

Citizen Participatory Cooperation

Making International Cooperation Part of the Japanese Culture

Understanding Development Countries in Their Current State and Development Issues

One of the distinct features of Japanese ODA is the large number of opportunities Japanese citizens have to become directly involved in international cooperation activities. Japan's history of ODA support includes citizens with specialist knowledge participating as volunteers or specialists in programs in developing countries. Local governments, universities and the private sector also play an important role by accepting and training technicians and students from developing countries in Japan, while NGOs, each guided by their independent visions and goals, also participate in international cooperation programs.

Meanwhile, JICA implements a variety of initiatives to support international cooperation by Japanese citizens as well as to promote a deeper understanding and interest in international cooperation in Japan.

Using Japan's Domestic Offices as International Hubs

JICA has 17 domestic offices throughout Japan. Beginning with the Tokyo-based Hiroo office called JICA Global Plaza, these offices are undertaking activities focused on raising awareness of international cooperation in various regions throughout Japan. Additionally, JICA's international cooperation promotion officers at International Association offices in each prefecture act as liaisons linking JICA with local communities and hold events and seminars and provide consultation on international cooperation.

In June 2009, JICA Chubu opened the Nagoya Global Plaza, where persons with experience in overseas cooperation serve as "Global Concierges" and lead visitors at exhibitions that encourage "seeing," "listening" and "touching." Through these exhibitions,



Students visiting the Global Plaza and a "Global Concierge"



Global Festa Japan



World Collaboration Festival (Held annually by JICA Chubu in collaboration with local NGOs)

citizens can experience actual conditions in developing countries and become aware of global-scale issues faced by people in those regions of the world.

JICA's Global Plazas feature on-site cafés that allow visitors to sample ethnic cuisines and also sell Fairtrade commodities. In addition, these plazas make available spaces that are ideal for holding seminars and meetings. These areas can also serve as venues for citizen-led international cooperation activities as well as presentations on the results of such activities.

JICA will strengthen its activities so that international cooperation will come to be regarded by Japanese citizens as commonplace as well as an outstanding characteristic of Japanese culture.

JICA Chubu Fairtrade College 2009

In the run-up to the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP10) biodiversity conference convened in Nagoya in autumn 2010, there were active movements by regular citizen's groups, centering on college students, to register the city of Nagoya as a Fairtrade town that promotes environment- and people-friendly fair trade.

To promote interest and participation in international cooperation through Fairtrade, JICA Chubu collaborated with local citizen's groups and college students and held the JICA Chubu Fairtrade College 2009, a series of courses, from October 2009 to February 2010. These courses ranged from introductory seminars for novices to Fairtrade fashion shows and talk shows, and all courses were enthusiastically received. The events were covered by numerous media and the number of participants exceeded 500.

JICA received various opinions from visitors who attended the event. One participant remarked, "I was able to become familiar with international cooperation through Fairtrade, and I would like to do whatever I can in the future." JICA will promote initiatives directed at a wide range of public segments to provide opportunities that will enable people to recognize that global-scale issues are also their own issues and prompt them to take action.

Programs for Supporting Development Education

JICA implements development education programs with the aims of “sharing knowledge” obtained in developing countries and to “provide opportunities for people to consider” what they can do themselves. JICA is especially focusing these efforts on schools through programs that include the “International Cooperation Lectures,” (held approximately 2,000 times per year), under which former volunteers visit classrooms as lecturers. We also hold the “Essay Contest on International Cooperation for Junior and Senior High School Students” (approximately 70,000 essays submitted), which is an essay competition on international cooperation.

Additionally, JICA implements the “Development Education Study Tour for Teachers Program” and “Development Education Instructor Training” for teachers interested in development education and also provides teachers with opportunities to visit overseas international cooperation sites.

International Cooperation Lectures

This on-demand course is held once a week at Akita Commercial High School in Akita city. During these courses, ex-volunteers talk directly to students about their experiences in JICA's international cooperation programs. Students take the lead in carrying out such activities as sending goods to developing countries as well as publishing books on international cooperation. This course earned the “Award for Encouraging Education for International Understanding” from the Japan Education Exchange-Baba Foundation and is also attracting attention from within and outside Akita Prefecture.



Essay Contest on International Cooperation for Junior and Senior High School Students

Starting from learning about linkages with developing countries—Award-winning essay on the impressions of a first-year high school student who participated in a study tour of Malaysia (excerpt)

“Although there were fewer conveniences than in my normal life, I was deeply impressed by the abundance of nature. However, when thinking that the destruction of nature is continuing, I asked myself what really is true abundance. I feel that making my best efforts to convey and protect the spiritual richness that I learned from the local people is a way of expressing my gratitude to them. During my visit to Son School, the language barrier that I had worried about so much disappeared thanks to the smiles of the students. I believe that if you have the desire to try to understand and accept another person, the door to your heart will open. I regard my recent study tour as an irreplaceable asset that made me look closely at myself and taught me about what I should do in the future. It is through such exchanges that a person is able to see what they must do in the future. Being able to take that first step toward the future from here gives me great happiness and is also a source of pride.”

Experiences like these will nurture people who will play active roles as JOCV members and JICA employees.



Development Education Study Tour for Teachers Program

Spreading Overseas Cooperation Activities Spurred by a training visit to Malawi by teachers from Yoshiwara Commercial High School in Fuji city, students sell folk art created by Malawi children as Fairtrade goods at the Yoshiwara Commercial High School Challenge shop, which is operated jointly by the school



Malawi children create bead accessories

and a local NGO. The proceeds are used for establishing HIV testing facilities in Malawi, thereby contributing to the prevention and early discovery of HIV.

In addition, JICA is developing other initiatives in various regions that include implementing education for international understanding during time allocated for general studies, creating teaching materials and starting up networks for teachers.

Development Education Instructor Training

Helping Solve Regional Issues

Kanagawa Prefecture is home to 60% of all Cambodians living in Japan. This training involves promoting interchanges among schools, with focus on teachers at schools attended by Cambodian pupils, beginning with schools with classes that address the issue of the regional problem of multi-cultural co-existence. Also, teacher and JICA networks with Cambodians residing in Japan as well as Cambodian support organizations have also been built.

There are numerous teachers who have been dispatched as JOCV members utilizing their experience in this training as well as the special training system for current teachers.



Instructor training (Yokohama)



Practical class after training