His Majesty King Abdullah II has laid on October 17th, 2014 the foundation of the Petra Museum, which will contribute in maintaining the historical heritage of the City. The Museum, which is funded by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) grant with a cost of 6.8 million US$ is expected to be completed in 2016. The museum will showcase historical and archaeological artifacts discovered in Petra region and raise the local community awareness on protecting both tangible and intangible heritage of Petra. The ceremony attended by the Prime Minister, Dr. Abdullah Al-Nsour, Chief of Royal Court. Dr. Fayez Tarawneh, Minister of Labor & Tourism and Antiquities, Dr. Nedal Katamine, Chief Commissioner of Petra Development & Tourism Authority, Dr. Mohammed Nawafleh, Embassy of Japan staffs and JICA Chief Representative, Mr. Shokichi Sakata.
On November 26, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) signed a grant agreement (G/A) with the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to provide grant aid of up to 2.238 billion yen (equivalent to approximately 20 million USD) for assistance for the Project for Rehabilitation and Expansion of the Water Networks in Balqa Governorate. This agreement was signed as a follow-up of the Exchange of Notes which was signed on November 20 during King Abdullah 2nd visit to Japan.

By improving and upgrading the water supply systems, the project aims to improve the state of water supply, reduce water losses in the network and decrease electricity consumption in Deir Alla and in Ain Al Basha, where some of the water is supplied from the Zai Treatment Plant which was expanded with a Japanese grand aid project totaling 7.422 billion yen (equivalent to approximately 70 million USD) in 2001.

This project will install 35.24 kilometers of pipes, construct three reservoirs with a total capacity of 5,300 cubic meters, construct a pumping station and carry out related work. The expected number of beneficiaries from this project is around 167,000 people. In Jordan, the water demand far exceeds the supply. One of the largest energy consumers, the water sector uses more than 18 percent of the electricity generated in Jordan. Therefore, it is of fundamental importance to improve waterworks management, and achieve the objectives of this project. Working with this perspective, JICA has been implementing several rehabilitation, improvement and expansion waterworks studies and projects throughout Jordan, including in Amman, Zarqa, the Jordan Valley, Tafieleh and recently the northern governorates which are affected by the influx of Syrian refugees, aiming at improving the availability and reliability of the water supply as well as reducing energy consumption. So far, JICA has provided 21.113 billion yen (equivalent to approximately 200 million USD) in total as grant aid for implementing projects in the water sector.
Prime Minister Dr. Abdullah Al Nsour inaugurated yesterday Raghadan Bus Terminal with a cost of 7 million and 450 thousand JD, where Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) financed 80% around 5 million and 960 thousand JD.

Amman Mayor Aqel Biltaji said that the inauguration of Raghadan Bus Terminal comes as part of the royal directions for reviving the down town in line with inaugurating the Hashemite Plaza last March, and the project of developing Amman Center which led to developing and improving a number of utilities and locations in the down town and facilitating the traffic movement.

He added that this Project represents a model of JICA projects and the benefits of the partnership with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), where we announce the operation of “Raghadan Bus and it is a new and main step in reviving the down town and returning the glamour to it which includes the elements of place, human and time.

Beltaji pointed that Raghadan terminal will be the focal point of the tourism movement in Amman, and it will transfers the tourists back and forth, provides various tourist services starting from transportation means, traditional handicrafts, services and restaurants and information center. In addition to facilitating the movement of the citizens in the down town through the “shuttle bus” that enables it users from parting their cars outside the down town and commute by using buses that move every ten minutes leading to facilitating the movement and reducing the traffic jam.

Beltaji praised the government decision in approving the Municipality’s decision in exempting the merchants of the down town, who were affected financially during the last years after transferring the passengers’ bus terminal to Al Mahatta, from the fees with a total cost of two millions and one hundred eighty thousand dinars.

From his side, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Dr. Ibrahim Saif presented his appreciation to Japan’s government and people on the development assistance which it had presented and still presenting to Jordan. Especially in this condition where the Jordanian government is encountering economic and financial challenges due to the current political conditions in the region and the consecutive economic crisis which the whole world is going through.

He also pointed that the continuous financial and technical support presented by Japan to Jordan has tangibly contributed in supporting the efforts of the government in realizing sustainable growth and development. He also praised the role and impact of the programs and projects presented and still being presented by Japan to various Jordanian institutions, helping in realizing the required growth rates, improving the living standards of the citizens and upgrading the national economy in all sectors.

Mr. Masayuki Magushi, Charge’ d’ Affaires in the Embassy of Japan to Amman, said that this Project is one out of six projects financed by the Japanese government with a total cost reaching to 70 million dollar for serving the tourism in Jordan.

Prime Minister removed the curtains from the memorial plate which carries the name of the complex, and listened to an explanation on the Municipality plan for operating the terminal in a way that enhances the tourism product in the down town and reflecting positively on the commercial movement.

The Prime Minister went around the terminal and viewed the Jett Tourism Buses, Avis Rent a Car Company, tourism buses and the shuttle bus affiliated to the Integrated Company for Transportation which its trail passes through the down town and includes Al Muhajeren crossing, Al Hussein Cultural Center, Al Quds Street, Jordan Museum, the Fountains Yard, Al Aqwaf Yard, Vegetable Souq, Sabeel Al Houreyat, Amman Municipality Library, Al Shabsogh, Faisal Yard and then Municipality Building, Al Hussein Cultural center, and ending with the Al Muhajeren Crossing. Raghadan Bus Terminal includes public parks for vehicles and tourism buses, four towers and commercial shops which the Municipality has put them for lease, including tourism transportation, handicraft shops, restaurants and internet café, traditional clothes, mini market, sweets, Dead Sea products, handicraft shops and other things related to the tourism product and presenting services to the tourists.
Kindergarten workshops for the Supervisors of Ministry of Education

By: Sawsan Haddad - Program Officer at JICA Jordan Office

Japanese Kindergarten volunteers’ in Jordan gathered to conduct workshops for the Kindergarten & the lower grades teachers and supervisors in three regions, north, south and middle. The workshops were conducted in cooperation between Ministry of Education, Directorate of Early childhood education and JICA Jordan Office.

Volunteers presented practical activities on how to deal with situations that face the teachers inside the class room. They demonstrated the solution as short plays. This new type of activity helped the participants to understand the difficulties teachers face every day in the class room with the children. Showing the teachers how “to guide the children behavior” was welcomed by the trainees without exceptions.

Kindergarten volunteers in cooperation with Ministry of Education staff also conduct many activities that were included in The Guide Book of Activities that was distributed to all the teachers of the kindergarten in Jordan. The activities were very simple and enjoyable for the teacher and the student at the same time. During the workshops the volunteers used raw and recycled materials that need very low budget.. It was important to show that good teaching depends on the good methods of teaching that are very basic and simple.

JICA dispatches Kindergarten teacher volunteers to Marfaq, Ajloun and Madaba directorates under Ministry of Education to promote the emotional education with teachers in this field.