

COMPLETION REPORT

Japan's Official Development Assistance to Myanmar: Role of Japanese International Corporations Agency and NIPPON FOUNDATION in Post 2010 Peace Process in Myanmar

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In terms of official development assistance to Myanmar, Japan has been focusing more on “proactive pacifism”, which based more on human security and hard infrastructure assistance. Besides, Japan official development assistance to Myanmar is not only solely intended to be charity or philanthropy activities but also secure diplomatic environment favorable to Japan. One of the political incentives for increasing Japanese ODA to Myanmar is hedging against Chinese influence in Southeast Asia. A special significant difference approach to Myanmar in terms of its’ transition is that while many of other third parties donors from Western take a democracy-first approach to Myanmar, Japan prioritizes development - human security and hard infrastructure assistance. Democratization and economic development are the main objectives of Japan’s Myanmar policy, but the issue of ethnic nationalities is also high on its agenda. In post 2012, through Japan International Corporation Agency, Japan has proposed “to promote peace through development” and encourages development activities to be conducted “in parallel” with political dialogue in Myanmar.

In most of the projects of JICA, it fails to adequately describe the projects; has not based on adequate consultation with the public or affected communities; do not fully analyze the project’s power supply; do not properly consider resettlement and livelihood issues especially in the case of return Karen refugees and Thilawa Special Economic Zone A and B. JICA has to focus on participatory development so that people will not take the projects as structural passion for people in Myanmar have been facing repression of dissent under successive military regimes and the lasting impacts of this repression. JICA should closely follow the compensation process when it has mega project in Thilawa SEZ which required resettlement of local residents. The resettlement site still lacks adequate infrastructure, such as sewage and water drainage, and is prone to flooding even in the dry season. None of the compensation provided— for homes, crops, and animals—replaces the value of what was lost by the displaced residents of Thilawa. As a result, residents have become impoverished, with many taking loans to make ends meet.

In many Japanese related projects in Myanmar, Japan has focus much on government sectors and hardly have a direct open space connection with local people who should be the real benefitters. It is crucial that recipient governments bear the ultimate responsibility for the environmental and social considerations of projects but ODA projects also should acquire ground context, people’s voice, and respect and protect human rights, and be responsible also for environmental. It is important for JICA to work along with recipient governments, to prevent and redress human rights concerns. Interactions with recipient government for ODA is essential but it is even more imperative spend enough time consulting with local people, civil societies, and a broader public who are the target of development projects. In many projects in Myanmar, both outcomes and processes are monitored and evaluated only by JICA’s elected intellectuals but not by neutral local and international experts.

It is important that Japan implement ODA to strengthen the capacity of local communities through human resource development and external assistance for protection and empowerment of individuals considering not only for global, regional and national perspectives, but also for human security with focus on individual. It is vital to take step to assure fairness for the breach between the rights holders and duty bearers as well as the gap between various regions in Myanmar.

Publication of the Results of Research Project:

Verbal Presentation (Date, Venue, Name of Conference, Title of Presentation, Presenter, etc.)

- No presentation yet as the research is finished in June 2016

Thesis (Name of Journal and its Date, Title and Author of Thesis, etc.)

- I send my abstract to some academic journals for publication, but there is no acknowledgement and acceptance yet.

Book (Publisher and Date of the Book, Title and Author of the Book, etc.)

- No