

# Support for Japanese Emigrants and Their Descendants

## Focusing on Human Resources Development and Elderly Welfare

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

There are currently more than 3.2 million Japanese emigrants and their descendants (*Nikkei*) living around the world, with the majority living in North America, Latin 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 assists Japanese emigrants who have settled in Latin America and the Caribbean in line with Japanese emigration policy since the early 1950s.

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 some *Nikkei* communities are encountering a situation where the working-age population is leaving the community, 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 America and the Caribbean also face educational issues such as truancy among *Nikkei* children due to a lack of Japanese language proficiency.

Accordingly, JICA supports the Japanese emigrants and *Nikkei* focusing on human resources development and elderly welfare. JICA also engages in establishing relationships between the Japanese private sector and *Nikkei* companies, or companies in

Latin America and the Caribbean owned or managed by Japanese descendants, by promoting private-sector partnerships.

### ● The 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 disseminate the history of Japanese emigration to the public in general, especially for 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

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

#### Case Study

#### Brazil and Peru: Data Collection Survey on Private-Sector Partnerships with *Nikkei* Communities in the Latin American Region

### JICA Contributes to Private-Sector Partnerships among Japanese Private Companies and *Nikkei* Companies

JICA dispatched the Second Partnership Promotion Survey in Latin America to Brazil and Peru from July 15 to 28, 2013.

JICA places private partnerships as a priority program in the regional assistance strategy for Latin American and the Caribbean. The Private-Sector Partnership aims at contributing to economic and social development in these countries by strengthening long-established networks with *Nikkei* communities and supporting Japanese companies with advanced technology to expand into the region.

It tends to be harder for Japanese companies to have interest in the Latin American region than in other regions due to the geographical distance between Japan and the region.

On the other hand, many Latin American

countries give credence and have affinity for Japan, cultivated by prewar and postwar Japanese emigrants in Latin American countries.

The historical relationship of these countries is utilized in strengthening business partnerships between Japanese and *Nikkei* companies. In particular, JICA envisions a vibrant and dynamic partnership in Brazil, where 1.6 million *Nikkei* reside.

#### Evident Effectiveness of Japanese Communities

The Survey included discussions with governmental agencies, visits to local

companies, and consultation with relevant *Nikkei* stakeholders.

JICA also co-hosted a Private-Sector Partnership Seminar in Lima, Peru, with full support from the Peruvian-Japanese Association. With 100 participants, including Peruvian government officials, private companies, and *Nikkei*, the Seminar promoted exchange of information and discussions on business partnerships.

In Brazil, the participants had the opportunity to introduce Japanese technologies at the Japan Festival held in São Paulo, the home to the world's largest *Nikkei* community. Recognizing the validity of the *Nikkei* community and their local networks, the participating companies took this opportunity to examine operational plans.



Mr. Yamashiro (left), president of the Peruvian Japanese Association, welcomes the participants of the Survey (right).

## 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 Brazil Japanese Center in São Paulo.

## 3) Upgrading Facilities and Equipment

In fiscal 2013, 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*

JICA organizes the one-month program targeting *Nikkei* young students 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 homestay in Japan. A total of 49 students from Canada, Latin America, and the Caribbean participated in this program in fiscal 2013.

### 2) Scholarship for Japanese Emigrants and Their Descendants in Latin America and the Caribbean (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 2013, seven 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 Latin America and the Caribbean, called *Nikkei* Volunteers, to assist with Japanese-language education, health care, 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 2013, seven teachers participated in a 21-month volunteer program. Upon returning to Japan, these former 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 governments, and other organizations in Japan submit proposals to JICA for training program to be received by *Nikkei*. In fiscal 2013, JICA accepted 112 *Nikkei* training participants under this program.

## 5. Strengthening Partnerships with *Nikkei* Communities in Latin America and Japan's Private Sector

JICA conducted the Second Partnership Promotion Survey in Latin America in Brazil and Peru in 2013. The survey aims to strengthen partnerships between Japanese private companies and private companies owned or managed by *Nikkei*, which will contribute to the development of economies and societies in Latin America.

Some Japanese companies that participated in the survey utilize the JICA Private-Sector Partnership Projects, such as the Feasibility Survey with the Private Sector for Utilizing Japanese Technologies, the Small and Medium-Sizes Enterprise (SME) Partnership Promotion Survey, the Overseas Volunteering Program in Collaboration with Private Sector, and the *Nikkei* Training Program to promote business partnerships with *Nikkei* companies.

## 6. 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

#### JICA Kyushu: *Nikkei* Training Program and Follow-up Survey for "Community Development"

## Efforts to Cultivate Community and Business Leaders for *Nikkei* Communities

JICA Kyushu accepted 29 training participants in six courses from 2007 to 2013. In 2014, JICA dispatched a follow-up mission to Brazil to advise the former participants.

### Creating a Course Focusing on SME Support

The training program aims to assist participants to engage in community development in their *Nikkei* communities. The program consists of a case study of solutions to environmental problems and industrial promotion by Kitakyushu City; a visit to Oita Prefecture to learn about the "One Village, One Product" Movement; and a

series of lectures on the cultivation of entrepreneurs, customer satisfaction management, and breakthrough thinking.

On returning to their communities, the former participants of this course reconfirm the importance of *Nikkei* organizations and community participation. In these circumstances, following up on former participants was one of the main issues in this course. Kitakyushu International Techno-Cooperative Association, the organizer of this program, has maintained and expanded the network among former participants and course leaders through activity reports and consultations via e-mail.

At the same time, the association identified an increasing demand for a program to nourish *Nikkei* business leaders, who associate and have knowledge on innovative technologies and management skills of Japanese SMEs.

In these circumstances, JICA dispatched a mission to Brazil in March 2014 to follow up on former participants. The mission surveyed the activities and provided technical advice and consultations to former participants. The Mission also held seminars to disseminate and promote community development. Through these follow-ups and seminars, the mission clarified the need for improving the present training program and focus on SME promotion. The association has evolved the community development course to SME Promotion for 2014.



*Nikkei* Training Program participants listen to the leader of "One Village, One Product" Movement in Oita.