

Collaboration with Civil Society

Making International Cooperation a Part of Japanese Culture

JICA promotes and supports international cooperation activities by Japanese citizens. Through partnership with citizens, JICA aims to contribute to development issues with various approaches to promote understanding in international cooperation, and further to return the benefits of ties with developing countries to Japan's local communities. Among these activities, partnerships with NGOs and other organizations, local governments as well as JICA's volunteer programs and support for development education are introduced below.

Partnerships with NGOs and Other Organizations

JICA works to strengthen partnerships with NGOs and other organizations through (1) dialogue, (2) collaboration, and (3) activity support.

1. Dialogue

In fiscal 2020, JICA continued to arrange the nationwide NGO-JICA Dialogue Meeting as well as regional meetings designed to deepen discussions focused on regional issues. It also shared information on specific topics and held NGO-JICA study meetings aimed at exploring more opportunities for cooperation. In this way, JICA offered multiple platforms for dialogue according to specific objectives in order to facilitate discussions toward closer cooperation.



The Philippines: In an effort to address the COVID-19 crisis, ACTION, a Japanese non-profit organization (NPO), worked with JICA to organize online seminars on public health management and stress management for staff and children at orphanages in the country. The NPO also distributed sanitary goods among them. (Photo: ACTION)

2. Collaboration

JICA implements JICA Partnership Program (JPP) projects jointly with NGOs and other organizations by taking advantage of their expertise and experience in order to support the socioeconomic development of developing countries. In fiscal 2020, a total of 49 JPP projects were adopted.

Separately, JICA adopted 10 such projects financed by the JICA Donation Fund for the People of the World, which receives donations from citizens and groups.

During fiscal 2020, the spread of COVID-19 made international travel to partner countries difficult. Nevertheless, JICA continued its operations in a flexible manner. For example, JICA changed some project plans, reviewed implementation processes through remote consultations, and added ingenious adjustments as appropriate.

3. Activity support

JICA offers capacity-building training in organizational management and project execution to NGOs and other organizations to support their effective international cooperation activities. It also operates the NGOs-JICA Japan Desk in some 20 countries to enhance cooperation between these organizations and JICA in those developing countries.

Partnerships with Local Governments

JICA is also engaged in activities that not only help developing countries but also serve to vitalize regional areas in Japan. A case in point is JICA's close cooperation with Japanese local governments—particularly important partners of JICA—in an effort to support overseas activities of local governments and industries and encourage other related ventures as well as to internationalize the regions, chiefly by taking advantage of the Local Government-Type JICA Partnership Program and assigning coordinators for international cooperation.

JICA also helps local governments with their international cooperation projects and the development of global human resources by signing cooperation agreements with local governments. JICA employees on loan to local governments help them to address their own issues and revitalize their communities by capitalizing on the expertise and experiences gained through JICA's cooperation projects in developing regions.



54,863
JICA volunteers

were assigned in fiscal 1965–2020



2,198,454
people

visited the JICA Global Plaza in Ichigaya, Tokyo
in fiscal 2006–2020

Viet Nam: A JICA volunteer who has returned after she and other volunteers were evacuated en masse and put on standby in Japan. The volunteer, assigned in the category of support for children and persons with disabilities, is giving lessons designed to nurture concentration through exercises using balls and baskets. While she was on standby in Japan, she was engaged in helping Vietnamese living in her community with their daily lives as well as in revitalizing the community. Back in Viet Nam, she worked with her peer volunteers to produce awareness-raising videos on infection prevention incorporating Vietnamese songs and dances.



Nowadays, an increasing number of local governments and other regional actors make use of JICA's know-how and networks in accepting more foreigners, promoting the SDGs, and taking part in the Host Town Initiative for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Volunteer Programs

JICA's volunteer programs support activities by citizens who wish 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 (JOCVs), founded in 1965—are widely recognized as a good example of grassroots-level international cooperation extended by the Japanese government and JICA, and they are highly praised by partner countries. By the end of March 2021, more than 54,000 JICA volunteers have engaged in different activities in the developing world as Japanese conspicuous contributors to the international community.

In March 2020, all dispatched volunteers returned to Japan and the dispatch of new volunteers was suspended due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Volunteers on standby continued contributions with online tools as well as honed their abilities and skills for stronger support to partner countries, and also tackled domestic issues utilizing their experiences [→ see page 9]. Their activities across Japan were given particularly high regard. The JICA volunteer programs generated renewed expectations as an undertaking that trains and produces valuable human resources that can contribute to the globalization and revitalization of Japanese society as well as to the realization of multicultural coexistence in society.

At the end of November 2020, JICA resumed dispatches, starting with Viet Nam. By March 31, 2021, a total of 76 JICA volunteers were sent back or newly assigned to 14 countries.

Development Education

JICA Global Plaza

JICA's three Global Plazas—the JICA Global Plaza in Ichigaya, Tokyo; the Nagoya Global Plaza in Nagoya City, Aichi; and the Hokkaido Global Plaza in Sapporo City, Hokkaido—offer hands-on exhibitions that encourage seeing, listening, and touching. Visitors can receive explanations from Global Concierges, who have abundant experience in international cooperation. These Global Plazas offer the opportunity to learn about the realities in developing countries and the challenges facing the global community as well as international development cooperation at work, while encouraging visitors to think about what they learned and even translate it into action. These Plazas offer a number of events and seminars as well. Other domestic offices of JICA also provide a wide range of information on international cooperation for the public.

Promotion of development education at schools

JICA conducts activities aimed at promoting development education at school. The idea is to foster the abilities of students and pupils to (1) understand how development challenges facing the world relate to Japan, (2) regard them as their own problems, (3) proactively study them, and (4) participate in efforts to overcome them. Specific activities include working with local governments, teachers and school administrators, and NGOs to deliver lectures on international cooperation upon request and organize training sessions and seminars for teachers.

JICA, with its ample expertise, information, and human resources in international cooperation, has an ever increasingly larger role to play in classroom settings when progress is being made in the effort to foster creators of a sustainable society as called for in the New National Curriculum Standards, which came into effect in fiscal 2020.