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Special

Publications Based on the Research Findings Released

Project History Series No.6 on Chagas' disease and the first academic book in Japanese on China's Foreign Aid released.

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Seminar Held on a Joint Research Project between Brookings and JICA

A seminar titled “Arab Spring Countries: Beyond Political Upheaval and toward Inclusive Growth” was convened at the Brookings Institution, located in Washington D.C., U.S. on January 31.

The event aimed to discuss the future of Arab countries, drawing on the findings from [five published papers](#); these [five papers](#), outcomes of the first-year research project, are part of a three-year research collaboration between the Brookings Institution and JICA. JICA-RI Research Fellow [Takako Yuki](#)'s research team wrote [one](#) of the five, taking Yemen, the poorest country in the Middle East. [The paper](#) analyzes an international comparison and domestic disparities in equity of educational opportunity as well as learning achievement; the paper also highlights the importance of proper deployment of teachers, enhancement of transparency in the school management including community participation, grant provision, and the effective monitoring system with use of existing data.

In association with the research collaboration, JICA-RI Research Fellow [Suguru Miyazaki](#) and Research Associate [Akira Murata](#) held [consultations for the second-year joint research](#) on “After the Arab Spring: Inclusive Growth in

the Middle East and the North Africa Regions” at the Brookings Institution on January 30 and 31.

During the consultations, with Mr. Hafez Ghanem, Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, Miyazaki and Murata exchanged their opinions on the following issues: the transformation triggered by the Arab Spring still in the developing stage; need to analyze the factors behind the emergence of the Arab Spring for continuing their support in the long term; recommendation of strategies for reforming the bloated public sector and improving the investment environment. Furthermore, as a policy proposal for youth employment, it was suggested that the Arab region could learn from experiences in Southeast Asia including Indonesia, where the proportion of the young among the working-age population in the 1970s was even higher than that in the Middle East and North Africa countries today.

These discussions led to the agreement that one of the themes for its second-year joint research project will be “a comparative study of job preferences among the youth in Egypt and Indonesia,” aiming at policy recommendations for the Middle East countries drawing on South-east Asian experience.



Public Seminar on Experimental Economics Held

On February 14, JICA-RI organized a [public seminar](#) to introduce experimental economics, which has been rapidly evolving in recent years, as a tool that can apply in the development fields.

Dr. Minhaj Mahmud from the Bangladesh Institute for Development Studies (BIDS), who has shown a remarkable work in this field, was invited as a guest speaker to this seminar, where he showcased examples and visions of his research with experimental economics approach.

Experimental economics is a methodology that seeks to identify patterns in decision-making and behaviors of economic agents, such as individuals, households and companies with observations through experiments in the laboratory and in the field. Today, experiments are being carried out in areas like public goods provision, financial markets and auctions. The results from the experiments could lead to some policy implication for development strategies.

During the seminar, Dr. Mahmud defined the experimental method as “a revolution to understand human behavior” and explained that this method observes how individuals make decisions under certain environments, and particularly how they allocate resources.

He stressed that it has the potential to create valuable knowledge for the fields of development studies and development policies.

Furthermore, he introduced his past and current Bangladesh research using the field experiments: 1) correlation between identity and trust; 2) demand for safe water products; and 3) road safety and drivers' risk-taking behaviors.

In the light of Dr. Mahmud's presentation, JICA-RI Visiting Research Fellow [Yasuyuki Sawada](#), Professor of the University of Tokyo, pointed out the significance of the experimental approach in economics, commenting on the potential of field experiments as the core instrument in modern development policies.

The Institute has been currently conducting a joint research project, entitled “Empirical Study on Risk and Poverty in Bangladesh,” which Research Fellow [Suguru Miyazaki](#) represents. Dr. Mahmud and Visiting Research Fellow Sawada, as members of the respective research groups of the project, are involved in the analysis on the study of road safety and drivers' risk-taking behaviors that was introduced in Dr. Mahmud's presentation. In this joint project, each research group attempts to employ the leading-edge approaches including a field experiment analysis.

<Related Link>

[* Dr. Mahmud's Presentation Materials](#)

[* Prof. Sawada's Presentation Materials](#)



Dr. Mahmud(left), JICA-RI Visiting Fellow [Sawada](#)(center), JICA-RI Research Fellow [Miyazaki](#)(right)

JICA-RI and CAITEC Exchange Ideas on Mutual Research Cooperation

On January 24 in Beijing, JICA-RI and Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation (CAITEC) exchanged views on Japanese and Chinese aid for Africa, along with the possibility of future research cooperation between the two institutions. [This meeting](#) was organized for the first time since the memorandum that both parties had signed last year.

JICA introduced its blueprint of Japanese aid for Africa toward the fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V) scheduled in Yokohama this June, while CAITEC explained their direction of aid for Africa following the fifth Forum on China and Africa Cooperation (FOCAC).

Furthermore, the Institute exchanged opinions on the overseas economic cooperation of Japan and China and a current international trend of development studies, as well as possibilities of future collaboration with researchers and officials of the several organizations—Economic Research Department of the Export-Import Bank of China, National School of Development and School of International Studies at Peking University, College of Humanities and Development Studies at China Agricultural University, Emerging Markets Institute at Beijing Normal University and others—as part of advancement of a research networking between the two countries.

Special

Publications Based on the Research Findings Released

On February 21, [Project History Series No.6 on Chagas' disease](#) was released; the endemic is a tropical parasitic disease prevalent in the Americas. This book traces back the history of JICA's technical cooperation to the disease control projects in Central America over the 30-year-period since 1975.

[The book](#) highlights the relentless efforts of a number of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs), including the author Ken Hashimoto. In coordination with the JICA Experts, the JOCVs played an essential role in implementing the vector control activities such as household surveys and residual insecticide spraying.

On January 18, [a book on China's Foreign Aid](#) was released from Nihon Keizai Hyoronsha. It is the first academic book in Japanese with an aim to get a whole picture of Chinese foreign aid through discussions from a diverse array of perspectives among the ten Chinese and Japanese experts.

JICA-RI is currently implementing a research project titled "Comparative Study on Development Cooperation Strategy." Deputy Director [Naohiro Kitano](#) and Research

Associate [Takaaki Kobayashi](#), both associated with the JICA-RI project, contribute to the book as authors. The English version of this book is scheduled to be released by the end of this year.

JICA-RI Released Three New Working Papers in February, 2013

"Institutional Development of Cross-Border Higher Education: The Case of an Evolving Malaysia-Japan Project" (No.52)
Authors: Kazuhiro Yoshida, Takako Yuki, and Nozomi Sakata

"China and the Two Crises: From 1997 to 2009" (No.53)
Author: Barry Naughton

"Measurements and Determinants of Multifaceted Poverty: Absolute, Relative, and Subjective Poverty in Indonesia" (No.54)
Authors: Teguh Dartanto and Shigeru Otsubo