

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 had been assisting to settle in the new lands and stabilize livelihoods for Japanese emigrants who have settled in Latin America and the Caribbean in line with Japanese emigration policy until 2005.

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 some of the working-age population is leaving the settlements, increasing social and economic vulnerability of the *Nikkei* communities.

Accordingly, JICA supports Japanese emigrants and *Nikkei* focusing on human resources development and elderly welfare. JICA also engages in establishing relationships between Japanese private sector and *Nikkei* companies, or companies in Latin America and the Caribbean owned or managed by Japanese descendants, by promoting partnership between *Nikkei* community and Japanese private-sector.

● The Main JICA Programs and Activities for Japanese Emigrants and *Nikkei*

To support 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 those in the younger generation who are prospective leaders of Japan. It also provides opportunities to become acquainted or reengaged with emigrants and *Nikkei*. The museum consists of permanent exhibits and special exhibitions featuring the history of overseas migration and the present situation of *Nikkei* communities. The museum also provides information on its website [[→ see the Case Study below](#)].

2. Support for Emigrants Abroad

1) Medical Care and Hygiene

JICA assisted in the management of five *Nikkei* clinics at settlements in Paraguay, Bolivia, and Brazil in fiscal 2014. JICA also supports travelling clinics for settlements in Brazil. Furthermore, JICA assists programs involving, nursing care, medical examinations, and day-care services in countries such as the Dominican Republic, Brazil, Argentina, and Bolivia.

2) Education and Culture

JICA assists Japanese language heritage education among *Nikkei* communities. In addition to joint training sessions for local *Nikkei* Japanese-language teachers, as well as third-country training for them, JICA supported the Brazil Japanese Center

Case Study

A Special Exhibition at the Japanese Overseas Migration Museum (JOMM) in Collaboration with Major Prefectures of Origin of Japanese Emigrants

Working Closer with Local Governments to Support *Nikkei* Communities

JOMM of JICA's Yokohama International Center, which marked its tenth anniversary in 2012, is working to strengthen cooperation with major prefectures of origin of Japanese emigrants, major migration museums, and neighboring local governments.

Toward Assistance for the Future

The prefectures Hiroshima, Okinawa, Kumamoto, Yamaguchi, Fukuoka, Wakayama, in that order, are the six major prefectures of origin of Japanese emigrants. A map of Japan on permanent exhibit at JOMM depicts the prefectural emigrant statistics in 3-D form, demonstrating the characteristics of overseas emigration by region.

JOMM offered a special exhibition with Okinawa Prefecture in March 2014, and with Wakayama Prefecture in March 2015. These exhibitions aimed to strengthen future cooperation

with major prefectures of origin of Japanese emigrants. These exhibitions not only featured the prefectural history of emigrants, but also introduced the path of Japanese emigrants and their descendants. Activities of relevant institutions and organizations in the respective prefectures were also presented. The exhibitions also focused on JICA's *Nikkei* Volunteers and *Nikkei* Training Program to enhance the knowledge of present *Nikkei* communities.

Growing interest in *Nikkei* communities in recent years in Okinawa, Wakayama, and other major prefectures of origin of Japanese



Wakapan, the mascot representing Wakayama tourism promotion, tours with visitors at the special exhibition jointly organized with Wakayama Prefecture

emigrants is accelerating their networking with Japanese emigrants and their descendants. Through these efforts, JOMM encourages visitors to view *Nikkei* communities and emigration as an ongoing process rather than a historical fact.

JOMM will continue to collaborate with prefectures of origin of Japanese emigrants through joint research and the sharing of collections.

in São Paulo with research on Japanese-language heritage education in fiscal 2014.

3) Upgrading Facilities and Equipment

JICA provided funds for regional development programs in *Nikkei* settlements in Paraguay in fiscal 2014.

3. Educational Initiatives for the Children of Emigrants

1) Education Program for Next-Generation *Nikkei*

JICA organizes a one-month program that provides a firsthand opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of Japanese culture, society, and heritage. Targeting *Nikkei* students aged 12 to 15 attending Japanese-language classes run by local *Nikkei* organizations, the program includes an educational experience in a public junior high school and a homestay in Japan. A total of 50 students from Latin America, the Caribbean and Canada participated in this program in fiscal 2014.

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 living expenses and tuition to support *Nikkei* students attending graduate schools in Japan. Five new students benefited from this program in fiscal 2014.

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 among others. 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 2008. Two teachers participated in a 21-month volunteer program in fiscal 2014. Upon returning to Japan, these former volunteer teachers

are expected to take full advantage of their experience to assist with the education of *Nikkei* children residing in Japan, among other activities. There were 31 volunteers who participated in JICA's short-term volunteer program to *Nikkei* communities in Latin America and the Caribbean in fiscal 2014, which was launched in fiscal 2012.

In addition, JICA coordinates *Nikkei* Training Programs for participants from Latin America and Caribbean countries. Universities, local governments, public organizations, and private enterprises in Japan submit proposals to JICA for training programs to be received by *Nikkei*. JICA accepted 144 *Nikkei* training participants under this program in fiscal 2014.

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

JICA dispatched the Third Partnership Promotion Survey Team to Brazil and Peru in 2014 with an aim to contribute to economic and social development in Latin America, through strengthening partnerships between Japanese private companies and private companies owned or managed by *Nikkei* in those countries. Some of the Japanese companies that participated in the survey now utilize JICA Private-Sector Partnership Projects, such as the Feasibility Survey with the Private Sector for Utilizing Japanese Technologies, the Small and Medium-Size Enterprise (SME) Partnership Promotion Survey, the Overseas Volunteering Program in Collaboration with the 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 **Brazil: The *Nikkei* Medical Doctor *Nikkei* Training Program**

Toward *Nikkei* Hospital-Based Public-Private Partnership in Health Care Assistance

From February 16 to 27, 2015, JICA invited 12 doctors from six Brazilian *Nikkei* hospitals to Japan as part of its efforts to strengthen cooperation with Brazilian *Nikkei* communities in the health care sector. The *Nikkei* Medical Doctor program offered the participating doctors hands-on experience with cutting-edge technologies at medical institutions and medical equipment suppliers in Japan. It also provided an opportunity to build a network among *Nikkei* hospitals as well as participating institutions and suppliers for business expansion.

Building a Network Involving Japanese Universities and Businesses

Many Japanese emigrants and their descendants participate actively in the health care sector in Latin America and the Caribbean. There are some 15,000 *Nikkei* doctors in Brazil. *Nikkei* communities play an important role as the core of regional development for the country's economic and social development. *Nikkei* are expected to pursue an active role in connecting Japan and the region in the business sector.

When Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited Latin America and the Caribbean in August 2014, he

pledged to strengthen relations with *Nikkei* communities and to increase support. As an initiative, he highlighted partnerships with *Nikkei* hospitals. The *Nikkei* Medical Doctor program is the very first program to be executed under this initiative.

The *Nikkei* doctors visited the National Cancer Center Hospital, university hospitals, and medical equipment manufactures in Japan. They had the opportunity to learn hospital management and the practical use of the cutting-edge medical equipment at the hospital.

As part of the program, JICA organized a seminar on cooperation with Brazilian hospitals run



Participants are receiving an explanation of medical equipment in the program at Hitachi Medical Corporation.

by Japanese descendants as part of international medical development. Approximately 130 people from Japanese hospitals, universities, and medical equipment suppliers participated in the seminar. Participants in the seminar discussed the challenges and opportunities for doing business in Brazil and working with *Nikkei* communities. Furthermore, the seminar also provided an opportunity for the *Nikkei* doctors to foster connections among the participants.

JICA will explore the possibility of translating the outcomes of this training into public-private partnerships as part of its efforts to build mutually beneficial relationships between Japanese organizations and trusted *Nikkei* communities in Latin America and the Caribbean. In a global context, JICA will also continue to be fully dedicated to addressing development objectives, including improving medical technology.