Emily Rinangyan had to cross rivers and walk for miles to get to the nearest elementary school, but she persevered to help her family and her fellow Mangyans. With JICA's assistance through a technical cooperation for grassroots project that a Japanese non-governmental organization (NGO) implements, Emily fulfilled her dream of becoming a midwife. Now, it is her turn to help her community.

Like in Emily's hometown in Mindoro, there are still a lot of places in the Philippines which lack access to basic social services. JICA works with various channels to bring the needed services closer to the people. While many of JICA's initial projects concentrated on agriculture, forestry and maintenance schemes, today it focuses more on such fields as education and health. JICA works with the Philippine Government in improving Science and Math education in the country, as well as Maternal and Child Health, among others.
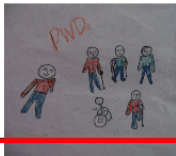
Aside from bilateral cooperation, JICA likewise assists Japanese NGOs, universities and local government units in implementing development activities outside of Japan.

A concept called "Human Security" has been increasingly incorporated into JICA programs. While acknowledging the importance of top-down large-scale and nationwide infrastructure programs such as road building, human security emphasizes a bottom-up grassroots approach, giving local citizens and communities a greater role in education, health and economic projects that directly benefit them.

POVERTY REDUCTION

Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV)

JICA dispatches about 20 volunteers to the Philippines every year. As of September 2008, 1,370 volunteers have been sent to the Philippines, making it the second largest JOCV recipient. The volunteers, who are trained and qualified professionals in a variety of technical disciplines, work at the local level in order to best meet the needs of the host country, as well as deepen the understanding of culture and traditions and build genuine friendships between volunteers and hosts.