

ANNIVERSARY SERIES

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(JICA Team Leader for MSSSI, 1999-2006)

JICA implemented its first technical cooperation project, the Mpumalanga Secondary Science Initiative (MSSI) Project, in South Africa from 1999 to 2006. With the Mpumalanga Department of Education (MDE) as counterpart, the Project retrained secondary Mathematics and Science (M&S) teachers. JICA responded to the call for international support from the Presidential Education Initiative made by the late President Nelson Mandela in 1995. It was designed to help MDE establish a school-based in-service education and training (INSET) system. MSSSI had three unique features. Firstly, JICA took two groups of MDE educators, one with M&S curriculum implementers, and another with education administrators, to Japan for four to six weeks. The visit afforded MDE officials an opportunity to observe the Japanese teacher training system and to formulate an INSET system for M&S teachers, with support from Hiroshima University and Naruto University of Education. Secondly, the Project was actually a trilateral partnership, with the University of Pretoria (UP) joining by contributing its M&S faculty resources. UP professors accompanied the MDE educators to Japan, helped extract and interpret the lessons from Japan's experience, and provided support, along with the visiting Japanese faculty, for the implementation of the INSET system. Thirdly, MDE offered the Project as receiving ground for JICA volunteers who were M&S teachers. During the project period, 135 MDE educators participated in the Japan visit, accumulating valuable learning experiences and fostering lasting human relations. They also collectively picked up the Japanese teachers' practice of "Furikaeri" (Reflection). Unlike before the Project, Mpumalanga is doing well when considering South Africa's M&S Matric scores.

Photos: Below



Prof Nagao, standing far left, with MDE educators.