

Aid by Other Means (2):

An Examination of Two NGO Subsidy Schemes in Japan

David M. POTTER and POTTER Seminar¹

1. Introduction

This research note compares two programs that provide grants to support Japanese and local overseas non-governmental organization (NGO) projects abroad: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) Japanese NGO Subsidy program and the Grassroots Human Security subsidy program. The first supports Japanese NGOs engaged in development projects overseas, the latter directly supports local agencies promoting development in recipient countries. These represent the core of Japanese government initiatives in the last two decades to strengthen the international NGO sector. Both are part of the official development assistance (ODA) program and included in annual grant aid budget figures. They were separated from a common account in the early 2000s during a period of aid reform under the Koizumi administration. Previous studies [Potter and Potter Seminar 2019, 2021, 2022] have investigated the sectoral and geographic distributions within aid recipient countries in Asia as part of overall Japanese aid to those countries and concluded that they are more widely distributed on both counts compared to government-to-government aid modalities.

2. Literature review

A number of official and private grant programs in Japan exist to support NGOs. The literature on these subsidies to date has tended to be superficial and thin compared to studies either of ODA or NGOs. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs Grassroots NGO subsidy, the forerunner of the two examined here, is the best researched, having been described by Saotome Mitsuhiro [1997], Yamada Yoichi [2000], Keiko Hirata [2002], Kim Reimann [2010], and David Potter et al [2016]. It is the only subsidy scheme in the ODA program to have undergone third party evaluation [see Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2002, 2005, 2011]. The international volunteer postal savings scheme (POSIVA) is the only other NGO grant program to be taken up by multiple scholars [Rix 1993, Uchida 1996, Machida 2003,

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Kim and Potter 2014].

The literature outlined above tends to place the subsidy schemes in the context of changes in Japan's ODA administration that were occurring largely during the period from the late 1980s to the early 2000s. Many of these works concerned themselves with the emergence of new aid programs and analyses were limited by the lack of data. As a result, little systematic attention has been paid to what these subsidy programs actually funded in terms of projects and NGOs.

As noted above, Potter and Potter Seminar [2019, 2021, 2022] investigated the Japanese NGO grant program and the Grassroots Human Security grant program in the context of Japanese aid to nine Asian countries. This study takes a different tack by investigating which agencies in those countries get funded and what characteristics they possess. More importantly, it revisits the research conducted by Potter and Potter Seminar [2016]. That research found a concentration of NGOs receiving grants for projects funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and POSIVA. Moreover, NGOs among the top twenty project contractors under one grant program were likely to be among the top twenty in the other. The research here uses different data from Ministry of Foreign Affairs grants to test that conclusion.

3. Methodology

Are some NGOs consistent recipients of each type of subsidy? If so, why? This research note analyzes NGOs and local development agencies that received grants from the Japanese NGO grant program and the Grassroots Human Security grant program from 2000 to 2020 in the nine Asian countries previously investigated by Potter and Potter Seminar: Cambodia, India, Laos, Myanmar, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Viet Nam. The researchers used the *Kunibetsu Yakusoku Jouhou* database located on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ODA webpage. Since 2003 it has recorded data on the two grant schemes separately. This database provides information on the date of contract, contracting agency, project location, and development sector for each project. NGO names are specified in the case of the Japanese NGO grants, but Grassroots Human Security grant information indicates only the type of contracting agency without name. Thus, the unit of analysis in this research is specific NGO in the first case and type of contracting agency in the second.

4. Results

The tabular results of the survey are presented in Tables 1 to 6.

Table 1 shows the number Japanese NGO grant projects in each ASEAN country by NGO listed in descending order of number of contracts. A total of 655 project contracts were funded across the six countries in the period examined. Myanmar accounts for the largest total number of projects receiving support (175 projects), followed by Cambodia (160), Laos (22), Vietnam (87), the Philippines (61), and Thailand (50). As can be seen in the table, the largest numbers of NGOs among the six countries are

found in Myanmar (40), followed by Cambodia (36), Vietnam (23), Laos and the Philippines (20 each), and Thailand (15). This represents a total of 113 Japanese NGOs.

Note that there is a considerable range in the number of contracts carried out by specific NGOs within each country. Laos, for example, has a relatively large number of projects but a small number of active NGOs. This suggests concentration of grants in a few key agencies. First, Myanmar has the highest number of NGOs with 40: among them, the number of projects by the top three NGOs accounted for 37.1% of total projects. Cambodia has the second largest number of NGOs, with 36: therein the top three accounted for 37.5%. Following, the number of NGOs working in Vietnam is 23, 34.5% of the aid goes to the top three NGOs. Laos has 20 NGOs and 38.5% are of top three NGOs. The Philippines also has 20 NGOs receiving support, with 50.8% of projects conducted by the top three organizations. The Philippines and Laos have the same number of NGOs, but Laos has received nearly two times more projects supported than the Philippines. Finally, Thailand has the lowest number of NGOs at 15. Among them, the top three account for 44% of total projects.

Shaded cells in the table denote NGOs working in more than one country in the region. Of the 113 NGOs working in the six ASEAN countries supported by this scheme, 91 are focused on a single country. Some NGOs operate in more than one country: 10 NGOs operate in two countries, eight in three countries. The “Sending Children’s Wheelchairs Overseas” project, which received a total of 12 rounds of support and worked in five countries (except Thailand), has the broadest scope.

Of those surveyed, AMDA *Shakai Kaihatsu Kiko* (AMDA-Minds)’s support for 37 projects in Myanmar is the most tenacious to a single country in this scheme. The NGO with the next largest number of projects was *Nihon Jirai Shori wo Shien suru Kai* (JMAS), which carried out 35 demining projects in Cambodia. This NGO also had the most projects in Laos, receiving support 22 times. In the Philippines, *OISCA* has the most projects with 12 projects. In Vietnam, *Save the Children Japan* had the most cases with 11, and in Thailand, *Shanti Volunteer Association International* had the most cases with nine.

Table 2 shows the same data as in Table 1 for the three countries examined in South Asia. The total number of project contracts in south Asian countries is 126 (Pakistan 42, Sri Lanka 52, and India 32). There are total of 41 Japanese NGOs receiving grants for operations in South Asia region.

The concentration of projects in a few key NGOs is even more pronounced than is the ASEAN case. The top three NGOs in Pakistan (Children Without Borders, JEN, and AAR) account for 69% of total contracts. The top three in Sri Lanka and India represent 53.8% and 37.5%, respectively.

As with Table 1 shaded cells denote NGOs working in more than one country in the region. Of 41 NGOs operating in South Asia region, 10 operate in more than one country. Also, although the largest is active in two countries, there are no NGOs active in all three countries. In which, Japan International Private Cooperation Association, International Labor Foundation and Children without Borders are operating in Pakistan and India. JEN is working in Pakistan and Sri Lanka, and Japan Preventive Diplomacy Center has worked in Sri Lanka and India.

Second, the authors cross-checked the NGOs in Tables 3 and 4 against membership in Japan Platform. Organized in 2003, Japan Platform is a system to strengthen Japan’s international NGOs by channeling funding and expertise from the corporate sector via Keidanren and the public sector via

Table 1: NGOs Receiving Japanese NGO grants in descending order of projects funded, ASEAN countries

	No.	Laos	No.	Myanmar	No.	Philippines	No.	Thailand	No.	Vietnam	No.
Cambodia											
Japan Mine Action Service	35	Japan Mine Action Service	22	AMDA-MINDS	37	OISCA	12	Shanti Volunteer Association(SVA)	9	Safe the Children Japan	11
Foundation For International Development/Relief(FIDR)	13	ADDP	15	Terra People Association	15	International Children's Action Network(ICAN)	11	Japan International Friendship and Welfare Foundation	7	Seed to Table	10
People's Hope Japan	12	Oragnization of International Support for Dental Education	10	Save the Children Japan	13	GLM Institute	8	People's Hope Japan	6	Asia Rainbow	9
IVY	9	Association For Aid and Relief, Japan	10	Association For Aid and Relief, Japan	10	ASIA PACIFIC ALLIANCE	4	Services for Health in Asian Afrian Regions (SHARE)	4	AMDA	6
Japan Team Of Young Human Power (JHP)	9	Action With Lao Children	8	Telecom for Basic Human Needs	8	Aichi Rescue	3	OISCA	4	World Vision Japan	6
Shanti Volunteer Association (SVA)	8	Japan International Volunteer Center	8	Association for Southeast Asian Exchange	7	Japan Anti-Tuberculosis Association	3	Japan Alliance for Humanitarian Demining Support (JAHDS)	3	PLAN INTERNATIONAL JAPAN	5
World Vision Japan	8	Shanti Volunteer Association (SVA)	7	Shanti Volunteer Association (SVA)	7	Global Voluntary Service(GVS)	3	Japan International Labour Foundation (JILAF)	3	Biomedical Science Association	4
Association of School Aid in Cambodia (ASAC)	8	JOICFP	7	SEEDS Asia	6	Oxfam Japan	2	All Life Line Net	3	Japanese Cleft Palate Foundation	4
Association For Aid and Relief, Japan	6	Medecins du Monde	7	Community Road Empowerment	6	The Volunteers Group to Send Wheelchairs to Overseas Children	2	Eco Future Found (EFF)	3	FOUNDATION FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT/ RELIEF (FIDR)	3
School Aid Japan	5	Plan International Japan	6	Bridge Asia Japan	6	Lequito Wings	2	SIKKHA ASIA FOUNDATION	2	GLM Institute	3
nature center risen	5	Reborn Kyoto	4	Japan Infrastructure Partners	5	Ikaw Ako	2	Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC)	2	MINZOKU FORUM	3
The Volunteers Group to Send Wheelchairs to Overseas Children	4	Telecom for Basic Human Needs	3	Asia Crafts Link	4	SEEDS Asia	1	OISCA Thailand	1	JOICEP	3
Services for the Health in Asian&African Regrons (SHARE)	3	World Vision Japan	3	OISCA	4	Asian Rural Institute	1	SHARE Thailand	1	The Volunteers Group to Send Whhelchairs to Overseas Children	3
Hearts of Gold	3	The Volunteers Group to Send Wheelchairs to Overseas Children	2	AMDA	4	ACTION	1	Jazzu Thai	1	Plan Japan	3
Children without Borders	3	Terra Renaissance	2	Peace Winds Japan	4	CASPAR	1	Japan Association for Mae Tao Clinic	1	Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC)	2
Nihon Hattatsu Syougai Renmei	3	Saitama Laos Friendship Association	2	ADRA Japan	3	VIDES Shizuoka	1			Japan International Labour Foundation (JILAF)	2
Japan Center For Conflict Prevention(JCCP)	3	Japanese Cleft Palate Foundation	2	Bridge Asia, Japan	3	Japan International Labour Foundation (JILAF)	1			Bridge Asia Japan	2
Institute of Environmental Rehabilitation and Conservation	3	Green Forum	2	Idaca	3	Japan Yunnan Friendship Association	1			CWS, Japan	2

CARE International Japan	2	Foundation For International Development/Relief (FIDR)	1	Japan Anti-Tuberculosis Association	3	3	NPO Kuore Shichinohe	1	SEEDS Asia	2
FRIENDS Without a Border	2	Efa Japan	1	Japan Heart	3	3	Japan Agricultural Exchange Council	1	Japan Foster Plan Inc.	1
Japan Anti-Tuberculosis Association	2			Activo	2	2		1	NICCO	1
Chiba Lions Club Cambodia Aid Project	2			World Vision Japan	2	2		1	Japan Medical and Dental Network	1
Japan International Volunteer Center	2			ADRA Japan	2	2		1	Asia Rainbow Association	1
Pride of Asai : Preah Vihear Association Japan	1			Kokoro Volunteer Group	2	2				
Side By Side International	1			The Japan Myanmar Friendship Association-Fukuoka	2	2				
Save the Children Japan	1			Zen	1	1				
Terra Renaissance	1			Japan Myanmar Association	1	1				
Cambodia Education Support from SAGA	1			MIS	1	1				
Tateyama Minami Lions Club	1			Oomura Medical Association	1	1				
Organization of International Support for Dental Education	1			Minzoku Forum	1	1				
Supporters for Mental Health(SMH)	1			Thai Japan Education Development Foundation(TJEDF)	1	1				
Kome Hyappyou School Project	1			People's Hope Japan	1	1				
Good Earth Japan (GEJ)	1			JOICFP	1	1				
				AMCMA	1	1				
				HITO Center	1	1				
				Barefoot Doctors OKINAWA	1	1				
				FAH	1	1				
				The Volunteers Group to Send Wheelchairs to Overseas Children	1	1				
				Japanese Academy of Narrative based Dentistry	1	1				
Total	160		122		175	175		61		87
										50

Source: compiled by the researchers from data in *Kumibetsu Yakusoku Jouhou*

Table 2: NGOs Receiving Japanese NGO grants in descending order of projects funded, South Asia

India	No.	Pakistan	No.	Sri Lanka	No.
Live With Friends On The Earth	5	Children Without Borders	17	JEN	11
Institute of Cultural Affairs	4	JEN	6	Peace Winds Japan	10
Plan International Japan	3	Association to Aid Refugees	6	Asia Pacific Alliance	7
SEEDs Asia	3	Japan Mine Action Service	3	AMDA	4
Japan International Civil Association	3	CWS Japan	3	PARSIC	4
Japan International Labor Foundation	2	Himalayan Green Club	2	Bridge Asia Japan	3
Asia Association & Aisan Friendship Society	2	Japan International Labour Foundation	2	Save the Children	3
India Welfare Village Society	1	Japan International Private Cooperation Association	1	Civic Force	3
Japan Evangelical Lutheran Association	1	Sakura Wheelchair Project	1	Japan Center For Conflict Prevention	2
Japan Preventive Diplomacy Center	1	Afghan Reconstruction Steering Group	1	Asia Pacific Resource Center	1
Wakachiai Project	1			Japan Preventive Diplomacy Center	1
Children Without Borders	1			Japan Diplomatic Association	1
Asia Crime Prevention Foundation	1			Research Institute For Urban Disaster Prevention Asia Disaster Reduction Center	1
L Angel International Volunteer Association	1			Japan Water Forum	1
Association for Rengei Tanjoji International Cooperation	1				
Rainbow International Association	1				
Asha Asia' Farmers & Walking Association	1				

Source: compiled by the researchers from data in *Kanibetsu Yabusoku Jouhou*

Table 3: Japan Platform NGOs receiving Japanese NGO grants, ASEAN

Japan Foundation Affiliate	Cambodia	Laos	Myanmar	Philippines	Thailand	Vietnam	Total
Shanti Volunteer Association	8	7	7	0	9	0	31
Association for Aid and Relief, Japan (AAR)	6	10	10	0	0	0	26
Save the Children Japan	1	0	13	0	0	11	25
World Vision Japan	8	3	2	0	0	6	19
Foundation for International Development, Relief	13	1	0	0	0	3	17
BHN Telecom	0	3	8	0	0	0	11
ICAN	0	0	0	11	0	0	11
Plan International Japan	0	6	0	0	0	5	11
IVY	9	0	0	0	0	0	9
SEEDS Asia	0	0	6	1	0	0	7
Medecins du Monde Japan	0	7	0	0	0	0	7
Peace Winds Japan	0	0	4	0	0	0	4
ADRA Japan	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Japan Heart	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Children without Borders	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
CWS Japan	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
CARE International Japan	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
JOICFP	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	50	37	57	12	9	27	192

Source: compiled by the researchers from data in *Kunibetsu Yakusoku Jouhou* and Japan Platform webpage

MOFA to 46 (currently) affiliated NGOs. This represents roughly one in ten international NGOs in Japan registered with the Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation. It is used here, therefore, as an indicator of a NGO's institutional capacity and closeness to government. The number of projects by NGOs of Japan Platform in ASEAN accounted for about 27.1% of all projects. The number of projects by NGOs of Japan Platform working in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam accounted for more than 30% (Cambodia: 31.1%, Laos: 30.3%, Myanmar: 32.6%, Vietnam: 31.0%). On the other hand, the number of projects by NGOs of Japan Platform working in the Philippines accounted for 19.7% and that in Thailand accounted for 18%. In this table, we can see that the number of projects by *Shanti Kokusai Volunteer Kai* which is working in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand is higher than any other NGOs working in ASEAN with 31 projects in total. Eight NGOs out of all Japan Platform NGOs working in ASEAN are working in more than two countries.

From table 4 we can see that *Kokkyo naki Kodomotachi*, which is working in Pakistan, has the highest project number in any of the three countries that (17) with another project in India. In Sri Lanka the highest number of projects is held by JEN (11). In general, however, Japan Platform affiliate projects are fewer than in ASEAN and their presence is correspondingly limited.

Table 4: Japan Platform NGOs receiving Japanese NGO grants, South Asia

NGO Name	Projects (n)
JEN	17
Children Without Borders	17
Peace Winds Japan	10
Association for Aid and Relief, Japan	6
NICCO	4
PARCIC	4
SEEDS Asia	3
CWS Japan	3
Plan International Japan	3
Ajia Tomonokai	2
Japan Center for Conflict Prevention	2

Source: compiled by the researchers from data in *Kunibetsu Yakusoku Jouhou* and Japan Platform webpage

Table 5: Local Agencies receiving Grassroots Human Security grants, ASEAN

Country	No. 1 (n)	No. 2 (n)	No. 3 (n)
Vietnam	local gov't (388)	hospital (84)	local NGO (42)
Laos	local gov't (310)	nat'l gov't (16)	local NGO (12)
Cambodia	local gov't (223)	local NGO (87)	INGO (68)
Thailand	local NGO (141)	school (62)	local gov't (60)
Philippines	local NGO (140)	local gov't (106)	school (50)
Myanmar	local NGO (608)	hospital (39)	nat'l gov't (18)

Source: compiled by the researchers from data in *Kunibetsu Yakusoku Jouhou*

Table 6: Local Agencies receiving Grassroots Human Security grants, South Asia

Country	No. 1 (n)	No. 2 (n)	No. 3 (n)
India	local NGO (288)	hospital (12)	school (10)
Pakistan	local NGO (232)	hospital (14)	other (5>)
Sri Lanka	local NGO (122)	INGO (51)	other (5>)

Source: compiled by the researchers from data in *Kunibetsu Yakusoku Jouhou*

Tables 5 and 6 present data on local agencies receiving aid from the Grassroots Human Security grant during the period examined. Note that agencies other than NGOs are eligible to receive these grants. The ASEAN data reveal a distinctive split between the Indochina countries and the rest of the region: government agencies overwhelmingly receive grants in the Indochina cases while NGOs account the bulk of grants in Thailand, the Philippines, and Myanmar. Both Cambodia and Myanmar are distinctive, moreover, within these subsets. International NGOs (INGOs: non-Japanese NGOs) account for a significant portion of projects, while local governments are absent from the top three among contractors in Myanmar.

In South Asia, on the other hand, local NGOs overwhelmingly account for grant contracts, with few other agencies receiving assistance under this program.

5. Discussion

The data examined in Potter et al. [2016] suggested a neo-corporatist pattern of interaction between MOFA and selected NGOs. This impression is reinforced here. Those that receive grants repeatedly are well-established. Two, AMDA and AAR, are in consultative status with ECOSOC (AMDA is currently the only Japanese NGO in general consultative status). OISCA is not a Japan Platform member but has a history of receiving ODA grants for technical assistance that dates back to the origins of Japan's aid program in the 1960s. Note, however, the discrepancy between the two regions. Japanese NGOs are much better established in Southeast Asia as reflected in the Japanese NGO grant data. Their presence thins in South Asia.

The data on Grassroots Human Security grants shows striking regional and subregional variance. In Southeast Asia there is a clear pattern of favoring local public agencies in the socialist (and former socialist) Indochina countries, with more emphasis on NGOs in the rest of the region. In South Asia the distribution clearly favors NGOs over public agencies.

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Abstract

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