

Latin America and the Caribbean

An Important Partner That Shares Values with Japan

The Partner in an Accelerating Crisis

Latin America and the Caribbean have a population of some 600 million and a GDP of over 1.5 trillion dollars, about twice the size of ASEAN. They constitute an important place in the world both as a home to rich natural and mineral resources, as highlighted by the Amazon region, and as a world center of agricultural production. The region shares with Japan basic values such as freedom, democracy, and the rule of law and also is home to the largest *Nikkei* (Japanese emigrants and their descendants) community in the world, making an important partner for Japan in addressing common challenges.

The region generally enjoys high income levels. It is an advanced region in term of efforts that help achieve digital transformation (DX). Nevertheless, economic disparities are large among and within the 33 countries in the region. The region faces a number of challenges, including (1) political instability, including the exodus of Venezuelans in 2019 and the immigration issue in northern Central America; (2) an aging population; and (3) vulnerability to natural hazards, challenges facing Japan as well. The region is the hardest hit by COVID-19, where the death toll since 2020 accounts for some 30% of the global total.

Toward Innovation Promotion and “Co-creation”

JICA identified its operational focus areas for Latin America and the Caribbean as (1) infrastructure development for economic development; (2) disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate action; and (3) support for addressing urban environmental problems and reducing disparities. From a cross-sectoral perspective, JICA promotes cooperation that helps to achieve and expedite DX and innovation. It also works to strengthen the framework for cooperation and collaboration with startups that will lead DX and innovation. In addition, JICA takes advantage of its long-lasting partnership with the region to help fight the pandemic and works to

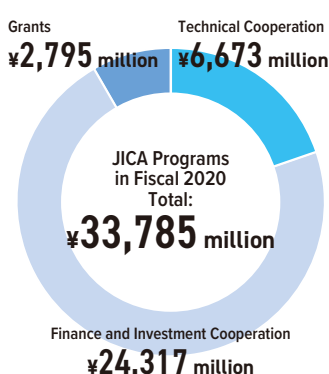


The Dominican Republic: Children participating in a workshop on the 3 Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle)

shape and establish a new operational structure for post-COVID-19.

In fiscal 2020, JICA implemented projects in water and sanitation as well as in renewables under the framework for cooperation with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). It also worked with the World Bank on DRR projects. Furthermore, JICA collaborated with the Central American Integration System (SICA) and other development partners in the region to address some of the region’s common issues, including the environment, logistics, gender, and DRR. Other activities that JICA conducted during fiscal 2020 include (1) building an environment for co-creation for addressing social issues, including business-to-business partnerships between Japan and the region; (2) promoting cooperation with high profile think tanks, especially based in the United States; and (3) developing human resources that will lead countries in the region by taking advantage of JICA Chair and JICA’s scholarship programs [→ see page 58].

In fiscal 2020, JICA also offered many webinars and much on-line training on measures for coping with COVID-19 and on how to go on with development activities amid the pandemic. In addition, JICA extended support for *Nikkei* as well as other people in their local communities through *Nikkei* organizations.



Central America and the Caribbean	Total value of JICA programs
Mexico	¥5,717 million
El Salvador	¥595 million
Honduras	¥433 million
Dominican Republic	¥421 million
Guatemala	¥401 million
Panama	¥212 million
Haiti	¥190 million
Cuba	¥188 million
Nicaragua	¥171 million
Costa Rica	¥154 million
Jamaica	¥107 million
Saint Lucia	¥107 million
Other 8 countries	¥124 million

South America	Total value of JICA programs
Brazil	¥10,728 million
Paraguay	¥10,235 million
Bolivia	¥2,615 million
Peru	¥440 million
Argentina	¥343 million
Ecuador	¥251 million
Colombia	¥174 million
Chile	¥155 million
Uruguay	¥16 million
Venezuela	¥9 million

357 and over 32,000

The number of remote seminars and events held by JICA in fiscal 2020, and the total number of people who attended them

Notes: 1. For the total value of JICA programs, see the note on “Program by Region” on page 27.
2. For Central America and the Caribbean, the above table lists only countries with program value of ¥100 million and over.

COLUMN

Further Strengthening the Bonds with *Nikkei* Communities in Times of Difficulty

Some 2.13 million *Nikkei* live in Latin America and the Caribbean and make important contributions in this region.

Their presence represents strong bonds between Japan and the region.

JICA continued providing support to Japanese emigrants who moved to the region under Japan's postwar emigration policy, so that they could settle in new lands and stabilize their livelihoods there.

Recently, JICA has shifted its focus to (1) cooperation and closer ties with *Nikkei* communities in light of their maturing and generational transition; and (2) support for them as they struggle with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Continued support through subsidies and remote training

In fiscal 2020, JICA provided subsidies to pandemic-affected *Nikkei* organizations for their services in such areas as health care, elderly welfare, and Japanese heritage language education.

JICA conducted remote training to a total of 76 junior and senior high school and college students of *Nikkei*. It also decided to support 10 *Nikkei* graduate students admitted to Japanese universities.

In addition, JICA implemented a training program designed to teach skills and promote international exchanges based on proposals by universities and local governments, among others, in Japan. It offered 25 remote-training courses in which 88 people participated, among which there was a remote seminar attended by some 300 people. Through this program, JICA launched a new training course aimed at promoting multi-cultural coexistence. This course provided remote training designed for *Nikkei* participants to learn about local initiatives while supporting their compatriots in Japanese cities with large *Nikkei* populations.

Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers for *Nikkei* Communities and others who have temporarily returned home due to the pandemic are continuing their activities for *Nikkei* in their countries of assignment from Japan, including giving remote Japanese language lessons.

Activities that leverage a network of museums

In fiscal 2020, the Japanese Overseas Migration Museum (JOMM) in Yokohama attracted 12,604 visitors. It also organized 10 online events, in which a total of 1,024 people participated. By taking advantage of a network of immigration-related museums in Japan and abroad, JICA co-organized an



Brazil: JICA provided bedside monitors and infusion pumps to the Amazonia Hospital, a *Nikkei* medical center in Belem City, Para State, at the request of a former JICA training participant who works at this hospital. The aim was to ensure efficient monitoring and treatment in response to increased admissions of serious cases toward the wider goal of maintaining the local health system. The photo shows that medical equipment thus provided is being tested.



Paraguay: JICA supported a Japanese school in La Paz Colony in building an environment for online classes. The school was struggling to hold classes because the pandemic made face-to-face classes difficult. Now children enjoy learning Japanese language while looking at the faces of their teachers and friends on the screen.

international symposium with the Historical Museum of Japanese Immigration in Brazil. It also announced the winners of the first JICA Essay Competition on Japanese emigration, which is part of efforts to collect and store old Japanese newspapers issued in countries in the region that are on the verge of being dispersed and lost.

Full-fledged export of emigrants' produce

The dispatch of JICA's Partnership

Promotion Survey Teams to Latin America and the Caribbean resulted in Okinawa Prefecture importing full-fat soy beans produced in Colonia Okinawa in Bolivia. Although cultural exchanges have been active to date, this was the first time that Japanese emigrants' produce was exported to Japan at full scale. It is hoped that this project, called "OKINAWA to Okinawa," will develop further in the future.