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Hot Issue

A Reflection on JICA's Pioneering Project for the Empowerment of the Disabled

In an attempt to re-explore JICA's projects as a publication, JICA-RI's "Project History Series" welcomes the second title on uplifting stories about empowerment of the people with disabilities in the Asia-Pacific region, written by the former JICA chief advisor and the current executive director at the Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD).

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Papuan children welcoming APCD mission representative late Topong Kulkhanchit and local activists *Photo: Akiie Ninomiya*

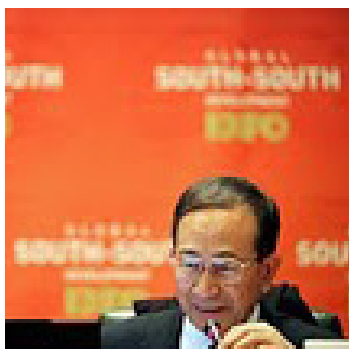


Review

Burundi: "Power Sharing" Alleviates Ethnic Conflicts

From Oct. 25 to Nov. 16, JICA-RI Senior Research Fellow Shinichi Takeuchi conducted a field survey in Burundi to gain an understanding of the effectiveness of their "power sharing institutions" in preventing future conflict. The survey confirmed these means working.

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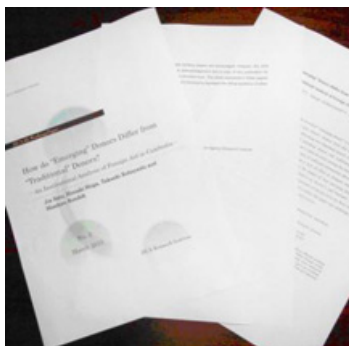


Review

JICA's Long-Term Efforts Positively Reviewed at the High-Level Meeting on South-South and Triangular Cooperation

On Nov. 23, JICA, together with UNDP and ILO, held an invitation-only meeting during the UN's Third Annual Global South-South Development Expo, and the sharing of JICA's accumulated knowledge stirred anticipation for ever-greater leadership.

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Special

Research Findings on Africa Now Available as Working Papers

JICA-RI released its new findings as three working papers from the research projects on expanding rice production in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the water supply management system in rural Africa .

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A Reflection on JICA's Pioneering Project for the Empowerment of the Disabled



Author Ninomiya visiting a bakery managed by staff with disabilities in the Philippines (2005) Photo: Akiie Ninomiya

History Re-examined

In the 36 years of JICA's history, a number of projects have been launched and implemented with a mission to contribute to improvement of developing countries by technical cooperation, ODA loans and grant aid. Now JICA's operation reaches out to nearly 150 countries and regions (as of FY2009). Yet, because projects are often elaborate and long-term, with relevant information so abundant, any effort to grasp the whole picture is no easy task. To evaluate the outcome and comprehend the significance of these projects, JICA-RI has commenced "Project History Series," which focuses on selected historical projects done by JICA, examines them multilaterally, and shares the findings as a Japanese book series, illustrated with personal episodes. By reflecting upon the past projects, JICA-RI aims to disseminate firsthand accounts of JICA's diverse operations and to apply invaluable lessons learned for better future contributions to international development.

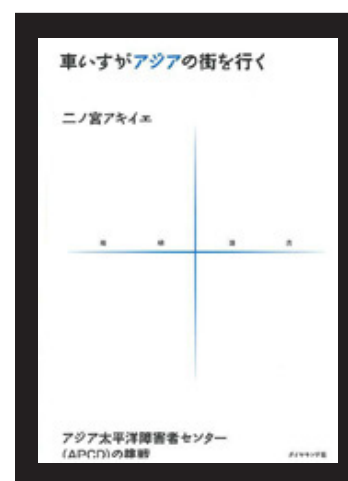
Two Books for Two Remarkable Tales

The first installment of the series is a retrospec-

tive look at a JICA's technical cooperation project entitled "The Japanese who Changed Chile into a Great Salmon-Exporting Country," written by Senior Research Fellow Akio Hosono. The project spawned a salmon-breeding industry in 1970's-80's Chile, consequently elevating the nation to a leading exporter of the product. (See JICA-RI Newsletter No.13 July 2010 issue for more.)

This month the collection introduces "Living Independently with a Wheelchair in Asian Cities," a publication on the initiative of the Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD) project, which started in Bangkok by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security of the Royal Thai Government and JICA in 2002. Crafted by Akiie Ninomiya, the first chief advisor and the current executive director of APCD, the book invites readers to follow as his team empowers the disabled who are often deprived of opportunities for social participation. The project has received an international acclaim for its pioneering approach; people with disabilities play central roles instead of residing in the periphery, further empowering fellow disabled individuals in the Asia-Pacific region. APCD has produced disability leaders in 32 nations and continues to play a crucial role in the realization of a barrier-free world.

For being a quintessential South-South and triangular cooperation case, this JICA project is an excellent model of contribution to capacity development. The book will serve as an informational source for development and cooperation projects to follow in the future.



Burundi: “Power Sharing” Alleviates Ethnic Conflicts

A Shift in the Nature of Political Disputes among the Elite Class

In Burundi and Rwanda, ethnic conflicts between “Tutsi” and “Hutu” have repeatedly erupted in the past. With almost identical ethnic component ratios, the two neighboring countries share similar factors of conflict. However, they’ve adopted contrasting political institutions. Contrary to Rwanda, where the political power has been controlled by the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), the victor of the civil war, Burundi has institutionalized a unique power sharing system (see [table](#)).

Through comparative analysis of these countries, the survey is to verify the effectiveness of political institutions in conflict prevention, and is part of JICA-RI’s research project “[Prevention of Violent Conflicts in Africa](#).”

In Burundi, JICA-RI Senior Research Fellow Shinichi Takeuchi interviewed more than 40 people, including Chief Secretary of the First Vice President’s Office, Deputy Chief Secretary of the Second Vice President’s Office, President of Hutu-led “Front for Democracy in Burundi (FRODEBU),” President of Tutsi-led “Union for National Progress (UPRONA),” chiefs of regional *collines* (the smallest administrative units), and officials from international organizations.

What first became clear was every interviewee’s favorable reaction to the power sharing policy, and that it was well observed by the stakeholders.

A shift in the nature of political disputes was also apparent among the elite class. “It’s no longer a plain question of Tutsi or Hutu,” Takeuchi points out.

The diminishing role of ethnicity in the political disputes among the political elite could mean significantly in the context of conflict prevention. Various factors lead to conflict, but those arising from ethnicity hold a powerful mobilizing force, and are dangerous because of it, as seen in the tragedies of Burundi and Rwanda. And in many cases, it’s the political elite that mobilize the people.

Takeuchi observes, “Burundi carries latent woes including ‘weak governance’ and ‘low standard

of living,’ but it’s succeeded in alleviating ethnic tensions among the elite class through the institutionalization of a power sharing system.”

Remaining Conflictive Issues

However, the survey also revealed the limitations in power sharing policies. Among them is the strong tendency of the ruling party “National Council for the Defense of Democracy – Forces for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD-FDD)” to occupy key positions and control the state institutions under this current framework. Critics point out the general public voice despair and anger towards the government now due to the resulting corruption and repression.

This led the “Forces for National Liberation (FNL),” a Hutu-led group like the CNDD-FDD, to resort to violence and heightened tension with the ruling party. This political rivalry has replaced ethnicity to become a new root of conflict, with FNL and other parties boycotting the elections in 2010.

Furthermore, issues rooting from ethnicity remain unresolved, with land issues looking more as a potential factor of conflict in the near future. An estimated 500,000 Hutu refugees from the civil war in 1972 are gradually returning after the inauguration of the new regime. Yet, the lands they left behind over 30 years ago are mostly occupied by other people including Tutsis.

But Tutsis were also victimized by Hutus in the civil war of 1993. Tutsi evacuees still live in camps for internally displaced persons. With land so limited, the question is how peasants can peacefully compromise. There’s still a risk that this problem might take on an ethnic character.

[Outline of Ethnic Power Sharing Institutions in Burundi’s Constitution \(2005\)](#)

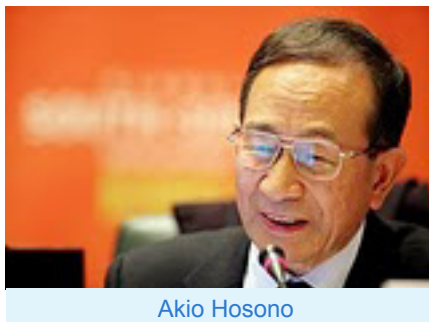
Vice President	The two Vice Presidents must belong to different ethnic groups and different political parties. (Article 124)
The Cabinet	The cabinet must consist of a maximum of 60% Hutu, 40% Tutsi. (Article 129)
Military / Police	The Corps of Defense and Security must have no more than 50% of members belonging to a particular ethnic group. (Article 257)
National Assembly	The National Assembly must have 60% Hutu and 40% Tutsi members. (Article 164)

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JICA's Long-Term Efforts Positively Reviewed at the High-Level Meeting on South-South and Triangular Cooperation

The highlight from the day was a 20-plus-minute-long presentation given by JICA-RI Senior Research Fellow Akio Hosono. He elaborated on Japan's wide variations of relevant operations over the years and shared abundant experiences with an exclusive audience at ILO Headquarters in Geneva. About 170 attendants, including director-general-level officials at cooperation agencies of emerging nations and representatives of donor countries and international organizations, listened attentively, and many of them, particularly from developing countries, openly expressed appreciation for JICA's trailblazing work of the past three decades.

The concept of [South-South and triangular cooperation](#) has been greatly debated, and its high potential to enhance cost-effectiveness and smooth transfer of knowledge was long recognized from geographical, environmental, cultural and economical standpoints. Yet, while not many were too aggressive, JICA has been the leading force, collaborating with pivotal countries and promoting cooperation between developing countries. As some of the traditional recipient nations such as Brazil and China are rapidly gaining presence as an emerging aid provider, and the damage from the financial crisis looms over industrial nations, there's a high chance this mechanism rise to mainstream. The time is nearly ripe, especially with the commitment to development by the global leaders officially manifested at G20 Summit in Seoul in November.



Akio Hosono

Research Associate Shunichiro Honda, who also attended the meeting, felt the air of excitement. He says, "The exuberance of the South countries was striking. Discussions on development are no longer possible without them." Hosono adds, "JICA's role is considerable in this context and capacity development research can substantially contribute to the discussions of South-South and triangular cooperation."

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Special

Research Findings on Africa Now Available as Working Papers

One of the working papers (WP) published this month summarizes the research findings from JICA-RI's project: "[An Empirical Analysis of Expanding Rice Production in Sub-Saharan Africa](#)," which gauges the impact of JICA's assistant measures to increase rice productivity in Eastern Uganda. (WP No.25)

Remaining two WPs present the accomplishments of the project: "[Management of Water Users' Associations and Formation of Collaborative Local Society in Rural Africa](#)." They respectively illustrate the verification of how villagers in Southern Senegal cooperate together to maintain and manage water supply systems, and the clarification of causality in collective management of common pool resources as water supply systems.

(WP No.23, 24)

[Click here](#) for all JICA-RI working papers