



A Senior Volunteer teaching doll making at a vocational training school in Bhutan



A Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer teaching agriculture during his placement in Malawi

Volunteer Program

Public participation in international cooperation highly regarded by recipient countries

Outline of Volunteer Program

JICA's volunteer programs are highly regarded by recipient countries as programs which closely approach and directly benefit communities. At the same time, while a severe environment for ODA budgets continues, public expectation and evaluation of the volunteer programs are rising as a core scheme of public participatory international cooperation.

Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV)

In response to requests from developing countries, the dispatch of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) Program promotes the activities of young people wishing to cooperate in the economic and social development of those countries. JOCVs generally stay in developing countries for two years, living and working with the local people while taking part in cooperative activities.

Cooperation is provided in seven fields: 1) agriculture, forestry and fisheries; 2) manufacturing; 3) maintenance and operation; 4) civil engineering and architecture; 5) health; 6) education and culture; and 7) sports. A wide range of around 120 occupations are involved in total and 1,482 volunteers were dispatched in FY2007. Since the program's inception in 1965, the number of dispatched volunteers surpassed 30,000 in June 2007, and has now reached a total of 31,371 volunteers dispatched to 82 countries.

Senior Volunteers

The Senior Volunteer Program is aimed specifically at middle-aged people who have a strong interest in cooperation activities in developing countries. Under this program, volunteers with extensive skills and plentiful professional experience between the ages of 40 and 69 are recruited. The recruits are then dispatched to developing countries in accordance with requests from the governments of those countries. The program can be described as a senior version of the JOCV Program.

Cooperation is provided in various sectors as of the JOCV Program. The number of dispatched volunteers has increased from 87 in FY1999 to 343 in FY2007 and a total of 3,373 volunteers have been dispatched to 60 countries since the program's inception.

Continuing efforts made in 2006 to provide the baby boomer generation with a way to stay active, in 2007, JICA explored requests and dispatched senior volunteers particularly in sectors related to economy and trade.

Japan Overseas Development Youth Volunteers and Senior Volunteers for Overseas Japanese Communities

Japan Overseas Development Youth Volunteers and Senior Volunteers for Overseas Japanese Communities Programs are dispatched in response to requests from Japanese immigrant communities in Latin America, in order to contribute to the development of those communities. Since the inception of the programs in 1985, 941 Youth Volunteers and 345 Senior Volunteers for Overseas Japanese Communities have been dispatched to 10 countries in total.

Recruitment and Selection

Volunteers are recruited twice a year, in spring and fall (volunteers for overseas Japanese communities are recruited once a year in the fall). JICA discloses the information about requests on its website and holds explanatory sessions throughout the country more than 500 times every year. The selection process consists of documentary screenings and interviews with regard to skills, health, and language proficiency.

In FY2007, 11,730 people attended the explanatory sessions of the JOCV Program and 1,298 out of 3,969 applicants were accepted. With respect to Senior Volunteers, 6,058 attended the explanatory sessions and 386 out of 1,390 applicants were accepted.

Pre-dispatch Training

Volunteers undergo training prior to dispatch. In FY2007, training for JOCVs and Senior Volunteers was integrated into a 65-day joint training for greater effectiveness and efficiency. In addition, part of the training for Japan Overseas Development Youth Volunteers and Senior Volunteers for Overseas Japanese Communities is being jointly conducted.

Language training for the language spoken in the target country is the heart of the training programs, and other components of the programs include the conceptual basis of international cooperation; cross-cultural understanding; the history and culture of the recipient country; health and hygiene; and safety management.