

## Support for Japanese Emigrants and Their Descendants and Enhancement of Collaboration with *Nikkei* Communities

More than 2.13 million descendants of Japanese emigrants (*Nikkei*) live in Latin America and the Caribbean, making important contributions in many fields. The presence of such *Nikkei* communities in countries in the region represents strong bonds between Japan and these countries.

JICA, in line with postwar Japanese emigration policy, had been providing assistance to settle in new lands and to stabilize livelihoods for Japanese emigrants who have settled in Latin America and the Caribbean. Today, as *Nikkei* communities have matured and generational transition has taken place, JICA is engaged in support to address new challenges arising from such changes, as well as strengthening collaboration with *Nikkei* communities.

The year 2019 marked the 120th anniversary of Japanese emigration to Bolivia and Peru as well as the 90th anniversary of such emigration to the Brazilian Amazon and Colombia. Various events to commemorate these occasions were held in these countries.

### Main Programs and Activities

#### 1. Dissemination of Knowledge on Overseas Migration

The Japanese Overseas Migration Museum aims to encourage the public to learn about the history of Japanese migration and become acquainted with emigrants and the *Nikkei*. The museum consists of permanent exhibits featuring the immigration records of Japanese emigrants and historical materials donated by them, as well as special exhibitions covering a variety of subjects. Besides the library reference room, which contains emigration-related books and films, the museum also provides information on its website and conducts studies and research activities. Student-friendly programs are also offered at the museum for field trips and off-campus learning. In fiscal 2019, the museum had 43,043 visitors, and the total number of visitors since its opening has exceeded 610,000.

In fiscal 2019, the museum held two special exhibitions: (1) "*Nikkei* People and Japan Bonded by Coffee"; and (2) a special exhibition commemorating the 120th anniversary of Japanese emigration to Bolivia, "Living in Bolivia—Lives of *Nikkei* People and Their Hearts and Minds."



Bolivia: The ceremony commemorating the 65th anniversary of Japanese immigration to Colonia Okinawa

Additionally, the museum worked on strengthening networks with immigration-related museums in Japan and abroad. It also collected and stored old Japanese newspapers issued in Latin America and the Caribbean that were on the verge of being dispersed and lost. In this context, the museum launched a "JICA academic essay contest on Japanese emigration." For the first round of this contest, the museum called for academic essays on the topic "Studies on Japanese emigration using Japanese-language newspapers in Latin America and the Caribbean."

#### 2. Support for Emigrants in Their Countries of Residence

JICA provided subsidies for: the management of *Nikkei* clinics at settlements in Bolivia and the Amazonia Hospital in Brazil while also supporting traveling clinics and programs involving elderly welfare and medical services for settlements in Brazil, Bolivia, and the Dominican Republic; and for programs aimed at supporting Heritage Japanese Language Education in Brazil, Argentina, the Dominican Republic, Peru, and Colombia.

#### 3. Educational Initiatives for the Next Generations

JICA organizes programs for junior high school, high school, and college students who are children of emigrants. The programs provide a firsthand opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of Japanese culture and society and enhance their identity as *Nikkei*. In fiscal 2019, a total of 100 students participated.

JICA also offers a scholarship covering living expenses and tuition to support *Nikkei* students attending graduate schools in Japan. In fiscal 2019, 11 new students participated in this program.

#### 4. Partnership with *Nikkei* Communities (1) *Nikkei* Communities Volunteers

JICA dispatches volunteers to *Nikkei* communities. They are called *Nikkei* Communities Volunteers, and they mainly assist with



Peru: The signing ceremony for the Project for Support to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises through *Nikkei* Credit Union

Japanese-language education and welfare services while living with Japanese emigrants and *Nikkei*. In fiscal 2019, 71 people were newly dispatched.

Under the Special Participation Program for School Teachers for *Nikkei* communities, JICA dispatched eight schoolteachers to Brazil in fiscal 2019. Upon returning to Japan, these volunteer teachers are expected to take full advantage of their experiences to assist with the education of *Nikkei* children in Japan.

#### (2) Training program for *Nikkei* communities

At the proposal of universities, local governments, public interest corporations, and private enterprises in Japan, JICA also invites training participants from *Nikkei* communities aiming at supporting nation building in their respective countries and promoting cross-border, people-to-people exchanges. In fiscal 2018, the scope of eligible participants, heretofore limited to *Nikkei*, was expanded to include people who are expected to play a leading role in linking Japan with *Nikkei* communities in Latin America and the Caribbean. During fiscal 2019, JICA accepted 184 participants for such training.

#### (3) Partnerships with private-sector and other entities

JICA dispatches Partnership Promotion Survey Teams to Latin America and the Caribbean with an aim to contribute to economic and social development in the region through strengthening partnerships between Japanese private companies and private companies owned or managed by *Nikkei* in those countries. In fiscal 2019, JICA sent such a team to Brazil. Some of the Japanese companies that joined the team now utilize JICA's private-sector partnership programs. Others are even expanding their business to Latin America and the Caribbean or are engaged in international cooperation with the region.

Other partnership activities included efforts to offer Japanese medical technologies and services abroad through Japanese-related hospitals in Brazil, as well as a joint project with the University of São Paulo to develop human resources who are knowledgeable about Japan. Under the Private-Sector Investment Finance program, JICA also extended subordinated loans worth up to \$10 million to Abaco, a credit union founded by Peruvians of Japanese descent in Peru. In Bolivia, road improvement work was commenced in August 2019 in the city of Okinawa, Santa Cruz Department, under JICA's Grant project titled "The Project for Okinawa Road Improvement." The project is expected to contribute to the development of Japanese-Bolivian communities (Colonia Okinawa) in the city and the department as a whole.