

Research

JICA Research Institute Aiming to Set a Trend in Development Assistance and Give Feedback to Practical Development Projects

The JICA Research Institute (JICA-RI) carries out research activities with two main objectives. The first objective is to conduct analysis of development issues in developing countries and contributing to JICA's operation strategies. The second is to contribute to constructive discussion on the development agenda by sharing research evidence widely and leading international policy dialogue. With these two objectives, JICA-RI conducts researches that build on the field experiences and know-how it has accumulated as a development assistance organization.

The results of the researches are published in the form of working papers, policy briefs and books, released broadly through websites and other means, and shared in international conferences and seminars as well.

● Basic Policy for Research Activities

1. Incorporating a Comprehensive Perspective

JICA-RI will incorporate a comprehensive perspective in its cross-field research and analysis of development issues, encompassing individuals, society, the state, and the market.

2. Integrating Past and Future

JICA-RI will conduct studies based on the past experiences and analytic results of development aid organizations worldwide, including JICA, and make these studies available for use in future aid activities.

3. Sharing Experiences in Japan and Asia

JICA-RI will analyze the growth experiences of Japan and its Asian neighbors and explore the applicability of these experiences to other regions.

4. Sharing Information with the International Development Community

JICA-RI aims to be a research institute that is open to both Japanese and international partners, including researchers, aid-implementing organizations, governmental bodies, private-sector corporations and NGOs.

● Focus Areas of Research Activities

1. Peace and Development

JICA-RI conducts comparative analysis of past experiences to uncover ways to effectively prevent and manage armed conflict, and promote post-conflict peacebuilding.

2. Growth and Poverty Reduction

Japan and its Asian neighbors are considered economic development success stories, having realized growth and reduced poverty. JICA-RI studies these cases from the multifaceted perspectives of individuals, state, market and society, and conducts comparative analysis with economic development in African countries.

3. Environment and Development/Climate Change

Regional and global environmental deterioration are major threats to human security in developing countries. JICA-RI conducts research in order to contribute to devise policies for evaluating environmental damage, effective means to manage natural resources, and ways to mitigate or adapt to climate change.

4. Aid Strategies

JICA-RI pursues rigorous academic analysis of the effectiveness of various approaches to international development assistance, utilizing Japan's experience and knowledge. Research is based on principles such as the "capacity development" approach aimed at enhancing multilevel capabilities covering individuals, organizations, governments, and societies, and the concepts of "human security" and "dynamic development that benefit all people."

● Outcomes of Research Activities

Based on the policies and areas, JICA-RI conducted 27 research projects in fiscal 2015 and published the outcomes.

1. Publications of Research Outcomes

JICA-RI compiles its research outcomes into working papers and publishes them for those engaged in development assistance around the world. In fiscal 2015, JICA-RI released 25 working papers that present findings of the research projects.

For example, in the research project titled "Impact Evaluation Analyses for JICA Projects," JICA participatory school management project titled "School for All," which has achieved good results mainly in West Africa, was evaluated by means of econometric methods. The results of various analyses of the case studies in Burkina Faso were summarized in three Working Papers (WP). One WP, titled "How Can Community Participation Improve Educational Outcomes? Experimental Evidence from a School-Based Management Project in Burkina Faso," demonstrated that both the attendance rate of students and the working situation of teachers were improved by encouraging community residents to get involved in school management.

Another research project, "Research for Developing Tools of the System Assessment for Better Education Results (SABER): A Focus on the Participatory School-Based Management System, Decentralization, and Accountability" focuses on participatory school management as well. This project utilizes an educational system analysis tool called SABER which was proposed by the World Bank and operated and improved by JICA and other organizations. The outcomes of this research project in Senegal and other countries were compiled in two Working Papers.

Research outcomes are also compiled as books by JICA-RI. JICA-RI released seven books written in English and two in Japanese in fiscal 2015.

In November, a book titled *Japan's Development Assistance: Foreign Aid and the Post-2015 Agenda* was published. It contains

the findings of the research project that was carried out in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of Japan's development assistance. Looking back on the history of Japan's ODA, this book was compiled by taking into account the Japan's future role in international cooperation. Jointly written by Japanese officials and scholars as well as by researchers at the Brookings Institution in the United States and scholars from overseas including China and the Republic of Korea, this publication provides a broad perspective of Japan's ODA. Furthermore, a book titled *In Pursuit of an African Green Revolution: Views from Rice and Maize Farmers' Fields* was also published in January 2016, which discusses the findings of the research project "Empirical Study on Increase of Rice Production in Sub-Saharan Africa." This publication argues the necessity of bringing about a Green Revolution in Africa. The Green Revolution in Asia successfully increased agricultural productivity and contributed to increased food production and economic growth. This book also examines how to generate revenue growth and to resolve the poverty of small-scale farmers, which accounts for a large percentage of the poor in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In addition, two books were released in Japanese: *Road to the Future: 40-Year History of the Sindhuli Road in Nepal and Regional Nation-Building* and *The 15-Year History of Inter-municipal Cooperation between Japan and Thailand*. These books were published in the series of "Project History," (Japanese only) which aims at analyzing Japan's contribution to developing countries from a long-term perspective.

In addition, most of the outcomes of research projects are widely shared among scholars, as articles of academic journals, books and conference presentations.

2. Collaboration with International Organizations and Research Institutions

For these research activities, JICA-RI promotes joint research with other research and aid organizations in Japan and the world building partnerships and networks.

In fiscal 2015, JICA-RI and the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), a famous Think Tank in the United States, launched a collaborative project in July on "Transformative Innovation for Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction." In October, JICA-RI, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP) and the Japan Society for International Development (JASID) jointly hosted a conference of "North-East Asian Development Cooperation Forum 2015," and discussed with researchers and academics from throughout the region about development issues from the perspective of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In addition, JICA-RI works with the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and other multilateral donors. It also conducts joint research with researchers at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) in the United Kingdom, the Initiative for Policy Dialogue (IPD) at Columbia University and the Brookings Institution in the United States, and the African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET) in Africa.

Case Study

Case Study Project: "Interdisciplinary Study of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs)"

Discussion from Various Disciplinary Perspectives

JICA-RI has been examining the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs) program using methods and insights from various academic fields, including economics, sociology, anthropology, and political science.

The JOCV program incorporates both Japanese youth participation and contributions at the grassroots level. Because of this multidimensional nature, evaluating the JOCV program with a single index can be problematic and even inappropriate. Taking this into account, JICA-RI established interdisciplinary research projects.

Public Seminar and Symposium

With the 50th anniversary of the JOCV program in 2015, JICA-RI hosted a public seminar in May to feature JOCVs as "Leading Actors in Development Cooperation." In July, JICA-RI and Tohoku University jointly held a two-day public seminar that targeted students on the first day and the public on the second day. This seminar aimed to deepen understanding of the JOCV program.



Interdisciplinary Study on Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers Symposium

In November, JICA-RI also hosted a symposium titled "Interdisciplinary Study on Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers," focusing on the objectives of the JOCV program: nurturing Japan's youth, fostering mutual understanding between Japan and developing countries, and promoting development cooperation. At this event, the idea of correlation among these subjects, which was nurturing youth and fostering mutual understanding could lead to promoting

development cooperation, was presented, and the future role of JOCVs was discussed.

JICA-RI also gave a presentation about its research findings at the luncheon session of the annual meeting of the International Forum for Volunteering in Development (IVCO 2015) held in Tokyo in October. Its quantitative analysis study on JOCV activities drew great attention from the attendees [→ see the Case Study on page 115].