

Research

The JICA Research Institute Aiming to Provide Feedback on Development Work and Input into the World's Development Agendas



Of the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), relevant goals are shown in color.

The JICA Research Institute (JICA-RI) carries out research activities with the main objectives of “conducting analysis of development issues in developing countries and contributing to JICA’s operation strategies” and “strengthening the

transmission of information to Japan and abroad and leading the development assistance agendas,” while utilizing the wealth of experience and know-how it has accumulated as a development assistance organization.

The results obtained from these research activities are published in the form of working papers, policy briefs, books, and other publications, and are released broadly through websites and other means.

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 value-added research 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

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.

3. Environment and Development/Climate Change

Regional and environmental deterioration are major threats to human security in developing countries. 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. Assistance Strategies

While utilizing Japan’s experience and knowledge, JICA-RI makes recommendations on the roles and functions of international cooperation by conducting research on the modalities of assistance based on principles such as the “capacity development” approach aimed at enhancing the capabilities of people, organizations and society across diverse domains, and the concepts of “human security” and “inclusive and dynamic development” (dynamic development that benefits all people).

Within these four research areas, JICA-RI places particular emphasis on the following five priority themes: responding to fragile states including conflict-affected countries, African development and the Asian experience, responding to climate change, analysis and improvement of aid effectiveness, and issues related to the integration of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

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 2010.

These working papers are released broadly in the form of

English language papers to those involved in development assistance throughout the world.

Policy briefs are also published in series, which summarize the political and practical implications drawn from the research findings detailed in the working papers in a concise manner. These policy briefs are intended to offer suggestions for the formulation of actual policies and the consideration of the directions of assistance.

JICA-RI actively presents these research findings at international research and academic meetings and other fora. In fiscal 2010, JICA provided a background paper to the World Development Report, which is published each year by the World Bank. At the Workshop on the Evolving Global Aid Architecture held in Seoul, Republic of Korea in November 2010 with a view to the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) High Level Forum to be held in Busan in 2011, JICA-RI made presentations on capacity development and South-South cooperation based on its research findings.

In February 2011, JICA-RI co-hosted a workshop in Thailand that also served as a forum to report the findings of a research project titled "Analysis of Cross-Border Higher Education for

Regional Integration and Labor Market in East Asia," jointly with the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) and the SEAMEO Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO RIHED). JICA-RI has also presented its research findings at other symposia and seminars.

In conducting these research activities, JICA-RI attaches importance to network-oriented research based on partnerships with not only local but also international research organizations and assistance agencies. JICA-RI carries out joint research with the researchers of overseas institutions, such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Harvard University in the United States, Oxford University in the United Kingdom, and the ASEAN Institutes of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN ISIS).

In addition to disseminating such information internationally, JICA-RI has also carried out research for the Project History Series, which analyzes Japan's contribution to the development of developing countries from a long-term perspective, and published the research findings in three volumes in Japanese.

*JICA Research Institute website: <http://jica-ri.jica.go.jp>

Case Study

JICA-World Bank Forum

Discussion on Globalization and a New Direction for Development Assistance

An international forum (co-hosted by JICA and the World Bank, supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan) was held at JICA-RI on April 2, 2010 to explore how the world has been changing through globalization and how the direction and roles of development assistance have shifted accordingly.

In the first part of the forum, then Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan Chinami Nishimura commenced the event with an opening remark. Then, Former Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea Han Seung-Soo, ASEAN Secretary-General Surin Pitsuwan, Senior Vice President and Chief Economist of the World Bank Justin Lin, entrepreneur Nobuyuki Idei, and JICA President Sadako Ogata, who served as panelists, stated their opinions on the increasing interdependence of nations and the benefits of regional integration (the titles of the panelists are from the time of the forum).

Through the discussion by the panelists, the following recognition was reconfirmed: "The largest issue in development is the insufficient capacity development of the developing

countries themselves. In conjunction with economic development, it is essential for developing countries to enhance the capabilities they need in order to achieve the MDGs. This is where the role of ODA comes in."

In the last part of the forum, with the attendance of Co-Director of the World Development Report (WDR) Sarah Cliffe and others, a workshop was held to contribute to the World Development Report 2011, themed on issues such as state fragility and armed conflicts. The first half of the workshop focused on threats that transcend borders and regional initiatives, and discussion was held on issues such as how regional integration has progressed in the recent global situation.

During the second half of the workshop, opinions were exchanged on issues such as national capacity building, stability, political leadership, and the differences between international standards and norms and regional standards and norms. Based on the discussions held during the workshop, then Director of JICA-RI Keiichi Tsunekawa pointed out that tolerance of antigovernment forces, modalities of economic competition, and secular national identities were among the socio-political characteristics of East Asia that have led the region to its current, relatively stable situation. He concluded that consideration should also be given to how political and economic reforms are carried forward.

From left to right: NHK commentator Aiko Doden serving as the chair, JICA President Sadako Ogata, and former Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea Han Seung-Soo.

