

An exhibition booth on Africa at the  
Yokohama International Festa



# Citizen Participatory Cooperation

For supporting international cooperation led by citizens

## Spirit of sympathy and helping others, as a core of Japanese culture

Japanese ODA has been implemented through citizens with various specialties. The way they engage varies, such as onsite activities in developing countries as JICA experts or volunteers, as well as the reception of trainees from developing countries to numerous institutions in Japan, including local governments, universities, and private enterprises. In addition to this, international cooperation by Japanese NGOs has also gained high reputations and attentions within Japanese society over the recent period.

JICA currently makes various efforts to support the international cooperations activities led by citizens, as well as to raise awareness for international cooperation within Japanese society.

### To let people know the situation in developing countries: Development Education Enhancement Programs

JICA provides many programs to enhance development education with the purpose of “sharing knowledge and information” that was acquired in developing countries and “providing people with opportunities” to consider what they can do by themselves. Special emphasis is placed on introduction at school activities. One of the good examples is the International Cooperation Lectures, in which ex-volunteers visit school classrooms as lecturers. Another is “Essay Contest on International Cooperation” for Junior High School Students. In addition, JICA also provides chances to visit international cooperation sites overseas for teachers who are interested in practicing development education.

### Joint Implementation of International Cooperation Activities Overseas: JICA Partnership Programs

As the assistance needs of developing countries grow more diverse, the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) becomes wider with the perception of their comparative advantages such as grass-roots approach and humanitarian assistance. JICA partnership programs are conducted based on proposals from Japanese CSOs (NGOs, universities, local governments, public interest corporations, etc.) for the purpose of supporting local communities in developing countries.

## Support for Organizational Development of Japanese CSOs

As a support for Japanese CSOs, JICA has enhanced its NGO support programs since FY2007, such as the training for Project Cycle Management methodologies; the human resources development training for NGOs; and other programs that NGOs can consult advisors individually on technical skills or organizational management advisors.

### Domestic Offices as Bases of International Cooperation

JICA has 17 domestic branch offices nationwide, including JICA Global Plaza in the Hiroo area of Tokyo, to work to raise awareness for international cooperation in various regions. In addition, coordinators for international cooperation are assigned to each local government and serve as the local contacts regarding JICA programs. They hold events and seminars with the cooperation of communities and provide consultation about how to participate in international cooperation.

For instance, JICA Yokohama International Center conducted various efforts for increasing citizens’ awareness of Africa on the occasion of the fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV), which was held in Yokohama in May 2008. Notable collaborations were made between JICA Yokohama and other institutions, such as a photo exhibit on Africa through a partnership with the Olympus Corporation, and the production of a campaign water bottle “Hamakkodoshi for Africa”\* through a partnership with the Yokohama Waterworks Bureau. Many citizens appreciate these efforts, such as by saying, “I felt like I was directly contributing to TICAD and Africa, both of which I usually feel to be at a distance.”

In addition, upon the proposal of universities and local governments, JICA also receives Japanese-descended trainees to assist nation-building in 12 Central and South American countries, as well as international exchanges.

JICA hopes that these efforts let Japanese citizens feel that international cooperation is not someone else’s affair, and lead the spirit of international cooperation to be a part of Japan’s wonderful culture.

\*1 The campaign bottle (retail price ¥100~¥120) was sold for approximately three months, and 500,000 bottles were produced. A framework was in place where ¥1 from the sale of each bottle would be donated to the UN World Food Program or JICA. It was also used as the official drink of TICAD IV.