

JILAF

Japan International Labour Foundation





【Message】

President

相原 康伸

The Japan International Labour Foundation (JILAF) was established by the Japanese Trade Union Confederation (RENGO) in May 1989 as an organization to promote international exchange and cooperation in the field of labour with the aim of contributing to the development of free, democratic, and robust labour movements and sound social and economic development in developing countries.

JILAF's main activities are the Invitation Program for trade union leaders in developing countries around the world, who are invited to visit Japan for training; Field Projects, including local seminars held in accordance with the needs of the countries concerned and programs aimed at raising the living standards of people working in the informal sector; the Research and Information Service; and Human Resource Development.

We are proud to say that our international cooperation in the field of labour, including our social development projects, contributes to industrial development through the building of constructive industrial relations and employment stability in developing countries. It also plays a role as a pillar of Japanese diplomacy by, for example, grooming many Japanophile leaders.

The SGRA project for informal-sector workers, which is being implemented in Thailand, Nepal, Bangladesh, Laos, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, and Cambodia, is steadily achieving results in such areas as vocational training and the establishment of cooperatives and is drawing attention from related parties both in Japan and overseas as a form of international cooperation through the improvement of human resource infrastructure.

JILAF will continue to develop projects as a means of contributing to the building of an international framework toward the realization of the dignity of labour and a just and fair society.

I sincerely look forward to your further support and cooperation in this endeavor.

In step with friends around the world

- 1989 ● JILAF established; Mr. Tadanobu Usami appointed first president
Invitation Program started; as an equipment supply project, equipment and materials for labour education provided to 13 countries and 1 territory
- 1990 ● “Exchange of Views on Labour Situation” meeting started
- 1991 ● Newsletter issued
- 1992 ● International program started jointly with the Singapore Institute of Labour Studies (SILS) and scholarships provided
- 1993 ● Asia-Pacific Regional Conference held jointly with the Asia-Pacific Regional Organization of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU-APRO)
- 1994 ● Field Projects started; workplace environment improvement program “POSITIVE” started
- 1995 ● Mr. Haruki Shimizu appointed second president
- 1996 ● School Project for the Eradication of Child Labour started in Nepal; International Activists Training Course begun
- 1997 ● Three-party field project conducted by the General Federation of Labour in Israel (HISTADRUT), the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU), and JILAF
- 1998 ● School Project for the Eradication of Child Labour started in India; JILAF website launched
- 1999 ● 10th anniversary of founding
- 2000 ● Mr. Teruhito Tokumoto appointed third president
- 2003 ● Invitation of trade unionists from major developed countries begun
- 2004 ● Follow-up seminars for invited persons begun
- 2007 ● Mr. Tsuyoshi Takagi appointed fourth president
- 2008 ● Training of Peer Educators on HIV/AIDS program begun in Thailand
- 2009 ● 20th anniversary of founding; distribution of e-mail magazine begun
- 2010 ● Labour-management relations and productivity seminar “PROGRESS” begun; joint multinational seminars with the International Labour Organization (ILO) begun (Bangkok)
- 2011 ● SGRA (Supporting Grass-Roots Activities through the International Employers’ and Workers’ Network) project begun in Thailand, Nepal, and Bangladesh; JILAF Thailand Office opened
- 2012 ● Acquired status of public-interest foundation
- 2013 ● Mr. Hiroyuki Nagumo appointed fifth president; seminars to prevent industrial disputes begun; industrial relations and labour policy seminars begun
- 2014 ● Implementation of mini-library in Nepal school project; SGRA project begun in Laos
- 2015 ● Fundraising for large earthquake in Nepal
- 2016 ● 1st Global Human Resource Development Training program held (reorganization of International Activists Training Course)
- 2017 ● Efforts begun to disseminate SGRA project in Vietnam and Sri Lanka
- 2018 ● Activities begun to disseminate SGRA project in Cambodia
- 2019 ● 30th anniversary of establishment
- 2021 ● Mr. Yasunobu Aihara appointed sixth president

Invitation Program

This program fosters trade union leaders in developing countries based on Japan's labour situation and experience of industrial relations.

● Labour lectures

Participants hear lectures on a wide range of topics, including the history of the Japanese labour movement, the present state and issues of the labour movement in Japan, industrial relations and labour-management practices in Japan, and Japan's labour legislation and social security system.

● Visits to labour-related organizations

As well as RENGO, participants visit such places as an industrial and enterprise-based union, the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare, which is in charge of labour administration, and the Japan Productivity Center.

● "Exchange of Views on Labour Situation" meeting

Participants report and share information on the present state and issues of the labour movement in their own countries and labour-management disputes in multinational companies.

● RENGO regional branch program

As well as visiting a regional branch of RENGO and learning about its activities and role, participants visit a workplace with a union affiliated to RENGO regional branch and the local Hello Work public employment security office to study the local administrative setup and services to assist jobseekers.

● Visit to an industrial federation and workplace

Participants visit an industrial federation of trade unions to learn about its organization and activities. They also visit a workplace with a union belonging to that federation, where they learn about actual union activities in the workplace conducted through labour-management discussions.

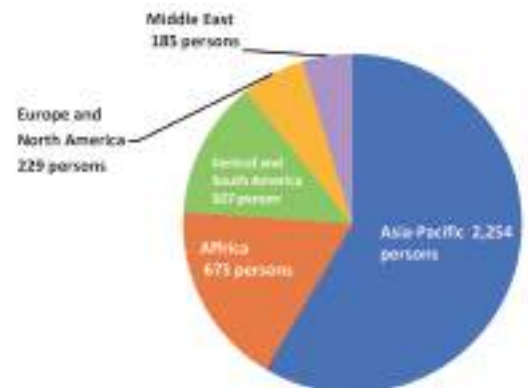
● Visit to Hiroshima or Nagasaki

Participants are taken to one of these two cities so that, by seeing the nuclear-weapon disaster spots in Japan, the only country in the world to have suffered atomic bombing, with their own eyes, they will sense the preciousness of peace.

■ Example of Program Content

Day 1	Arrival in Japan
Day 2	Orientation; opening ceremony; introduction of JILAF; lecture on "The Role of Japanese Trade Unions and Issues"
Day 3	Visit to the RENGO HQ; lecture on "Labour and Social Security Legislation Supporting the Labour Movement"
Day 4	Visit to the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare for a lecture and discussions; lecture on "The Democratic Management of Trade Unions"
Day 5	Visit to an industrial trade union federation for a lecture and discussions; lecture on "Trade Union Leadership"
Day 6	Lecture by the Japan Productivity Center; lecture by Nippon Keidanren (Japan Business Federation)
Day 7	Follow-up
Day 8	Peace program (visit to Hiroshima or Nagasaki)
Day 9-11	RENGO regional branch program
Day 12	"Exchange of Views on Labour Situation" meeting; lecture and group discussions on "The Negotiating Skills of Trade Union Executives"
Day 13	Lecture by a workers' welfare organization on its role and business content; discussion with JILAF directors; proposal of action plans; closing ceremony
Day 14	Departure from Japan

■ Invitation Program Participants by Region (as of end of March 2022)



From fiscal 1989 to fiscal 2022, 3,850 persons were invited from 130 countries and 6 international organization.



Field Projects

The holding of seminars toward the building of constructive industrial relations contributes to social and economic development through the strengthening of trade unions.

Since 1994 JILAF has been holding industrial relations and labour policy seminars toward the realization of decent work with the aim of assisting economic and social development in developing countries.

Taking account of the conditions in each country concerned and the priority issues of each national center, the seminars are held on various themes, such as the building of constructive industrial relations or globalization and the role of trade unions.



● Protection of workers' rights

With the aim of raising and improving the status of workers in developing countries, the seminars provide knowledge and practical know-how for the promotion of trade union organization and protection of workers' rights.

● Collective bargaining and labour-management consultations

On the basis of plenty of case studies, the seminars share knowledge about the characteristics of collective bargaining and labour-management consultations and the differences between them and provide knowledge and practical know-how for the building of constructive industrial relations.

● Labour legislation and the minimum wage and labour agreements

The seminars provide basic knowledge relating to labour legislation, working conditions, and the minimum wage and know-how on the conclusion and improvement of labour agreements.

● Industrial dispute settlement

On the basis of plenty of case studies, the seminars provide basic knowledge relating to the types and characteristics of industrial disputes, as well as emphasizing the importance of constructive industrial relations, with the aim of preventing unnecessary industrial disputes, which occur frequently in developing countries, and settling them when they do occur.

● Gender equality, etc.

The seminars provide knowledge and case studies with the aim of raising the social status of women in developing countries, improving their living and working conditions, and building gender-equal workplaces and societies.

■ Frequency of Field Projects and Number of Participants

Yr	No. of target countries and organizations	Frequency	No. of participants
1994	5 countries, 8 organizations	32	1,165
1995	6 countries, 9 organizations	84	2,697
1996	7 countries, 10 organizations	100	2,858
1997	9 countries, 1 territory, 12 organizations	208	4,540
1998	14 countries, 1 territory, 18 organizations	265	5,302
1999	15 countries, 1 territory, 18 organizations	238	7,871
2000	14 countries, 1 territory, 18 organizations	211	6,747
2001	13 countries, 18 organizations	240	8,838
2002	14 countries, 18 organizations	290	8,896
2003	9 countries, 12 organizations	252	8,226
2004	18 countries, 12 organizations	343	9,264
2005	13 countries, 16 organizations	277	7,825
2006	12 countries, 17 organizations	166	2,815
2007	9 countries, 18 organizations	75	1,828
2008	11 countries, 17 organizations	53	1,338
2009	14 countries, 18 organizations	40	1,240
2010	16 countries, 18 organizations	44	1,260
2011	14 countries, 15 organizations	38	1,198
2012	14 countries, 17 organizations	30	893
2013	14 countries, 17 organizations	35	1,481
2014	14 countries, 16 organizations	17	840
2015	15 countries, 17 organizations	35	941
2016	15 countries, 17 organizations	19	885
2017	15 countries, 17 organizations	20	1,871
2018	15 countries, 17 organizations	23	1,967
2019	15 countries, 18 organizations	24	1,155
2020	15 countries, 16 organizations	16	898
2021	14 countries, 16 organizations	19	1,241
2022	14 countries, 15 organizations	18	1,281
Total		2,062	67,257

Field Projects

School Project for the Future of Children

According to a 2017 report by the ILO, more than 152 million children aged 5–17 years are engaged in child labour worldwide, of whom about 62 million are living in the Asia-Pacific region.

In response to this situation, believing that it should promote child labour countermeasures, JILAF is implementing the School Project for the Eradication of Child Labour in Nepal and India together with the national centers of those countries.

The project, which targets poor children aged 8–14 years who have not been able to receive the minimum necessary education, involves the management of nine non-formal schools in Nepal and one learning center in India and the provision of basic education with the aim of enabling the children to transfer to public schools.

Part of the funds necessary for this project is covered by donations from various Japanese trade unions and companies.

Voices of School Graduates

In Nepal there are students who have transferred from non-formal schools to continue their studies in public schools and then gone on to become schoolteachers.

At the Kaski School, from where she graduated, there is one assistant teacher who went on to study at university after initially persuading her parents that “a girl receiving education is the same as the whole family receiving education.”

And at the Rupandehi School, there is an assistant teacher who attended the school as a child with the cooperation of officials of the national center of trade unions in Nepal. She was from a single-mother family and had even been told that she would be disowned if she went to school. The girl later transferred to a public school and then, while facing hardships, went on to study at university. Now her mother supports her as she works as an assistant teacher at her former school while attending university.

Both women are proud to be teaching at their former schools.



Assistant Teacher, Graduate of Rupandehi School, and her teacher.

Supporting Grass-Roots Activities through the International Employers' and Workers' Network (SGRA) Project



Project to support grass-roots activities for informal-sector workers (SGRA)

While many developing countries in Asia are achieving rapid economic growth, poverty and disparities are expanding and creating social problems. For this reason, the building of a social safety net for vulnerable people, such as low-income earners and women, is an urgent issue.

In these circumstances, with grants from the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare, JILAF since fiscal 2011 has been implementing the Supporting Grass-Roots Activities through the International Employers' and Workers' Network (SGRA) project. JILAF has set up local offices in Thailand and Nepal to promote the project. The aim of this project is to utilize the international labour-management network in order to organize people who are not covered by public assistance and to build a social safety net at the grass-roots level.

Vocational training and educational seminars for informal-sector workers and their family members are being implemented in Thailand, Nepal, Bangladesh, Laos, Vietnam, Sri

Lanka, and Cambodia with the cooperation of local trade unions, employers' organizations, governments, the ILO, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).



Worker at a traditional textile factory (Laos)



Training of Trainers seminar

Research and Information Service

JILAF collects and transmits both domestic and international labour-related information and aims to promote network building in the field of international labour.

● Website

The website introduces JILAF's activities and supplies labour-related information on other countries. It carries national center information and a database covering 20 countries in Asia with basic information, data on labour legislation, etc.

The website is available in five languages (Japanese, English, Spanish, French, and Chinese).

Access to website → <https://www.jilaf.or.jp/eng/>

● E-mail magazine

JILAF distributes an e-mail magazine in Japanese and English and endeavors to supply labour-related information with the aim of building networks with labour-related persons both in Japan and overseas and sharing information. By transmitting various labour-related information, this e-mail magazine also plays a role in preventing industrial disputes in Japanese companies operating overseas.

Register for the e-mail magazine

→ <https://www.jilaf.or.jp/eng/mail/>

● JILAF pamphlet

A pamphlet introducing JILAF is published in 25 languages.

● Research projects

JILAF endeavors to enhance its country database by collecting labour-related information on these countries.



◀ JILAF website



▲ JILAF e-mail magazine



▲ JILAF pamphlet

● Seminars for the prevention of industrial disputes

Calling on the cooperation of RENGO and Global Union Federations, and inviting trade union officials from overseas, executives of employers' organizations, and others, JILAF holds seminars in Japan with the aim of deepening understanding about the labour situation in other countries among Japanese companies setting up overseas operations. These seminars are attended by a wide range of people, including trade union officials, employers, researchers, and students.

Human Resource Development

JILAF aims to develop human resources capable of being active on the international stage.

● Global Human Resource Development Training Program

In cooperation with RENGO, JILAF holds the Global Human Resource Development Training Program with the aim of fostering people who can be active internationally in the field of labour. Through English-language study, labour-related lectures, and visits to labour-related organizations, the course enables participants to acquire the basic knowledge and experience necessary for them to be active in the international labour movement.

● Youth Leadership Course

JILAF holds the Youth Leadership Course jointly with the Regional Organization of the International Trade Union Confederation for



Youth Leadership Course

Asia and the Pacific (ITUC-AP) and Ong Teng Cheong Labour Leadership Institute (OTC Institute). Forty persons from affiliated and friendly organizations in about 30 countries participate in the course. In the program, through group discussions, promising trade union leaders study such topics as issues facing trade unions in the Asia-Pacific region and responses and the skills required of trade union leaders.

Projects

The Japan International Labour Foundation (JILAF) was founded by the Japanese Trade Union Confederation (RENGO) in May 1989 as an organization to promote international exchange and cooperation in the field of labour. Ever since its establishment, JILAF has consistently endeavored to cooperate with trade unions in developing countries. JILAF has been assiduously implementing projects with the collaboration of RENGO and other labour-related organizations, related ministries and agencies of the Japanese government, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), and national centers in other countries. From now on also, JILAF will aim to contribute to the strengthening and development of the labour movement and to sound social and economic development in developing countries.

Invitation Program

JILAF invites 10 or so teams of promising trade union leaders, approximately 120 persons in total, to visit Japan every year. The teams are organized by region and theme. The participants, who in principle are recommended by national centers affiliated with the ITUC, learn about such topics as Japan's constructive industrial relations and labour situation.

Field Projects

After grasping the needs of trade unions in developing countries, we implement various projects contributing to economic and social development and workers' education, such as local seminars focusing on the building of constructive industrial relations in accordance with the surrounding environment, Life Support Seminars for people working in the informal sector, and the operation of bridge schools with the aim of eradicating child labour.

Research and Information Service

Through our website, e-mail magazine, and printed publications, we introduce JILAF's activities and collect and supply labour-related information. We also hold seminars on the prevention of unnecessary industrial disputes and actively participate in various events, such as those relating to the eradication of child labour, international cooperation, and May Day.

Human Resource Development

JILAF aims to foster people who can be active globally in the field of labour. We provide opportunities for people to acquire the knowledge necessary for the international labour movement, thereby endeavoring to strengthen and develop the labour movement.



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SDGs

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by a United Nations summit in September 2015, are objectives for the achievement of sustainable development covering the period from January 2016 to 2030. JILAF agrees with the SDGs and is making efforts toward their attainment.