

# Support for Japanese Emigrants and Their Descendants

— Focusing on Human Resource Development and Elderly Welfare

## Evolving Issues and Challenges Weighing on *Nikkei* Communities and Japanese Emigrants

There are currently more than 2.9 million Japanese emigrants and their descendants (*Nikkei*) living around the world, with the majority living in North, Central and South America and the Caribbean. Japanese emigrants and *Nikkei* communities make important contributions in many fields in each country, including politics, business, education and culture. Their presence plays a key role as an intermediary between Japan and the countries where *Nikkei* reside.

JICA has assisted Japanese emigrants who have settled in Central, South America, and the Caribbean in line with the Japanese emigration policy since the early 1950's.

The characteristics of Japanese emigrants have changed along with the maturing and the generational transition of *Nikkei* communities. The first generation of emigrants is aging and many *Nikkei* communities are encountering a situation where the working age population is leaving the community, thus increasing social and economic vulnerability. Such communities also face issues involving the loss of their *Nikkei* identity, which originates from a shared heritage, history and upbringing. The *Nikkei* communities in Japan that consist of migrant workers

from the *Nikkei* settlements of Latin American and the Caribbean also face educational issues such as truancy among *Nikkei* children due to a lack of Japanese language proficiency.

## Main JICA Programs and Activities for Japanese Emigrants and *Nikkei*

To support the Japanese emigrants and *Nikkei* confronting these issues, JICA undertakes the following activities and programs.

### 1. Knowledge Dissemination

The Japanese Overseas Migration Museum, which opened in Yokohama in 2002, aims to provide information about the history of Japanese emigration to the public in general, especially for the younger generations who are prospective leaders of Japan and their respective countries. It also provides opportunities to become acquainted or re-engaged with the emigrants and *Nikkei*. The museum consists of permanent exhibits and special exhibitions featuring the overseas migration history and the present situation of *Nikkei* communities. The museum also provides information on its website.

### 2. Support for Emigrants Abroad

#### 1) Medical Care and Hygiene

## Case Study

## Strengthening Partnerships with Japanese Emigrants and Their Descendants in Latin America and the Caribbean

### Strengthening Public-Private Partnerships with *Nikkei* Communities in Latin America through the First Partnership Promotion Survey in Latin America

The Planning and Migration Affairs Division of the Latin America and Caribbean Department conducted the Partnership Promotion Survey in *Nikkei* Communities (First Partnership Promotion Survey in Latin America) in Brazil and Paraguay from February 25 to March 9, 2013.

This survey aimed to promote the formation of projects that strengthen partnerships between Japanese private companies and private companies managed by *Nikkei* which will contribute to the development of economies and societies in Latin America.

To encourage applications to the Survey, JICA Okinawa and JICA Yokohama (both organizations with historical affiliation to *Nikkei*) hosted the Seminar on Private Sector Partnership Promotion in Latin America, in close cooperation with Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO).

Many local companies participated in the Seminars and showed a strong interest in Latin America, particularly Brazil which is experiencing economic growth as one of the four BRIC major emerging national economies. A total of 13 companies and organizations participated in the survey from a total of

approximately 60 applicants from Japan.

The survey included study visits to local Japanese companies, discussions and visits with *Nikkei* representatives and local companies, as well as discussions with government agencies. In Brazil, Japan-Brazil Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Parana State (Câmara do Comércio e Indústria Brasil Japão do Paraná) hosted meetings to exchange opinions with local companies. The group of entrepreneurs, Seiwajuku School do Brasil, and the Chamber of Commerce and Japanese Industry in Brazil, Câmara de Comércio e Indústria Japonesa do Brasil, shared information on economic conditions in the region and provided the keys for success in dealing with corporate management. In Paraguay, *Nikkei* agricultural cooperatives and representatives of companies in the settlements of Iguazu, along with the Chamber of Commerce and Japanese Industry in Paraguay (Câmara de Comercio e Industria Japonesa del Paraguay) sponsored a social gathering to provide explanations of the advantages of Paraguay which provide a production base for Brazilian markets. Several of the companies participating in the survey

agreed with the opinion that *Nikkei* societies would be a strong candidate as business partners.

As a result, many of the participating companies became acquainted with Latin America and deepened their understanding of the region. Some of the participating companies have already applied for Public-Private Partnership Cooperation with JICA. Moreover, several participants began business negotiations with the *Nikkei* representatives they met during the survey.



Participants of the survey listening to an explanation by Consultant/Adviser, Mr. Hirasaki (right) at Brazilian *Nikkei* company Sansuy

JICA assists in the management of five *Nikkei* clinics at settlements in Paraguay, Bolivia and Brazil. JICA also supports traveling clinics for settlements in Brazil. Furthermore, JICA assists programs involving health insurance, nursing care, medical examinations and day care services with a high demand for elderly welfare and medical services in countries such as the Dominican Republic, Brazil and Bolivia.

## 2) Education and Culture

To enhance Japanese-language heritage education among *Nikkei* communities, JICA assists joint training sessions for local *Nikkei* Japanese-language teachers, as well as third-country training for local Japanese-language teachers and research on Japanese-language heritage education which are conducted by the Brasil Japanese Center in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

## 3) Upgrading Facilities and Equipment

In fiscal 2012, JICA provided funds for a basic study concerning regional development programs in *Nikkei* settlements of Paraguay.

## 3. Educational Initiatives for the Children of Emigrants

### 1) Education Program for Next Generation *Nikkei* (previously called Educational Programs for Students of Japanese-Language Schools)

JICA organizes the one-month program targeting *Nikkei* children aged 12 to 15 attending Japanese-language classes run by local *Nikkei* organizations and provides a firsthand opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of Japanese culture, society, and their heritage. This program includes an educational experience in a public junior high school and a home-stay in Japan. A total of 49 students from North, Central and South America and the Caribbean participated in this program in fiscal 2012.

## 2) Scholarship for Japanese Immigrants and Their Descendants in Latin America (Program for Developing Leaders in *Nikkei* Communities)

JICA offers a scholarship covering the living expenses and tuition to support *Nikkei* students attending graduate schools in Japan. In fiscal 2012, eight new students benefited from this program.

## 4. Support for *Nikkei* Communities and Local Communities

JICA dispatches Youth Volunteers and Senior Volunteers to *Nikkei* communities in Central, and South America and the Caribbean (*Nikkei* Volunteers) to assist with Japanese-language education, healthcare and welfare services. As a new assistance initiative in fiscal 2008, JICA established the Special Program for School Teachers for *Nikkei* communities, where public school teachers from Japan are assigned to government-accredited schools in Brazil. In fiscal 2012, four teachers participated in a long-term (21 months) volunteer program. Upon returning to Japan, these ex-volunteer teachers are expected to utilize their experience to assist with the education of *Nikkei* children residing in Japan.

In addition, JICA coordinates *Nikkei* Training Programs for participants from Latin America and the Caribbean countries. Universities, local government and other organizations in Japan submit proposals to JICA for training programs for *Nikkei*. The programs aim to promote *Nikkei*'s contribution to nation-building in the respective countries. In fiscal 2012, JICA accepted 119 *Nikkei* training participants under this program.

## 5. Business Loans

The JICA loan program for emigrants and *Nikkei* organizations concluded in fiscal 2005. At present, JICA administers only the repayment of these loans.

### Case Study

## Dissemination of the History and Achievements of Japanese Emigrants

### 10th Anniversary of the Japanese Overseas Migration Museum

A symposium held in November 2012 to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the opening of the Japanese Overseas Migration Museum. Co-hosted with the Association of *Nikkei* and Japanese Abroad of Japan, the event attracted approximately 130 participants of the 54th Convention of *Nikkei* and Japanese Abroad, researchers, and representatives of mass media. The symposium provided the very first occasion for representatives of *Nikkei* museums around the world to present and discuss the importance of disseminating the history and knowledge of Japanese migration. Although the population composition of the *Nikkei* communities vary in each country, participants pledged to use coordination and collaboration among the museums, along with other measures to pass on the history of emigration to future generations. Participants also emphasized that the Japanese Overseas Migration Museum plays an essential role in the execution of the coordination among *Nikkei* museums and libraries.

JICA established the Japanese Overseas

Migration Museum in 2002 in an effort to promote greater understanding of the history and achievements of Japanese overseas migration. Dr. Tadao Umesao, an anthropologist who was the founder and the former director-general of the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka, directed and supervised the exhibit "Dedicated to Those Japanese Who have Taken Part in Molding New Civilizations in the Americas," which showed the daily lives of the emigrants.

The Japanese Overseas Migration Museum has welcomed their Imperial Highnesses the Emperor and Empress of Japan. The number of visitors reached 300,000 with an increase in students attending classes on social science and participants of school trips. Many learn for the first time about the *Nikkei* and the terrible experiences *Nikkei* suffered during World War II. There is an increasing importance and an obligation to define and transmit the history of Japanese migration by substantiating

the network among museums in the coming decade.

Moreover, the Japanese government recognized the Japanese Overseas Migration Museum as an institution holding historical records and materials on April 1, 2013. The recognition confirmed that the collected documents and materials possess significant scholarly and historical value.

JICA is determined to prove that Japanese Overseas Migration Museum will continue to be the keystone for dissemination and utilization of the history of Japanese migration.



Panel discussion at the 10th Anniversary Symposium