

Toward a New Era of Development Cooperation

Harnessing Japan's Knowledge and Experience to Meet Changing Realities



Last year was the 60th anniversary of Japan's international cooperation, and 2015 marks the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

Japan rose from the ruins after the war to become a safe and wealthy country. I believe that during this period, one of Japan's major postwar contributions to the global community has been international cooperation for developing countries, implemented primarily by JICA.

Today, though, the world is undergoing dramatic change. While some regions are showing positive developments toward peace and stability, other regions such as the Middle East continue to be plagued by terrorism and conflict. In addition, poverty, frequently occurring typhoons, earthquakes, and other natural disasters around the world threaten the lives and human dignity of large numbers of people.

Internationally, 2015 is the target year of the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and also the year to set new development goals. On the domestic stage, a new Development Cooperation Charter was established, and clearly expressed the concept of human security as one of the principles and basic policies of Japan's ODA.

In the face of these changes, JICA will apply the basic policy of human security in its response to the broad-ranging challenges confronting developing countries. By expanding collaboration with private companies, NGOs, local governments, universities and research institutes, and other development partners, JICA will harness Japan's knowledge and experience to continue delivering "International Cooperation that Invigorates the World and Japan."

Thank you for your understanding and support for JICA's activities.

Akihiko Tanaka
President
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

Q1 JOCV celebrated its 50th anniversary, so could you talk about how the program has evolved over this time, and its significance.

It has been 50 years since the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) began in 1965 with the dispatch of five volunteers to Laos, and I believe JOCV activities have become one of the significant programs carried out by JICA. During the 1990s, JICA expanded the forms of volunteer dispatch to senior volunteers and youth and senior volunteers for Japanese descendant communities. As of the end of fiscal year 2014, more than 47,000 volunteers had been dispatched to 96 countries to be the face of Japan's international cooperation.

I meet JOCV members and volunteers around the world, and not only do they carry out their activities with tremendous enthusiasm, but they are also very highly regarded by the governments and local communities of the recipient countries.

The three pillars of JOCV activities are to “help local com-

JOCV celebrating its 50th anniversary. Working together hand-in-hand with local communities and local organizations has been very effective.

munities,” “strengthen friendship and mutual understanding between local communities and Japan,” and “develop Japanese full of vitality through the empowerment of the participating individual,” and outstanding results have been achieved in each aspect. In development cooperation, having volunteers working together hand-in-hand with local communities and local organizations has been very effective, and close ties are developed between Japan and the recipient country through the efforts of the volunteers. To the local people, Japanese seem to

50 years of JOCV, and Japan's international cooperation activities

History of JOCV		History of Japan's cooperation	
1954		Japan joins the Colombo Plan, starts international cooperation	
1961		Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF) established	
1965	Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) program started; First five JOCV members dispatched (Laos)		
			
	Fiscal 1965 — Initial JOCV members dispatched (Philippines)	1966 — Dispatch of JOCV members to Africa commenced	1972 — Dispatch of JOCV members to Pacific countries commenced
1974	Japanese name for JOCV changed		Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is established
1985	Overseas Development Youth program established		
1989			
1990	Number of dispatched JOCV members exceeds 10,000 Programs for Senior Cooperation Experts and Senior Cooperation Experts for Overseas Japanese Communities established		
1992	1992 — Dispatch of JOCV members to Eastern Europe commenced		ODA Charter formulated
1996	Programs except JOCV reformed as Senior Volunteers, Volunteers for Japanese Communities Overseas and Senior Volunteers for Japanese Communities Overseas		
1999			The Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) established ¹
2000	Number of dispatched JOCV members exceeds 20,000		Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) established
2003			ODA Charter revised
2007	Number of dispatched JOCV members exceeds 30,000		
2008			
2011	Former JOCV members active in reconstruction assistance following the Great East Japan Earthquake		
	Former JOCV members preparing meals outside for people of the areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake.		
2012	Private-Sector Partnership Volunteer Program established		
2015	Number of dispatched JOCV members exceeds 40,000; 50th anniversary of JOCV foundation		Development Cooperation Charter established



1. Former organization of JICA (formerly JBIC) established through the merger of the Export-Import Bank of Japan and the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF).
2. Established through the merger of the former JICA, department in the former JBIC responsible for overseas cooperation (Loan Aid), and part of the Grant Aid implemented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



JOCV member teaching (art) at a school in the Irbid Refugee Camp in Northern Jordan (run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East). (Photo by Shinichi Kuno)

JICA's volunteer programs indeed typify what I would call "programs that invigorate Japan while invigorating the world."

be perceived as "volunteers who are always working with us."

Upon their return to Japan, JOCV members who have gained better communication and problem-solving skills and an inner strength are in turn sharing these skills and their experiences with Japanese society. In addition to their contribution to local communities in various fields, in recent years, many JOCV members are providing invaluable assistance in reconstruction efforts in the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake. These days, Japanese companies are aware that former JOCV members have a global outlook that is effective around the world, and are providing a growing number of job opportunities for them. JICA established a private-sector collaborative volunteer system for contributing to the development of globally competent human resources together with companies. JICA takes into consideration recipient countries' needs and their request details with the individual companies, and dispatches the company employees as JOCV members. JICA's volunteer programs indeed typify what I would call "programs that invigorate Japan while invigorating the world."

Q2 The JICA volunteer program including JOCV is a unique program not seen in other development aid organizations. What are the features and strength of the program?

The strength of the program is that the cooperation can meet local needs through the interaction between people. Volunteers working together with JICA technical cooperation and financial assistance can deliver the outcomes of cooperation at the central or regional governments to the local community level. There are also many volunteers undertaking other unique activities developed together with the local people, not previously considered the mandate of the volunteer program. Incorporating both of these aspects is, I believe, a feature of the volunteer program.



Returned JOCV member teaching about the environment at a nature school she established using the buildings of a closed primary school in a marginal village where she was born and raised.

Communication with local people is essential to bring out this feature to its fullest. Volunteers who are fluent in the local language as well as the official language such as English, French or Spanish can function as intermediaries between local people and the volunteer group, and between the government and private companies.

I believe another unique aspect of the program is that it stresses techniques and skills, and the use of these in the activities on the ground. At pre-departure training in Japan, the volunteers receive support not just in language, but on useful skills as well, and this enables the volunteers to cope with a shortage of funds and supplies, come up with creative ideas, and provide the necessary support in developing countries. This, too, is a strength that the JICA volunteer program has traditionally valued.

Q3 What are some of the more prominent projects that JICA tackled in fiscal 2014?

Fiscal year 2014 was the 60th anniversary of Japan's international cooperation, and to mark this, JICA conducted joint international research and held seminars and symposiums that reflected on these six decades of cooperation.

Specifically, JICA implemented infrastructure projects to help resolve urban issues, one of the contemporary challenges developing countries face. One of the major projects is cooperation for urban traffic in Hanoi, Viet Nam. The completion of a new terminal at the Noi Bai International Airport, an expressway linking the airport and the city districts, and also the Nhat Tan Bridge with ODA Loans has made travel between the airport and the city much more convenient. In addition to such cooperation, JICA is also providing support for building a ring road to ease traffic congestion in Hanoi, and developing a traffic safety system to reduce traffic accidents, a serious social issue facing the city.

In human resources development, JICA started the African Business Education Initiative for Youth (ABE Initiative). Under this program, over a period of five years, 900 talented youth who will become leaders in African industrial development are invited to Japan to take a master's course at a university and internship at a Japanese company.

In March 2015, the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction was held in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture. At the

conference, JICA gave an overview of cooperation that has effectively utilized Japan's extensive experiences and knowledge in disaster prevention, and shared cooperation outcomes and lessons learned, and the future direction of cooperation, especially in building resilient societies through mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction. It was a significant achievement that many of the ideas and policies for disaster prevention support implemented by JICA were included in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and global action guidelines to 2030 adopted by the conference.

The outbreak of the Ebola disease in three countries in Western Africa became a global problem in fiscal year 2014. JICA provided emergency relief to combat the spread of this infectious disease to other countries, including the dispatch of experts, and provision of personal protective equipment and emergency

Within such efforts for peacebuilding, JICA faced great difficulty in implementing projects due to the deteriorating security situation, most evident in Afghanistan and Iraq. Against this backdrop, it is noteworthy that staff members who had evacuated from South Sudan were able to return and resume cooperation on a full scale in October 2014 as the situation became more stable, and in March 2015, they were able to realize the ground-breaking ceremony for the Nile River Bridge, a vital transport facility for the region.

It was also pleasing that the Japanese researchers who developed the LED were awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics, as JICA has used LED products in projects to improve the lives of people living in areas without electricity, promote energy conservation, and meet the needs for medical care and research equipment.

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relief supplies. Special mention should also be made regarding the pivotal role played by former JICA training participants, the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research in Ghana, and other JICA cooperation partners and organizations in combatting the spread of the disease. JICA is using the experiences gained in this recent outbreak to examine how we can provide even faster and more effective support to deal with an infectious disease outbreak that can easily spread across borders.

Providing cooperation to countries and regions gripped by political instability, such as the conflict in Syria, was also a major challenge for JICA. Refugees from Syria flooded into Jordan and Turkey, while the invasion by ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) created countless internally displaced persons in Iraq. JICA continues to provide fiscal support to countries in the region that are accepting the refugees, and support for infrastructure development in the host communities. In Myanmar, progress is being made in reconciliation and ceasefire negotiations between the central government and various ethnic minorities, but the nation still faces some major challenges. It was significant that in addition to providing support for infrastructure development in Yangon and other cities, JICA was able to begin programs aimed at reducing poverty in rural areas, including areas that are home to ethnic minorities.

Q4 In February 2015, the Japanese Cabinet endorsed the Development Cooperation Charter. In closing, could you talk about the future direction of JICA's international cooperation?

What is important to JICA is that the new Development Cooperation Charter clearly specifies the concept of human security as a guiding principle of Japan's development cooperation.



A new bridge over the Nile River under construction. Cooperation resumed on a full scale in South Sudan and the construction of the Nile River Bridge (Freedom Bridge), the symbol of peacebuilding, was also resumed in March 2015. (Photo credit: Dai Nippon Construction)

To date, we at JICA have placed the realization of human security as one of our guiding principles in implementing development cooperation. This has been set out more systematically in the Development Cooperation Charter, and we see this as a clear expression of Japan's commitment to further promoting this principle. JICA will continue to methodically implement its programs in line with this.

The Development Cooperation Charter states the diversity of the partner developing countries. Some are emerging countries that have achieved dynamic economic growth, while others are still vulnerable, gripped by conflict, internal instability, and constant poverty. For both, human security is crucial. In such a situation, it is therefore natural to provide support that places importance on the life, livelihood, and dignity of the individual in vulnerable countries or regions. In more developed countries as well, poverty still exists due to growing development disparity, and there is also an underlying risk of a sudden deterioration of living standards caused by drastic change in the economic environment, natural disaster, and infectious disease outbreak, among others. Stable growth is much more difficult if emphasis is not given to the principle of human security.

It is my understanding that the quality growth specified in the Development Cooperation Charter does not simply refer to expanding the amount of growth, but also means that the growth must be inclusive in the sense that the fruits of that growth must be shared among as many people as possible, leaving no one behind. Moreover, it must be sustainable over generations and maintain a balance with the environment, sustainable socioeconomic growth, and measures to counter global warming. Quality growth must also be resilient against natural disasters, economic crises, and other kinds of disturbance. We must bring about such growth, and through this, help to eradicate poverty.

The new Development Cooperation Charter clearly specifies the concept of human security as a guiding principle.

The Development Cooperation Charter also points to the increasing diversity of the various actors taking part in development cooperation. In the past, OECD member countries were referred to as donors, but these days, some of the emerging countries are also providing aid. The number of international organizations and international NGOs is also increasing, and similarly in Japan, NGOs, private companies, local governments, universities and research institutes are also showing a growing motivation toward international cooperation. As a focal point for utilizing Japanese knowledge, technology and human resources in international cooperation, JICA will strengthen the collaborative relationship with the various stakeholders to provide more effective cooperation.

In light of this, JICA volunteers will play a pivotal role. Those who have participated in the JICA volunteer program are active in NGOs, local governments, and private companies after they return to Japan, and we see them as important partners for promoting development cooperation. There are also many people who are interested in becoming involved in JICA's operations, so we can say the volunteer program is producing the personnel who can form a network among Japanese development cooperation actors. We will continue encouraging volunteers to share their experiences with society, and promote programs through which they can expand their areas of activity.



Bangladesh: President Tanaka (center) taking part in activities for rural women run by Shiseido Co., Ltd., which provides support for BOP business surveys.