



Non-Governmental Organizations Assistance Division
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ODA



ODA&NGO

Partnership with Japanese NGOs under ODA

NGO

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan

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● Japanese NGOs for International Cooperation

The term Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) originally referred to non-governmental and non-profit organizations that work in cooperation with United Nations agencies. The definition has since been broadened to include those non-governmental and non-profit organizations that address such global issues as development, the economy, human rights, humanitarian concerns, and the environment. Today, more than 400 Japanese NGOs are engaged in international cooperation activities. First emerging in the 1960s, NGOs increased in number and quality in the late 70s and early 80s, mainly through providing assistance to Indochinese refugees. Recent cooperative activities of Japanese NGOs in Kosovo and Afghanistan are the proof of their steady growth.

● International Cooperation NGOs and Japanese

NGOs have become an indispensable part of today's international community. Their mobility and flexibility are vital in providing grassroots-level assistance and emergency humanitarian relief.

The Japanese government believes that collaboration with NGOs is crucial in gaining public understanding and support for its Official Development Assistance (ODA) programs. NGOs provide a channel through which people can lend a hand directly to international cooperation activities.

Partnership between NGOs and the government assumes two forms: collaboration and support. Working with them in ODA policymaking and project implementation, the government benefits much from their knowledge and human resources, and in return, provides them with financial and other forms of support. Collaboration and support, of course, are based on close dialogue.

● Collaboration, Support, and Close Dialogue

As part of the collaboration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) launched a joint evaluation program in fiscal 1997. By evaluating and discussing ODA projects and NGO activities, NGOs and MOFA have come to understand each other better and thus are able to work out ideal cooperation schemes.

Another example of collaboration is Japan Platform, which was established in 2000. This system is intended to help the government, the business community, and NGOs cooperate to provide emergency humanitarian relief more effectively and quickly.

The NGO Project Subsidy and the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects, both introduced in 1989, have been the main pillars of the governmental NGO support schemes. In fiscal 2002, MOFA launched the Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects and the JICA Partnership Program by integrating existing schemes. These new programs aim to reinforce support for Japanese NGOs through ODA.

While NGO international cooperation activities continue to expand, increased expertise and organizational skills have not necessarily followed. In addressing this issue, MOFA introduced Capacity Building Support for NGOs in fiscal 1999, which consists of various programs such as the NGO Advisors, the NGO Study Groups, and the NGO Researchers.

None of the collaborative and supportive efforts by MOFA can succeed without close communication with NGOs. MOFA continues to deepen the dialogue with NGOs through NGO-MOFA Regular Meetings, NGO-Embassy Meetings, among others.

● Tasks Ahead

Unlike their US and European counterparts, many of the Japanese NGOs engaged in international cooperation have not enjoyed long experience or a solid financial foundation to extend and strengthen their activities. To create a better environment for Japanese NGOs, the government considers it important to further diversify its support programs for NGOs while making such programs more suitable to their needs. The government also plans to help improve NGOs' expertise and project-implementation skills in healthcare, education, agriculture and other fields as well.



Lifesaving Operation in the earthquake affected areas in Iran
(Photo:Japan Rescue Association/Japan Platform)



【Major Programs】

● NGO-MOFA Regular Meeting

Regular meetings held between NGOs and MOFA to promote close dialogue and collaboration.

● NGO-Embassy Meeting

Regular meetings held in the countries in which many Japanese NGOs conduct activities. Japanese aid implementing agencies also join these meetings.

● Regular meetings held between NGOs and MOFA to promote effective implementation of the Global Issues Initiatives on Population and AIDS (GII) and the Okinawa Infectious Diseases Initiative (IDI).

Collaboration

【Major Programs】

● Japan Platform

A system created to help NGOs, the business community, and the government work together to provide emergency relief for victims of regional conflicts and natural disasters in a quick and effective manner.

● MOFA-NGO Joint Evaluation

MOFA and NGOs make comprehensive evaluations of ODA programs and NGO projects to foster a more cooperative relationship.

Support

【Major Programs】

● Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects

Financial support designed for NGO grassroots-level economic and social development cooperation programs in developing countries. Grants are extended to development projects, consortium projects, emergency and humanitarian relief, microcredit funding, recycled aid goods' shipping, and antipersonnel land mine removal. Support for Projects that reflect human security concepts will be strengthened.

● NGO Project Subsidy

Subsidies for upgrading Japanese NGO's expertise and project implementation capacity.

● JICA Partnership Program

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) collaborates with NGOs, universities, local governments, and quasi-governmental juridical persons in implementing projects to better the lives of people in developing countries.

● Capacity Building Support for NGOs

Support for increasing expertise and management capacity of NGOs. The program includes the NGO Advisors, the NGO Study Groups, the NGO Researchers and seminars.

