



For a better tomorrow for all



Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in the Kyrgyz Republic

Newsletter № 52 (December, 2010 - January, 2011)

1. Our events

Bridges of friendship between Japan and Kyrgyzstan are ready!

On January 21, 2011, a ceremony was held to mark the completion of the Project for reconstruction of bridges in the Chui Oblast that was implemented within the framework of grant aid provided by the Government of Japan. The project was implemented fully on a grant basis with the total amount of around 6.9 million U.S. dollars.



Bridge over the Alamedin river before reconstruction



Bridge over the Alamedin river after reconstruction

The project involved full dismantling of the three bridges across the Ala-Archa river (30 m), Alamedin (42 m) on the Almaty-Bishkek-Tashkent highway and in the village of Ken-Bulun (25 m) on the Bishkek-Naryn-Torugart highway, piling, structural installation and concreting operations. Bridge reconstruction work began in July 2009 and ended on January 13, 2011. All of the three bridges are currently open for traffic.



Bridge over the Ala-Archa river before reconstruction



Bridge over the Ala-Archa river after reconstruction

The Japanese construction company Iwata Chizaki Inc. acted as the general contractor of the project, with subcontractors sourced locally in Kyrgyzstan. The project was unique in that, for the first time, construction was carried out jointly by experts from both countries and under the leadership of the Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Kyrgyz Republic whose main goal was to transfer Japanese technology of bridge construction to the Kyrgyz counterparts. Specialists of the Ministry highly appreciated the high-quality technology and the quality control over construction works produced by Iwata Chizaki Inc. according to Japanese standards and safety procedures during construction. In particular, Japanese specialists closely monitor quality and composition of the concrete mix as a major factor in strengthening and expanding work lifespan of reinforced concrete bridges. Also, it is for the first time in this country's practice that the pre-stressed concrete beams technology was to be used at a construction site.

Pictures in this article clearly show all the three bridges before and after construction. (Suyunalieva Guljan)



Bridge over the Ken-Bulun river before reconstruction



Bridge over the Ken-Bulun river after reconstruction

Signing of the Minutes of Meeting on the Mid-Term evaluation of the Japan Center



Signatories: Mr. Akunov, Rector of KNU, and Mr. Fushimi K., Head of the JICA Mission

At 10:00 on January 31, 2011, minutes of the meetings between JICA, the Ministry of Finance of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Kyrgyz National University named after Zh.Balasagyn were signed at the Kyrgyz Republic Japan Center regarding medium-term evaluation of the KRJC Project.

Many of our readers know about this organization, popularly known as the Japan Center.

The Japan Center was opened in Kyrgyzstan in 1995 and it began operations in different directions aimed at deepening mutual understanding between Kyrgyzstan and Japan. In 2003, in response to a request of the Government of Kyrgyzstan, JICA and the Kyrgyz National University named after Zh.Balasagyn agreed on implementation of the joint

Kyrgyz Republic Japan Center Project (hereinafter KRJC) on the basis of the already existing Japan Center.

KRJC's mission is to train professionals promoting business development in Kyrgyzstan and implement activities to deepen understanding and strengthen friendly relations between the Kyrgyz Republic and Japan. This implies information and experience sharing, as well as helping the population of the KR to learn about Japan's culture and language.

The project was updated in 2008 to enter its second stage for the next 5-year period. At this point, right in the middle of the Project's implementation, there came a Mission from Japan on medium-term evaluation of achievements of the Project. The Mission and the Kyrgyz Government exchanged views on a midterm evaluation and future directions of cooperation for the Project, with both sides agreeing on signing the above document.

It is expected that the activities of KRJC shall be strengthened in the future, and so will cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and Japan. (Alelekova Svetlana)

Trying to vote electronically

On December 6, 2010, a demonstration of JICA's pilot project on e-voting took place involving the Chairman of the Central Election Commission of Kyrgyzstan Mr. Akylbek Sariiev, JICA's Resident Representative in Kyrgyzstan Mr. Hideaki Maruyama, members of the Bishkek City Kenesh and other invited persons.

On this day members of the school parliament - pupils of Integrated Lyceum № 13 elected the Speaker of the School Parliament using two technologies: traditional methods of voting and vote counting on the one hand and electronic voting and automated counting of votes on the other. The first technology is widely known to our voters - the use of ballots and counting votes by hand. The second technology is when voting is done by using touch screens to click on the name of one of the candidates, while the software performs automatic counting of votes in real time.

There are many technologies out in the world to do electronic voting and counting of votes during elections, especially in developed countries.



Touch-screen electronic voting system

Each country uses one or more types of electronic voting, however there is no single technology that could be universally recognized as the most effective one.

Although electronic voting is not yet widely known in Kyrgyzstan, one of the purposes of this demonstration project was to promote awareness of the importance of transparent elections among the young generation as future voters. This pilot project is the first step to test and identify the most suitable technology for Kyrgyzstan and, in this case, is represented by simple touch screens and basic software for counting votes.

The software for this project was developed by specialists of the IT Centre which was established under a JICA technical cooperation project several years ago.



The CEC Chair Mr. Sariiev congratulates the winning candidate for the Speaker

lished under a JICA technical cooperation project several years ago.

The main reason for choosing school students for the pilot experiment is that, in a few years, the electronic voting system will be possibly applied on a wider scale in our country, and matured students, upon reaching their voting age by the time, will already know about electronic voting. (Suyunaliyeva Guljan)

Lectures by Japanese professors

On January 28, 2011, the Kyrgyz Republic Japan Center, in collaboration with the Kyrgyz National University named after Zh. Balasagyn and with the support of the Embassy of Japan in Kyrgyzstan and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), conducted a seminar on the current state of the Japanese economy for students of the KNU.

Among other honored guests, the seminar was attended by Rector of the Kyrgyz National University named after Zh. Balasagyn Mr. A. Akunov, the Ambassador of Japan to the Kyrgyz Republic Mr. Maruo Sin, the Resident Representative of JICA in Kyrgyzstan Mr. Hideaki Maruyama and other dignitaries.

The seminar brought together about 70 students from economics departments and the Department of International Relations of the KNU. The seminar was opened by the KNU Rector. In his speech, Mr. Akunov thanked the Kyrgyz Republic Japan Center for their cooperation and invited the KNU students to actively participate in



Students were listening with much attention

the seminar saying that KNU students did not need to go to Japan for knowledge, since lecturers from Japan themselves have come to the KNU students to share their experiences. Further on, welcoming remarks were made by the Ambassador of Japan to the Kyrgyz Republic Mr. Maruo Sin. In his speech, the Ambassador stressed the importance of education as the engine of this country's development. Japan, not having many natural resources, was able to achieve high rates of its economic growth through development of its human resources.

Lectures at the seminar were read by representatives of the two famous universities in Japan: Mr. T. Suruga, Professor of the Kobe University, who read on the "Economic situation and existing challenges in Japan today", and Mr. K. Kotani, Professor of the International University of Japan, who read on the "Current situation in Japan from the microeconomic viewpoint - inflation and deflation."



The seminar was built with an emphasis on interactive communication between the students and the lecturers. In the course of communication, KNU students raised questions on the economic, political and social topics in Japan and Kyrgyzstan. Students were interested in measures taken by the Japanese Government to combat inflation, issues of the Japanese economy's impact on the international economy and foreign policy priorities of Japan. Also there were questions about the benefits of Kyrgyzstan's transition to a parliamentary form of government and development prospects of the

Kyrgyz economy. All the issues discussed were however linked to one point- that the country's future depends on the level of education and development of human resources and lies on the shoulders of the youth of today.

It should be noted that the Japanese professors addressed the audience in English. Interactive communication between the KNU students and the guests of the seminar, incidentally, was also held in English.

I'd like to believe that this seminar was the beginning of a good, fruitful and lasting relationship between the KNU and the Japan Center in developing human resources capacity in Kyrgyzstan. (Sagdeeva Oksana, the Kyrgyz Republic Japan Center)

Opening of the Japan World in Bishkek

Japan is an amazing country with its unusual, unique culture and people. This country is admired and taken interested in by many of our countrymen. Unfortunately, there hasn't been one Japanese company or a single shop in Kyrgyzstan where we could purchase items or products made in this country. Right, we couldn't, but NOW WE CAN!

Because, for the first time in Kyrgyzstan, an opening ceremony of the Japanese store “Japan World” was held in the shopping complex “Tash-Rabat” on January 27, 2011, hosted by its founder, the Japanese company “Perry Red”.

The opening was attended by the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan Mr. Maruo Sin, the Resident Representative of JICA in Kyrgyzstan Mr. Hideaki Maruyama, Director-General of the “Shoro” company Mr. Zhumadil Egemberdiev and many other guests.

The opening began with a welcome speech by Mr. Kenichi Yamazaki, the President of “Perry Red”. According to him, their company plans to deal with not only the import of Japanese goods, but also exports of traditional Kyrgyz items and goods, products of the Jaamats that work within the framework of the JICA Project “One Village - One Product”. In addition, there have been planned an opening of a Japanese restaurant, provision of advice on imports and exports between Japan and Kyrgyzstan, and many other things.

At the present time, “Japan World” exhibits to sell primarily curtain fabric made in Japan, several kinds of Japanese food, fashion magazines for girls, anime, and some other small merchandise from Japan.

We can say that the opening of this store is just the beginning and residents of Kyrgyzstan can hope in the future for other large Japanese companies to open their branches here as well. (Ibraeva Burul)



2. JICA Volunteers

It is 10 years this fiscal year since volunteer activities have been implemented in Kyrgyzstan. In our newsletter, we publish some of the articles by Japanese volunteers who have worked in our country during this time.

Kyrgyzstan – the country of the youth with passionate hearts and sparkling eyes

My strongest impression of this country is that Kyrgyzstan is a hot country. With dry air and temperatures exceeding 40 degrees Celsius – the heat in the summer gets quite incredible. I arrived in Kyrgyzstan in the month of July, so the heat was the first of my experiences over there. However, it's not the hot temperature but the “hot” spirits of the people of Kyrgyzstan that I want to write about.

I came to Kyrgyzstan to work as a teacher of Japanese. Like all other volunteers, I set out for this country with only one desire to take all my efforts for the development of this country. However, my profession, a teacher of the Japanese language, can't assist in a country's development directly and immediately. But, like I mentioned before I was burning with the desire to help. And then I decided that I would make my utmost contribution to educating those who would become the backbone of Kyrgyzstan in the future.

At the lectures, I taught Japanese and, together with the students, heartily discussed the subject: “How to make Kyrgyzstan a better place”. They were alight with the sense of patriotism. I remember a student at a Central Asian speech contest saying in his speech that the people of Kyrgyzstan were more patriotic than people in other countries. At those speech contests, not only my students but also other participants made their speeches on “hot” subjects.

In 2010, Kyrgyzstan went through its second “revolution”. Most likely, there were various reasons that brought the country to these disturbances, but I also may presume that the hot temper of the Kyrgyzstan citizens played its significant role as well. I believe that, sometime in the future, the young intellectuals of Kyrgyzstan scattered around the world shall find in their Motherland the balance between the hot spirit and the reason that could channel this spirit into the required direction. I always recall my students with a flutter and shall never forget their sparkling eyes. At the time, I

didn't have much work experience and my lessons weren't quite professional, but even then my students would eagerly listen to whatever I might say to them. Up to this day, I haven't met anywhere else such earnest eyes. When I looked in those eyes, I always thought that I should do something for these young people. And I think I managed to teach them what a teacher could be all about.

Currently I teach Japanese in another post-Soviet country. In this country, the situation in general and the students specifically vary considerably from those I left in Kyrgyzstan. Yet, working with them, I try to retain those feelings that guided me when I first set out for Kyrgyzstan – giving everything I can to the young people whom the country's future depends on. I believe that this is what I, young and inexperienced, was taught by the Kyrgyzstan's students with their passionate hearts and sparkling eyes.

I think, even now young volunteers un-

derstand various activities in Kyrgyzstan with the hope and desire to work for the development of this country. Going nostalgic about Kyrgyzstan, I listen out for the beautiful melody that comes of engagement between the hearts of the young Japanese and the passionate hearts of the youth of Kyrgyzstan. (Mitsumori Yu, JICA Volunteer, translated by Abdrazakova Sabira)



Mitsumori-san (a man in the first row) with his students

We have new volunteer coordinators....

ISOGAI Mayumi

My name is Isogay Mayumi. I'm in Kyrgyzstan for the first time. My first impression of Kyrgyzstan is surprisingly beautiful mountains and friendly people. I am very glad to have come to this country. Prior to coming here I worked for 7 years in JICA in Bangladesh. I want to use my work experience here to support volunteers in their activities. Also, I shall make every effort to develop friendly relations with the Kyrgyz people.



SUDO Takao



I arrived in Kyrgyzstan on January 6, 2011, to work for two years as a Project Formulation Advisor, especially in volunteers' activities. My name is Sudo Takao. After graduated University, I worked in real estate and financial company, than I worked as a JOCV Volunteer in Colombia in the field of rural development.

Then I spent several years Japanese Embassy in Central Asia (two input terms in Uzbekistan and then in Afganistan and Tajikistan) and then entered a university for a master's degree in International Public Policies. Afterwards, I went to work in Japanese Embassy in Paraguay, South America.

I had long wanted to work with volunteers. In my opinion, their work played one of the most important roles in the scheme of international cooperation. Also, considering career purposes, I wanted to try my hand as a Project Formulation Advisor. Quite luckily and in line with my wish, I was sent to Kyrgyzstan to

work in this position. Several years ago, when I was still working in Uzbekistan, I had a chance to be here doing some work and I was then struck by the beauty of nature and the kindness of people. These days, that impression still lives in me with no changes at all. I will do my best to support volunteers in their activities and I hope to make my own contribution to the development of Kyrgyzstan.

And new volunteers



Left to right: Matsuda-san and Kawakubo-san

Hello. We are JICA volunteers. We arrived in January 2010. Overall, there are 8 of us - one senior volunteer and seven JOCV volunteers. Let me to introduce our line of activities.

Senior volunteer **MATSUDA Shinji** came to work in the community of the blind and visually impaired in Bishkek as a blind people support specialist.

KAWAKUBA Hanae will work at the Bishkek State University as a teacher of the Japanese language.

SATO Momoko will be directed to Naryn where she will deal with rural development.

KAWADA Yukki will go to the city of Karakol to work at the Issyk-Kul Oblast Administration.

MINAMIDE Sachiko will be sent to Bokonbaevo, also to engage in rural development activities.

SHIMADA Sayaka, **SHUDA Ehey**, **BOGAKI Shiho** will be sent to various villages of the Issyk-Kul Oblast for the same purpose.

We will work within the framework of the "One Village - One Product" Project to develop communities we will live and work



Minamide-san, Kawada-san and Sato-san



Left to right: Shimada-san, Shuda-san and Bogaki-san

with.

We felt that Kyrgyzstan is an easy country to live in. Perhaps the reason for that is that the Japanese look a lot like the Kyrgyz and local residents often address us for local time and travel information. Because of this, we were probably able to fit in with the locals.

Their culture and traditions are very much different from those of the Japanese, so every day we find ourselves in rather shocking situations. And these days will be the beginning of our two-year life in Kyrgyzstan. And we look forward to seeing ourselves in the thick of things, going different places in Kyrgyzstan. We hope that the time we will spend here will be interesting and productive enough.

(Translation by Abdrazakova Sabira)

3. The JICA Alumni Association Page

Once again, Christmas gifts for children!

It was not for the first time that the Association came up with nice New Year gifts for children. This year too, on December 28, 2010, a ceremony was held to transfer sports equipment (2 tennis tables), household appliances (a freezer), as well as small gifts (mugs, sweets and toys) to the pupils of the "Nurmeeaisa" children's home in the village of Orlovka of the Chui Oblast. There live more than 50 children in "Nurmeeaisa". The ceremony was organized by the JICA Alumni Association in the Kyrgyz Republic jointly with the "Unique Technologies" company with funds collected in the second "Ekiden-2010" charity relay race.



Resident Representative of JICA, Director of the orphanage,
Head of the JICA Alumni Association

The ceremony was attended by Mr. T. Zh. Koichumanov, Head of the Association, Mr. Hideaki Maruyama, Resident Representative of JICA in Kyrgyzstan, Mr. Aziz Abakirov, Director of the "Unique Technologies" company, Mr. Askar Abakirov, an agricultural sector businessman from the Kemin Raion, Mr. Kanatbek Akmatov, Head of the Orlovka Aiyl Okmotu, and Mr. Temirkul Dzhumagaziev, Deputy of the Kemin Kenesh.



A photo for memory

The Director (Ms. Gulnara Kiribaeva), employees and, of course, the children of the "Nurmeeaisa" Center for Children's Temporary Accommodation expressed their gratitude to the organizers for the support and assistance.

However, it was not only the guests who provided gifts. The kids, in their turn, staged a

little show for their guests – they recited poems, sang Christmas songs and showed the guests a wall newspaper about Japan they had prepared themselves. The Director said they had long been interested in this wonderful country and had been in correspondence with children from Japan for several years.

Summing up, Mr. Koichumanov thanked all those taking active part in this charity and assured the audience that the JICA Alumni Association and all their like-minded partners would continue to support such activities in future. (Burul Ibraeva)



Mr. Koichumanov, Head of the JICA Alumni Association, and the children

Entrants to the Alumni Association



Kyrgyz delegation and representatives from other Central Asian Countries

their duties and responsibilities. Japanese civil servants are constantly improving their knowledge and skills, there exist well-equipped centers for training of municipal employees. As was commented by Mr. Imai, Deputy Resident Representative of JICA, a system of rotation is used for employees' constant motivation - once in every three years, staff members are moved from one department to another in order to produce required knowledge and experience (work in a financial department is quite likely to be sequenced with the next 3 years of agricultural sector management activities) before they eventually get to the level of a manager/supervisor /head of a department.

Our interns are also committed to contribute to the development of partnerships between the government and businesses. In this respect, Japan is ahead of the rest of the world. On the whole, both the Japanese government and businesses do one and the same thing and stand on just one side of the barricades, quite the opposite of what we do in Kyrgyzstan – complained the young civil servants.

A system of attracting free funds available from the population is practiced to cover the budget deficit, especially out in the regions.



Our girls, government workers, visiting a Japanese school

A reporting meeting of the participants of the course for young leaders in administration management took place on February 4th, 2011. The young people were full of emotions. All of them were amazed by the cleanliness, friendliness, politeness and diligence of the Japanese.

Alongside with the current problems such as aging of the nation, budget deficit, an outflow of youth from peripheries to big cities, Japan still remains one of the leading countries in the world.

In particular, Kyrgyz interns were interested in the public service system. All employees clearly know



Aitkulova Meerim from the Ministry of Finance of KR, against the backdrop of the city at night

cover the budget deficit, especially out in the regions.

There exists a very high level of public confidence in the government. By the way, the experience is already there. Before World War II,

there was already a precedent when the Japanese government has asked its citizens to bring in their savings to repay the public debt - and that way the debt was paid off! This is what patriotism is about!

Overall, we hope that our young staff won't lose their energy and positive emotions and, in the routine of their work, they will find time to transform the knowledge they acquired into practice. (Alelekova Svetlana, from the words of the course trainees)

The purpose of this Newsletter is to introduce all interested readers to JICA's activities, to extend an invitation for participation in its programs, to promote friendly information exchange among graduates of JICA courses. The Newsletter is circulated among individuals interested in JICA's activities in the Kyrgyz Republic. For posting of information in the Newsletter, as well as for any general enquiries about JICA's activities in the Kyrgyz Republic, please use the following email address: jicakg-info@jica.go.jp

Contact details of the JICA office: the Kyrgyz Republic, 720040, Bishkek, Chokmorov St. 115, tel.: (+996-312) 900 270 (-4), fax: (+996-312) 900 279, Alelekova Svetlana, Public Relations Manager.