's poorest nation.

Life Expectancy: 41

Life expectancy in Zambia is 41. The infant mortality rate in Mali is 129 per 1,000. The literacy rate among females in Niger is 14.2% but the fertility rate in that country is the highest in the world at 7.4 per child-bearing woman.

7 | NIGERIA

Reaching Out to Millions of Nigeria's Women

Nigeria is Africa's most populous nation with 250 ethnic groups among its 150 million people. In such a diverse nation women have enjoyed varying fortunes, occupying senior positions in cities such as Lagos, but being more restrained in conservative northern regions.

In 2007, JICA began a three-year project to help some of the country's most disenfranchised females. Women's development centers in the country's 774 local government regions had already become "redundant and dysfunctional."

A Japanese gender expert and visiting short-term officials worked with Nigeria's National Center for Women's Development training local officials and drawing up national guidelines to reactivate the centers, starting with a pilot project in northern Kano State.

The area is religiously and culturally conservative, its capital steeped in centuries of history. Rural communities rarely have electricity or running water though JICA has helped sink boreholes in some villages.

One of the first obstacles the project faced was that many women were allowed to attend the centers only at night because of Islamic religious restrictions. Through gentle advocacy that obstacle was overcome. Women were able to socialize with other married women outside their homes and for the first time began learning practical skills.

Construction has started on a US\$4 million women's development center in Kano city based on a Japanese model.

Desk officer Maimuna Sani, who took a training course in Japan during the project implementation, said "Women can now earn money through the various trades and skills they acquired and can support their families—buying books, paying school fees for their children, as well as buying medicine for ill family members."

A second phase project will now hopefully extend the success in Kano to other parts of Nigeria.



Learning new skills for the first time

Climate Impact

Africa has contributed less to climate change than any other region, but is expected to suffer perhaps the worst consequences because of a mixture of widespread poverty, drought, inequitable land distribution and overdependence on rain-fed agriculture.

AIDS Impact

Sub-Saharan Africa is the worst affected area for HIV-AIDS. In 2008, 1.4 million people in the region died from the disease and 1.9 million became newly infected. Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland exceed 20%. The figures continue to rise.



A lucrative harvest from the shea tree

8 | BURKINA FASO

An Unfair Burden on One of the World's Poorest Countries

When torrential storms lashed the Burkina Faso capital of Ouagadougou several months ago one foot of rain fell in 10 hours forcing 150,000 people to flee their homes.

Burkina Faso, the world's sixth poorest country according to the UN, is being whiplashed by climate change and environmental degradation. While seasonal rains become ever more unpredictable, desertification and drought creep inexorably across northern areas of the country.

The country's plight is symptomatic of many parts of Africa. While some problems are self-imposed—destruction of trees for firewood hastens desertification—it is also increasingly a victim of global climate change.

According to the UN, the average citizen here emits 0.1 tonnes of carbon dioxide every year. The Chinese emit 40 times and the Americans 200 times more per person.

Many African nations lack the technology and financial resources to tackle these impacts and the continent is set to become one of the major victims of any change. JICA is involved in an increasing number of climate change and environmental projects across Africa.

In Burkina Faso it has worked with the government since 2007 to preserve the country's dwindling trees. Villagers are educated on the importance of saving the forests and have been organized into Groupements de Gestion Forestiere (GGF), or forest management groups, to participate in income generating activities.

Timber, honey and fruits are harvested. A former JICA volunteer, Yuko Morishige, formed her own company to market shea butter from the local shea tree. The Japanese embassy founded an association which has helped female HIV-AIDS sufferers to build a soap factory to process the forestry products.

9 | RWANDA

Coming to Terms with History and Blindness

Disabled ex-combatants learn new skills and thousands are starting new lives.

Innocent Shurumuteto is a blind former Rwandan military combatant, but he has become a successful businessman. Jean Munyeragwe has recruited a team of mainly ex-combatants like himself and has also launched a welding business company.

Nearly one million people were killed in Rwanda's 1990s genocide, but once the killing stopped the country faced the task of patching together a deeply divided society, including thousands of disabled ex-combatants.

JICA has teamed with Rwanda's Demobilization and Reintegration Committee to help people like Innocent Shurumuteto and Jean Munyeragwe from both sides of



the conflict.

Today Shurumuteto is a member of a local agricultural cooperative tending 800 coffee trees. His true passion, however, is a small shoe-making business which he began with a JICA

starter kit which includes basic tools to suit each occupation. He now employs two assistants and his only problem now is that "we need more materials to meet market demand."

Jean Bosco Munyeragwe received eight months of skills training in the JICA program in addition to the tools of his trade. Five of his six other co-workers are former combatants like himself and he recently employed two new interns.

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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.

