

Stories from the Field



Using Experience Gained in Japan for Measures against Infectious Diseases in the Future

—An ex-JICA training participant fighting against COVID-19 at the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research in Ghana—

Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research (NMIMR) was established in 1979 with support from Japan to commemorate the achievements of Dr. NOGUCHI Hideyo, a bacteriologist who devoted his life to tirelessly researching yellow fever. The Institute is now greatly contributing to preventing the spread of COVID-19 in Ghana. NMIMR had carried out over 350,000 COVID-19 PCR tests as of the end of December 2020, and it was responsible for approximately 80% of all tests undertaken in Ghana at the peak of the pandemic. For approximately 40 years since NMIMR's establishment, Japan has not only contributed to improving research equipment at the Institute, but also to developing its human resources through numerous targeted research activities and projects as countermeasures against infections and epidemics.

Dr. Mildred Adusei-Poku is one of the Ghanaian researchers working on the frontline at NMIMR right now. A virologist, Dr. Adusei-Poku started working at NMIMR in 2009, participating in the Science and Technology Research Partnership for Sustainable Development (SATREPS) program* under the "Studies of Anti-viral and Anti-parasitic Compounds from Selected Ghanaian Medicinal Plants" project conducted from 2010 to 2015. She talked about joining NMIMR, as well as her experience during her visit to Japan under the above-mentioned project, as follows.

"In Ghana, people are required to complete a mandatory one year of National Service after their undergraduate studies. I was assigned to the Virology Department at NMIMR as I had studied Biological Sciences. It was a great honor for me since, even at that time, NMIMR was one of the largest research institutes in Africa conducting advanced research in the areas of infectious diseases and nutrition. Later, I was part of a team that undertook research exploring medicinal plants in Ghana that could be effective in the treatment of HIV/



Dr. Adusei-Poku preparing a PCR test (Photo: JICA)

AIDS. During that period, I attended a three-week training program at the Tokyo Medical and Dental University in Japan as part of the SATREPS project. I learned research and problem-solving methods that were new to me, and it was a privilege for me to share this knowledge with my colleagues at NMIMR on my return."

Dr. Adusei-Poku then began studying at Kumamoto University in Japan on a Japanese Government Scholarship (Monbukagakusho: MEXT) in 2015, earning a doctorate degree for her research on HIV/AIDS. She stated that her senior colleagues at NMIMR who had experience in Japan encouraged her to pursue a doctorate degree in Japan. Following her seniors' footsteps, she is now supervising activities related to COVID-19 at NMIMR while also lecturing at the Department of Medical Microbiology, the University of Ghana Medical School.

Dr. Adusei-Poku talked about the role of NMIMR in Ghana. "NMIMR was one of only two institutes testing for COVID-19 in Ghana when the country confirmed its first cases in March 2020. Therefore, NMIMR worked to enhance the testing capacity of other medical institutions to increase the number of testing facilities in the country. I was one of the people who had the privilege to instruct professionals at these other institutes on how to effectively test for the disease and handle the test results."

Dr. Adusei-Poku talked about her own future. "I will seek to enhance my knowledge and experience, as well as explore collaborative working relationships that will improve our collective understanding of infectious diseases." It is hoped that NMIMR will continue to cultivate more people like Dr. Adusei-Poku who can lead the fight against infectious diseases in Africa.



NMIMR's Advanced Research Center for Infectious Diseases. Construction was carried out with Japan's support and completed in March 2019. (Photo: JICA)

*See the Glossary on page 40.



Japanese Companies Forge Ahead with Palau Airport Project

—An all-Japan initiative contributing to the development of Palau's tourism industry—

In Palau, the tourism industry accounts for over 70% of its GDP, and tourism supports the country's financial and industrial sectors. However, due to a rise in the number of tourists since 2015, the number of passengers using the country's only international airport, Palau International Airport, has been exceeding the capacity of available airport facilities, causing issues such as long lines at immigration and check-in counters at peak times. The expansion of airport facilities and operational improvements are therefore crucial in the continued development of Palau as a tourism-oriented country.

To resolve these issues, Japan has been implementing the "Renovation, Expansion and Management of Palau International Airport Project" in Palau since 2019.

This project is a joint venture between Sojitz Corporation, a company with a wealth of knowledge on the aviation industry and connections with airlines, Japan Airport Terminal Co., Ltd. (JAT), a company with operational expertise of Haneda Airport's passenger terminals and an excellent reputation internationally, and the Japan Overseas Infrastructure Investment Corporation for Transport & Urban Development (JOIN). The project was launched thanks to a boost from financing under JICA's Private-Sector Investment Finance (PSIF) scheme^{*1}; the first implementation of the PSIF in the Oceania region. Upon embarking on the project, Sojitz and JAT first deepened their investigation via a JICA preliminary survey, and after that, Sojitz, JAT, and JOIN established a local airport operations company called Palau International Airport Corporation (PIAC) with the Government of Palau. Since then, renovation and expansion of the existing terminal at Palau International Airport is being carried out alongside operation and maintenance work, and know-how on airport operation is being passed onto Palau, all through PIAC. The existing terminal, which is currently under renovation, was itself originally constructed in 2003 with Grant Aid from Japan, and it is Japan's consistent support that has led to the development of the present project.

Mr. ASAEDA Masahiro, formerly on secondment to PIAC from Sojitz, talks about the circumstances that led to the project's implementation as follows: "Sojitz and JAT have long had a keen interest in engaging in airport operations both within Japan and overseas. We set our sights on Palau, a country that has a friendly relationship and close ties with Japan, as we would be able to utilize the expertise and networks of each company. I think it was Japan's previous contribution of support to the country that led to the Government of Palau allowing Japanese companies to implement this project."

This is the first overseas project for JAT, which is carrying out improvements and providing guidance on the operations of Palau International Airport. In the field, PIAC, Sojitz, JAT, and JOIN are working hand in hand to make steady progress with the project while also

facing unforeseen circumstances—namely, delays in renovation works due to the spread of COVID-19—and are being mindful of differences in culture and customs between Japan and Palau.

Mr. TAKEI Ryo from JAT says, "JAT has presented



JAT giving guidance on cleaning (Photo: PIAC)



The new terminal under construction (January 2021) (Photo: PIAC)

various proposals that cover the entire scope of operational improvements to Palau International Airport. Specifically, we have enforced thorough cleaning practices, improved the installation locations of informational signs, renovated facilities with a view to making them barrier-free, strengthened the cooperative relationship between the airport and its commercial tenants, and arranged the locations of new commercial facilities following the airport's expansion. We have been sharing our experiences in Japan with PIAC as we progress with the project."

In addition, Mr. NARITA Mitsuru, Vice President of PIAC (on secondment from JAT) engaging in the on-site implementation of the project, said, "At the onset of the project, employees' working hours were not being recorded with timecards, and there was no systematic manual on maintaining or cleaning the facilities. We persevered in changing local people's way of thinking and creating a pleasant working environment to improve operations."

The project is certainly an all-Japan initiative in that the important issues facing Palau are being resolved by cooperation between the Government of Japan and Japanese businesses. As there has not been any precedent for the privatization of infrastructure facilities in Palau, the project is becoming a catalyst for promoting the privatization of key infrastructure in the country. In addition, the project, which is the first public-private partnership (PPP) infrastructure project^{*2} in Palau, has become a model case of PPP in the country, as new electrical power projects utilizing renewable energy are now also being considered under a PPP framework with other foreign companies. It is hoped that the project contributes to the economic development of Palau, which largely relies on its tourism industry, by steadily transferring specialist knowledge and technology from Japanese companies to local people, and in turn, increasing the number of passengers using the airport, as well as the number of daily flights. Moreover, it is also hoped that the success of this project will lead to more Japanese companies expanding into Palau.

Japan continues to partner with private companies to overcome the difficulties of COVID-19 and connect the success of this project with further promoting a friendly and trusting relationship between Japan and Palau.

^{*1} See page 139 regarding details on this scheme.

^{*2} See page 136 regarding details on this system.

Stories from the Field



Forging a Path to Ethiopia's Future with “KAIZEN” —Utilizing Japan's strengths in combining technical cooperation and grant aid to maximize a synergistic effect—



Mr. Sugimoto, a Japanese expert, discussing with his Ethiopian counterparts and company representatives at a construction materials factory (February 2013) (Photo: Japan Development Service Co., Ltd.)

In Ethiopia, located in the eastern part of Africa, cooperation through JICA began in 2009, focusing on the “KAIZEN”^{*} method from Japan in order to enhance the competitiveness of Ethiopia's domestic industries, such as the manufacturing industry. The Ethiopian Kaizen Institute (EKI) was established by the efforts of the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. Japan's cooperation started with EKI as a foothold by promoting technical cooperation initiatives to transfer technical skills and experience through training and “KAIZEN” practice at factories, in order to popularize the “KAIZEN” approach within Ethiopia.

As a result of this cooperation, the concept is currently widely recognized across Ethiopia, and the certification, accreditation and registration system for consultants who provide training and guidance on “KAIZEN” for Ethiopian companies has been introduced. EKI, which started with only nine staff members at the time of its establishment, has increased its staff to approximately 110 consultants, and is spreading “KAIZEN” to many Ethiopian companies. In addition, cooperation is currently underway to ensure that EKI can disseminate “KAIZEN” through its Ethiopian staff even after the Japanese experts return to Japan.

Mr. SUGIMOTO Seiji of Japan Development Service Co., Ltd. (JDS), who led the initiative as a technical cooperation expert and Chief Adviser from 2011 to 2020, says, “It is not uncommon to see an increase in productivity of 30 to 50% in our indicators. Future challenges include disseminating “KAIZEN” to schools and ministries, introducing “KAIZEN” in management strategies

and marketing for businesses, and further spreading the “KAIZEN” method not only to the capital area, but also across the entire country.”

In addition to the manufacturing industry, the Ethiopian government also hopes to disseminate “KAIZEN” to the



Conceptional image of the completed TICAD Human Resource Development Center for Business and Industry (Construction: Fujita Corporation; equipment procurement: Sirius Corporation) (Designed by the Consortium of Nippon Koei Co., Ltd. and Koei Research & Consulting Inc.)

service industry, and is currently providing training by EKI consultants to government-affiliated public corporations from the transportation sector. As a result, a significant outcome is expected in terms of cost reduction of approximately 100 million yen per year by thoroughly implementing 5S and reviewing the combinations of transportation routes and measures.

Since EKI did not previously have its own facilities and its consultants were directly visiting the factories and companies where training was taking place to give guidance on an individual basis, EKI's activities were limited to the area around the capital Addis Ababa. The TICAD Human Resource Development Center for Business and Industry, which is currently in the process of construction and procurement of equipment through grant aid, is designed to resolve this issue and further promote the spread of “KAIZEN” throughout Ethiopia. The center, which is under construction close to the African Union (AU) headquarters, is planned to be equipped with training and accommodation facilities in addition to the EKI head office, where trainees from outside the capital will be able to stay and receive training.

Mr. HOSHIAI Yoshifumi from the Consortium of Nippon Koei Co., Ltd. and Koei Research & Consulting Inc., which is designing and supervising the construction of the center, tells us the following. “After the center is complete, it will be possible to accept up to approximately 12,000 trainees a year. While construction was temporarily suspended due to COVID-19, we hope that it will be finished as soon as possible, which will lead to the development of human resources and the development of Ethiopia as a whole.”

The Ethiopian government has set its sights on using the Center not only as a national training facility, but also for spreading “KAIZEN” to neighboring countries. As one of Africa's core bases for human resources development, the center plans to accept trainees from neighboring countries. Japan's consistent cooperation over the last decade has borne fruit, and the Japanese style “KAIZEN” initiatives are steadily taking root in the African continent.



A Japanese expert giving guidance on “KAIZEN” for the manufacturing process on-site at a sewing factory (Photo: Japan Development Service Co., Ltd.)

^{*}An approach in which each worker at a production site comes up with and implements their own ideas on how to eliminate inefficiency in the production process and improve quality and productivity. In Japan, in a period of rapid growth after WWII, this approach was cultivated on-the-job by the manufacturing industry to increase quality and productivity, and is based on 5S: “Sort, Set, Shine, Standardize, and Sustain.”

Response to COVID-19 at the World's Largest Camp for Displaced Persons —UNHCR activities—

In August 2017, an outbreak of violent clashes in Rakhine state, Myanmar forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee within a matter of days to Cox's Bazar in the southeastern part of Bangladesh. In order to protect the lives and livelihoods of displaced persons, who were forced to flee their homes with nothing but the clothes on their backs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has been closely collaborating and cooperating with the Government of Bangladesh, partner organizations, and NGOs to develop infrastructure, provide shelter, and deliver emergency relief supplies including food and water.

Three years have passed since the incident in Myanmar, yet the road to repatriation has not been easy for those forcibly displaced. Displaced persons continue to face various challenges each day in settlements across Cox's Bazar, and the global spread of COVID-19 since the beginning of 2020 has further intensified existing hardships.

Approximately 860,000 displaced persons have fled to Cox's Bazar,* currently living in shelters across more than 30 settlements. Cox's Bazar is one of the poorest regions in Bangladesh, and the risk of infection by COVID-19 is heightened by the lack of adequate medical services and sanitation in the densely populated camps.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, UNHCR has been working on COVID-19 infection prevention and control measures in the camps. As a major donor country, Japan has also contributed greatly, mainly in the following two areas.

The first is in the establishment of health care facilities and provision of medical supplies. With financial contributions from the Government of Japan, UNHCR has provided isolation facilities for treating patients, medical equipment, personal protective equipment (PPE), and other supplies required in intensive care units (ICU). COVID-19 response mechanisms were established at an early stage through support from Japan and



Displaced children with Ms. Hosoi from UNHCR Bangladesh's Dhaka Office (Photo: UNHCR)

other countries, which contributed to promptly provide appropriate treatment when the first case of COVID-19 infection in Cox's Bazar was confirmed in May.

The second is in the improvement of hygiene and sanitation conditions at the camps. Good sanitation is essential in preventing the spread of infectious diseases. UNHCR has worked to provide improved latrines, shower facilities, and waste management systems to reduce the risk of infection. As a preparation for the impending monsoon rains, these measures have also been effective in preventing water-borne infectious diseases, such as cholera.

However, none of these efforts would be possible without the presence of aid workers dedicated to delivering humanitarian assistance on the ground. Among these aid workers are a large number of Japanese nationals who work for international organizations, such as UNHCR and NGOs. "Unease and fear. That is exactly what we felt at the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis," recalls Ms. HOSOI Mai from UNHCR Bangladesh. She says that while UNHCR has worked tirelessly to strengthen health and sanitation infrastructure, volunteers from among the displaced persons have played a vital role in these efforts. "Displaced persons have taken matters into their own hands to protect their own lives, and as volunteers, help raise awareness to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Seeing their self-reliance and resilience despite having been beset by numerous challenges in the camps gives me a great deal of courage," states Ms. Hosoi, adding, "my hope is for the people of Japan to show compassion towards, and recognize the strength of, those forced to flee their homes."



A displaced person washing his hands at a handwashing station, installed to help combat the spread of COVID-19 (Photo: UNHCR)

*Source: UNHCR Bangladesh, Operational Update External, November 2020
<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/83629>

Stories from the Field



"Thank you, Japan!"

—Water pumping and restoration works by a Japan Self-Defense Forces unit at primary and middle schools damaged by torrential rains in Djibouti—

On November 21, 2019, torrential rains deluged Djibouti, a country located in the Horn of Africa, causing significant damage. Djibouti is normally a low rainfall country; however, heavy downpours over three days at an amount approximately three times that of the country's average yearly rainfall resulted in about 250,000 people falling victim to flood damage. Consequently, roads in the city were destroyed, electricity supply was partially stopped, and other unforeseen situations arose.

Under these circumstances, a unit of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) deployed in Djibouti for anti-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden carried out an International Disaster Relief Operation in response to a request from the Government of Djibouti. The activities took place over seven days from November 26.

The JSDF unit mainly worked at primary and middle schools in the capital, Djibouti City. With almost no pumping or drainage facilities available at the schools, the grounds, which were surrounded by concrete walls, were completely submerged, and the buildings were also flooded. This inevitably led to the schools' closure. The JSDF unit undertook water pumping and restoration works after surveying the status of damage at four schools within the city. The work was carried out using drainage pumps, which had originally been equipped for maintaining the facilities of the JSDF base.

Lieutenant (Lt.) NOMURA Tatsuya, who was in command during the water pumping, describes their activities as follows. "We have Djiboutians working with us at the JSDF base, so the unit members participating in the project did so with the hope of repaying the kindness shown by the people of Djibouti, who are always taking care of us. Although we did not have adequate equipment for such heavy rainfall, we sought the best equipment we could onsite under such restrictive conditions while pumping works progressed."

With the goal of removing the trapped water in the school grounds, the JSDF unit worked in shifts of approximately



With local students in front of one of the reopened schools (Photo: Ministry of Defense)

twenty people each day, and pumping was completed at two schools in six days. After the water was removed, the unit members cleaned classrooms by hand, aiming to reopen the schools as soon as possible. A total of about 230 JSDF members was engaged in pumping approximately 1,950 tons of water from the schools. The unit also transported emergency relief goods in their vehicles, distributing approximately 4.3 tons of tents, blankets, and other items provided by the Government of Japan through JICA to victims of the flood.

Lt. Nomura adds, "We carried out the work in collaboration with local waterworks staff, the fire department, police, and other personnel. There were times when the language barrier made communication difficult; however, since everyone shared the same goal of reopening the schools, we all worked our hardest to communicate with each other through body language and gestures until the job was done."

The unit's efforts paid off as the schools were reopened on December 1. The pumping and restoration works were carried out under the watchful eye of the residents of the community, including children, with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Interior of Djibouti visiting the site and personally expressing their appreciation to the JSDF members working at the time.

When the JSDF members went into town after some weeks since the completion of the emergency disaster relief operations, they received lots of cheers and encouragement, with cries of, "Thank you, Japan!" from residents who recognized the figures of the JSDF from the Japanese national flag. Lt. Nomura reflects on that time. "I realized once again that we were acting as representatives of Japan." He concluded by adding, "It brings me a great sense of pride that we were able to contribute to furthering the friendly relationship between Djibouti and Japan."



The JSDF unit carrying out pumping at the middle school with the cooperation of local Djiboutian authorities (Photo: Ministry of Defense)

Stories from the Field



Papua New Guinea's First National Textbooks and Teacher's Manuals Completed!

—Japan's know-how of developing textbooks is contributing to locally tailored learning for children—

Papua New Guinea, with a large number of primary and secondary schools scattered far from the city, has faced a major challenge in the quality of teachers in remote areas that are difficult to access. For example, some teachers have to conduct classes without sufficient subject knowledge. An advanced Outcomes-Based Education was introduced in 2001 as part of a curriculum reform, but no nationally standardized textbooks or teacher's manuals were developed, and the teachers, left largely to their own discretion, conducted classes relying on their own teaching skills using reference materials produced by various overseas publishers. As a result, the quality of education could not be ensured and teachers were unable to provide adequate instruction for the children, and it has drawn mounting criticisms that children's academic abilities had declined.

Thus, the Papua New Guinean National Department of Education decided to discontinue the Outcomes-Based Education in 2014, replacing it with a newly introduced Standards-Based Curriculum and developing national textbooks. However, as the country had never developed national textbooks before, there was a lack of sufficient knowledge and experience.

Under these circumstances, the National Department of Education requested cooperation from Japan, which had been providing support in the field of science and mathematics education in the country since 2005. In 2016, the "Project for Improving the Quality of Mathematics and Science Education" was launched to develop national textbooks and teacher's manuals for third to sixth grade primary school students and teachers across the country.

Teachers and curriculum development staff appointed by Papua New Guinea and Japanese experts gathered together and collaborated to develop the first national textbooks for approximately four years. Incorporating Japan's lesson study methods (mock lessons) and know-how provided by the Japanese textbook publishing company GAKKOTOSHO Co., Ltd., they devised various ways to make the content easy to understand for the children and teachers in Papua New Guinea by including plenty of photographs and illustrations and introducing the country's nature and culture. When setting math questions,



Papua New Guinean children learning with the newly developed textbooks (Photo: JICA)

as units of money and other familiar items differ from those in Japan, they consulted with the Papua New Guinean teachers on each and every aspect to adjust the content to reflect their local situation.

"The experience of being entrusted with developing national textbooks, which are at the foundation of nation-building and human resources development, was an extremely precious opportunity. From the second year, the teachers' mock lessons to verify the contents of the textbooks were held in a training camp style, and between classes, verification, and preparations for the next class, they worked barely without rest," said Mr. ITO Akinori, a JICA Expert involved in the textbook development looking back on that time.

"Most amazing of all, the passion of the Papua New Guinean teachers to improve the level of education in their country could be seen. It was a great honor for us to be able to witness the starting point of the future of education in Papua New Guinea," said Mr. SERIZAWA Katsuaki and Mr. KOMAZAWA Susumu of GAKKOTOSHO Co., Ltd., who participated in the project. They continued as follows: "Japanese textbooks are excellent because the learning contents are exceptionally systematic. For example, after learning multiplication, students learn to calculate area. They are devised so that each unit teaches new items based on the content completed in previous ones. In this way, each unit is completed step by step. Students can properly acquire all of the necessary knowledge in just six years. We received jubilant comments from Papua New Guinean teachers about the Japanese textbooks, saying, 'I really learned a lot,' and 'Now for the first time I understand what kind of learning content is needed.'"

The science and mathematics textbooks and teacher's manuals, which took approximately four years to complete, have been in use since the new school term in February 2020. Unlike Japan, where the textbooks are distributed to each and every child for their own use, in Papua New Guinea, teachers collect them at the end of lesson. These new textbooks that made use of Japanese know-how are used over and over again in places of learning, and are contributing greatly to improving the quality of education in Papua New Guinea.



Japanese experts and their Papua New Guinean counterparts developing textbooks and teacher's manuals suited to the local situation (Photo: JICA)

Stories from the Field



Toward a Society Where All People Can Live in Peace —Supporting Venezuelan refugees and migrants in cooperation with the Government of Japan—

In Venezuela, a country in South America, more than 5.5 million of its people have been displaced due to the country's deteriorating socio-economic situation, evacuating to neighboring countries in one of the largest displacement crises in the world. Approximately 1.8 million Venezuelans have fled to Colombia, the country where I live.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provides protection and assistance called R4V (Response for Venezuelans), in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), to Venezuelans who have had no option but to leave their homes. I have been working at the UNHCR Cúcuta office, located in the border area with Venezuela in the eastern part of Colombia, since June 2018. My role includes protecting Venezuelan refugees arriving at Norte de Santander Department, including Cúcuta City and its neighboring department, coordinating humanitarian assistance programs provided by more than 50 agencies through the Interagency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V), information management, and public relations activities.

COVID-19 began spreading across Colombia in March 2020, and from then until the day of writing (November 2020), the border with Venezuela has been closed. However, before its closure, as many as 3,000 to 5,000 refugees and migrants were flooding into the country daily, and even after its closure, many Venezuelans have been entering Colombia across unofficial borders, such as mountainous areas and rivers, in search of a guarantee of their fundamental human rights including physical safety, food, and access to health care and education. However, the presence of human trafficking organizations and armed groups in these border areas pose a security risk to Venezuelan refugees and migrants, as well as local residents. In addition, the spread of infection and strict restrictions on economic activities have left many Venezuelan people displaced in Colombia without their livelihoods, and they are now in a difficult situation where they face severe food shortages and eviction from their place of evacuation.

In response to these circumstances, the UNHCR Colombia office provides support in collaboration with partners including the Governments of Colombia and Japan. In July 2019, the Government of Japan extended 302 million yen in grant aid through an international organization for the Project for Humanitarian Assistance to Venezuelan Refugees, Colombian Returnees and Host Communities in Colombia. Following this, in March 2020, the Government of Japan provided Emergency Grant Aid totaling 1.43 billion yen (of which 396 million yen was provided



An internally displaced Colombian family who fled to Norte de Santander Department due to the country's civil conflict, together with Associate Protection Officer Hatori and her colleague at UNHCR. The family is supporting displaced Venezuelans who arrived in their community. (Photo: UNHCR)

to Colombia) to support displaced people in countries neighboring Venezuela (Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru). Thanks to this aid, we provided the following assistance during the ten-month period between July 2019 and May 2020: providing legal assistance, livelihood and resettlement support, and counseling to over 40,000 people, including both Venezuelans and Colombian returnees; institutional strengthening for protection of refugees by offering relevant legal and technical advice to government organizations, their officials, and other personnel; assisting more than 70,000 people in acquiring Colombian citizenship; improving surveys on the movement, needs, and situation of refugees; and providing temporary shelters for approximately 10,000 refugees.

Moreover, the UNHCR Colombia office conducts training on the human rights of refugees and access to basic services aimed at Venezuelan refugees and migrants and their host communities, in addition to supporting their livelihoods. With the aim of integrating Venezuelan people into Colombian society, the office is also working on the “Somos Panas Colombia”^{*} campaign, which promotes understanding of and support for Venezuelans in Colombia who have been forced to leave their home country. The campaign aims to create a society in which all residents in Colombia live in harmony by sharing values such as solidarity, empathy, and tolerance towards displaced Venezuelans in Colombia.

Governments of neighboring countries, donor countries including Japan, international organizations, private companies, civil society organizations, and local residents are already working together in their response to the Venezuela Situation. However, due to the tremendous scale of the crisis, assistance has not reached all those who need it, and more efforts to mobilize assistance are necessary. As a member of UNHCR, I would like to continue to work toward ensuring that necessary assistance reaches as many people as possible.

HATORI Atsuko
Associate Protection Officer,
Cúcuta Office, UNHCR Colombia
(Dispatched under the JPO Programme)



Refugees traveling on foot across Norte de Santander Department in Colombia and talking with Associate Protection Officer Hatori (Photo: UNHCR)

^{*} “Somos panas” means ‘we are friends’ in Spanish (<https://somospanascolombia.com/> (in Spanish only))

Stories from the Field

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Voices of Japanese Personnel Working in International Organizations

—Endeavors toward peacebuilding through education in Africa—

Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, is also known as the capital of Africa as it is home to many embassies and United Nations agencies, as well as the headquarters of the African Union (AU), and has the largest number of diplomats in residence on the continent. Addis Ababa is a highland city located 2,300 meters above sea level with a comfortable climate throughout the year, and in 1999, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)'s International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA) was established there. The IICBA develops teacher policies, provides teacher training, and conducts relevant research and studies with the objective of strengthening teacher development in Africa. I have been serving as Director of the IICBA since April 2015. I believe that my work at the IICBA, which is to support teachers who are fundamental to the educational challenges in Africa, is my vocation, and I am working hard in that endeavor.

I have been engaged in education in Africa for almost 40 years, ever since I started working as a volunteer teacher in a rural village in Western Kenya in 1981 during my time at university. Through my experience working at a Zimbabwean NGO, JICA, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and UNESCO, I have visited almost every country in Africa. People sometimes say that I seem more African than Japanese, or that I am a Japanese African. When a job opening for the position of Director of IICBA was posted in 2014, I applied with low expectations of being selected, as previous directors had been former cabinet ministers of African countries. Fortunately, I was hired. I hope to consider the development of African nations as seriously as, or even more seriously than, the people of Africa.

Teachers play an essential role in increasing enrollment rates and improving the quality and suitability of education. The IICBA has provided training to and exchanged opinions with instructors at education faculties at universities and has worked with teachers' unions to have teachers' voices reflected in policies. With regard to science and mathematics education, which most teachers are not so proficient at themselves, IICBA carries out STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education in collaboration with the Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in Africa (CEMASTEA), which has been strengthened by JICA's assistance. In addition, IICBA has developed a Gender Responsive Pedagogy together with the Forum for

African Women Educationalists (FAWE), an organization for promoting girls' and women's education in Africa. Our motto is that Africa's challenges should be solved by Africa itself.

The biggest challenge facing Africa is ensuring peace and stability. Civil wars, armed conflicts with neighboring countries, conflicts arising from ethnic or religious issues, and other disputes hinder the development of the continent. Many African educators have a desire in their hearts to build peace through education. Japan's assistance is making this possible. In order to build peace

and to put an end to conflicts in African countries, where young people make up the largest percentage of the population, it is important that as many young people as possible embrace peace and work earnestly toward achieving it. Japan has been supporting peacebuilding and conflict prevention in Africa through the education of teachers in collaboration with UNESCO since 2017, and is currently providing training to approximately 5,000 young teachers from 25 African countries to improve their knowledge and skills on peacebuilding and mediation under educational programs and raise awareness of promoting peace and preventing extremism. The assistance under this project can be regarded as part of the New Approach for Peace and Stability in Africa (NAPSA), which Japan advocated for at the Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD7) in 2019 (see also page 131 for details on NAPSA).

In the increasingly globalized world of the 21st century, I hope that talented young people in Japan will take an interest in developing countries, especially African countries. Many people in Africa have admiration and respect for Japan, seeing it as a country rising from the aftermath of World War II and huge earthquakes, as well as a country with knowledge and technology. While the African continent is geographically distant from Japan, its culture has much in common with Japanese culture. These similarities pleasantly surprise me in my work and daily life. Working at the United Nations is challenging as once you finish your task, you will have the next issue to deal with. I have heard that fewer young people in Japan want to engage in development cooperation work. However, I hope they will think about contributing to Africa from Japan all the more now that we are facing challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic.



The author holding a poster of peacebuilding education conducted with cooperation from Japan (Photo: UNESCO-IICBA)



The author receiving a warm welcome from children on her visit to a school in Côte d'Ivoire at an AU African Day of School Feeding event (Photo: UNESCO-IICBA)

YOKOZEKI Yumiko
Director

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