

Volunteer Programs

Citizen-Based International Cooperation: Future Change Agent to Build a Better World

JICA's volunteer programs support activities by citizens who volunteer with high aspirations to cooperate in the economic and social development as well as the reconstruction of developing countries. These time-honored programs—which include Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV), founded in 1965—are widely recognized as a good example of grassroots-level international cooperation extended by the Japanese government and JICA, and are highly praised by partner countries. In recent years, the programs' participants have been increasingly valued in Japan for their contribution to internationalization and revitalization of Japanese society.

What Are JICA's Volunteer Programs?

Since its commencement of dispatching 29 JOCVs to five countries, namely Laos, the Philippines, Cambodia, Malaysia, and Kenya, in fiscal 1965, JICA has implemented volunteer programs for more than 50 years. By the end of March 2019, some 53,000 JICA volunteers (including more than 44,000 JOCVs) have engaged in different activities in the developing world as Japanese conspicuous contributors to the international community.

As it stands, JICA sends four types of JICA volunteers to partner countries: (1) JOCVs, the main pillar; (2) Senior Volunteers; (3) Youth and Senior *Nikkei* (Japanese Descendant) Communities Volunteers, who are dispatched to contribute to the development of *Nikkei* communities; and (4) short-term volunteers with an assignment of less than one year. With more than 50 years' history, the volunteer programs have been reviewed carefully and specialized for their classification and frameworks. Specifically, JICA has adapted to the changing environment in Japan and abroad in order to encourage more people to participate in the volunteer programs.

In fiscal 2018, JICA's Volunteer Program reviewed its system in light of the findings of the Autumn Administrative Program Review* for fiscal 2017. The collective name "JICA's volunteers" has been renamed to "Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers." It used to have age categories (youth and senior), but in the new system, starting in fiscal 2019, volunteers are classified by whether or not the project requires a certain level of experience and skills.

Contributing to Human Resources Development for Japan and the World

In recent years, high regard has been given—in terms of human resources development—to the experiences of JOCVs who have lived with local people and worked with them to solve or ameliorate problems in a society and culture different from those of Japan.

Former JOCVs are given an active role to play in social globalization in Japan and abroad and regional revitalization at home as talent who are capable of out-of-the-box thinking



Paraguay: A JOCV in community development explaining how to manage money using a household account book (Photo by Hiroshi Wada)

in a new environment, collaborating successfully with people around them and taking the lead in making new attempts. The JICA volunteer programs are thus attracting attention as an undertaking that serves to "energize Japan and the world."

The number of job offers from private companies etc. to former JOCVs totaled 1,482 in fiscal 2018. Growing numbers of local governments and boards of education offer former JOCVs a special employment quota and other kinds of preferential treatment in the screening process. In fiscal 2018, 82 local governments, 40 boards of education, 17 graduate schools, and 1 university were confirmed to have offered such preferential treatment.

Enhancing Cooperation with Various Partners in Japan

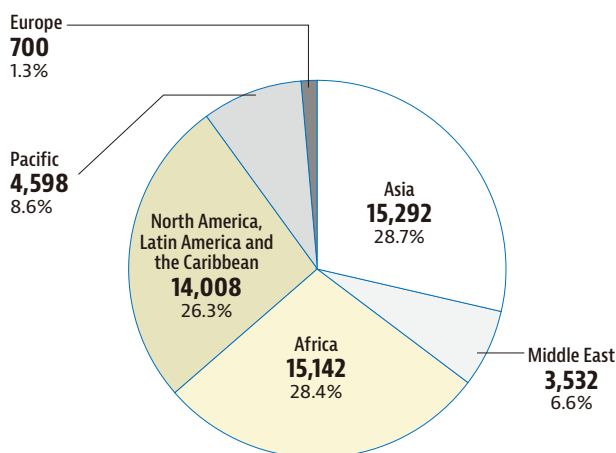
To make use of the technologies and knowledge of domestic partners, including local governments, the private sector, and universities, in solving development challenges in developing countries, JICA cooperates with such entities.

JICA's cooperation contributes not only to overcoming challenges faced by developing countries during the course of advancement but also to developing human resources for the business globalization intended by such entities. During fiscal 2018, there were 14 volunteers sent in partnership with local governments, 13 with the private sector, and 122 with universities.

The participation of in-service school teachers in JICA's volunteer programs has a favorable impact on school education in Japan; the experience proves to be useful in promoting development education and international understanding education, and accommodating foreign students. A total of 124 teachers from public schools were sent overseas in fiscal 2018.

* A public review of government programs held with the participation of third-party experts under the auspices of the Council on Administrative Reform.

Cumulative number of JICA volunteers dispatched by region (as of March 2019)



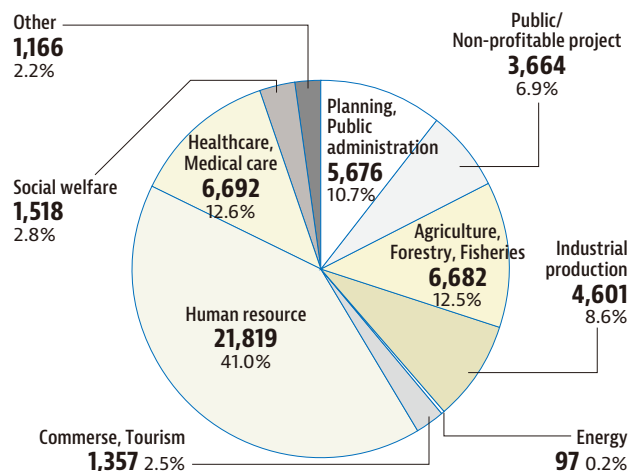
Contribution to Diverse Development Agenda

To address a diversified development agenda, JICA's volunteer programs promote coordination with JICA's other projects and other volunteer organizations overseas. Also, the programs are designed to address development agendas at all stages, such as formulation of each program, selection of capable candidates, pre-dispatch training, and support for volunteer activities.

For example, JICA started to send a team of JOCVs for mathematics education to Guatemala in 2010. They have been working to improve mathematics classes by making good use of the national textbook *Guatemala*, a major output of JICA's earlier technical cooperation project in the country. In fiscal 2018, these JOCVs offered 268 training and lesson study sessions to 4,208 local teachers. From February to March 2019, a national newspaper carried some of the exercises contained in *Guatemala* a total of 24 times, indicating that Japan's assistance in mathematics education was attracting attention.

To improve access to safe water and sanitation in Africa, to date JICA has dispatched more than 260 JOCVs to 21 African

Cumulative number of JICA volunteers dispatched by field of work (as of March 2019)



countries as part of the Water Security Action Team (W-SAT), which was established at the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) in 2008. In December 2018, JICA organized the Water Security Action Team 10th Anniversary Forum as a pre-event of TICAD 7. At the forum, two of the former JOCVs who had worked in Rwanda explained some of their grassroots activities aimed at technology dissemination and sanitation awareness-raising for water-management associations and residents.

Toward the Sport for Tomorrow (SFT) international contribution program that the Japanese government has been promoting for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics, JICA has been sending volunteers in the physical education and sports areas in order to communicate the value of practicing sports to people in developing countries.

JICA also intends to share its knowledge and achievements with other volunteer-sending organizations by participating in Forum's annual conference of International Volunteer Cooperation Organisations, working with the United Nations Volunteers Programme, the U.S. Peace Corps, and others.

Egypt: JOCVs in School Education

Bringing Japan's Special Activities (TOKKATSU) to Egypt



A class at work as part of the "caravan" campaign. Many parents came to see this class as well.

In Egypt, "special activities" that characterize Japan's school education are attracting attention under the name *Tokkatsu*. These include classroom activities, cleaning, and *nicchoku*, in which students take turns each day to do classroom helper jobs. The year 2018 saw the opening of 35 Egypt Japan Schools (EJSs) that incorporate *Tokkatsu* activities in their curricula.

A team of 11 JOCVs experienced in school teaching cooperated with experts working for a JICA technical cooperation project designed to have "special activities" take root in Egypt. This team mounted a touring "caravan" campaign that took them to EJSs

across the country and promoted Japanese-style education with cultural presentations and open classes.

A type of education that not only develops scholarly abilities but also fosters open minds seems to be budding in Egypt. An Egyptian involved in an EJS said: "*Tokkatsu* has resulted in more children thinking for themselves and working more cooperatively with others, indicating the vast potential for the new curricula. Some parents reported that their children were now more willing than ever to do household chores. I want the JOCVs to come again to teach us more."