

The Japan International Cooperation Agency Research Institute expresses its deepest condolences to the victims and families of the March 11 earthquake and tsunami.

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Workshop on East Asian Cross-Border Higher Education Held in Bangkok

East Asia has seen active intraregional educational exchanges and collaborations in recent years. JICA-RI team has been examining this phenomenon and held a workshop in Thailand to share its findings.

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JICA-RI held the workshop on East Asian Cross-Border Higher Education in Bangkok.



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Colombia's second largest city Medellín achieved great success in redeveloping its slums and reducing crime rates. "Capacity Development (CD)" of residents and local government officials is credited for playing a considerable role in this success story.

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Review

How to Expand African Economies Further

Sub-Saharan Africa has seen a relative economic growth in recent years but a great leap is needed to advance the current trend to the next level. Experts in Chinese and African economies gathered in Ethiopia to discuss various topics on the theme to secure enabling environment for business development in Africa.

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Workshop on East Asian Cross-Border Higher Education Held in Bangkok

Waves of Active Educational Cooperation

Since the 1980s, Southeast Asia has started to experience an economic surge and, instead of depending solely on Europe or the U.S., they have put effort into promoting intraregional cooperation in the area of commerce and finance. Education is no exception. Pushed by a rising need for higher education, there are thousands of student and teacher exchanges and cross-border degree programs created. For example, the number of Asian schools which have an exchange agreement with Japanese universities skyrocketed from 57 in 1981 to 2,948 in 2006. This pan-Asian phenomenon is showing a sign to expand further, pushed by ever increasing policy discussions on the regionalization of higher education in East Asia.

Latest Findings Shared

JICA-RI's visiting fellow [Kazuo Kuroda](#) (Waseda University) and research fellow [Takako Yuki](#)'s team is conducting a project to examine the trends and effectiveness of cross-border programs. To share its preliminary findings, they held a workshop in Bangkok on February 23-24, 2011. The event was co-hosted by Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO RIHED), and about 50 guests including government officials, development agencies and international organizations like UNESCO Bangkok, and experts in higher education participated.



Takako Yuki (left) and Kazuo Kuroda (right)

The workshop, titled Analysis of Cross-Border Higher Education for Regional Integration and Labor Market in East Asia, was divided into three sessions. The first focused on the analysis of the survey JICA-RI team implemented on the internationalization of 300 leading universities in East Asia and their cross-border collaborative degree programs. Yuki and Kuroda revealed widespread recognition of the importance and the potential for promoting regional alliances and boosting economic development.

At the second session, JICA-RI research collaborator and Hiroshima University professor Kazuhiro Yoshida and JICA-RI education expert Yoshiko Koda spoke on the JICA's projects to promote Malaysian engineering students' study in Japan. Yoshida covered the influence of the Higher Education Loan Projects (HELP) on institutional governance. Koda compared HELP's second phase with the Look East Policy Program to find differences in the effectiveness and in their graduates' activities.

On the second day, leading figures in East Asian higher education, including UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education director Gwang-Jo Kim and SEAMEO RIHED acting director Supachai Yavaprabhas, discussed their strategies for international development and regional cooperation.

Reflecting on the workshop, Yuki says, "It was stimulating as the distinguished guests actively provided their valuable comments on our work." On the prospect of future Japanese involvement, Kuroda elaborates: "Before, Japan-Southeast Asia relationship was that of donor-recipient, but now, with the improving quality of Asian schools' researches it's changing to more equal partnership. Japan can take the leadership and contribute to building a foundation of regional interchanges."

The JICA-RI's research team is currently preparing papers on this agenda. With the feedback and comments received at the workshop, they plan to publish them later this year.

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Investigating Colombia's Success in Slum Redevelopment

The Colombian government and agencies in charge of the development and planning of major urban areas such as Bogotá and Medellín have made efforts to redevelop cities by providing housing for lower income households and enhancing urban transportation. Some officials from these organizations were once participants of JICA Obihiro International Center's "Training Course for Urban Planning and Land Readjustment" and many have actively undertaken renovation projects by referring to what they learned about Japanese land readjustment. Their experiences in Japan have also been useful in examining how they should implement redevelopment projects in impoverished communities.

To observe the progress of the project, senior research fellow [Akio Hosono](#) conducted a survey and directly spoke with local community leaders and officials of Medellín's Urban Development Enterprise (EDU), which mediated between the Medellín city government and residents. Hosono identified three distinctive features of this project: 1) the fostering of an understanding and trusting relationship between the city government, EDU and residents was a significant factor in the project's success; 2) appropriate redevelopment methods were determined through discussions among involved parties; and 3) a commission of housewives was established. The process suggests that capacity development (CD) took place in both sides of the administration and the residents of Medellín.

JICA-RI outlines the following five elements as factors needed to strengthen CD in developing countries: "ownership," "trigger of CD processes,"



Hosono discussing with Medellín City officers

"mutual learning and collaboration," "scale-up strategies," and "assistance." In terms of "ownership," giving property rights of land and buildings to slum residents prompted their participation in the projects. Meanwhile, on "trigger of CD processes," the establishment of a comprehensive law on urban planning paved the way, which authorized municipalities to implement their own development plans.

The difficult part is grasping how these factors work to create "chemical" reactions. Hosono confirmed the importance of "mutual learning and collaboration." The collaboration process, through which people built trust and worked together to put the ideas into practice, helped to resolve numerous problems in the slums.

Hosono explains the prospects of the study: "For the further mainstreaming of the CD concept in future ODA projects, I hope to systematically unravel its process, and to classify and analyze the processes of different CD types by examining specific case studies. This would lead to the formulation of guidelines and benchmarks of each country's CD level. Pursuing this research would hopefully encourage the mainstreaming of the CD concept in future development assistance projects."

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Medellin: before and after its development
Photo: Empresa de Desarrollo Urbano

How to Expand African Economies Further

African Economies: On Growth Path and at Crossroads

Africa is perhaps the place where the power of Mother Nature is felt most strongly. Glaring sun can scorch the earth and cause droughts, while abundant natural resources enrich the life on the continent, where humankind is said to originate. It is no surprise that primary products such as dairy, minerals and oil are the main trading items and contributor to the current growth in the region. Over the 2000-2009 period, Sub-Saharan Africa recorded its strongest and long-lasting growth since the 1960s (annual GDP growth rate of 5.6% on average). Yet, that hasn't been enough to get it out of the poverty cycle and the region remains one of the least developed areas of the world. Meanwhile, China, now the world's second largest economy, is gaining recognition as a prominent trade partner of Africa. According to JICA-RI's research fellow [Jean-Claude Maswana](#), China represented less than 2% of Africa's export market in 1990, but the figure jumped to 15% in two decades. Its impact is significant. A golden opportunity for further development may lie here if African countries can benefit from China's presence in the continent.

Learn from Chinese Case and Utilize

Maswana, who leads the JICA-RI's research to explore areas of potential drivers of growth for African economies, attended a China-DAC study group event in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and gave a presentation before a 100-plus audience. The gathering was co-organized by the International Poverty Reduction Centre (IPRCC) of China, OECD/DAC and the African Union, on February 16th and 17th, 2011. Officials from China, African countries and OECD member states, and experts in relevant fields, spoke on the theme of enabling environment for enterprise development in Africa.

In a preliminary paper titled "Emerging Patterns in Sino-African Trade and Potentials for Enterprise Development" which the presentation was based on, he examined diverse trading patterns to identify Africa's export competitiveness and trade opportunities. Using China's trade dynamics

with developed Asia and with developing Asia as references, Maswana shared his findings including: 1) The pattern of African trade with China is primary-commodity dependent; 2) The main mechanism of China's economic success—its role as an assembly line in the global value chains—has been the driving force behind the dynamics of trade in Asia; and 3) There exists major potentials for Africa in manufacturing industry, particularly labor-intensive products such as parts and components.

The Key: Shift to Manufacturing

Taken together, the above points suggest Africa's trade hasn't leveraged the Chinese trade dynamics, and Africa needs to increase its manufactured exports share to China, Maswana argues. He says African enterprises should shift into activities better-suited to technology absorption.

Additionally, various means like foreign direct investment could help. Maswana: "If a global company builds a factory in Africa, they can provide hands-on-training opportunity. This is one of the areas where donor countries can do something more with their assistance."

Transformation cannot be achieved overnight, but he believes it can start from basic technology like bicycle-manufacturing.

Whether Africa can capture the moment and break into the global market depends largely on their own efforts, but JICA and other development organizations' effective support can work to support their endeavor.

**The outcome of this research will be published as a working paper later this year.*

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