



A Bolivian Nikkei association formed by emigrants from Okinawa

Implementation System: Cooperation Modality

Support for Japanese Emigrants and Their Descendants

Focusing on Human Development and Welfare for the Aged

Background to Activities and Current Issues

Emigration to the Amazon region of Brazil in 1952 marked the restart of organized emigration from Japan in the post-World War II era. At present, it is estimated that there are more than 2.9 million Japanese emigrants and their descendants (*Nikkei*) living around the world, with the majority of emigrants and their descendants living in North, Central and South America. Japanese emigrants and *Nikkei* communities contribute in many fields in their chosen countries, including politics, business, education and culture. Their presence has also played a crucial role in building closer bilateral relationships between Japan and many of the countries in which *Nikkei* live.

Until now, JICA has operated programs to assist Japanese emigrants who have settled mainly in Central and South America since the end of World War II in line with the organized emigration plan promoted by the Japanese government. JICA has primarily focused on helping emigrants settle fully into their adopted countries, through programs such as emigrant loans (for the purchase of land and the capitalization of farming operations), settlement area support (land development and subdivision) and infrastructure development support (agricultural production, community facilities, medical care, hygiene, and education).

However, with the passage of time, circumstances for emigration have changed. The number of new emigration applicants has dwindled while *Nikkei* communities have matured encountering a generational transition. The first generation of emigrants is aging and many *Nikkei* communities are seeing much of their prime working age population leaving their home countries in search of employment opportunities. As a result, the weakening of such communities and the loss of a *Nikkei* identity have occurred as new problems. For *Nikkei* communities in Japan, such issues as non-participation in

medical insurance and pension programs are becoming serious. There is also the problem of education of *Nikkei* children, some of whom are not attending school owing to a lack of Japanese-language ability.

Main JICA Activities and Programs for Japanese Emigrants and Their Descendants

To address the issues facing Japanese emigrants and their descendants, JICA currently undertakes the following activities and programs.

Knowledge Dissemination

The Japanese Overseas Migration Museum opened in Yokohama in 2002 with the aim of promoting greater understanding among Japan's general public about the history of Japanese emigration and deeper knowledge of *Nikkei* communities and culture. The museum particularly wishes to provide such learning opportunities to Japan's younger generations, who will lead the future, through permanent exhibits and special exhibitions focusing on such topics as migration history and the current status of *Nikkei* communities. Moreover, the museum also provides information online.

Support for Emigrants Abroad

● Dissemination of Farm Management Practices

To improve farm management techniques, JICA dispatches agricultural experts from Brazil, conducts training programs in technically advanced farming regions of Brazil and provides practical training for agricultural cooperative staff members also in Brazil. In addition, JICA provides subsidies to foster agricultural study groups.

● Medical Care and Hygiene

JICA assists in the management of five *Nikkei* clinics at the colonial settlements in Paraguay and Bolivia, a hospital in Brazil's Amazonia region and a mobile clinic in Brazil. In Argentina, the Dominican Republic, Paraguay and Brazil—where there are substantial needs

among emigrant communities for welfare and medical services for the aged—JICA has strengthened its programs to assist such services by subsidizing related *Nikkei* organizations.

● Education and Culture

To enhance Japanese-language education among *Nikkei* communities, JICA undertakes a range of measures to assist the training and retention of local *Nikkei* Japanese-language teachers. These include joint training sessions for teachers, rewards for teachers, purchase of teaching materials, third-country training for local teachers mentioned below, and the Japanese language research program at the Brasil Japanese Center. The Pan-American joint training program for Japanese-language teachers held in São Paulo, Brazil, saw the participation of 28 teachers in fiscal 2008.

● Upgrading Facilities and Equipment

In fiscal 2008, JICA subsidized the purchase of medical equipment for two *Nikkei* clinics in Bolivia, and under the centenary commemorations for Japanese emigration to Brazil, JICA subsidized other projects (fitting out of the commemorative publications database system office and so on).

Educational Initiatives for the Children of Emigrants

● Educational Programs for Students of Japanese-Language Schools

For *Nikkei* children attending Japanese-language classes run by local *Nikkei* organizations in various countries throughout North, Central and South America, JICA offers a twice-yearly program to attend a public junior high school in Japan for a short period together with a homestay with a Japanese family. This program aims to provide students with the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of Japanese culture and society firsthand. In fiscal 2008, 49 students took part in this program.

● Scholarship for Japanese Immigrants and Their Descendants in Latin America

JICA offers back-up support to *Nikkei* students attending graduate school in Japan through a scholarship to help cover living expenses and tuition fees. In fiscal 2008, nine new recipients were selected for this program.

In addition, as a special initiative to support Japanese emigrants in the Dominican Republic, JICA once again held a short-term training program in Japan

in fiscal 2008 for young *Nikkei* leaders.

Support for *Nikkei* Communities

JICA dispatches Youth Volunteers and Senior Volunteers to *Nikkei* communities in Central and South America to assist with Japanese-language education, healthcare, welfare services for the development of those communities.

As a new assistance initiative in fiscal 2008, JICA established the Special Program for School Teachers (*Nikkei*) under which public-school teachers from Japan are dispatched to govern-

ment-accredited schools in countries in Central and South America. Six teachers who are expected to take part in the full two-year program in fiscal 2009 were dispatched to Brazil for a three-week short-term program during fiscal 2008.

*For details, please refer to page 136.

Business Loans

The JICA loan program for emigrants and *Nikkei* organizations was terminated in fiscal 2005.

Example

Centenary Commemorations for Japanese Emigration to Brazil (Japan-Brazil Exchange Year Activity)

History of 100 Years of Japanese Emigration to Brazil Introduced through a Photographic Exhibition and DVD

Japanese emigration to Brazil began in 1908, so in 2008, to mark this centenary, JICA held a photographic exhibition at its Japanese Overseas Migration Museum entitled "Japanese Emigrants to the New World," which introduced the history of this emigration. Subsequently, the exhibition went on tour to a total of 105 locations through-

out Japan, particularly focusing on such places as Toyota, Aichi Prefecture, and Hamamatsu, Shizuoka Prefecture, where there are large *Nikkei* communities.

As part of these commemorative activities, JICA also commissioned a documentary film for DVD release called *The Century of Children: Tracing the Boys and Girls Who Emigrated to Brazil*. This documentary follows the lives of people who emigrated to Brazil with their families between 1931 and 1936, when they were between 8 and 14 years old.



Example

Support for *Nikkei* Communities in Japan

Unemployed *Nikkeijin* (Descendants of Japanese Emigrants) Assigned as Support Staff to Provide Smooth Assistance at Consultation Offices for Foreign Nationals

In response to employment and educational issues faced by *Nikkei* communities in Japan, JICA expanded its existing program of Consultation Services for *Nikkeijin* Workers in Japan. Specifically, this included assigning unemployed *Nikkeijin* to 35 local public consultation offices for foreign nationals in Japan to ensure smooth assistance to *Nikkeijin* who visited those offices. This expanded

program was implemented from March through July 2009.

To deal with educational issues, JICA dispatched former Volunteers to assist with Japanese-language programs run by local government agencies, local international associations and NPOs. A dispatch was made to the Handa International Association in Handa, Aichi Prefecture, for six months starting March 2009. JICA is also supporting the activities of former Volunteers running such programs as Japanese-language courses to assist *Nikkeijin* in finding new employment, and Japanese-language courses and its supplementary lessons for children.

JICA will also provide facilities at no charge in its Chubu International Center for a teacher training program being planned by the Brazilian

government for the Brazilian teachers who work at Brazilian schools in Japan. This program assistance is scheduled to run for five years from June 2009.

Furthermore, JICA is running a program for *Nikkeijin* who are interested in working in the field of nursing care for the elderly, with 20 participants receiving a Japanese-language training, a welfare training at the vocational school and internships at care homes, over a period of approximately three months. When the participants return to their home countries, it is hoped that they will be better prepared for re-employment and will contribute to the enhancement of welfare services for the aged within *Nikkei* communities. This program runs from July through September 2009.