

AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Bureau for Technical Assistance
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REPORT ON A VISIT TO JAPAN

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SUMMARY REPORT OF A SURVEY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS OF JAPAN

Introduction

This report is a result of interviews conducted by TA/UDS in Japan from September 20-23, 1971. The purpose of the survey was to determine what approaches and resources Japan is applying to international technical assistance in the urban development field.

This summary report contains general observations and information on specific institutions and programs. More detailed information is available in publications about the institutions, programs, and projects discussed. Assistance to urban development is presented in the overall framework of Japanese foreign assistance.

General Observations on Japanese Foreign Assistance

Magnitude and Trends Including Technical Assistance. Japan has been looming increasingly larger in the area of international development assistance. Its government has expressed publicly the goal of achieving expenditures of 1% of total GNP on foreign aid by 1975. Foreign aid, broadly interpreted as all financial flows to the less developed countries, had already reached 0.93% of GNP in 1970, up from 0.62% in 1966. Direct technical assistance has been a very small percentage of total assistance although the absolute volume of technical assistance has been increasing. It has increased from less than five million dollars in 1962 to nearly twenty-five million in 1970. The greatest increases have occurred in the past four years in keeping with a policy of expanding technical assistance. A goal of allocating 5% of total aid to technical assistance is currently under discussion. This would require a five-fold increase over present levels and a more positive approach to technical assistance programming.

For obvious reasons (geographic, historical and economic), Japan's foreign aid has been concentrated in Asia. Since 1954, 80% of Japan's technical assistance has gone to Asia, 12% to the Near East, Middle East and Africa, and 8% to Latin America. The technical assistance components of this aid are carried out through four separate schemes: (1) Colombo Plan; (2) Near East, Middle East and Africa Plan; (3) Latin America Plan; and (4) Other Asia (e.g. Taiwan).

Problems in Technical Assistance. There are three fundamental difficulties which the Japanese face in their technical assistance efforts: the historically "shotgun" nature of the program; the Japanese language as a communications barrier; and Japan's lifetime employment system as an obstacle to recruitment of experts. However, many Japanese are fully aware of these problems and efforts are being made to cope with them.

The shotgun approach was criticized by a number of interviewees. This complaint applies to all assistance, but is even more serious in the technical assistance field. Assistance has been extended on the basis of country request only, with no particular concern for overall or country-specific development strategies or priorities. The program has lacked a conceptual framework and there has been little or no project integration within recipient countries. Another factor which weakens the assistance program is the separation of capital and technical assistance and the very poor coordination between them.

Efforts are underway within the government and on the part of influential private organizations (such as the International Development Center of Japan) to change this. In the 1970's, Japan will be seeking to "discover and execute integrated package programs that would cause the least waste or loss to both the recipient and donor countries."

The two other problems, being more structural in nature, will be more difficult to overcome. Language is an important obstacle. Japanese people are not traditionally linguists, and Japanese is a very difficult language for nationals of other countries. This poses a problem of communications for Japanese experts abroad and for participant trainees in Japan (of which there are some two thousand each year). Japan relies heavily upon group training to help overcome language problems for participants. About 60% of its training programs are in this category.

The lifetime employment problem is also a sticky one. While Japan obviously has a great deal of expertise to offer in management and technical fields, it is very difficult to recruit experts for other than short-term assignments. The lifetime employment system tends to commit an individual to a firm or organization for a lifetime career. Competition for position is severe and the tradition of loyalty to one's organization is strong. Hence, an expert does not generally feel free to leave his post for extended periods, if at all. The pace of Japan's economic development also limits the number of skilled people available for service elsewhere. Most experts are now recruited from government agencies, and some five hundred to six hundred are sent abroad each year.

Related to these problems is the general lack of public support for foreign assistance programs, primarily due to lack of knowledge or understanding of the subject. To help overcome this situation, administrators are devoting more time to public relations and propaganda work. A special committee has been created for this purpose and newspapers have begun to pick up on the theme.

Administration of Technical Assistance. All Japanese Government technical assistance programs are administered by the Overseas Technical Cooperation Agency (OTCA). This quasi-government agency was established in 1962 and is under the supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Prior to OTCA, technical assistance was handled by a number of separate government agencies, depending on the nature of the assistance.

OTCA has its own experts, but in large measure must draw upon other specialized government agencies to staff overseas assignments. It handles the whole gamut of technical assistance activities including participant training, consultants and technicians, commodity support.

Relationship with Universities. It was pointed out that university linkages with technical assistance programs are not so strong as in the United States. For example, there are no "sister university" relationships with institutions in the developing countries. However, efforts are made to include university based experts on consultant and survey teams and the universities are beginning to do some research into problems of development in developing countries.

One very innovative idea under consideration is the development of a human resource inventory in engineering for use in staffing development programs overseas. Under this plan, a language exam and a development exam would be added to the national qualifying exam for engineers. This would be a highly useful screening and locator device for skills important in development work.

Technical Assistance in Urban Development

Only a small proportion of Japan's technical assistance has been devoted to urban development. This was attributed by interviewees to several factors:

- Japan has not been particularly successful in the orderly growth and development of its own cities.
- Japan's technical assistance is based on host country requests and there has been very little demand for such assistance.
- Effective urban development assistance requires an integrated approach. This is "around the corner" for Japan's programs, according to officials, but it has not been characteristic of her programs to date.

Transport and Other Field Surveys. Most recent requests for technical assistance in urban development have been in the transport field. Japan has established a good reputation in urban and inter-urban transportation. Recently preliminary studies for urban transport master plans have been

completed for Seoul (1970), Manila (1971), and Teheran (1971). A private company is demonstrating the monorail system in Bangkok and elsewhere. (It is significant that there has been no expansion of the system in Tokyo since the 1964 Olympics. Reportedly it has not been popular with the people.)

Other field surveys related to urban development have been completed in the following areas:

Waterworks: Pakistan (Islamabad); Vietnam (Saigon and two other cities); Thailand (Bangkok and two other cities).
Harbors: Malaysia; Singapore; Pakistan; Taiwan.
Industrial complexes: Indonesia (Surabaya); Thailand; Ceylon (Colombo).
Airport surveys: occasional.

For the most part these surveys are carried out by short-term government survey teams (30-90 days) with occasional follow-up by individual team members as requested. Such surveys are the responsibility of the Development Surveys Department of OCTA.

Area Development. This is an approach for which there has been a significant increase in demand for technical assistance. It involves comprehensive sectoral or multi-sectoral development planning for regions, usually at the sub-provincial level. Japan's reputation in this field can be attributed in part to Japan's apparent success at area development at home and to the work of the Japan Center for Area Development Research and the United Nations (formerly Chubu) Centre for Regional Development.

Despite the potential and implications of this approach for urban development and rural-urban integration, most of the overseas projects have been in the field of agricultural development. Such projects have been completed or are underway in Thailand (Lamphun), Indonesia (South Sumatra), Brazil (southern area of Sao Paulo state), Tanzania, Iran and India (Dandakaranis area).

In summary, urban development has not been a significant component of Japan's technical assistance program, nor has there been much demand in this area from recipient countries.

There was some speculation on the part of OCTA officials that the new move towards a more integrated, multi-sectoral approach to foreign technical assistance would lead naturally into greater concentration on urban problem solving. For example, a research unit is planned for OCTA to help implement the new approach and this would begin to explore, among other things, the relevance of urban development to national development. However, urban problems have not been singled out for attention, nor would they be, in view of the laissez faire programming approach that has characterized Japanese technical assistance.

Problems of Urban Development. There was some discussion of urban problems in developing countries during interviews, although this was not their intended purpose. Considered to be most important were rapid urban growth, rapid motorization of urban centers (alternatives to the automobile should be considered), and squatters in urban areas. On the positive side there surfaced the notion that the Hagenesque change in personality necessary for development is spawned most readily in urban institutions; e.g., an urban living environment.

Improvement of Technical Assistance in Urban Development. While not the focus of any of the interviews, a number of suggestions emerged for improvement of Japanese technical assistance. These were as follows:

- Technical assistance should be considered as a two-stage operation. First the atmosphere for exchange of ideas must be created. Only then can effective technical transfer, the second stage, take place.
- Professors and young scholars should be engaged in the developing countries as research advisors (distinguished from situations where they do the research themselves).
- Young Japanese should be exposed to the problems of development.

(Note: The Japanese "peace corps" was an effort in this direction but it has not been as successful as expected. Language and recruitment problems have been the major obstacles.)

- Japanese social scientists should focus more on development issues; their absence is conspicuous in fields like urban planning.
- Those who approach urban development in developing countries should think in terms of a sub-national region rather than in terms of metropolitan areas per se.

Institutions with Urban Development Concerns and Programs

The change that is taking place in Japanese developmental thinking -- in terms of external assistance as well as domestic policies -- is due largely to the influence of four institutions: the Japan Centre for Area Development Research; the International Development Centre of Japan; the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (formerly the Chubu Centre); and, the Japan Committee for Economic Development. The latter is a loosely structured committee of government and private representatives of development-oriented institutions. It has been a forum and focal point for discussion of national and international development issues. Its Managing Director is Seuchi Yamashita. The other three are viable institutions and will be described briefly in the following sections. All, in the words of one interviewee, "are on the same wave length."

The Japan Centre for Area Development Research (JCADR). The JCADR was established in 1964 to stimulate and advance the concept of "regional development" in Japan and elsewhere in Asia. It has a large and prestigious Board of Directors and derives its income through contributions from its foundation fund, contributions from board members and others, and income from its activities. These activities include research, seminars and lecture meetings on regional development, and publication of a monthly journal, Chiiki Kaihatsu (Regional Development). Since 1966, under a \$550,000 Ford Foundation grant, three international symposia, one Japan-U.S. conference, and five Japanese conferences have been held on the subject of regional and urban development. (publications are available on each conference). In addition, the grant included exchange of scholars, consultants, and fellows, and special research projects.

The JCADR has explored a range of research topics using a variety of resources. Those focusing on urban development include: "Man and Urban Environment" (1970); "Urban Development and Citizens", a case study of Hachioji (1969); "Research and Study on Southeast Asia", including urban problems (1969); "City Location and Transportation Systems" (1968); "Study of Metropolitan Problems" (1966); "Study of New Industrial Cities" (1966); and, "Study of City Planning Legislation" (1966)

The work of the JCADR contributed directly to the "new look" in Japan's developmental strategies, typified by the New Comprehensive National Development Plan and the New Economic and Social Development Plan. These plans are based on the concept of regional development in which the growth pole approach is adapted to a national communications and transportation network. The objective is to "sustain comprehensive development in the future and to guarantee balanced utilization of the national land." The alignment of the network determines the direction and spatial dimensions of growth.

The JCADR is unmistakably a unique resource in the urban development field, particularly for the countries of Asia. If the Agency chooses to become involved in the urban development field in a meaningful way, it should remain in contact with the JCADR.

International Development Centre of Japan (IDCJ). Dr. Saburo Okita, the founder and president of the IDCJ and a development economist of international repute, has had a substantial role in bringing about Japan's new approach to its international development programs. The IDCJ, as a government-supported private institution established in February 1971, is an important reflection of this effort. Its purpose is the improvement of Japan's technical assistance efforts overseas through judicious application of Japan's stock of technical and developmental experience to the needs of developing countries. Its primary foci will be the training of internationally oriented development planners and economists who can help and

participate in the preparation and implementation of comprehensive development plans, and the conducting of operational, project-oriented research. The IDCJ will train Japanese and foreign specialists and will do research related to the work of Japanese as well as regional and international development assistance programs.

Through sponsoring symposia, seminars and participation in the meetings of other national and international organizations, it hopes to establish and maintain liaison with a host of similar institutions. It will be most interested in information exchange.

Specific research and operational projects are in the process of being selected and an impressive array of "hard core" developmental problems is being considered. On urban development, the following excerpt from the Centre's brochure is indicative of the direction that will be taken initially in this area.

Urban Growth in Asia and Related Public Investment Projects

By 2000 AD it is forecast that Asia will have several cities populated by more than ten million people; in cities of smaller size as well, the problems and potentials of urbanization are expected to greatly increase in importance. Accordingly, this research project will concentrate on public investment projects, to provide useful information for planning urban growth and to make the Japanese experience available to other Asian countries.

Maintaining contact with the IDCJ will be advantageous to the Agency in terms of urban development and other development programs as well.

The United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD), Nagoya. With the support of the United Nations, the Japanese Government established the Chubu Centre in 1968. The purpose of the Centre is reflected in a 1965 ECOSOC resolution (1086C) which authorized UN support for efforts of member states to promote "methods and techniques that could assist developing countries in promoting development and achieving optimum patterns of rural and urban human settlement and production activities." In July 1971, by an agreement between the United Nations and Japan, the Chubu Centre was transformed into the United Nations Centre for Regional Development.

The aim of the UNCRD is to "contribute to regional development, especially in Asia, through programs of training, research, information exchange and advisory services." The Centre will focus on institutional development and its facilities will be available mainly to nationals from the developing countries. Programs will be integrated so that persons in training courses

will participate in research, and the research will contribute to training materials. Most training courses will have international participation, although when a group comes from a particular country, special country-specific programs will be developed. A program in regional development for twenty participants is scheduled for February through June 1972. This will be the first training program of the transformed Centre, although several such courses were conducted by the Chubu Centre. A recently completed evaluation of these programs will improve future training at the Centre.

Program planning had just begun at the time of this TA/UDS survey and the philosophy and approach had not yet been completely worked out. However, being a UN institution it will remain as non-controversial as possible in its contribution to regional planning and development. The program will be multidisciplinary in nature with a primary concern for applying regional planning techniques to the problems of development.

The Chubu Region is a particularly good location for the UNCRD, in that it has a system of active regional development planning and research institutions. These include: the Chubu Regional Development Agency which links the national development plan with the Chubu regional plans; twenty-three cities of greater than 100,000 persons and nine prefectures, all of which have planning agencies which tie into the regional planning process; the Chubu Regional Council, which represents local interests; the Central Council of Chubu Region Development with both local and national interests represented and the top of the hierarchy in terms of coordination of regional plans; and the Chubu Region Development Research Centre. The region is also diversified economically and geographically so that a wide range of sectoral activities can be observed and studied.

The first Director of the UNCRD is Professor George Duggar of the University of Pittsburgh. He was an advisor to the Centre last year. Professor Duggar has indicated that he would like to see the Centre become a central repository for information on regional development in Asia and exchange information on a global basis. Use of microfiche equipment by an international network of institutions would facilitate an extensive, active, and relatively efficient exchange of documents, reports, articles, etc. Along these same lines, Professor Duggar will attempt to promote the UNCRD as a briefing and/or debriefing center for technicians coming into and leaving Asia on assignment via Japan. In this way the Centre will remain aware of many more activities in the region than would be possible otherwise. Also it could make its resources available to a wide range of experts operating in the region.

These three institutions are an "informal consortium" of considerable usefulness to the region. Their addresses are included in the appendices. Other institutions visited and individual contacts also are listed.

Other Resources of Japan

This report has focused on some of the more obvious resources and activities in the urban development field in Japan. There are many others which time did not permit to be explored. Examples of these are Hiroshima as a "model city"; the recently-established Bureau of Environmental Protection of Tokyo Metropolitan Government; the Research Institute for Environmental Protection of Tokyo Metropolitan Government (established in May 1970); the Japan Economic Research Centre; and the Tokyo Institute for Municipal Research.

Conclusion

The foregoing would seem to indicate that while its technical assistance role in urban development is relatively minor, Japan, in fact, has a variety of resources in this field. However, many of them are new. Perhaps with their growth, and given the stated concern for urban development problems in Asia, Japan's technical assistance role in this field will increase in the near future.

Individuals, Organizations and Institutions Contacted in Japan

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