



*Primary school children from Tiriki in Western Kenya share experiences with primary school children in Japan, via satellite communication.*

## Kenyan and Japanese Children Share Experiences via Satellite

It was one of the most unforgettable experiences for primary school children from Tiriki in western Kenya when they visited JICA offices in Nairobi recently to participate in a live discussion via satellite with children in Japan.

From a room at the Rahimtulla building, they were able to hold a forty-five minute discussion with children of the same age and class in Japan in what turned out to be a very interesting discussion.

What do you eat? How do you play? How do you spend your school holidays? Would you like to visit Kenya? Would you like to visit Japan? What kind of toys do you play with? And many other questions of interest to the children from the two countries were exchanged as the two groups faced each other 'live'.

Throughout the program, the children learned a lot about each other's country, cultures, school and ways of life. It was one of the best ways to



*Kenyan pupils in a satellite meeting with Japanese Pupils.*

make children from such two diverse cultures and geographical regions that are so far apart learn about each other. It established a bonding that will last throughout their lives.

The event was organized through the JICA office and primary school teachers from Tiriki who accompanied their pupils during the event.



### Background

The Regional Support Office for Eastern and Southern Africa (ReSOESA) was established in October 2004. This was in line with JICA's new policy to give more authority to overseas offices, as part of its organizational and operational reform programme. As a result, overseas offices handle more responsibility and require greater support in the following areas:

- Aid strategy formulation;
- Program and project formulation;
- Monitoring and evaluation (M&E);
- Cross-country networking; and
- Training programme.

Support is also provided to enhance and reinforce efforts in common regional issues, project formulation, accounting and procurement. ReSOESA provides the above support to countries mainly in Eastern and Southern Africa, namely Botswana, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe (countries with JICA Offices) and Angola, Burundi, Comoros, Eritrea, Lesotho, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Swaziland (countries without JICA Offices).

### Objectives

The priority of development issues and the government capacity to effectively manage and absorb development resources varies from country to country and from institution to institution; thus, aid strategies and approaches must be tailored to each particular set of circumstances. In this context, JICA country offices must strengthen their capacity to formulate more effective country assistance programmes and projects in line with partner countries' development strategies. Furthermore, such programmes and projects must be carefully monitored and evaluated, in close collaboration with other concerned actors.

As this capacity of JICA country offices varies from one office to another, there is a great necessity for upgrading. In order to meet the capacity required for sound program formulation and effective programme implementation, JICA country offices need support.

Thus, the objective of ReSOESA is to improve JICA's region-specific programme/project implementation capabilities, as well as its aid effectiveness and impact on development.

### Development Areas Prioritized by ReSOESA

Considering the current needs in the region, ReSOESA has set the following main six target areas:

Programmes Based Approaches (PBA)

- Africa-Asia Cooperation;
- Agriculture and Rural Development;
- Education;
- Health;
- Peace Building and Post Conflict Reconstruction; and
- Regional JICA Staff Training Programme.

### Recent Activities

Currently, ReSOESA is planning/implementing the following key activities:

#### i. Promoting Africa-Asia Cooperation

In order to provide quality support activities and promote Asia-Africa cooperation, ReSOESA will strengthen collaborative relationships with key resource organizations in both Eastern and Southern Africa and Asia.

Some of the key roles of this sector are to analyze the needs Africa-Asia cooperation, create a strategy for promoting the concept and to support formulation and implementation of the sector's programmes/projects.

#### ii. Agriculture and Rural Development

During 2006, the ARD team was involved in the development of assistance strategy papers for Burundi specifically in Agriculture, Water Resources and Irrigation. At the same time, it conducted project formulation, monitoring and evaluation missions in Zimbabwe, Kenya, and Mozambique among other countries in the region. A notable achievement of the team during the year however, was the publication of three books: *Participatory Approaches to Sustainable Village Development*



*A Thai Expert demonstrates to Kenyan farmers how to dry mangoes as a technique of value addition to agricultural products for diversification and better market.*

(PASViD) in Sub-Saharan Africa in both English and Japanese; and *Sustainable Agriculture Technologies (SAT) for Sub-Saharan Africa*. These books have been distributed in all JICA offices and a good number of institutions of higher learning in the region.

### iii. Education Sector

In 2006, the ReSOESA Education Sector supported the Joint Education Sector Review in Tanzania, a country where aid coordination is very advanced. It has also supported the SMASSE Project, which began in Kenya and has now been adopted in other Sub-Saharan African countries.

Analysis of development framework of education sectors in priority countries was carried out, and support given to programme/project formulation and M & E activities in this region. Some of these were the preparation of Education Sector Development Frameworks for Rwanda, Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda.

### iv. Health Sector

In the area of developing assistance strategy papers, the health sector came up with a HIV/AIDS Guidance Paper for Project Formulation in Eastern and Southern Africa, and the Infectious Diseases Guidance Paper for Project Formulation in Eastern and Southern Africa. Support has been

provided across countries in the region in the form of programme/ project formulation and M & E activities for the Health Sector.

### v. Peace Building and Post Conflict Reconstruction

Peace building and reconstruction activities in the region have received great support from ReSOESA. Countries emerging from conflict have benefited from technical assistance in post conflict reconstruction in areas such as health, education, agriculture and reconstruction of their depleted infrastructures. Through the support of ReSOESA, new field offices have been opened in South Sudan (Juba) and in Burundi (Bujumbura), and Sudan (Khartoum). This is in line with the policy of effectiveness, efficiency and speed, since it will be easier to plan, implement and monitor development projects from the field offices.

### vi. Regional JICA Staff Training Program

In order for national staff in the region to take a more responsible role in JICA activities, the staff training programme ensures that they are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills. Some of the activities carried out have been training workshops and seminars, as well as information sharing through the bi-monthly bulletin NAMBU (New Aid Management Bulletin). This bulletin is a forum where staff share information on activities in their countries, and the impact that their projects have had towards development and the motto of "For a better tomorrow for all".



*JICA Regional National staff participates in a training Programme in Uganda.*



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