

## Evaluation of the System of Postal Savings for International Voluntary Aid

Instituted in 1991, the Postal Savings for International Voluntary Aid is a donation system through which all or a part of the after-tax interest on their checking accounts of the postal savings is used for improvement of the welfare of people in developing nations via Japanese Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) operating in overseas. The system aims to contribute to expansion of overseas aid on a private level with the participation of ordinary people. With Postal Privatization as of the end of September, 2007, the Management Organization for Postal Savings and Postal Life Insurance succeeded to the remaining donations and is responsible for distributing donations.

*\* This evaluation was outsourced to the Mitsubishi UFJ Research & Consulting Co. Ltd. (MURC) as an FY2012 Study Research of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and implemented during August 2012 through January 2013. The materials presented below are a summary of the evaluation submitted by MURC.*

### 1. Results of the Postal Savings for International Voluntary Aid

#### ■ Contribution to the welfare of people in developing areas

Donations have been distributed in a total of 99 countries and regions since instituting the system. In a questionnaire survey on 273 projects which received contributions during 2008 through 2010, 99.3% of such organizations revealed that their projects solved problems related to the basic human needs of their respective areas, and it was confirmed that the funds has been beneficial to the welfare of the residents of the developing areas.

The survey also revealed that many of the projects are still in operation through the use of organizations' own funds or aid received from other sources.

Figure 1 An example of results of contribution achieved by one of the fund-distributing organizations, SHAPLA NEER

Barnary is a 9-year-old girl. She suffered a high-fever 3 days after birth, but her parents were too poor to give her proper treatment. As a result, she developed polio myelitis. She was unable to stand, walk, put on her pants on, or sit on the toilet by herself. When she was 7 years old, she began to receive primary rehabilitation therapy, and now 2 years later, she is able to do all those activities all by herself. Her family and neighbors never thought that she would ever walk by herself, but now they think differently.



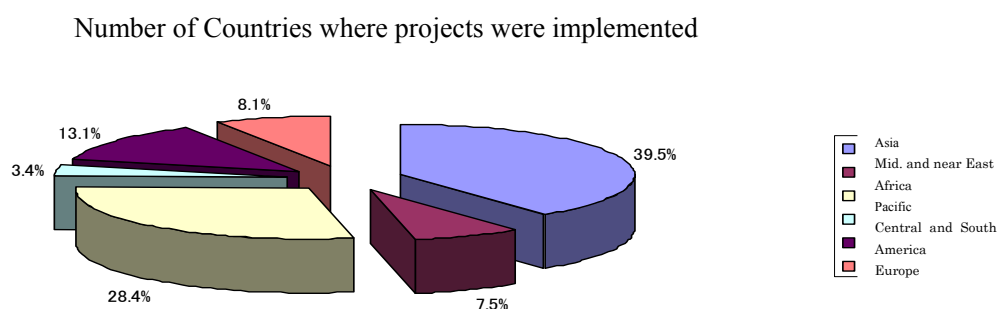
Source: Excerpted from the SHAPLA NEER Bulletin, "The South Wind," December 2011, by MURC

■ Large Contribution to the development of Activities of International Volunteer Organizations

Since its foundation, the funding system distributed approximately ¥21 billion to a total of 2,921 organizations (3,508 projects). Around 1991, when the Postal Savings for International Voluntary Aid was established, international volunteer activities were growing significantly in Japan. It is conceivable that distributing funds on an ongoing basis to nonjuridical organizations or organizations with less experience contributed considerably to the encouragement of the activities of international volunteer groups and the growth of such organizations.<sup>1</sup> The responses to the questionnaires revealed that it is also highly appreciated by international volunteer organizations. In addition, the funds provided were allowed to be used for the payment of the remunerations of local staff, which was not common in the case of other aid funds, and relatively long funding terms of 5 years met the needs of such projects of mid-to-long-term durations.

		Total of FY1991 through FY2012	Countries/regions where projects were implemented  <u>99 countries and regions in total</u>
Funds	Organizations	2,921	
	Projects	3,508	
	Amount	¥21.026 billion	

Figure 2 Breakdown of countries where projects were implemented (FY1991 through FY2012)



Source: Excerpted by MURC from Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications materials

■ Contributed to feeling closeness toward Japan

Although the funds of Postal Savings for International Voluntary Aid were distributed by various organizations, it is required to be made in the name of the owners of the postal savings accounts when various organizations operate international volunteer activities in developing countries. To the question in the MURC questionnaire, “Was the feeling of closeness to Japan fostered?” 99.3% of the organizations responded positively, indicating that pro-Japan sentiments were fostered in the sentiments of the residents of the benefitted areas.

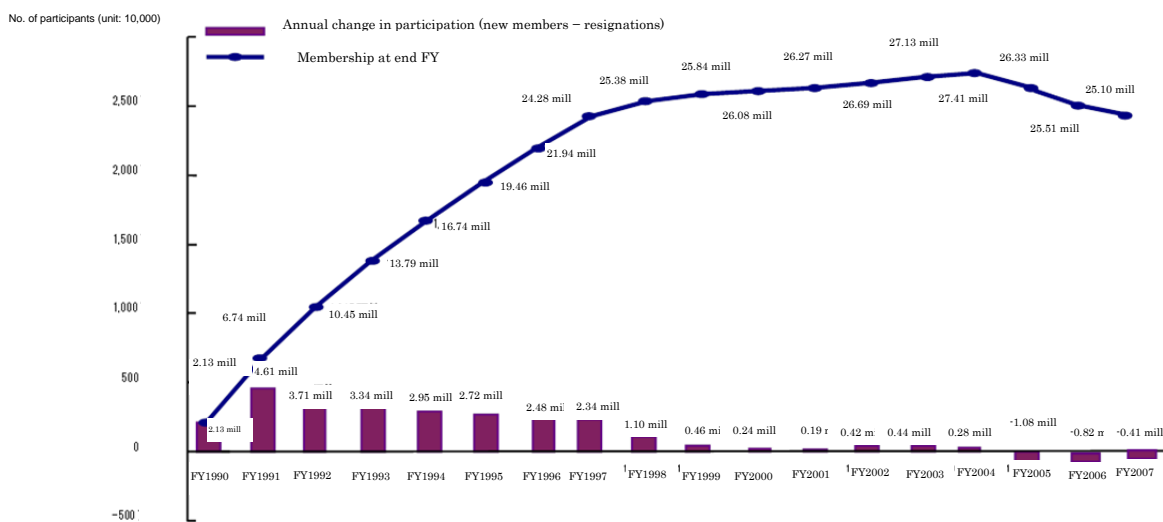
<sup>1</sup> The “NGO Data Book 1994, Japan’s NGO Seen in Figures,” (Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation, 1994) lists that NGOs’ income from the Postal Savings for International Voluntary Aid comprised 6.4%. This, as compared with private grants (6.1%) or those of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2.3%), is higher than the two sources.

■Bolstered Japan’s ODA Programs

The Postal Savings for International Voluntary Aid targets grass-roots level projects that intend to solve problems in countries and areas where official aid seems to be difficult in reaching (such as East Jerusalem, Palestine etc.) and thus it is conceivable that it supplements the official ODA Programs.

■Fostering of public awareness of international volunteer activities

The source of funds of the Postal Savings for International Voluntary Aid is born from the interest received by the owners of the checking accounts of postal savings accounts. Taking the single fiscal year of 2004 for example, 27.41 million of good will citizens participated in the Postal Savings for International Voluntary Aid. As such, the system has been widely supported by the good will of the public in this country indicating it contributed to foster public awareness in this regard.



\* The Study Research

【Points of View in the Evaluation】

It has implemented an evaluation of the Postal Savings for International Voluntary Aid from the standpoint of policy validity, appropriateness of the process, and effectiveness of the outcome. Especially in evaluating the last matter, we have selected 273 projects (out of 3,459) within 3 years from project completion. Using those 273 projects as samples, we have applied the 5 points of view commonly used for ODA evaluations (validity, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability)

【Evaluation method】

It has conducted a review of related documents, review of various documents submitted by the volunteer organizations, such as project applications, interim reports, and final project reports, and interviews with people concerned in Japan (people in charge of the fund-distributing organizations, Management Organization staff, special committees of councils, MIC staff, etc.) using questionnaires, as well as sending questionnaires to the distributing organizations and implementing field surveys for the fund-distributing organizations (on-site inspection of 4 projects implemented by 3 organizations out of best practices completed within the past 3 years).

Table Summary of Evaluation of the Effectiveness of  
the Postal Savings for International Voluntary Aid

Viewpoint	Summary
Validity	<p>Responses to the question in the questionnaire as to whether the issues that must be resolved were previously in a specifiable condition or not were as follows: 97.8% of the respondents answered “a. the issues existed clearly” or “b. tolerably clearly existed.” Responses as to whether prior search was conducted to determine the contents and scale of the issues and whether they were grasped and analyzed for solution of the issues were as follows: 90.9% responded “a. thoroughly studied” or “b. studied to some extent.” From those responses showing the fact that prior search on specific issues was actually conducted to determine their contents and scale, we can conclude that those implemented projects were relatively valid.</p>
Efficiency	<p>With respect to the efficiency of the project period, since 85.1% of the projects were completed on time, we consider that a high level of efficiency was achieved within them. As to the efficiency in contents of implementation, since 70.1% of the projects were completed within the budget as scheduled and when the response “b. while we went over by a small amount, the project was completed” is included, 96.9% of all projects reached completion as expected at the project start, we can confirm the high efficiency in contents of implementation.</p> <p>Regarding efficiency in terms of the estimated cost, 57.9% of the projects have been completed within the range of estimated cost. As compared with efficiencies in project period and implementation contents, we assume that some problems have occurred in this area. However, if response “b. while we went over by a small amount, the project was completed” is included, 100.0% of all projects were completed by the implementing organization adding some funds of their own. Therefore, it is considered that the level of estimated cost did not cause specific problems in project implementation.</p> <p>With respect to accidents and other related troubles during project periods, 62.7% answered “c. no special problems were experienced.” When the answer “b. unexpected conditions and troubles did occur but did not affect project contents or schedule” is added, 83.6% of the projects were completed without troubles.</p>
Effectiveness	<p>With respect to prior specification of project objectives, 85.1% of respondents answered “a. objectives were clear.” When adding response “b. while not exactly clear, intentions and targets were recognized,” 99.3% have succeeded in setting the objectives prior to the project’s start.</p> <p>The item of conditions of achievement of prior-set objectives were answered as “a. objectives were satisfactorily achieved as previously set” by 56.1% and when added together with “b. objectives have been achieved somewhat,” a total of 99.3% expressed satisfactory achievement of the objectives of the project.</p> <p>In terms of reasons for achieving objectives, 78.9% responded “a. the plan was valid and appropriate,” followed by “e. assistance of local supporters” (52.6%) and “b. efforts of organizational members” (51.1%). The planning ability and assistance from other related persons were suspected to be keys to the project success.</p>
Impact	<p>As for the responses in this area of evaluation, the answer “positive impact was confirmed” was submitted by 73.7%, and when “although not very clear, a positive impact was evident” is added, the total reached 99.3%. On the other hand, with respect to the negative, “negative impact was not discernible” was submitted by 93.2%, indicating that no significantly negative aspects in the projects were present.</p>
Sustainability	<p>In comments of sustainability, 52.7% responded “a. even now, still performed in the same contents and scale (or more),” and when “b. still performed in smaller contents and scale” is added, 86.3% of the projects were still in operation.</p> <p>As for answers to the question about the method of continuing the project, 54.9% responded that the organization pays the operating expenses, followed by the answer that residents themselves operate the project independently (38.9%) and “other supporting schemes are used” (13.3%).</p>

Source: MURC Research