Natural Resources Management in Post-Conflict Societies: Lessons from ODA Projects

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“Where resource exploitation has driven war, or served to impede peace, improving governance capacity to control natural resources is a critical element of peacebuilding.”

Carolyn McAskie
Former UN Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support
To fill this gap, four institutions partnered in 2008 to establish a new global research program on post-conflict peacebuilding and natural resources: UNEP, The University of Tokyo, McGill, and Environmental Law Institute.

Objective was to collect 20 case studies of good practice and to develop evidence-based policy guidance. Call for proposals was issued in 2009. Nearly 300 submissions were received. Six donors came forward to publish 150 cases: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, USAID, The Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership, and The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.
Project Overview and Statistics

- 150 case studies and analyses
- By 225 authors from 50 countries
- In 6 edited books, totaling 3000+ pages (Earthscan 2012-2013)
  - All cases will be freely available online six months after initial release: www.environmentalpeacebuilding.com
  - Drawing upon experiences in 61 countries and territories
- Plus … a seventh, overarching book (Cambridge University Press 2013)
- Now stands as the largest research program undertaken on natural resources and post-conflict peacebuilding
Policy Guidance for Japanese Government & JICA
(and U.S. Government and USAID)

Harnessing Natural Resources for Peacebuilding: Lessons from U.S. and Japanese Assistance
A guide to managing natural resources to build peace following conflict

Case Studies in English

Policy Brief in English and Japanese

天然資源を平和に活かすために：
日米の援助からの教訓

紛争後の平和構築に向けた
天然資源の管理ガイド
Peace-Building Activities by Japan as Cases (1)

Afghanistan: Demobilization, Reintegration, and Natural Resources in Afghanistan: Afghanistan’s New Beginnings Programme (by Mami Sato)

Cambodia: De-mining and Access to Resources in Cambodia (by Nao Shimoyachi)

East Timor: Assistance to Natural Resource Management and Community Reconstruction in Post-Conflict East Timor (by Naori Miyazawa)

East Timor: Post-Conflict Agriculture Restoration in East-Timor (by Haruka Satoh, et. al.)
Peace-Building Activities by Japan as Cases (2)

Iraq: Post-Project Evaluation of Iraqi Marshlands Restoration Project (by Toshiyasu Suzuki, et. al.)

Mekong Region: Japanese Support to the Interim Mekong Committee during Post-Conflict Recovery of Member States (by Mikiyasu Nakayama)

Sri Lanka: Lessons from Japan’s post-conflict support of Sri Lanka (by Mikiko Sugiura)

Sudan: Redevelopment of Inland Water Transport for Post-Conflict Rehabilitation in Southern Sudan (by Mikio Ishiwatari)
US-AID and JICA are like Twins?

• Two organizations have a number of problems of the same or similar nature.

• Many of them may be “by birth” as a big and bureaucratic governmental organization.

• Still, some problems seem (if not absolutely) specific to JICA and its projects.
Recommendations for JICA?

- Must be able to adapt their programs to incorporate sensitivity to local conditions on the project level.

- Should reform their institution to be more flexible and adaptable at the project and strategic levels.

- Needs to improve coordination within the donor government.

- Should consider developing a list of best practices to serve as guidelines.

These are “borrowed” from the synthesis for USAID (= ●●●●●).
Six Broad Lessons Learned (for JICA and USAID)

• Natural Resources Affect Multiple Peacebuilding Objectives

• Programs and Projects Must be Adaptive

• Coordination is Essential for Post-Conflict Peacebuilding

• Community Engagement is Essential

• Additional Constraints and Challenges can Shape a Mission

• Projects must Provide for Appropriate Evaluation and Timeframes
“Japanese Experience and Knowledge for ODA” Implications
(Sudan by Ishiwatari)

• No one may object to the idea of making use of experiences and knowledge accumulated in Japan for ODA.

• How can JICA identify “Japanese experience and knowledge” useful for ODA? How these could be applied for projects?

• The idea of “Inland Water Transportation” was proposed by an expert, who happened to be involved in redevelopment project after the Kobe Earthquake.

• “Knowledge Base” is lacking and needed.

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Weak Institutional Memory  
(Cambodia by Shimoyachi)

- “Decentralization” is a buzzword in many ODA institutions and JICA is not an exception.

- While we hear many good things about decentralization, we seldom hear caveat.

- The researcher asked JICA’s HQ for JICA’s experience regarding de-mining in Cambodia, only to be asked to visit JICA’s country office in Phnom Penh.
“Unbalanced” Implementation
(Afghanistan by Mami Sato)

- Disarmament was targeted only to the Afghan Military Force, leaving the illegal armed groups or people armed.

- Lack of coordination between the international agencies caused ineffectiveness of the operation.

- Emphasis was not put on vocational trainings, e.g. agricultural supports, which led to unsustainable livelihood support.
A criticism of JICA’s assistance in agriculture (which I have heard often) is that JICA tries to develop a project for “irrigated paddy field” everywhere in the developing world.

Was development of “irrigated paddy field” the most rational option in “just after conflict” society?

It may be needed and rational in a nominal society, while (in post-conflict societies) more labor intensive and “low tech” scheme may be appropriate?
Inflexibility of “International” Framework
(Iraq by Suzuki)

• Japan joined the “Iraqi Trust Fund” as framework to finance “Marshland Restoration Project” for post-conflict Iraq.

• A lot of paper work required by the Trust Fund let UNEP-IETC spend too much time on administration (i.e. little time left for project implementation).

• Funds for UNET-IETC should have been given through an “easier” scheme, as it later took place in the Phase-2.
Survival of functioning institution
(Mekong basin countries by Nakayama)

• Preserving an institutional was made possible by a safe net, namely umbrella of the United Nations.

• Change of political regimes in countries does not mean the end of collaborative mind of the countries.

• Efforts were made not to be forgotten, including information transparency and putting emphasis on economy (not politics).

• Japanese experts functioned as “cost effective” information channel with countries, for which when Japan suspended ODA.
Rehabilitation of Communities Takes Time
(East Timor by Miyazawa)

• Community members need time and opportunity for cooperation to regain motivation for working together with other members.

• The function of community was not recovered fully shortly after conflicts in many cases, with less interest in group work, mutual help, or mutual cooperation.

• Project outcome and its sustainability are largely affected by the function of community, especially mutual cooperation, when capacity of government is still under development.

• Without reactivating above mentioned “community functions”, projects with community-base approach may not work effectively.
Ignoring Non-Monetary Value of Project  
(Sri Lanka by Sugiura)

- Playing a role of a coordinator among other foreign aids brings the maximized effect even under the conditions of limited budget.

- JICA does not have an evaluation system which assess the “linking” function of the project.

- “Linking among donors and related institutes” is not obviously accounted in the existing cost-benefit calculation.
What We Found about JICA’s Activities (1)

- “Institutional Memory” is very weak.

- We needed to find “right persons” to learn about a particular project.

- “Decentralization” tends to create difficulties.

“Knowledge Base” of past projects in post-conflict societies is needed to improve quality of future projects
“Knowledge Base” must be Functional and Useful

• A library can never be highly reputed without having good librarians.

• A museum can never be highly reputed without having good researchers/curators.

• A Knowledge Base needs both good “librarians” and “researchers/curators” to become really functional and useful.
What We Found about JICA’s Activities (2)

• The way how projects for post-conflict societies should be developed, differently from projects for nominal societies, is not well understood.

• What is right for nominal societies is not necessarily right for post-conflict societies, for the nature of “societies” is quite different between them.

“Tool Kits” for projects in post-conflict societies are needed to improve quality of future projects.
“Tool Kits” must be Practical and Useful

- Tools should be sector specific to be practical

- Tools should be selected based on “Lessons Leaned” from projects in the past.

- “Knowledge Base” should serve as the pool of practical Tools.

- “Experiences in Japan” should be included in Tools through scrutiny by experts, so that experiences should be useful in post-conflict societies.