Fifteen Years of Innovation,
Serving the World’s Neediest
Fifteen years ago, the Government of Japan and the World Bank Group entered into a partnership to respond to the needs of the growing number of people living in poverty. The result has been the Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF) — a granting instrument which focuses on participation, inclusion and capacity building to alleviate poverty.

The JSDF provides direct relief to the poor and disadvantaged through the piloting of new and innovative methods in the hope that these techniques will be scaled up by others. It builds new partnerships among local communities together with NGOs and other civil society groups, and governments. This is a unique and valued feature of the JSDF program, unlike most Bank-financed projects that are executed by the government at the central level, JSDF grants are executed by NGOs, civil society organizations and local governments. JSDF grants provide support including microfinance for programming that has a high potential for improving the livelihoods of the most affected groups and promoting financial inclusion while building the foundations for sustainable development.

The JSDF is also a mechanism for local communities to actively participate in and be responsible for their own economic and social development. By encouraging this direct and tangible participation in the decision-making and implementation processes, those groups most in need are being empowered not only by technical or programmatic support, but by the transfer of knowledge, the fostering of responsibility and promotion of accountability. These build the foundations for sustainable development: creating ownership, pride, and a sense of self-determination.

As this report vividly illustrates, the JSDF has become a crucial global instrument to support programming that promotes changes in policy and decision-making at the grass-root level by providing direct assistance through innovative approaches to poverty reduction and livelihood support, empowering people and their capacities to help themselves.

JSDF grants have shown that poverty reduction is not only an economic issue. With over 330 grants in some 85 countries, the JSDF has become a premier global instrument that responds to both the social and economic challenges that face the world’s neediest. Collectively, JSDF pilot grants have demonstrated unparalleled leverage and catalytic effects. A recent independent assessment of the JSDF showed that over two thirds of pilot grants resulted in long-term adaptation and continuation of the programming initially pioneered by a JSDF grant.

The Japan Social Development Fund represents a sustained and historic partnership of the Government of Japan and the World Bank to respond to social and economic needs of the world’s poorest and most disadvantaged. The Government of Japan looks forward to our continued partnership with the World Bank Group in this important granting facility to achieve our joint vision of a world free from poverty and fear.
Forward

It is with great pleasure that I introduce this Illustrated Report of the Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF). For the past fifteen years, the partnership between the World Bank Group and the Government of Japan that embodies the JSDF has been one of the most fruitful and productive.

The JSDF is a granting mechanism that is unlike many other World Bank-administered trust funds. More specifically, it is not focused on a specific sector or thematic area, but rather designed as a multi-sectorial approach to combating poverty by filling gaps, testing innovative and pioneering ideas and promoting community-based solutions. It has built an enviable reputation as one of the most effective investments available to the World Bank in supporting innovative approaches to delivering direct benefits to disadvantaged groups in developing countries.

In 2014, an independent assessment of the JSDF was conducted. It sought to assess how JSDF grants are contributing to poverty alleviation among beneficiaries and how grants are helping to sustain livelihoods. The findings were conclusive.

The JSDF has achieved considerable success in contributing to the two major goals of the World Bank; to end extreme poverty by 2030 and boost shared prosperity for the bottom 40% of the population of all developing countries. It did so by tackling development issues that prevent beneficiaries from overcoming poverty and from improving their livelihood. The activities supported by JSDF grants have reflected the complexities inherent in combating poverty by introducing a diverse range of mechanisms to address deeply rooted multi-dimensional challenges. The JSDF is unique, both in terms of its ability to reach out and deliver real benefits to the poorest and most vulnerable groups in low-income and lower middle-income countries and also in encouraging the pioneering of innovative methods that introduce new or alternative approaches to delivering services.

On behalf of the World Bank Group, I am most grateful to the Government of Japan for their continued strong support to the JSDF. Together, the World Bank and the Government of Japan will continue to sustain this innovative and ground-breaking program that brings such rapid, demonstrable benefits and which builds ownership, capacity, empowerment and participation of local communities in shaping their future.
The JSDF is a partnership between the Government of Japan (GoJ) and the World Bank, which was established in 2000 in response to the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s. During initial negotiations it was mutually agreed that the partnership would be expanded to have global scope, supporting innovative activities to benefit the most disadvantaged groups in eligible developing countries. The specific goal of the JSDF Program is to fund activities that support community-driven development and poverty reduction programs that serve to enhance productivity, increase access to social and community services and infrastructure, and improve the living conditions of poor and vulnerable groups. It thus finances (a) projects supporting improved service delivery, especially innovative new approaches that can be scaled up; or (b) capacity building grants that target local governments and communities, NGOs, or civil society organizations (CSOs).

Thematic areas of focus for the JSDF range across all the range of the World Bank’s list of priority themes, for example, from empowering female victims of violence through capacity building activities to programmes aimed at mitigating the effects of the global economic crisis on at-risk youth. JSDF grants are delivered by implementing partners who may be NGOs/CSOs, elements of local or national government and of community associations. They thus provide a platform for cooperation between these key actors in the development process.

JSDF grant financed projects are administered by the World Bank’s Development Finance (DFi) Vice Presidency; with the Trust Funds and Partnerships Department (DFPTF) having responsibility for the management of the Fund.

The JSDF is very much in line with the recently established Strategic Goals of the World Bank, which its President, Jim Yong Kim, articulated in 2013.

“-- to end extreme poverty by 2030 and to boost shared prosperity of the bottom 40 percent of the population in all developing countries.”

Moreover, it also ably complements long-standing priorities that Japan has articulated for overseas development cooperation. The Priority Policy for International Cooperation of Japan lays out three major objectives:

- To realize a prosperous and stable international community with freedom;
- To support the growth of emerging and developing economies together with the growth of the Japanese economy;
- To promote human security and strengthen trust in Japan.

Funding Criteria for JSDF Grant Proposals

Target and respond to the needy, providing direct benefits to poor, vulnerable, and disadvantaged groups with rapid results for improved livelihood.

Support community-driven development by empowering the poor at the local level to participate in society and government and affect their development through learning by doing.

Build capacity by supporting communities and their associations to participate in decisions that affect their lives, as well as strengthen the capacity of their local governments and local NGOs/CSOs to provide services.

Pilot alternative innovative approaches or partnerships with NGOs/CSOs, community associations, or local governments as implementing agencies to target groups not reached by other programs.

Reflect a participatory design and consultation process with the targeted beneficiaries who endorse the grant inputs.

Use participatory monitoring and evaluation to help beneficiaries address their vulnerabilities and ensure ownership and sustainability.
The following citations from Japan’s Medium-term Policy on Official Development Assistance exemplifies the philosophical link between Japan’s approach to poverty reduction and the JSDF.

“Poverty is not only an economic dimension. It also has social and political dimensions exemplified by lack of access to basic social services… and lack of opportunities to participate in the decision-making process”...”Therefore poverty reduction should be pursued proactively through actions that address both economic and social dimensions.”

“Direct assistance to the poor occupies a significant position in efforts to reduce poverty. From the human security perspective this requires strengthening the poor so as to enable them to participate in the formulation of aid policies, and the project planning and implementation processes that affect their own lives.”

This Report will highlight the contributions of the JSDF to poverty alleviation and in particular to livelihood support. It however transcends traditional understandings of programming to combat poverty. Accordingly, key characteristics such as promotion of human rights and fostering human security, advancing gender equality, fostering empowerment and combatting discrimination and exclusion, and most importantly, introducing innovative and pioneering techniques to catalyse solutions to long-standing poverty challenges will be featured in this Report.

The sustainability of JSDF-supported activities is also a defining characteristic of the Fund. With the exception of a handful of grants which have been provided over the years to staunch emergencies, in many instances the result of natural disasters, JSDF grants are generally designed to be used to complement the work of the World Bank, introducing new ideas and proving their validity so that these new approaches can then be transplanted into much larger initiatives. In this context therefore, Japan’s investment in the JSDF not only contributes to poverty reduction, it in effect, catalyzes and strengthens the World Bank’s capacity to introduce cutting edge techniques that otherwise might not have been developed.

The Centrality of Innovation

It is important to underscore the centrality of innovation and the promotion of experimentation within the context of the JSDF.

The JSDF is not designed to be used to replicate or scale-up existing programming. JSDF grants support projects that bring new ideas into play, especially encouraging the introduction of new concepts that are contextually relevant. For example, providing a cash-based livelihood stipend to the most seriously disadvantaged is not necessarily a globally new idea. However, introducing it to a country that has no prior experience with this kind of mechanism is innovative in that context.
The specific goal of the JSDF Program is to fund activities that support community-driven development and poverty reduction programs that serve to enhance productivity, increase access to social and community services and infrastructure, and improve the living conditions of poor and vulnerable groups.

All low-income and lower middle income countries are eligible to receive JSDF grants, which normally range in value from US$200,000 to US$3 million.

The GoJ has been the sole financier of the JSDF program. As Table 1 shows, the average annual contribution to JSDF is about US$51 million, an amount that includes the GoJ’s additional contributions to the Emergency Window of US$50 million in FY 2010 and FY 2012 respectively.

Overall disbursements increased from US$37.5 million in FY 2011 to US$40.0 million in FY 2012, continuing the trend from the previous year, and increased again to US$49.3 million in FY 2013.

Table 2 shows the regional distribution of the approved grants by fiscal year of approval for the five years between 2009 and 2013. The two regions with most approved grant amounts for the entire period are Africa (AFR) and Latin America and the Caribbean (LCR). South
Asia Region (SAR) is fifth in terms of total amount of approvals for the five year period, but the approved amounts for the region have been relatively steady each year, unlike AFR, EAP, LCR and MNA (Middle East and North Africa Region), which have varied significantly from year to year.

While JSDF grants can support any sector of the economy, most granting activities target initiatives that directly impact the lives of poor and vulnerable groups. As Table 3 shows, the distribution of regular program grants between sectors was very balanced at 21% for all sectors other than mining (which was 16% of the total). This balanced distribution is not always typical of JSDF; for example, the severity of the global food crisis that began in 2011 led to a greater emphasis on agriculture in FY 2011 and FY 2012. This in turn demonstrates JSDF’s flexibility and responsiveness across sectors in seeking to reach the most poor and vulnerable during times of crisis.

Table 3. Sectoral Distribution of Regular Program Grants Approved in FY13 (US$ Million)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Amount (US$ Million)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Finance</td>
<td>$3.0</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitation</td>
<td>$3.0</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Social Services</td>
<td>$3.0</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health, Nutrition and Population</td>
<td>$3.0</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>$2.3</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: $15.6 million
Poverty Alleviation and Livelihood Support

In October 2013, the President of the World Bank, Jim Yong Kim, at the closing of its Annual Meeting, laid out the following two goals for the World Bank:

“-- to end extreme poverty by 2030 and to boost shared prosperity of the bottom 40 percent of the population in all developing countries.”

The JSDF clearly contributes to the fulfilment of these objectives. Its long-standing focus on poverty alleviation has been multi-disciplinary in nature, recognizing that the poverty trap is more than merely a matter of economics. Disenfranchisement, exclusion and discrimination are equally causes of poverty as are lack of skills or lack of access to means of production. The projects highlighted in this Report demonstrate that multi-disciplinary solutions are frequently required to begin to break the cycle of poverty. JSDF projects that combat poverty in many instances also are targeted toward supporting livelihoods as a mechanism to combat the ravages of poverty more generally. Livelihood support can take many forms. The examples showcase the diversity and innovation of JSDF grants that have been directed to strengthening capacity, and increasing the resilience of peoples and their livelihoods.
“Bridging the Education Gap in Mongolia”

Improving Primary Education Outcomes for the Most Vulnerable Children

Located between Russia and China in North Asia, Mongolia is a land
of geographic, social and economic contrasts. Abundant in mineral
resources, with an 11.7% increase in GDP in 2013 alone, Mongolia
has maintained one of the highest rates of economic growth in all of
Asia. Yet a high level of poverty remains. Nationally, the poverty rate
in 2012 was 29.8%. While Ulaanbaatar is being transformed into a
modern metropolis, less than 60 km from its dazzling lights, Mongolian
nomadic herders live in poverty, unable to access basic social services
such as education for their children. Thirty percent of the population
of Mongolia remain rural dwellers, a majority engaged in pastoral
nomadic agriculture.

The children of these families are uniquely disadvantaged. In a world
where future economic opportunities require access to a good
education, the pastoral livelihood of their families places them at a
significant disadvantage. Many families face the emotional crisis of
having to choose to continue to nurture their children, or send them to
boarding schools at a very young age. Dropout rates of these children
are significantly higher than among urban dwellers. Few young rural
children have access to early childhood education programming, a
proven precondition for long-term educational success. Traditional
approaches to address these challenges did not seem to be effective.
These families and their children were in danger of being left behind.

For several years, a major Japanese NGO, Save the Children Japan, has
been working with rural communities to improve access for nomadic
and pastoral, disabled and disadvantaged rural children. Coming
together with community leaders in four rural provinces, in 2011, Save
the Children Japan began to shape a new and more targeted way
to address these challenges. The JSDF was approached to provide
assistance.

A three part US$2.6 million pilot project was developed. Its major
elements established new early childhood education support
mechanisms for nomadic youth, financed an innovative approach to
distance learning for early grades to reach out to nomadic families
with young children; and, fostered the establishment of community
education councils in rural areas, a first for Mongolia.

After only two years of operations, impressive results have already
ensued. Over 7,500 young children have been enrolled in the early
childhood education programs. The ground breaking after school
programming has commenced in all locations. All 30 education
councils have been established and are playing key roles in
empowering local communities. Dropout rates have fallen among
young children. Innovative distance learning tools have been
developed and soon will be rolled out to nomadic families. In short,
the JSDF pilot project delivered by Save the Children Japan has already
exceeded expectations.

Of equal if not greater importance, based on these early successes,
Mongolian officials already have begun to explore the expansion
of the pilot program to other rural areas, thus again validating
some of the central characteristics of JSDF pilot programming:
contextual relevance, innovation, leveraging other financing and local
empowerment.
“Strengthening the National Social Safety Net by Broadening Inclusiveness in Djibouti”

Employment and Human Capital Social Safety Net

Located in the Horn of Africa, Djibouti is a small nation nestled beside the Red Sea. Unemployment, a lack of a sustainable resource base and social exclusion have long beset this nation of some 800,000 people, most of whom live in the capital city. Djibouti’s social safety net was clearly not inclusive, leaving behind young people and specifically, women and children. The level of poverty and especially the level of chronic malnourishment among children in this small nation was serious due to declining economic opportunities. In 2010, the JSDF was called on an emergency basis to combat systemic poverty and early childhood malnourishment by filling gaps in the national safety net.

A special pilot project was developed that combined job creation, especially physical infrastructure improvements, with capacity building among the poorest of the poor to raise their awareness of the benefits of good nutrition for young children. This resulted in an integrated social safety net, a first for Djibouti. Unlike many other social assistance programs, this pilot project introduced a new and objective way of identifying potential beneficiaries. The selection of beneficiaries was based on a needs test that prioritized eligible households, as opposed to merely targeting entire communities.

Although this pilot program is still on-going, early impressive results are apparent. Over 2,000 individual households are participating in the subsidized nutrition program for children below two years of age and over 1,000 people are working on infrastructure improvement activities. Preliminary results also show significant improvements in family health, with increased levels of prenatal consultations and child vaccinations, improved access to sanitary facilities and the enhancement of pre-natal feeding programming. As well, approximately 150,000 poor and vulnerable people are indirectly benefiting from the improved physical infrastructure and social services that have been funded by the JSDF project.

The lessons learned from this initiative have pioneered the development of more extensive and combined World Bank programming through a new Country Partnership Framework and have led the JSDF itself to begin to develop a new holistic approach to the integration of JSDF-supported initiatives into overall World Bank strategies. As well, the results of this project are leading toward the development of multi-year strategies for longer term JSDF investments so as to strengthen their sustainability.
“Combatting Poverty by Fostering Secure Land Tenure in Cambodia”

Strengthening Good Governance in Land Distribution; and Strengthening Civil Society-Government Partnership to Deliver Land Tenure Security

After decades of disruption, the land tenure system in Cambodia remains fragile at best. Large portions of both the rural and urban populations do not have legal tenure and remain in the grip of extreme poverty. Many urban and rural poor do not have any access to land, living a precarious lifestyle where employment is frequently on a day-to-day basis and secure access to a home, let alone social services, problematic. The Government of Cambodia has put in place a long-term and comprehensive approach to addressing the land tenure issue.

However, there were gaps in this approach. Accordingly, in 2008 the JSDF was called upon to support two pilot initiatives that focussed on engaging landless urban and rural poor people more actively in land tenure decision-making and also increasing their economic skills so that they could benefit from new land and begin to escape poverty.

Both projects involved utilizing NGOs to reach out to the urban and rural poor, something that had not been undertaken in earlier approaches to land distribution.

The first project involved improving access by the urban disenfranchised poor to land within the city of Battambang. After extensive local consultations, the local government began working with an NGO to raise awareness among the urban poor to give them the tools so that their voices could be heard and to provide technical support in terms of housing construction and land use. Over a period of four years, several hundred plots were distributed to previously landless families. Most importantly, the distribution pattern was fully transparent, being based on an objective needs assessment that was conducted by the NGO.

"Our community has bought a tractor and we have been able to farm more of our land. Next year we will be buying a used truck to take our produce to market."

The results of this initiative were considerable. Not only were new technical skills engendered, new community associations were established and continue to thrive. More and more people have started up or improved businesses after having official plots of land. More families now have access to clean drinking water and electricity. Income generation activities have been increased. A range of new businesses have grown up, including: grocery, sewing, shoemaking, cookie production, hair dressing, and motor repair.

The second project addressed the needs of the rural poor.
A national NGO worked with the provincial government to build the capacity and voice of landless families and their communities in gaining access to land and livelihood support through three main components.

The results of this initiative were significant. Over 3,000 families, previously landless and living in poverty, now possess plots of their own. Nearly all of these plots are now being successfully farmed. The community associations established during the selection process for land distribution have continued and remain effective voices for the people themselves. There is early evidence that incomes among these 3,000 families have considerably increased, in large part due to the value of agricultural production. In some instances, recipients have combined day wages with tending their own plots, thereby diversifying their income. Equally, new communities have emerged anchored by new schools and health posts. Entrepreneurship has begun to take root in the form of small community-based businesses, thus keeping wealth within the community itself.

“My family did not have a permanent home or secure employment. We did not have a place to call our own. Now we have started a small business.”
“Building a Life After Blood Diamonds in Sierra Leone”

Artisanal Mining Community Development and Sustainable Livelihoods

Sierra Leone is a small English speaking country in West Africa. At the turn of the century, it had been beset by a decade-long civil war with final reconciliation not occurring until 2005. Sierra Leone also has some of the most easily accessible alluvial deposits of diamonds, the infamous “blood diamonds”. Although considerable wealth has been washed from the banks of rivers, very little of it remains in the hands of the rural peasant artisanal miners. Now with deposits beginning to be depleted, these miners and their families faced a crisis.

The JSDF was asked in 2010 to support a pilot project which would begin to transform the precarious livelihoods of these miners by providing them access to sustainable agricultural production. To achieve these goals however, a war-torn infrastructure had to be rebuilt, a key objective of the World Bank’s overall strategy for Sierra Leone. The JSDF project, which has become to be known as “Life After Diamonds”, began to address some of the social inequalities that confronted this transformation. Some 12,000 people, 80% of them women or youth, have benefited through block grants. Over 4,000 part-time and full time jobs were established.

One of the most important elements of this initiative was the restoration of roads and bridges and community buildings in remote districts that border the neighboring Republic of Guinea. Some of these investments in infrastructure have dramatically improved economic opportunities for communities that were effectively isolated from their own country. In one instance, the restoration of a bridge reduced travel times to bring produce to market from an exhausting 18 hours to less than three. But more than infrastructure investment and technical support for agricultural production was provided. An integral element of this initiative was local community level capacity building, the establishment of community cooperatives and village development committees and the formation of micro-finance institutions for women.

This initiative, valued at US$2.75 million, clearly showed how the JSDF can carefully target its interventions to have significant community impact with modest levels of investment. It also again underscores the fundamental nature of the JSDF, a community-based approach to empowerment and poverty reduction that employs innovative techniques while building toward long-term sustainability.

“After the civil war ended no one came to rebuild our schools. The Life After Diamonds project gave us the money so that we could build our own new schools.”

“Promoting Community Resilience to Combat Natural Disasters in Honduras”

Community Disaster Management in the Barrios of Tegucigalpa

In Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras, poor residents living in informal settlements (barrios) suffer from frequent flooding and landslides, made worse by poor waste management systems and deficient infrastructure.

In order to address this issue, the JSDF granted US$2 million to the Municipality of Tegucigalpa to implement a pioneering, community-driven disaster management project. The project’s goals were to (i) build local and community capacity to manage environmental risks to an informal market area highly susceptible to flooding; (ii) institutionalize a working relationship between communities, local emergency response committees and the Municipality of Tegucigalpa, and strengthen ties to NGOs; and (iii) develop and implement new, participatory techniques for community risk assessment and disaster mitigation, ultimately defining a methodology for community level disaster mitigation.

This ground breaking initiative managed to exceed its target output by 500%. The original goal was to train and support 20 local emergency response committees; the number of committees reached was actually 109.

The civil works supported by the grant are now being sustained by the beneficiaries themselves, and some communities have now taken ownership of them, ensuring their day-to-day maintenance. Based on these positive initial results, the Municipality of Tegucigalpa has decided to integrate this community-driven model of disaster management into its own procedures, and it is now a standard operating mechanism.
“Introducing New Farming Techniques to Diversify and Increase the Sustainability of Livelihoods in Kenya”

Support to Community-Based Farm Forestry Enterprises in Semi-Arid Regions

Spanning from the Indian Ocean to the Great Lakes of central Africa, Kenya is a land of geographic and cultural diversity. Yet, in this diverse land, there are large pockets of extreme poverty in both urban and rural areas, places where livelihoods are precarious, at the mercy of the elements or unforeseen economic conditions. The North and North-East regions of Kenya are semi-deserts, agricultural production is limited by geography, combined with isolation. Deforestation has long been endemic in East Africa. The World Bank and the Government of Kenya have long recognized these challenges. Overall World Bank country strategies have emphasized the need to undertake more proactive programming in these regions. In 2009, the JSDF was called upon to fill an important gap in these larger strategies; how to improve the capacity of small farmers struggling to combine agriculture and forestry in this semi-arid environment.

The JSDF pilot project, which was built in an earlier initiative supported by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), introduced new ways of strengthening livelihoods in rural communities by introducing forestry into a traditional crop production cycle. Given the rapid
growing cycle of many trees, it also can provide a new supplementary source of income via timber harvesting. Equally, these isolated farmers were able to benefit from capacity building and technical training, increasing their productivities skills. But to farm also requires capital investment, something seriously lacking in isolated rural Kenyan communities. The JSDF-supported program linked farmers to private sector micro-finance institutions thereby providing an alternate source of community-based capital investment, farmers and their families helping other farmers and their families to build sustainable livelihoods in their own communities.

“Our community was isolated and no one seemed to care. Together we rebuilt the bridge. We can now go to market with our crops in our own country and not have to travel for nearly a full day.”

This initiative is now coming to an end. However, the roots it has set down in the soil of Northern Kenya are beginning to take hold and flourish. The Kenya Forest Service, an agency of the national government, is continuing to provide technical support for the communities involved. Farmer cooperatives and community groups maintain knowledge transfer through mounting their own training programs. Demand for small loans to finance additional plots and tree nurseries are now exceeding capacity of the micro-finance institutions and are resulting in increased support by traditional financial institutions in the region, thereby strengthening the cycle of investment, production and contribution to poverty alleviation.
“Increasing Market Access and Income for Disadvantaged Peoples in Nicaragua”

Alternative Indigenous and Afro-Descendants’ Sustainable Agro-Forestry Management for the Autonomous North Atlantic Region

Located in Central America, Nicaragua reaches from the Pacific in the west to the Caribbean Sea in the east. Most of its inhabitants live on the Pacific slopes, while in the east toward the Caribbean Sea, settlements are more scattered and there is considerably more poverty. Many residents are indigenous people or descendants of former African slaves. Most of the people farm small plots and are reliant on middlemen to purchase their produce.

The JSDF was asked in 2009 to help alleviate poverty among these people and especially among the indigenous residents who in many cases, continue to pursue traditional patterns of forest agriculture. The JSDF grant supported a pilot program designed to increase farming skills, better integrate traditional practices and beliefs, build new cooperatives so as to both increase productivity and eliminate middlemen.

The results of this project, which began in 2008, have been impressive. Former subsistence farmers are now generating cash crops in cocoa and benefiting from increased market access, thereby generating income and helping them escape poverty which has been endemic in that region of Nicaragua. Additionally, farmers have established a primary refining of the cocoa beans, again to increase the value of their crop. Women have become more active in the operation of cocoa farmer cooperatives and as well have been encouraged to tend their own land. Young people, especially indigenous youth, have learned valuable new skills.

These results have established a sustainable foundation on which to build. The farming cooperatives remain active. The capacity building and knowledge sharing is now continuing on a farmer to farmer local basis. The lessons learned from this pilot program informed how the World Bank and local governments designed the US$34 million Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP) for Nicaragua, which aims to empower small producers and ethnic minorities through the development of value chains and increased agricultural productivity in the impoverished Caribbean coastal region of Nicaragua.

“We have cut out the middle men who made all the profit from our work. Now we market our own cocoa and the money is ours to invest in our farms and provide for our families.”
“Reaching Out to the Disadvantaged to Improve Access to Community Services in Tanzania”

Community-based Conditional Cash Transfer Pilot Project

This initiative which began in 2008, was supported by a US$1.972 million JSDF grant. It not only helped combat extreme poverty by supporting the livelihoods of some of the most vulnerable people, but it also introduced cutting edge techniques.

The need for the targeting and inclusion of vulnerable groups - the poorest, women and the elderly - was a direct request from the communities served by the Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF), a government body that supports local and village councils to respond to needs in their communities. The JSDF supported a new approach to reaching these vulnerable communities by introducing cash transfer payments, a first for Tanzania and also for Africa as a whole.

The overall benefits gained by the project were the following:

- This community-based project reached 4,998 targeted households covering 13,081 beneficiaries. In these households, parents and guardians, most of whom are now grandparents, now have the money to seek medical care for their children.

- Consumption and access to health services improved as reflected in the reduction in illnesses among the elderly and infants, and also resulted in increased school attendance by children.

This innovative approach to combating extreme poverty now will be sustained. The Government of Tanzania has secured an additional US$4.5 million from the World Bank as part of the Second Tanzania Social Action Fund Project to scale up the cash transfer initiative.
Human Rights

Promoting human rights and fostering human security have been at the centre of Japan’s foreign policy for many years. JSDF projects, by promoting community empowerment and contributing to poverty reduction, many times address complex and multi-faceted issues related to the promotion of human rights and human security. Human security, as a concept central to overall human development, recognizes the symbiotic relationships between development, the exercise of human rights and security of persons and their communities. It is best exemplified by the phrase “freedom from fear; freedom from want; and freedom to live in dignity”. These two examples demonstrate how JSDF projects have addressed a range of human rights and human security considerations.
“A New Approach to Fighting Poverty and Human Trafficking in Senegal”

Fighting Child Begging and Human Trafficking in Senegal

Child begging and human trafficking of young people has been a persistent problem in Senegal, and the government has had limited success in addressing it. In addition, child beggars have constituted a very marginalized cohort among those denied access to education, and could not be accommodated in the regular Education for All projects because of the specific, multi-sectorial approach required, thereby placing them and especially girls at extreme risk to human traffickers.

A group of concerned civil society members met for over a year to coordinate and strategize with support from the World Bank (and UNICEF). Their work became the basis for the initiative. Civil society, religious leaders and government representatives conducted extensive consultations. Subsequently, they sought JSDF support in addressing the problem of child begging and combatting human trafficking.

Previous interventions focused on providing assistance to children already in the street. This was the first time that a concerted effort towards prevention was made, which was considerably cheaper than after the fact assistance, and was aimed to result in much less suffering for the children and removing them from the influences of human traffickers. The project also took the only sustainable approach to address the problem, and had the advantage of putting families and communities on centre stage, encouraging them to take greater responsibility for the well-being of their children. An additional innovative component was the comprehensive approach developed to address demand (from Koranic teachers) and supply (from families) factors of child begging. Impressive results ensued:

- 76,464 households were informed and educated about begging and human trafficking issues;
- There was a 68% reduction in the migration of young people in 35 villages in one region and 71% reduction in the 15 villages of a second;
- The Government of Senegal received for the first time a complete curriculum, harmonized with and validated by the Ministry of Education, the Koranic teachers and experts in Islamic education.

This innovative initiative has generated catalytic effects. It has led to the Government preparing and adopting a new law to protect children from begging and human trafficking. In addition, the project contributed to the development of a curriculum for Koranic schools that is being implemented by the Government with the support of the World Bank.

- 98 local committees to protect children against begging were set up;
“Empowering Those Afflicted by Hepatitis B and C to Speak for Themselves in Moldova”

Preventing Hepatitis B and C

The Republic of Moldova is nestled between Romania and the Russian Federation. Formerly part of the Soviet Union, it gained its independence some 20 years ago. Moldova is the poorest country in Europe. It faces numerous economic and social challenges due to decades of underdevelopment. Like many other countries, Moldova faces the scourge of HIV Aids and the related conditions of Hepatitis B and C. Yet, it has not developed the means to effectively counteract these conditions. In 2009, the JSDF was called to assist in addressing these serious challenges. One of the most significant gaps in Moldova’s strategy to redress the effects of Hepatitis B and C was the absence of grassroots community empowerment and support, essential components of a proactive strategy which not only combat the disease, but the social stigma and thus contributes to the enhanced exercise of fundamental human rights.

Many times those afflicted are also society’s most vulnerable, the urban poor, women and girls, the mentally ill. The JSDF pilot project reached out to over 50,000 vulnerable and at-risk individuals, building a new culture of community involvement and laying the groundwork for community advocacy. For the first time in Moldova, advocates for the afflicted were able to work directly with government representatives. For the first time, Moldova’s blood donation system was sensitized to the need to be respectful of those afflicted by Hepatitis B and C. This successful pilot program has led to new government procedures with respect to the national blood donor system and the nature of its new approach to outreach to those afflicted by Hepatitis B and C. Local governments, in a number of instances, have continued the community outreach strategy. Additionally, the national government has allocated new resources to the national blood transfusion system.

"Here in Moldova people like me are made to feel that is our own fault that we have Hepatitis C or HIV/AIDS. Nobody wants to listen to us. This program has opened the door for us to be able to talk more openly with the government about our needs."
Gender and Disadvantaged Groups

Promoting gender equality is both a strategic objective of the World Bank as well as a long-standing goal of Japan’s foreign policy. The following two examples both address gender equality. The example drawn from India demonstrates how capacity building can result in wide-spread empowerment of females, providing them first time access to the skills they need to lead them to gainful employment. The example from Nepal combats a double disadvantage, historical discrimination against a specific ethnic group where young women and girls suffer doubly.
Historically, Nepal’s education system beyond the primary level requires that parents pay tuition and also provide for educational support such as school uniforms. These costs can be onerous in a nation where the majority of the population lives below the poverty line. They also can be oppressive when entire cultural groups have historically been excluded from Nepal’s education system in general. The comprehensive World Bank loan was predicated on the assumption that there would be an equitable supply of lower secondary school graduates (Grades 9 and 10 in Nepal) to move onward. Analysis showed however, that the proportion of girls advancing to higher secondary school was very low, along with the proportion of disadvantaged ethnic groups. Accordingly, community leaders joined with the World Bank and the Department of Education to develop an innovative strategy to rectify these inequalities and thus better promote education for all.

This new approach was proactive in nature, seeking to rectify these challenges by building a completely new approach to identifying and supporting girls and members of ethnic minorities. School stipends, an annual payment to a family to provide for tuition and uniforms, have long been used in Nepal as a means to widen access to educational opportunities. However, their track record in terms of ensuring gender equality and education for all, has been mixed, given that the traditional distribution pattern involved decision-making by local school officials. Communities were not involved.

In 2009, the JSDF sponsored an innovative approach whereby the Ministry of Education partnered with a leading nation-wide NGO to establish a socio-economic means test which assessed family incomes,
initiative. The stipend allowed these young people to be able to proceed beyond what would have been the ceiling of their ability to access education and thus contribute to breaking the poverty trap. This pilot project did not build schools, nor did it train teachers or provide the learning materials; it was targeted exclusively at improving equality rights.

The success of this pilot project has been significant. Not only has the Department of Education agreed to expand it nation-wide from the initial small number of districts, the objective tool to determine socio-economic needs has been incorporated into the social programming of several other Ministries, thereby improving the fairness and transparency of social assistance programming across Nepal. The JSDF was instrumental in investing in this kind of innovation and has made a lasting difference not only for the young people of Nepal, but also for all its citizens.

Over the life of this pilot project which concluded in 2013, some 15,000 young people, of whom over 50% were girls, benefited from this initiative. The stipend allowed these young people to be able to proceed beyond what would have been the ceiling of their ability to access education and thus contribute to breaking the poverty trap. This pilot project did not build schools, nor did it train teachers or provide the learning materials; it was targeted exclusively at improving equality rights.

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access to housing and public infrastructure and other factors to better determine qualification for a school stipend. The questionnaire was developed at the community level itself with the active participation in its design by ethnic minority groups who had been traditionally disadvantaged. This was a first for Nepal, breaking long-standing barriers to true equality of access.

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“Not only have we introduced objective assessments for education stipends, our government is now expanding this approach to other social programs.”
“Breaking the Poverty Cycle in Rural India”

SEWA (Self-Employed Women’s Association) Capacity Building

The plight of women in rural India to establish their own economic independence has been long-standing. Cultural traditions combined with lack of educational access had led to the marginalization of women. SEWA is a nearly 40 year old national voluntary sector institution in India that has its roots in Gandhi’s principles of empowerment and non-violence. During these years, SEWA has piloted a number of innovative approaches to combating discrimination and exclusion of women and girls, more and more focusing on building capacity, providing educational opportunities and catalysing small scale community-based economic production. The JSDF has partnered with SEWA on a number of occasions in the past. In 2011, they came together to develop a pilot program to implement the economic empowerment of women by providing access to educational opportunities, contemporary forms of communications and information sharing and business development skills.

This initiative, exclusively focused toward rural women, is breaking down stereotypes and barriers in the State of Gujarat. Poor uneducated women who had never seen a cell phone learned to conduct complex business transactions in these centers. As well, providing access to modern computer technology enabled many participants to reach out beyond traditional employment opportunities to begin to build sustained livelihoods of their own.

But there was also more. Not only have women and girls benefited from capacity building and educational opportunities. SEWA itself has been transformed, from formerly being an advocacy group to now more reflecting a community-based business resource centre for women. As well, this pilot initiative reached out to establish partnerships with the private sector and with local and national governments.

These new community-based centres have proven to be effective in increasing the skills of their participants and also in laying foundations for their own sustainability by providing services themselves on a recovery basis. They have shown that rural women can establish viable micro-finance enterprises and more fully participate in the social and economic lives of their communities. They have affirmed gender equality.

“I completed my 10th grade and now I want to continue training in computers so I can become a fashion designer. This project gave me the opportunity to do so and now I am well on my way to establishing my own business.”
Innovation

Innovation and experimentation can have many faces. These two examples demonstrate very different innovative and experimental approaches. In the first, new techniques for rebuilding confidence in the justice system after the prolonged and bitter civil war in Sierra Leone were piloted and subsequently integrated into ongoing local programming, contributing to the national healing process. In the second, in Colombia, approaches to community development and empowerment for young women and girls subtly resulted in strengthening the community’s capacity to combat an epidemic of violence, instability and intimidation.
“Rebuilding Trust in the Judicial System of Sierra Leone After the Civil War”

Developing a Model for Delivering Primary Justice Services

After a decade-long civil war, Sierra Leone continues to face considerable economic and social challenges. Livelihoods were disrupted and poverty remains rampant. If not more importantly, the social contract between citizen and state had evaporated, resulting in a loss of confidence in the state and thereby a loss of fundamental human security. Crucial societal institutions such as the justice system lay in tatters. In 2006, the JSDF was called upon to address one of these societal gaps, lack of confidence in and access to the justice system, especially as these gaps affected women and other disadvantaged groups. A US$900,000 capacity building grant was approved.

Informal community needs assessments, as well as targeted consultations with traditional leaders and representatives of various community organizations, were conducted in five chiefdoms. The assessments were used to identify the scope of justice problems and needs. This innovative initiative aimed to improve the access of disadvantaged groups in Sierra Leone to customary and formal justice and increase the accountability of justice sector institutions.

The focus of this initiative on improving access of the poor to services was consistent with the overall objective of the national devolution program, entailing increased citizen access to a wide range of basic services. It also complemented the work of the World Bank’s Institutional Reform and Capacity Building Project in Sierra Leone in improving democratic participation and accountability at the local level, and ensuring that general institutional reforms are beneficial to the citizenry. The target beneficiaries of this grant were disadvantaged groups, including women.

The overall benefits gained were as follows:

- Community dialogue meetings contributed to post-conflict inclusion in communities, including the empowerment of beneficiaries to enable them to speak out and seek help when needed.
- Traditional chiefs were included in the project implementation process through the creation of local boards, which assisted in bridging the gap between the formal and informal legal systems in Sierra Leone.
- The service of paralegals, and additional coordination with civil society to provide justice services, was included as part of the state structure.

The innovations that were fostered by this initiative are subtle in nature but extremely important in the rebuilding of the trust and respect among individuals, civil society organizations and governments.
“Using Sport to Build Community Solidarity and Resilience in Colombia”

Fútbol Juntos (Soccer Together)

In Colombia’s sprawling cities, the struggle against drug-related crime and poverty has been relentless with both the national government and local governments attempting to create safe, sustainable communities. Traditional means of promoting community empowerment have met with only limited successes. The city of Baranquilla on the Caribbean Sea is no exception. Young boys and girls and women are particularly at risk for sexual exploitation and to be swept away into a culture of violence and poverty. Community leaders and the local government approached the JSDF in 2011 with an innovative way to counteract these ills, using the “beautiful game” fútbol, as a means of building community consensus and empowerment.

Community organizations were established to build a network of boys’ and girls’ fútbol, teams and to provide some improved facilities. But fútbol was only the stage on which the real aims of the grant were delivered. These community associations brought together women’s groups, individual women, boys and girls, local businesses and local governments to shape community empowerment strategies including efforts to increase enrolment in the local schools and build community resilience in these hostile and violent environments.

The grant continues to be implemented. The community associations and the support programming for young women, boys and girls including fútbol, continue to thrive and expand. The crucial sense of community empowerment continues to grow and deepen in support. Partnerships have been established with the private sector and with government which have resulted in on-going sustainability.

“Our new neighbourhood group not only runs the fútbol league for our kids. For the first time, our community can speak to the schools. We can show them what they need to do to help out kids stay in school.”

This grant exemplifies how the JSDF, through its promotion of innovative solutions to poverty, can be used to experiment with ideas that otherwise would not have been supported through traditional means. Utilizing fútbol, as a metaphor to counteract violence and exploitation of young women and boys and girls demonstrates the flexibility and ingenuity of the JSDF and also the fact that the scourge of poverty has many faces and thus requires innovative and unique responses.
The Way Forward

For the past fifteen years, the JSDF, supported through the generosity of the Government and people of Japan, has made several hundred strategic investments designed to reduce poverty and sustain livelihoods. The above examples, drawn from the last six to eight years, highlight the breadth and scope of these initiatives. They demonstrate that addressing the challenges of poverty inherently must include consideration of human rights and gender equality. They underscore that livelihood support means more than simply providing jobs on a short-term basis.

In 2014, an Independent Assessment of the JSDF was undertaken. It identified the significant degree to which JSDF projects contributed to poverty reduction and support for livelihoods. It confirmed that the vast majority of JSDF grants resulted in long-term benefits reaching beyond the life of the project itself. In many cases, the innovative concepts which characterize JSDF grants were integrated into on-going governmental programs, thus generating truly catalytic results. In others, because of their involvement in the design of the grants, people and their communities have, without outside support, expanded upon what they learned, making it locally sustainable and have spread the message and skills to others.

But more needs to be done. One of the major lessons that can be learned from the JSDF’s fifteen year history is the degree to which combating poverty is multi-faceted. The need for the JSDF is as great today as it was over a decade ago. Indeed, the challenges to humanity brought about by climate change, rebuilding the social fabric after civil unrest and responding to long overlooked concerns of indigenous and other disadvantaged peoples underscore the continued necessity of a flexible, responsive partnership such as that between Japan and the World Bank. In the coming years, the JSDF will respond to new challenges and will do so continuing to respect its community-based roots, responding to the needs that people themselves articulate.

The JSDF will continue to support the fundamental principles on which Japan’s foreign policy is rooted. It will continue to inform the design and evolution of World Bank Country Partnership Frameworks; and thereby will materially contribute to the attainment of the World Bank’s recently articulated new strategic goals of eliminating extreme poverty and increasing shared prosperity.
Conclusion

What can be said in conclusion about the JSDF? The breadth and scope of the JSDF reaches well beyond traditional social development considerations, emphasizing the degree to which the challenges of poverty reduction and increasing levels of shared prosperity cut across traditional ways of thinking. The JSDF mechanism, by contributing to both the foreign policy objectives of the Government of Japan as well as World Bank’s Country Partnership Frameworks, has created a valuable synergy between Japan and the World Bank.

Even reports such as this can tend to de-personalize the consequences and benefits of catalytic activities such as those supported by the JSDF. Even the vignettes presented in here do not do justice to the degree of change, the degree of hope and confidence and the degree of empowerment that JSDF grants have engendered.

Early in March 2011, large segments of the island of Honshu in Japan were devastated by the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. The consequences of the loss of life and devastation are only now being fully understood. Support from around the globe began to pour into Japan, some from most unlikely sources.

In 2010, a JSDF grant was approved to provide emergency assistance to unemployed residents of the city of Ulan Bator, Mongolia’s capital. This grant was designed to support urban infrastructure restoration and was targeted at reaching out to formerly rural peasants who had left their lands in search of economic opportunities in the burgeoning capital of Mongolia.

The TTL recounted that when news of the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami began to circulate in Ulan Bator, the community leaders responsible for the design and implementation of the JSDF grant reached out to the beneficiaries themselves, asking these already desperately poor people to come together to make a collective contribution to the victims of the earthquake and tsunami.

These people, living at or below the poverty line, had come to learn that the civil works project that was employing their family members and neighbours and thus not only providing economic benefits but also building skills, confidence and self-respect, was the result of a contribution from the people of Japan. Several thousand dollars was rapidly raised and presented to the Japanese Embassy.

At the same time, all across the world, other JSDF beneficiaries came together through their community groups or as individuals to express their solidarity with the people of Japan. They wished to be one. They wished to express their gratitude. The World Bank assembled all these messages into a Book of Hope and Solidarity which was presented to the Government of Japan.

These expressions of global solidarity may be the best way to conclude this Report. They highlight what is truly important, the solidarity among diverse peoples, the extent to which hope can be engendered and the centrality of mutual support in the face of natural and human challenges.
Fifteen Years of Innovation, Serving the World’s Neediest

The Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF) was established in 2000 as a collaboration between the government of Japan (GoJ) and the World Bank. The JSDF provides a mechanism for offering direct assistance to the poorest and most vulnerable groups in eligible member countries of the World Bank Group, while promoting long-term social development. JSDF grants target initiatives that show rapid results in poverty alleviation and encourage the direct participation of NGOs, community groups, and civil society.

The Government of Japan  The World Bank Group

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