

VI. Japan's Philanthropic Development and International Cooperation

As stated at the outset of this paper, it is difficult to assess the success of JCIE's International Philanthropy Project and the applicability of its experiences for other countries. There are too many factors accounting for philanthropic development in any given country, and such factors vary significantly from country to country making transfer of a "successful" project from one country to another no simple task. On the other hand, there may be some elements in JCIE's past strategies and project designs which may be of relevance to efforts in philanthropic development in other societies. In other words, what may be most relevant is not what was actually done but the reasons certain strategies were employed and the rationales for certain project designs. It should be pointed out again that they need to be understood in the particular context within which JCIE was operating. The conditions JCIE was facing at different periods, and the strategies employed have been discussed in detail in conjunction with the various projects JCIE has undertaken, and therefore will only briefly be reiterated here.

1. Essential Elements of JCIE's International Philanthropy Project

- (1) A sustained and self-reinforcing multi-faceted

process: JCIE has tried to make sure that each activity under the Project is not isolated but would reinforce past activities and provide a point of departure for future activities.

(2) Clear definition of goals for each activity: Related to the above point, it has been found to be critical that JCIE staff be able to articulate clearly the objectives of certain programs, whether it be a study mission or conference, in the context of the overall goals of the Project. Such objectives might be: consciousness raising of such diverse target groups as foundation officers, corporate leaders, government bureaucrats, the media, voluntary groups, and the general public; information and know-how acquisition; transmission abroad of information on Japanese philanthropy, establishment of contacts with future collaborators, both foreign and Japanese; providing incentives for self-development, development of professional staff, etc.

(3) Catalytic role in mobilizing resources: It is thought that the success of the Project has depended on the extent to which influential organizations and individuals could be mobilized to give Project activities significant political and social impact. The involvement of Keidanren, for example, has been essential, and other organizations such as the Committee for Economic Development, the Trust Companies Association of Japan, and the Japan Association of Charitable Organizations have been enlisted as co-sponsors and cooperating organizations. Government agencies have not been involved in the activities officially, but their leaders have been invited to the programs as speakers and participants.

(4) Action-orientation: The activities of the International Philanthropy Project, particularly in the initial stage, could have been regarded as seeking to multiply the number of "instant experts" on philanthropy, who would have a great deal of knowledge and information but not be engaged in actual philanthropy. This was a common pitfall of conferences and studies. Such activities as the establishment of the Asian Community Trust (ACT), which facilitates international grant-making for new foundations, and encouraging joint grant-making with foreign foundations have imparted a fair degree of action-orientation to JCIE's project. Ultimately, the basis of JCIE's activities has been oriented toward getting the Japanese government to provide tax-incentives for private donations, and to recognize the importance of third-sector institutions in general and philanthropic organizations in particular. Although JCIE became the first organization to be given the privilege of receiving tax-deductible contributions as an organization in the new tax category created through the recent tax-reform as a "special public interest promoting juridical person" in August 1988, the persistent domination of Japanese society by the bureaucracy means that the battle for full citizenship for third sector institutions in Japan must continue.

(5) Mobilizing external leverage: The most effective and firmly established feature of the International Philanthropy Project has been the usefulness of foreign leverage in promoting private philanthropy in Japan. The philosophy and practices of foreign foundations and corporate giving provided interested Japanese with basic

information and stimulated their explorations for future activities of their organizations. Exchange of views on priorities of philanthropic giving has been essential for newly started Japanese foundations and corporate givers in contemplating their activities. Cooperation with philanthropic organizations in other countries has provided effective leverage that helps assure the integrity and independence of philanthropic organizations in the domestic context. The continuous process of organized exchange activities has also fostered a community of Japanese foundations and corporations interested in philanthropy which, in turn, could promote the broadening of contacts between Japanese and overseas philanthropic organizations.

2. Philanthropic Cooperation and Japan's International Cooperation

We recognize that, regardless of JCIE's International Philanthropy Project, philanthropic development in Japan has been heavily influenced by international philanthropic cooperation and interchange. Japan's economic growth itself was a result of a dramatic increase of international trade in the post-World War II era, bringing about, on the other side of the coin, certain external conflicts. The accumulation of wealth by private industry, made possible by external economic activities, has given impetus to philanthropic giving with a considerable international dimension, and the external conflicts of this economic success have also motivated industries to undertake philanthropic giving overseas.

That trend has been further stimulated through increasing interdependence among nations, as evidenced by the sharp rise in Japan's overseas direct investment, in turn prompting an interest in good corporate citizenship particularly in foreign communities. Japan's continued ascendancy as a global power has brought about greater expectations around the world that Japan will undertake a larger share of global responsibilities. The emergence of global issues of immense gravity require greater efforts by Japan, the private sector included.

Under such circumstances, there is a growing awareness among Japanese leaders and the public at large that Japan should play a more positive international role, and that the government alone cannot meet the challenges. There is an increasing recognition in Japan that the roles to be played by independent and philanthropic organizations are important in Japan's external efforts and international contributions. Thus, the recent development of private philanthropy in Japan has received a unique impetus from Japan's external relationship and the international environment. In such circumstances, international interchange, as promoted by JCIE's International Philanthropy Project, can play a positive facilitating role.

It must be noted, however, that major constraints continue to inhibit further development of a new philanthropic tradition. Bureaucratic dominance and the lack of a tradition of private sector involvement in public affairs, the continuing primacy of immediate economic gain and narrow economic efficiency in Japanese corporate culture, and the failure to perceive the distinction

between philanthropy and public relations on the part of government officials and corporate managers, as discussed before, are examples of these constraints. The initiatives made in the International Philanthropy Project will continue to be relevant. In particular, increased collaborative activities with counterparts overseas can further encourage the constructive growth of Japan's private philanthropy through familiarity and even peer-pressure among Japanese foundation and corporate officers.

It may be said that international philanthropic cooperation is relevant and important to any nation in our interdependent world. Even in nations with long and rich philanthropic traditions, new efforts to achieve international consciousness among their people and to respond to broader global needs are required. An effective network of private philanthropic institutions and third-sector institutions will provide the strong underpinnings for the harmonious management of complex international relations and for the enhancement of international cooperation the world of the future so critically requires.

In reviewing JCIE's International Philanthropy Project, the authors of this paper are keenly reminded of the strong support and encouragement as well as warm friendship, provided by many colleagues and associates abroad engaged in philanthropic activities. They have provided, above all, the living proof that close working relationships in the international philanthropic community are the most effective source for innovation in philanthropic development in any country.