

Research

Establishment of the JICA Research Institute

The JICA Research Institute (JICA-RI) was established in October 2008 to strengthen research functions by leveraging JICA's experience and know-how as an aid-implementing agency. JICA-RI intends to make its presence known through the analysis of pressing issues in developing countries and by contributing to JICA's operation strategies, proactively sharing its research findings with partners in Japan and overseas, and making intellectual contributions to the international community.

Basic Principles of Research Activities and Key Research Domains

The international community has been grappling with the problems facing developing countries—including poverty, armed conflict and environmental degradation—but solutions to many of the most basic problems remain elusive. To promote research of added value aimed at producing policy recommendations, JICA-RI has laid down four basic policies and four key research areas, as listed below.

Basic Policies

(1) Incorporating a Comprehensive Perspective

JICA-RI will incorporate a comprehensive perspective in its cross-field research and analysis of development issues, encompassing individuals, society, the state and the market.

(2) Integrating Past and Future

JICA-RI will conduct studies based on the past experiences and analytic results of development aid organizations worldwide, including JICA, and make them available for use in future aid activities.

(3) Sharing Experiences in Japan and East Asia

JICA-RI will analyze the growth experiences of Japan and its East Asian neighbors and explore the applicability of these experiences to other regions.

(4) Sharing Information with the International Development Community

JICA-RI aims to be a research institute that is open to both Japanese and international partners, including researchers, aid-implementing organizations, governmental bodies, private-sector corporations and NGOs.

Key Research Domains

(1) Peace and Development

Armed conflict undermines human security and hinders socioeconomic development. JICA-RI conducts comparative analysis of past experiences to uncover ways to effectively prevent and manage armed conflict, and promote post-conflict peacebuilding. It also analyses past experiences in regional and international efforts to resolve difficult cross-border problems that cannot be handled by

individual countries, such as infectious diseases, transnational crime and environmental degradation.

(2) Growth and Poverty Reduction

Japan and its East Asian neighbors are considered economic development success stories, having realized growth and reduced poverty. JICA-RI studies these cases from the multifaceted perspectives of individuals, state, market and society, and conducts comparative analysis with economic development in African countries. By doing so, JICA-RI aims to identify lessons that can be shared in Asian and African experiences.

(3) Environment and Development/Climate Change

Regional and environmental deterioration are major threats to human security in developing countries. The impact of climate change is threatening the lives of people at a rate faster than expected in some regions. JICA-RI promotes the formulation of measures to promote environmental conservation and adapt to environmental change caused by climate change using the latest knowledge in natural sciences, and experience and data gained from JICA's field operations.

(4) Aid Strategies

JICA-RI investigates the effectiveness of aid approaches based on a body of knowledge and experience accumulated through over more than half a century of Japan's ODA activities. In particular, research takes into consideration the experiences and know-how of Japan, including the "capacity development" approach aimed at enhancing the capabilities of people, organizations and society across diverse domains, and concepts of "human security" and "inclusive and dynamic development."

In conducting research in these areas, JICA-RI places special emphasis on the following five priority themes: state-building of "fragile states"; African development and the Asian experience; response to climate change; analysis and improvement of aid effectiveness; and issues related to ASEAN integration.



Research Activities in Collaboration with Other Institutions around the World

An overview of these research projects can be found on the JICA-RI website* along with preliminary findings in the form of working papers. Fourteen working papers were released in fiscal 2009. Final research results are expected to be published as academic journal papers or in book form. JICA-RI also released a policy brief entitled “Toward Cross-border Higher Education and International Cooperation in an East Asian Community” in February 2010, summarizing policy implications from its research findings.

Research results are presented at various symposia, international seminars and academic meetings. Preliminary findings on research related to growth and poverty reduction in rural areas of East Africa were presented at the World Bank’s Annual Bank Conference on Development Economics (ABCDE) held in Korea in June 2009. In July of the same year, preliminary findings on research related to the impact of the financial crisis on Africa and land issues in Africa were presented at an African Task Force Meeting run by the Columbia University-based organization Initiative for Policy Dialogue (IPD) that was held in South Africa.

In January 2010, JICA-RI held the second workshop on Ethnic Diversity and Economic Stability in Africa, a joint research project with Kobe University. The event was held at Yale University in the United States (the first workshop was held at Kobe University in July 2009).

JICA-RI emphasizes network-oriented research based on partnerships with internal and external research organizations and development assistance agencies. Joint research was conducted with such international institutes as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Columbia University in the United States, Oxford University and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in the United Kingdom, and the ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN ISIS).

* <http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/ja/index.html> (JP)
<http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp/index.html> (EN)

Japan-German Symposium on Development Cooperation — Discussion on State-Building of Southeast Asia and Afghanistan

JICA-RI held a symposium entitled “Challenges of State-building in Asia” in November 2009. JICA and two German organizations, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and the Japanese-German Center Berlin, sponsored the event that focused on the two countries’ roles in the state-building of Southeast Asia and Afghanistan, and explored ways toward more effective international cooperation. Over 200 academics, politicians and development practitioners took part in the symposium.

In the symposium’s keynote speech, JICA President Sadako Ogata highlighted a need for greater international cooperation among nations to tackle increasing global issues in a time of unprecedented crisis. Due to differences among countries and backgrounds, Ogata pointed out that no one model of state-building can satisfy all.

Presenting a conceptual framework for successful state-building, Keiichi Tsunekawa, Director of JICA-RI, stated that two things are involved: A country’s institutions must properly function through well-trained, capable management in order to deliver basic security and social services, and arbitrate the interests of the people. The other condition for state-building is state legitimacy, Tsunekawa said,

which is built on the satisfaction of people’s context-specific aspirations along with their basic needs. Politically, East Asia’s state-building has progressed relatively smoothly compared with other parts of the world. The Director pointed out that other lessons East Asia has to offer stem from its economic and social history. He cited the advancement in small farmer-based agriculture, suitable management of industrial and trade policies and the effective use of external aid.

Thereafter, participants from Indonesia, Cambodia and Afghanistan as well as representatives of international organizations gave speeches on challenges to state-building in each country. The debate focused on the roles of Germany, Japan and the international community in the state-building of Asia.



JICA President Sadako Ogata



JICA Research Institute Director Keiichi Tsunekawa