

Volunteer Programs

— “Work to Change the World, and Yourself” International Cooperation Led by Citizens

JICA's volunteer programs support activities by citizens who wish to cooperate in the economic and social development as well as the reconstruction of developing countries. The volunteer programs are widely recognized as representative programs of Japan's international cooperation and are highly praised by partner countries. Furthermore, upon their return to Japan, the volunteers, having developed a global perspective, are expected to be a valuable presence in Japanese society.

Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs)

In principle, JOCVs are assigned to developing countries for a period of two years. As summarized by the phrase “together

with the local community,” JOCVs live and work together with the communities in the country to which they were sent, speak the same language of the community and carry out activities with an emphasis on raising self-reliant efforts while fostering mutual understanding.

Recruitment campaigns target people between the ages of 20 and 39, with the areas of cooperation spanning nine sectors and a diverse range of about 200 sub-sectors, including planning and administration, commerce and tourism, public and non-profitable utilities, human resources, agriculture, forestry and fisheries, health and medical care, industrial production, social welfare, and energy. In fiscal 2012, a total of 948 people

Case Study Partnerships with Universities in Volunteer Program

Supporting Small-scale Dairy Farmers in Paraguay in Cooperation with Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine

JICA and Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine signed an Obihiro - JICA Volunteer Team Partnership Program Memorandum of Understanding in August 2011, which embarked upon the challenge of providing a six-year program of support from fiscal 2012 involving dispatching students and graduates from the university as JOCV to Paraguay to improve the quality of dairy farming technology and strengthen community development. The partnership with the university in this volunteer program is an attempt that should be beneficial both to JICA, in order to fulfill its aim of continuing to despatch human resources equipped with the specialist skills to be able to make a contribution to the development of developing nations, and to the university concerning its efforts to nurture and train global human resources. Partnerships like this between universities and JICA are under way at many universities in addition to Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine, including Hiroshima University, Tokyo University, and Takushoku University.

The partnership program between Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine and the JICA Volunteer Team Program has its basis in a cooperative partnership between the university and JICA domestic offices stretching back over many years. Moreover, the program started with the dispatch of a group of volunteers for strengthening small dairy farmers in the department of Itapua in response to a request from related bodies in Paraguay for self-reliance support for small-scale dairy farmers.

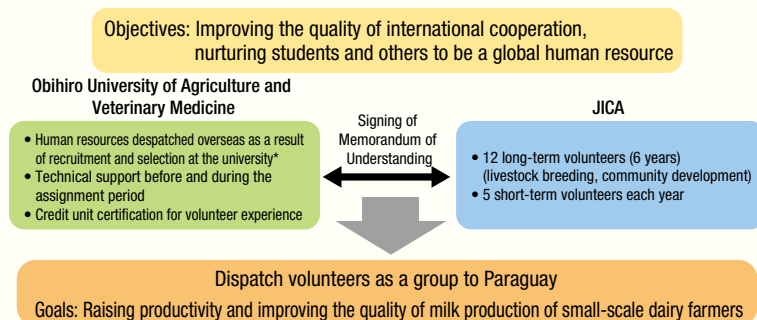
This project aims to raise productivity and improve the quality of the milk production of small-scale dairy farmers. The plan is to despatch 12 long-term team members and 30 short-term team members on assignment over the course of the six-year term of the

program. The long-term team members will be responsible for inspecting local bases, making visits and providing guidance to individual farmers, and strengthening the nurturing of agricultural cooperation, etc. The short-term team members are to supplement the activities of the long-term team members by traveling to the three cities involved in the project to gather and analyze data, and carry out monitoring and other activities.

Moreover, the university is backing up the members of the team with the support of the whole university and is proactively striving (through the introduction of a system of credit unit certification and other measures) to create an environment that makes it easy for students to participate in volunteer teams. This is done

by fostering a supportive academic background by the addition of Spanish as a second foreign language and establishing a Support Committee within the university to supply technical support to team members.

By providing support on an organization-wide basis for students with the skills and drive required to participate, JICA creates a forum for activity that not only makes it possible for the partnership to be of a very high quality thanks to the effectiveness of the coordination involved, but also to ensure that global human resources are nurtured through these volunteer activities. Furthermore, there are great expectations for the contributions that returned volunteers from the program are likely to make to Japanese society after their return.



*JICA assesses the suitability of candidates to be volunteers through its normal selection procedure.



Short-term team volunteer collecting data about the nutritional status of livestock (Paraguay/livestock breeding). Local residents and long-term volunteers share their results to compile reports and submit them to individual farms.

were sent overseas, with a cumulative total of 37,899 people dispatched to 88 countries since the program was inaugurated in 1965.

Senior Volunteers

Recruitment targets people between the ages of 40 and 69. In recent years, there has been an increase in applications from retirees seeking to spend their “second life” in a more meaningful way.

Areas of cooperation span nine different sectors including agriculture, forestry and fisheries, energy, health and medical care, and human resources (education, culture, sports, etc.). In fiscal 2012, 264 people were sent overseas. To date, a total of 5,138 people have been dispatched to 71 countries. Volunteers for Japanese Communities Overseas and Senior Volunteers for Japanese Communities Overseas, too, are dispatched to contribute to the development of Nikkei communities in Latin America, and short-term volunteers are dispatched for periods of less than one year.



JOCV (Youth Activities) in action at a school for the deaf in the Dominican Republic. Day in and day out they are kept busy with the challenge of coming up with solutions to provide support to deaf children and students.

Support for Returned Volunteers

There are high expectations for returned volunteers as human resources who welcome diverse cultures and societies, who are open to dialogue, and who take action in a variety of settings, including community, government, educational and corporate activities in Japan. Based on information that was confirmed as of April 1, 2013, the number of local government authorities and boards of education that have special employment quotas for returned volunteers has increased to 54.

Hence, JICA has support systems in place to allow volunteers to make use of their experiences in their assigned countries upon their return to Japanese society. Moreover, many returned volunteers take initiatives to address various issues faced by Japanese society, including the implementation of child-rearing support and the revitalization of Japanese communities. JICA will be publicizing its volunteer programs as programs which not only contribute to the development of developing countries but as programs that also serve to “energize Japan.”



Senior Volunteer attached to the Plant Pathology Division, Nepal Agriculture Research Council (mushroom cultivation). They are engaged in technical research into the cultivation of shiitake mushrooms with the aim of assisting local farmers and mushroom producers.

Case Study Volunteer Project in Sports

International Baseball Federation (IBAF) Honors JICA Volunteers with Special Award in Recognition of Their Meritorious Achievements

In recognition of the extraordinary contribution JICA has made in helping promote baseball and softball on global basis over the years, the IBAF presented a Special Award to the JICA at its Congress in Tokyo on April 14, 2013. Since 1970, JICA has dispatched a total of 278 volunteers in baseball and softball to some 36 countries world worldwide. As of March 31 2013, there were 13 volunteers on active duty in these two sports.

After receiving the plaque, JICA Vice President Tsuneo Kurokawa reported on recent achievements. “11 years ago, our cooperation in Sri Lanka started with only two baseballs and one bat. In 2009, they won their first international championship medal. In 2012, their first ever baseball stadium was built in collaboration with Japan, starting a new chapter for Sri Lanka baseball. Five years ago in Burkina Faso, a young boy had never touched a baseball in his life. This summer, he will be joining one of Japan’s amateur baseball team as a trainee.” He went on to express his gratitude to all the people that have supported the program by saying, “these successes are the result not just of the efforts of JICA volunteers but of coaches and players from countries all around the world,

and of the enormous support we have received from the IBAF. I pledge that JICA will maintain its commitment to making continued efforts for the betterment of the world through the promotion of sports such as baseball and softball.”

In presenting the award on this occasion, Ishola Williams (Nigeria), IBAF Continental Vice President representing Africa, praised the activities of JICA volunteers in Africa. “JICA volunteers have contributed greatly to baseball and softball in all the countries of Africa. Without them, it is impossible to imagine how baseball and softball could ever have developed in many African countries. Thanks to their activities, the people of Africa call the young people of Japan ‘friends of Africa’ and they feel extraordinary affection for them.”

This prize brings even greater luster to the sparkling achievements of JICA volunteers in supporting global baseball and softball over for so many years. JICA hopes that the “catch ball between heart and heart” will continue to spread ever wider in the years to come through the efforts of JICA volunteers.



With the captain in the center, JOCV as a coach and the team talk about the aim of achieving unity of purpose – it’s not just the baseball skill that counts but cherishing growth in the spirit through baseball. (Burkina Faso)