

Japan's International Peace Cooperation and Human Resource Development : @PKO Now! No.50

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May 31, 2013

Thus far, International Peace Cooperation Programme Advisors (PAs) have written articles on various topics based on their individual professional experience. I assume readers of those articles could benefit from the articles and the reference materials mentioned. Being in charge of human resource development, I would like to make some remarks on Japan's international peace cooperation and the challenges of human resource development.

"System of International Peace Cooperation Programme Advisors" was founded in April 2005, recognizing the proposal made in the final report of "Council of International Cooperation for Peace", hosted by the Chief Cabinet Secretary and chaired by Mr. Yasushi AKASHI, former UN Under Secretary General. Since the foundation of the System, total of 42 mid-career professionals have served as PAs. Within two-year-period, PAs pursue research projects to further engulf their professional specialization. At the same time, PAs assist the PKO Secretariat in its daily operation by providing knowledge and views accumulated by their practical experiences in the field of international peace cooperation. Through these two types of activities, PAs further develop their capacities to be ready to perform more advanced duties in international peace cooperation. Of the 34 ex-PAs, nearly 40% of them have obtained suitable posts in the United Nations or international organizations. Many others have chosen to work for Japanese government ministries, NGOs, and academic institutions, proving the excellent operation of the System and superb performance of individual PAs.

Then, what necessitates the human resource development system as such? Previous articles have often noted that many of the conflicts occurred in the current world have mixed background and causes. Effective peacebuilding cooperation provided by the international community to post-conflict countries should not only be directed to purely military and social stability, but also to infrastructure recovery and administrative institution building within short- and long-term point of view. Furthermore, human resource development in post-conflict countries must be promoted so that those countries will eventually be democratically governed and run by the local population sustainably. To realize such cooperation, Japan has to be endowed with a reserve of well-trained professional personnel with rich experience and adequate expertise. In that sense, it is a welcome trend that recently more young people begin to show their interests in international cooperation as their future profession. At the same time, they need to be aware that "international peace cooperation" demands something more than "international cooperation" in general. In "international peace cooperation", practitioners would often have to serve in post-conflict countries where they have to pay due attention that their "cooperation" should not mistakenly trigger resumption of conflicts among local population, not to mention that experts must be able to protect their own security. Currently, not all practitioners in international cooperation are accustomed to fully perform in such complex post-conflict environment. In addition to that, another challenge could be that work experience in international cooperation in general cannot be appropriately evaluated once practitioners return to the Japanese society.

Recognizing such difficulties, Japan has to make consistent efforts to make meaningful contribution to international peace and stability. Though small, the System of PAs is a concrete step to enrich Japanese professionals, and individual PAs are expected to make higher performance in various fields. As concrete examples of PAs work, one could mention that they participate in election observation teams to support establishing democratic governments in post-conflict countries; make presentations in "International Peace Cooperation Symposium" annually convened by the PKO Secretariat, and publish research theses in "Collection of Articles on International Peace Cooperation", issued by the PKO Secretariat. Moreover, PAs often deliver lectures at universities and schools in Japan, as well

as instruct trainees in PKO centers overseas. I would appreciate readers' further support and encouragement to our efforts in human resource development.