

# Japan Centers — Business Professional Development in Countries Transitioning to a Market Economy

## Centers Established in Eight Countries from 2000

The Japan Centers for Human Resources Development (“Japan Centers”) were established as bases for business professional development in countries transitioning to a market economy, mainly in the nations in the Indochina region and Central Asia. The first Japan Centers were established in Viet Nam (Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City) and Laos in September 2000, and this network was subsequently expanded with the opening of additional centers in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Mongolia, the Kyrgyz Republic, Cambodia and Ukraine. Presently there are a total of nine centers in operation in eight countries. (Note: Although the projects in Ukraine and Kazakhstan have ended, the Japan Centers will continue to be operated by these countries.)

## Supporting the Development of Business Professionals

Under the Business Programs provided primarily by the Japan Centers, training has been conducted for over 88,000 people to date, making a significant contribution to the development of business professionals. Primarily targeting proprietors of small and medium-sized businesses, managers, as well as entrepreneurs, the program provides practical training covering business management and skills, including Japanese-style management, as well as on-site diagnostics and consultation and other skills. This program has earned high acclaim from local companies and business communities. Some people who have completed this training have become executives who achieved significant growth of a business and others have become entrepreneurs who used the training to create business plans for launching new businesses. In recent years, alumni and other associations organized in some countries by graduates of Japan Center business programs

have been conducting many activities that are creating networks of local business professionals.

## Collaboration with Japanese Companies and Other Organizations

Japan Centers are often located in countries like Vietnam and Cambodia where many Japanese companies have business operations. By using the Business Program know-how and networks acquired over many years of activities, Japan Centers are conducting activities for assisting Japanese companies and collaborating with these companies.

An increasing number of Japanese companies are sending their local employees to attend the Business Programs of Japan Centers. Companies want these people to study the culture and customs of Japanese business activities and gain a basic knowledge of Japanese-style management and business practices.

Studying the Japanese language and culture also helps facilitate sound communications within a company. Many Japan Centers offer Japanese language classes in conjunction with the Japan Foundation. In recent years, there has been an increase in demand among Japanese companies to hire people who understand Japanese and to give workers enough knowledge of the Japanese language to improve their job performance. In response, some Japan Centers conduct courses for local employees that are customized to meet these needs.

JICA is also providing cooperation with the goal of making Japan Centers well utilized by Japanese companies as well as universities, other companies, NGOs, government agencies, local governments and other organizations and enabling Japan Centers to serve as platforms for cooperation and interaction between Japan and partner countries.

### Case Study

## Vietnam-Japan Human Resource Cooperation Center

### Keiejuku (A Management School) to Train the Future Business Leaders in Vietnam Industry

The Keiejuku (Management School) is one of the Business Programs of the Japan Center in Vietnam. Started in 2009, the school holds a program for about 20 young company owners and other businesspeople in Vietnam. Classes are held for one week every month over a 10-month period. Students study management strategy, marketing strategy, production management, human resource development and other subjects. In addition to the lectures, the Keiejuku includes a practical program that includes group research and discussions, presentations, and other activities. By providing a structured

course about Japanese-style management and *monozukuri* (manufacturing), the Keiejuku aims to provide participants with knowledge that will allow them to become the future business leaders in Vietnam industry.

Keiejuku Club consisting mainly of graduates of the program has been established to create a network for communications among these people. The club has relationships with economic associations in Japan, participates in business discussions with Japanese companies in Vietnam, and takes part in other activities aimed at promoting business network

between Vietnam and Japan. In addition, there are expectations for members of the Keiejuku Club, who have a good understanding of how Japanese companies are managed, to become business partners for Japanese companies in Vietnam.



The opening ceremony for the third class of the Keiejuku