

(1) Enhancing Human Resources and Intellectual Foundations for Development Cooperation

To implement effective and strategic development cooperation, it is essential to secure and foster human resources with advanced knowledge of development challenges, as well as public understanding and support.

The Government of Japan has set a target of 1,000 Japanese working for UN-related agencies by 2025. To this end, in collaboration with universities and Japan offices of international organizations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) actively recruits, trains and supports Japanese nationals who can play active roles on the global stage.³⁴ As mentioned in the recommendations made by the Advisory Board for ODA, considering the development of global human resources, including those engaged in development cooperation, as an urgent issue, the government organizes seminars in and outside of Japan to explain the recruitment system of international organizations to a wide range of audiences, including students at secondary and higher educational institutions and professionals already employed. Recently, seminars mainly take place online, allowing incumbent Japanese staff of international organizations to remotely participate and share their experiences. Also, among other things, the government produces videos and holds seminars featuring senior officials and human resource experts from international organizations.

Moreover, the Government of Japan offers the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) Programme, supporting Japanese professionals who pursue careers in international organizations, including those engaged in the area of international development (see "Stories from the Field" on page 37, "Featured Project" on page 62, and "Stories from the Field" on page 151 for examples of Japanese staff members at international organizations, including one sponsored under the JPO Programme). MOFA established the JPO Programme in 1974 and has since sent a cumulative total of over 2,000 JPOs. The program marked its 50th anniversary in 2024. In FY2023, 55 JPOs were dispatched. In addition, MOFA implements the "Program for Global Human Resource Development for Peacebuilding and Development."³⁵

Through the Participatory Network for Expert Recruitment (PARTNER)³⁶ website, JICA centrally distributes information on international cooperation (such as recruitment and various training and seminar opportunities) undertaken by a wide range of actors such as ministries, agencies, JICA, NGOs, international organizations, companies, and universities. It also provides services such as human resources registration services and career counseling. Furthermore, JICA offers internships to university and graduate students who are interested in Japan's international cooperation and are willing to play an active role as international cooperation personnel in various fields in the future. JICA also engages competent professionals with extensive work experience in developing countries through the Senior Advisor System while administering the Associate Experts Program and the Capacity Enhancement Training in support of human resources development.

Furthermore, the JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development analyzes knowledge gained in the field of development cooperation, provides feedback on research results to JICA projects, and contributes to the realization of human security and the achievement of the SDGs by publishing reports and academic books on human security and organizing symposiums.



Mr. HARADA Masatake, Education Officer at UNICEF Mozambique, with children participating in the pre-school education program supported by UNICEF (Photo: UNICEF Mozambique)

³⁴ The website of the Recruitment Center for International Organizations (<https://www.mofa-irc.go.jp/>) (in Japanese only) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides information on vacancies in international organizations and other information related to careers in international organizations.

³⁵ See ⁴⁰ on page 50.

³⁶ International Cooperation Career Information Website "PARTNER" <https://partner.jica.go.jp/> (in Japanese only)

(2) Efforts on Information Disclosure and the Promotion of Public Understanding and Support

In today's globalized world, Japan and developing countries are in a relationship of mutual support. Japan's ODA is of great significance as a critical effort by Japan to contribute to the peace and prosperity of the world, including developing countries, and thereby defend Japan's national interests. Since ODA is funded from the public resources of the people of Japan, it is crucial to communicate the significance and efforts of development cooperation in an easily understandable manner, and to gain the recognition and support of a wide range of people in the country. It is also important that Japan's efforts be properly understood overseas in order to enhance friendly bilateral relationships and Japan's credibility in the international community. From these perspectives, ODA public relations are becoming increasingly important. Furthermore, to promote collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, including private companies, local governments, and NGOs, it is essential to raise awareness and get many people involved.

The Government of Japan undertakes various efforts in public relations and information dissemination on ODA.

■ Strengthening Public Relations and Information Dissemination

MOFA strives to conduct more effective ODA public relations, in cooperation with JICA. Domestically, MOFA focuses on publicizing its policies, using specific measures to reach young people and small and medium-sized enterprises in rural areas that are not very familiar with ODA. The measures include posts on ODA websites, social media, and YouTube channels, as well as email newsletters, videos, public relations events, and ODA Delivery Lecture series. For example, MOFA has created the third TV drama series titled "First Step 3: Sekai wo Tsunagu Heiwa eno Negai," (Japanese only) and a series called "Eagle Talon's Go! ODA Man," featuring well-known personalities and characters. These public relations activities are intended to communicate respective themes to the public in easily understandable and accessible manners. As a joint public relations effort not only by MOFA and JICA but also by other parties involved in development cooperation in Japan, MOFA, together with JICA and the Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC), holds one of the largest events on international cooperation in Japan called "Global Festa JAPAN" every year around the time of International Cooperation Day (October 6). In 2024,

multiple events commemorating the 70th anniversary of international cooperation are being held (see "ODA Topics" on page 153 for details on the specific initiative). MOFA also puts efforts into International Cooperation Delivery Lectures where people can hear from those involved in international cooperation.

Overseas, Japan is committed to increasing the visibility of its cooperation. For example, Japanese embassies in developing countries, etc. have local media organizations report on ODA project sites, create public relations materials in local languages, and display Japan's national flag on equipment and facilities donated or built by Japan. Furthermore, ambassadors and Consuls-General of Japan themselves frequently post on X (formerly Twitter) and Instagram to improve the understanding of local people about Japan's ODA.

In the White Paper on Development Cooperation published annually, MOFA aims to make its contents easy and interesting to read, by featuring many photos and stories from the field, and strives to ensure transparency on the implementation status of ODA with relevant statistical data. The White Paper is also published in both English and Japanese. As a result of these efforts, public response to various public relations tools has steadily increased, as shown by the number of participants in Global Festa JAPAN, the number of ODA Delivery Lectures, and the number of views of posted ODA-related videos. Japan is committed to continuously strengthening public relations even further.

■ Information Disclosure on Implementation and Evaluation of ODA

MOFA and JICA set up the "ODA Mieru-ka Site" ³⁷ (a website designed to visualize ODA) on the JICA website, and makes available to the public ODA project summaries, results, ex-ante/ex-post evaluations, and other related information.

Likewise, the MOFA website features the results of policy- and project-level ODA evaluations ³⁸ and other related information, in addition to new ODA projects and statistical materials, for more effective implementation and the promotion of public understanding and support for ODA.

■ Promotion of Development Education

MOFA holds the "ODA Delivery Lecture" series, in which MOFA officials provide explanations on international cooperation, including ODA, at educational institutions, NGOs, and other organizations in Japan. Over the past 10 years, a total of 318 ODA Delivery Lectures have been organized with the involvement of approximately 32,000 participants, mainly students. In

³⁷ ODA Mieru-ka Site <https://www.jica.go.jp/oda/> (in Japanese only)

³⁸ ODA evaluations <https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/evaluation/index.html>

Stories from the Field 6

Voices of Japanese Personnel Working in International Organizations

– Tackling the Challenges of Forced Displacement –

In 2024, Japan celebrates the 50th anniversary of the start of its Junior Professional Officer (JPO) Programme.^{*1} More than 2,000 young Japanese professionals have been dispatched to international organizations through this programme, and as of the end of 2023, approximately half of the 960 Japanese staff (at professional level or above) working in UN-related organizations are former JPOs. Thus, the JPO Programme plays a significant role as the first step for Japanese nationals pursuing careers in international cooperation as staff members of international organizations. The author of this column, Ms. SHINOZAKI Tomomi, is among those who have benefited from the programme and is set to assume a regular staff position as of January 2025.

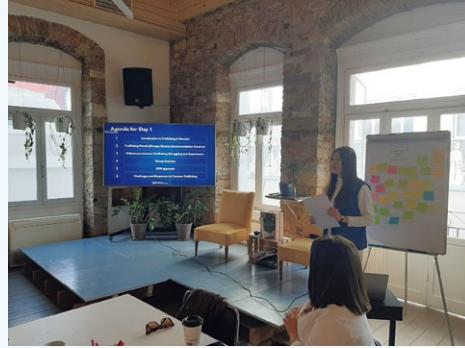
Refugee Camp Visit Leading to a Career in International Cooperation

After visiting Hiroshima on an elementary school field trip and hearing testimonies from atomic bomb survivors, I began to think, "I want to contribute to global peace through meaningful roles in international cooperation." To identify the fields I aspired to work in, I actively took part in internships both in Japan and overseas as well as study abroad programs during my student years. While studying Post-war Recovery Studies in graduate school, I traveled to Uganda to conduct research for my master's thesis. Engaging directly with refugees and hearing their stories firsthand shaped my desire to pursue a career at the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Witnessing the struggles of people forced to flee and rebuild their lives in countries with different languages and cultures, I became determined to support displaced individuals and address the root causes of forced migration.

After completing graduate school, I joined a Japanese NGO and provided assistance to displaced persons in South Sudan and Uganda. I then served as a UN Volunteer at IOM Nigeria through the "Program for Global Human Resource Development for Peacebuilding and Development"^{*2} before being appointed as a JPO at IOM Greece in January 2022, where I supported efforts to combat trafficking in persons.^{*3} Since April 2023, I have been working on IOM Somalia's peacebuilding programme from its Kenya-based Sub-Office. Initially, I was primarily responsible for project formulation



Refugee women working in a market within a refugee settlement in Uganda to make a living (Photo: SHINOZAKI Tomomi)



The author conducting training on counter-trafficking in persons for IOM Greece staff (Photo: SHINOZAKI Tomomi)

and reporting on ongoing projects. Over time, I was entrusted with managing projects that I had developed myself. I am currently tasked with a broad scope of work, including coordination with the Somali government, donors, and other international organizations, as well as the recruitment of local staff, selection of local NGOs as implementing partners, budget management, and monitoring activities.

Addressing the Root Causes of Forced Displacement

In Somalia, the activities of violent extremist groups, notably Al-Shabaab, have been a significant cause of forced migration and human suffering. Therefore, the Government of Somalia aims to dismantle these groups by encouraging voluntary defections and providing rehabilitation and reintegration support for "low-risk" defectors. Many women who have left these groups, such as the wives of the combatants, face serious challenges including discrimination and alienation from local communities and the risk of retaliation from the groups, despite not being directly involved in killings or acts of violence. Many are also victims of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). The project I am currently managing provides psychosocial care, vocational training, and other support to low-risk defectors from violent extremist groups, including such women, as well as marginalized young people who are at high risk of being recruited by these groups. The project aims to promote their socio-economic reintegration and meaningful participation in society. At IOM Somalia, I am based in the Nairobi Support Office in the Kenyan capital. I regularly communicate with local staff via phone, social media, email, and online meetings. While it is difficult to visit project sites in person, I find great fulfillment in delivering much-needed assistance in hard-to-reach areas through cooperation with local staff and partner NGOs who share the same aspirations. I am committed to continuing my work on addressing the issues that cause forced displacement and supporting those affected by it.

SHINOZAKI Tomomi
International Organization for Migration (IOM)
Somalia Office

*1 Established by a 1961 resolution of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, this program allows international organizations to accept young professionals on the condition that their costs are covered by their respective governments.

*2 See 40 on page 50.

*3 See 51 on page 56.



ODA Public Relations

– Bringing ODA Closer to the Public –

■ Communicating Japan's Development Cooperation

According to a public opinion survey*1 conducted by Japan's Cabinet Office in 2023, 79.4% of respondents indicated that, regarding the future of development cooperation, it should be either "more actively promoted" or "maintained at the current level," reflecting positive public support. This positive public opinion is driven by a growing awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as a broader understanding—amid the multiple crises facing the international community, including Russia's aggression against Ukraine—that countries must work together to address global challenges such as disasters and infectious diseases. There is also a growing recognition that development cooperation contributes to ensuring the stable supply of energy and other resources, that it is necessary to enhance trust in Japan within the international community, and that it serves as an important tool for strategically advancing Japan's foreign policy.

This column highlights several initiatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA) to communicate information and policies regarding the significance of Japan's development cooperation.

■ 70th Anniversary Commemoration of Japan's Official Development Assistance

2024 marks the 70th anniversary since the inception of Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA). MOFA, in collaboration with JICA and other relevant organizations, designated this milestone year as an opportunity to reflect on the role ODA has played over the past seven decades and to engage the Japanese public in discussions on the future of international cooperation. To commemorate this occasion, various events were held, including the International Cooperation 70th Anniversary Kick-off Event in Kobe in March, the International Cooperation MIRAI Conference in May, Global Festa JAPAN 2024 in September, and the Symposium to Commemorate the 70th Anniversary of Japan's ODA in December.



The Symposium to Commemorate the 70th Anniversary of Japan's ODA, held at the United Nations University on December 17

■ Television Dramas

MOFA also produces public outreach content featuring well-known figures to reach a wider audience.

As one of these initiatives, the Ministry produces and broadcasts the TV drama series "The First Step" with TV personality and author Mr. MATAYOSHI Naoki as the host. The series, set in MOFA's International Cooperation Bureau and the field sites of international cooperation, explores Japan's development efforts. In 2024, the third installment, "The First Step 3: Sekai wo Tsunagu Heiwa e no Negai [A Wish for Peace That Connects the World]," was released. Centered on Japan's support for mine clearance in Cambodia, the drama follows a young man's personal growth through interactions with diverse individuals, driven by his desire for a peaceful, conflict-free world.



The third installment of the TV drama series "The First Step 3: Sekai wo Tsunagu Heiwa e no Negai" (Japanese only), set in MOFA's International Cooperation Bureau and actual cooperation sites

■ Go! ODA-Man

ODA-Man, now in his seventh year as MOFA's ODA PR character (see also Part V, Section 4 (2) on page 150), has continued to raise awareness of Japan's ODA efforts around the world through various video episodes. In 2024, three new episodes were released: "ODA-Man Goes! The 70th Anniversary of International Cooperation Edition," which looks back on 70 years of ODA and highlights its significance, "The 100-Year Journey of Japan and Türkiye;" and "The SATREPS*2 Edition."



Go, ODA-Man!

■ Global Festa JAPAN 2024



Stage event: "Sekai wo Tsunagu Heiwa e no Negai—Weaving the Future through Mine Clearance Support"

"Global Festa JAPAN 2024," a major international development and cooperation event, took place on September 28-29, 2024. Marking its 33rd edition, the event was held under the theme "70 Years of International Cooperation—Together into the Future." Approximately 200 organizations working in the field of international cooperation—including NGOs, NPOs, international organizations, companies, universities, and foreign embassies in Japan—set up exhibition booths at the event. It also featured live sessions with diverse guests, experiential workshops, and food and merchandise booths offering cuisine and cultural items from various countries. With a combined audience of in-person attendees and online viewers, the event attracted approximately 74,000 participants, a significant increase over the previous year.



Then Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Hosaka delivering remarks at the opening ceremony of Global Festa JAPAN 2024

MOFA launched the event with an opening ceremony, followed by various sessions and activities. These included an on-stage presentation by ODA-Man explaining "Co-



The Lobby Gallery, featuring exhibits by foreign embassies in Japan, international organizations, NGOs and others. MOFA also participated with a booth that aimed to clearly explain how Japan's ODA contributes globally.

creation for common agenda initiative" *3 in simple terms, a session on how ODA can support the overseas expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises, a quiz segment introducing how ODA is connected to everyday food ingredients, and a talk featuring individuals working on the front lines of mine clearance and reconstruction support in Cambodia. The Ministry also held the award ceremony for its annual ministerial photo contest.*4 Under the theme "A World Where Everyone Shines for the First Step!", the contest received many submissions filled with smiling faces, and award-winning works were selected from among 350 entries. Other activities included a career seminar for those interested in working in international organizations hosted by MOFA's Recruitment Center for International Organizations, and a session reporting on NGO activities in international cooperation, attended by officials from MOFA's Non-Governmental Organizations Cooperation Division of the International Cooperation Bureau and NGO representatives. For details, please refer to the event report*5 on the ODA section of the Ministry's website.

■ ODA Email Newsletter, ODA Public Relations X

MOFA publishes an ODA email newsletter monthly, which is also available on the ministry's website. In addition, it shares information about ODA on the social media platform X. As of December 2024, the newsletter has about 20,000 subscribers, and MOFA's X account has over 13,000 followers.



MOFA's ODA account on X



ODA email newsletter



Key visual for the 70th Anniversary of International Cooperation

*1 The FY2023 Public Opinion Survey on Diplomacy was conducted from September to October 2023 by a research agency commissioned by the Cabinet Office. The survey was administered by mail to 3,000 Japanese nationals aged 18 and over across the country (Cabinet Office Public Opinion Survey: <https://survey.gov-online.go.jp/r05/r05-gaiko/index.html> [in Japanese only]).

*2 See the glossary on page 43.

*3 See Part I, Section 2 (2) on page 12 and Part V, Section 2 (2) on page 145.

*4 Report on the MOFA Photo Contest "A World Where Everyone Shines for the First Step!"

https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/press/event/pagew_001313_00001.html (in Japanese only)

See also Special Photograph Collection (1) on page vi for the photographs submitted to the contest.

*5 Global Festa JAPAN 2024 event report

https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/press/event/pagew_000001_00233.html (in Japanese only)

addition to face-to-face delivery lectures where JICA's 15 domestic offices introduce former Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs), local stakeholders in international cooperation, and JICA trainees visiting Japan as lecturers, JICA also holds online delivery lectures where JOCVs and JICA staff dispatched to developing countries share their experiences and cross-cultural understanding. In FY2023, approximately 1,600 lectures were held and attended by approximately 140,000 participants. Other efforts to promote understanding and participation in international cooperation include "Visit JICA," in which students can visit JICA offices in Japan, and the "JICA Essay Contest on International Cooperation for Junior and Senior High School Students." JICA also manages the exhibition facility "JICA Global Plaza."



ODA Delivery Lecture given by a MOFA official



Online delivery lecture connecting with JOCVs dispatched to developing countries

■ Promotion of Discussion and Dialogue

The Government of Japan holds information sessions for NGOs, companies, business associations, and others on how to utilize ODA in respective activities. In addition, the Government organizes public lectures on international trends and Japan's efforts in international cooperation, providing opportunities for dialogue with the public interested in diplomacy and ODA.