

JICA celebrates International Volunteer Day to strengthen people-to-people exchange between India and Japan

New Delhi, December 3, 2021: International Volunteer Day is celebrated every year on December 5th to recognize the contribution of individual volunteers, communities and organizations to encourage development at the local, national and international levels. To promote international cooperation on volunteering, the JICA Volunteer programme was started in 1965. As of September 2021, about 55,000 volunteers have been dispatched in 98 countries and regions to work in areas such as agriculture, forestry and fisheries, fabrication, repair operations, civil engineering, sanitation, education and culture, sports as well as planning and administration.

In India, the JICA Volunteer programme was started a year later in 1966, to cooperate in developing India's human resource and improving lives in India. To this date, over 200 volunteers have been dispatched across various fields. They are categorized under two wide heads – Japan International Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs), who are energetic individuals aspiring to gain and impart knowledge, and Senior Volunteers (SV) who are relatively skilled and experienced in a specific field.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, there were 20 JOCVs working across India in fields such as Japanese Language Education, Sports, Community Development, Special Education and Primary Education. During the pandemic, though they were repatriated to Japan, they still continued to keep ties with India, such as, by conducting online classes for the Indian students from Japan and by providing sessions on Indian life and culture to the school students in Japan who otherwise had been unaware about India. In October 2021, India has started to receive JOCVs again and a rugby coach JOCV has been dispatched to a school in Gujarat to teach rugby as well as promote and develop rugby in the state.

Speaking on International Volunteer Day, **Mr. SAITO Mitsunori, Chief Representative, JICA India** said, *"We believe that our programme has a positive impact on the lives of the people, with our volunteers working with local communities at grassroots level, nurturing friendship and developing mutual understanding with them. JICA's vision for India is in alignment with the Government's program to build self-reliant communities. Our volunteers have been working with the people in India to support their efforts in being self-dependent and self-reliant by developing their skills and knowledge. We will continue to put our efforts in increasing the number of JOCV's in India."*

JICA continues to nurture the programme for the further promotion of international cooperation through the sharing of knowledge and experience, and people-to-people exchange between India and Japan. To mark the upcoming 70th anniversary of India-Japan diplomatic relations in India, JICA is aiming to recover the number of volunteers to pre-Covid levels to further enhance the people-to-people exchange between the two nations. For FY 2021, it is expecting a few more JOCVs to arrive in the country and trying to normalize the programme in FY 2022.



Rugby Coach Mr. Iwamizu Youhei, teaching rugby to students of Om Landmark School in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.



JOCVs have been working with the people in India to support their efforts in being self-reliant.

About JICA

Established, by a specific law, as an incorporated administrative institution under the Government of Japan, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) aims to contribute to the promotion of international cooperation, as a sole Japanese governmental agency in charge of ODA implementation. JICA is the world's largest bilateral donor agency. JICA works as a bridge between Japan and emerging countries, and provides assistance in forms of loan, grant and technical cooperation so that the emerging countries can strengthen their capabilities.

JICA India Office Web: <https://www.jica.go.jp/india/english/index.html>

JICA India Brochure:

https://www.jica.go.jp/india/english/office/others/c8h0vm00004cesxi-att/brochure_15.pdf

JICA Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/jicaindiapr/>

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