

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan
Third Party Evaluation

Evaluation of Japan's Cultural Grant Aid Summary Report

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Preface

This report is a summary of the results of the evaluation of Cultural Grant Aid undertaken by the External Advisory Meeting on ODA Evaluation (EAM) at the request of the Economic Cooperation Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In recent years Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) has been maintained at a top level on a world scale, but there have been domestic and international demands for more effective and efficient implementation of aid with better quality. As the supervisory agency of ODA, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs conducts evaluations of aid programs mainly at the policy level with two objectives: to support ODA's management of the implementation of aid programs and to ensure its accountability. This evaluation study aims to assess the objectives, results and processes of Japan's Cultural Grant Aid. Its purpose is to extract lessons learned and make recommendations for future reference to enable the implementation of more effective and efficient aid programs. Finally, the evaluation results are made public in fulfillment of the EAM's responsibility to provide details of its findings.

Cultural Grant Aid is an aid scheme in Japan's Official Development Assistance and its purpose is to contribute to the promotion of culture and education in developing countries. In many developing countries, there is a strong concern not only for the economic development of their society but also for maintaining and promoting the unique cultures of their countries and efforts are being made toward achieving a balanced development from a broad perspective which includes cultural considerations. In cooperating with such developing countries, Japan also assists them in their efforts to preserve their traditional culture and cultural heritage and in their art and educational activities. Cultural Grant Aid is an important pillar in Japan's international cultural cooperation.

The EAM is an advisory group to the Director General of the Economic Cooperation Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was established to enhance the objectivity of evaluations of ODA. At the request of the Economic Cooperation Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to conduct an ODA evaluation, the EAM assumes responsibility for formulating the methods for conducting the evaluation, summarizing the results in a report and providing feedback to the Economic Cooperation Bureau as a viewpoint for their reference. Professor Hiromitsu Muta of the EAM was in charge of this evaluation.

In carrying out the evaluation, the EAM received the cooperation of various people in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, initially the Research and Programming Division, and would like to express its deep appreciation for all of their efforts. Furthermore, Mitsubishi Research Institute, Inc., under commission of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, provided continuous support services.

Finally, the EAM would like to add that views expressed in this report are not a reflection of the position of the Japanese government and other government-related organizations.

External Advisory Meeting on ODA Evaluation

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Summary

1. Evaluation Approach

1.1. Background and Objectives of the Evaluation

In grant aid programs provided through Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA), Cultural Grant Aid is an assistance scheme which was initiated in 1975 with the purpose of contributing to the promotion of culture and education in developing countries. Since then, Cultural Grant Aid has provided funds for the purchase of materials and equipment used in various cultural activities, such as the preservation and use of cultural assets and cultural heritage, the public performances and exhibitions related to culture, and for the promotion of education and research. These funds have been provided not only to assist developing countries in the development of their culture and education but also to promote cultural exchanges and to enhance friendly relations and mutual understanding between Japan and the recipient countries.

This evaluation was undertaken with two purposes: (1) to review aid policies by verifying the objectives, results and processes of Cultural Grant Aid and to draw lessons and recommendations from the findings to enable more effective and efficient implementation of aid in future, and (2) to fulfill the requirements for accountability by making details of findings available to the public.

1.2. Evaluation Methods

In its study, the External Advisory Meeting on ODA Evaluation (hereinafter "the EAM") undertook the evaluation of the Cultural Grant Aid scheme by considering it from three perspectives: relevance of objectives, the effectiveness of the results, and the appropriateness of the processes. To gain an understanding of the scheme to be evaluated, the EAM summarized Japan's Cultural Grant Aid in an objective chart format by itemizing its objectives and goals. The chart consisted of input and output of projects, mid-term objectives, and final goals. The amount of time required to

determine whether equipment provided under the scheme is being appropriately used is generally two to three years after the equipment has been supplied. The EAM's study, therefore, focused on results of Cultural Grant Aid up to FY2000. Next, the evaluation standards and indicators for determining results were set and relevant information was collected through researches conducted in Japan. Finally, the evaluation was undertaken on the basis of the information gathered and the results were summarized in a report.

However, there were a number of constraints on the evaluation:

- (i) Information for the evaluation was limited to that obtained from reference materials and interviews;
- (ii) Benchmarks and measurement indicators had not been set, so the degree of achievement of objectives could not be quantitatively determined;
- (iii) As the causality between input of aid and the final goals was not proven, the direct outcomes from the Cultural Grant Aid were difficult to assess.

2. An overview of Japan's Cultural Grant Aid and its characteristics

2.1. An overview of Cultural Grant Aid

Cultural Grant Aid is an assistance scheme initiated in 1975 to promote culture and education in developing countries. The scheme was introduced within a context of the recognition by the Japanese government that there was a strong desire in developing countries not only to promote the economic development of their society but also to maintain and promote their unique cultures and that they were engaging in initiatives to achieve balanced development from a broad perspective that included cultural considerations. In cooperating with those countries, Cultural Grant Aid has been positioned as an important scheme in Japan's international cultural cooperation in providing assistance in the preservation of traditional cultures and cultural heritage, and in activities related to arts and education in developing countries.

Under the Cultural Grant Aid scheme, the grant limit for a single project is

50 million yen. Funds are provided for the purchase of materials and equipment used in the promotion of culture and education in the recipient countries and for the payment of necessary contingent services such as transportation and installation. Based on the World Bank's guidelines for funding, countries eligible for Cultural Grant Aid include countries in groups I to IV. (For example, in FY2002 this included countries where per capita GNP was below US \$5,225 in 2000.)

On the basis of Exchange of Notes, a total of 43 billion 982.9 million yen in Cultural Grant Aid was provided to 124 countries and regions for 1,073 projects from the inception of the scheme in 1975 until the year 2000. In the past 10 years, the total amount provided for Cultural Grant Aid has been approximately 2.2 to 2.5 billion yen annually for the implementation of approximately 50 to 60 projects annually.

3. Evaluation Results

3.1. Evaluation of the relevance of the objectives

The relevance of the objectives was verified by confirming that the objectives of the Cultural Grant Aid were consistent with aid objectives in Japan's upper-level policies and aid objectives of the international community. In regard to consistency with Japan's upper-level policies, the objectives of the Grant Aid Assistance were in agreement with the overall fundamental principles of the former and the new ODA Charter, and issues of priority in ODA's mid-term policy. In terms of consistency with aid objectives of the international community, the objectives of the Cultural Grant Aid were in agreement with the orientation of the Millennium Declaration, the DAC Development Partnership Strategy and other international agreements.

3.2. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the results

In this part of the evaluation, the Cultural Grant Aid scheme was organized systematically according to logical stages of the project such as input, output, mid-term objectives and final goals, and the degree of achievement of the objectives at each respective stage was verified. The Cultural Grant Aid scheme has two fundamental final goals: "to further culture and education in developing countries", and "to enhance friendly relations and mutual understanding between the developing countries and Japan through

the promotion of cultural exchanges”. The results of the evaluation in relation to these goals were as follows:

(1) Final Goal 1: To further culture and education in developing countries

The first final goal had three mid-term objectives: “a deeper appreciation of cultural assets and heritage”, “a more widespread appreciation of culture”, and the “promotion of education and research”. The status of achievement of these respective mid-term objectives was verified.

(a) A deeper appreciation of cultural assets and heritage

From FY1998 to FY2000, 36 projects totaling 1 billion 426.2 million yen in aid, which accounts for 21% of the total Cultural Grant Aid during that period, were undertaken to promote a deeper appreciation of cultural assets and cultural heritage. Equipment to restore and preserve documents, video recording and editing equipment, and microfilm equipment were provided under the scheme. The following points were confirmed regarding the restoration of cultural assets and cultural heritage:

- 133,028 documents and 40 years’ worth of various reference materials were transferred to microfilm.
- More than 1,770 items of cultural heritage were assessed and recorded.
- 700,000 exhibition items became viewable on video recordings.
- Historic remains in nine separate locations were excavated.
- 120 cultural assets were sterilized by refrigeration.
- 230 artifacts used in spinning were cleaned with ultrasonic cleansing equipment.

The above cultural assets and cultural heritage items were displayed in exhibition venues almost every day (5 to 7 days a week) at maximum, 4 to 5 times a year at minimum, and on average at intervals of 4.8 days. Also, within the possible scope of study, it was found that 1.15 million people visited these exhibitions annually. For example, in Syria, 12,000 people visited the cultural assets and cultural heritage exhibitions per year. This figure far exceeds the average number of visitors to museums and historic sites. Therefore, it can be judged that the Cultural Grant Aid had a certain impact on

deepening the appreciation of cultural assets and heritage.

(b) A more widespread appreciation of culture

Between FY1998 and FY2000 a total of 1 billion 865.8 million yen in assistance, which accounts for 28% of the Cultural Grant Aid during the same period, was provided for 42 projects promoting a more widespread appreciation of culture. Lighting, sound, and audiovisual equipment as well as musical instruments for orchestras were provided. Public performances and exhibitions were held using this equipment 3.7 times a week on average before audiences totaling 250,000 people per year. For example, in Eastern Europe and the New Independent States (NIS) region, exhibitions held under the Cultural Grant Aid scheme hosted 170,000 visitors a year. This figure is far greater than the average number of visitors at art museums of the region, which is estimated to be around 54,000 people. This implies that the Cultural Grant Aid had a noticeable impact on the region.

(c) Promotion of education and research

Between FY1998 and FY2000, 54 projects at a total of 2 billion 176.9 million yen, which amounts to 33% of the total Cultural Grant Aid during the same period, were undertaken during the same period to promote education and research and to provide equipment for ball game sports, for physics and chemistry experiments and for other purposes. In terms of frequency, the equipment was utilized 14.1 times per week on average, or 43.2 hours per week on average in terms of amount of time. This implies that the equipment provided is, in general, appropriately utilized. Furthermore, the number of users was investigated on the assumption that the more users of educational and research equipment there were, the more education and research were promoted. Of the 15 projects for which information was obtained, it was found that 260,000 people made use of the equipment annually, which is equivalent to one user per 1,256 people. General tendencies could not be obtained, however, because of regional differences and of lack of the availability of comparative data.

- (2) Final Goal 2: To enhance friendly relations and mutual understanding between the developing countries and Japan through the promotion of cultural exchanges

Final goal 2 had two mid-term objectives: “a more widespread appreciation of Japanese culture” and “promotion of education in Japanese culture”. Achievement of the respective mid-term objectives was verified.

- (a) A more widespread appreciation of Japanese culture

Between FY1998 and FY2000, eight projects at a total of 269.4 million yen in assistance, accounting for 4% of the total Cultural Grant Aid during the same period, were undertaken to promote a more widespread appreciation of Japanese culture. Documentary and educational programs were created. In the Asian region, from where the data was available, the programs were broadcast 407 times in total. On the assumption that the greater the number of viewers of these programs on Japanese culture, the more widespread the appreciation of Japanese culture would be, the number of viewers was investigated. In Bangladesh, where the data was available, 100 million people, equal to 80% of the total population, had viewed the programs on Japan at least once, showing evidence of the impact of the Cultural Grant Aid. Furthermore, on the assumption that interest in Japanese culture in the recipient countries would be shown in the volume of exports of Japanese publications to these countries, the volume of publications exported was investigated. However, the increase in publications exported to these countries where Cultural Grant Aid schemes were in progress showed an increase lower than that of countries where the scheme was not in progress and, consequently, remarkable appreciation of Japanese culture could not be confirmed.

- (b) Promotion of education in Japanese culture

In regard to the promotion of education in Japanese culture between FY1998 and FY2000, 25 projects at a total of 950.6 million yen in aid, which amounts to 14% of total Cultural Grant Aid during the same period, were undertaken and equipment, including language

laboratory and audiovisual equipment were provided. Data was obtained only on 14 projects and the rate of operation of equipment surveyed according to frequency of use was on average 21.7 times a week and 35.9 hours per week for equipment surveyed according to amount of time it was used. The findings indicate that the equipment is used at an appropriate level. The average number of users, though varying from region to region, was 16,060 people per week or approximately 830,000 per year, which accounts for one user per 432 people. With no comparative data available, the level of usage could not be evaluated. Furthermore, on the assumption that if education in Japanese culture was being undertaken, the number of learners of Japanese would increase, the number of students taking the Japanese Language Proficiency Test was investigated. Among the countries where Cultural Grant Aid was undertaken, applicants were present in Mongolia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Mexico, Paraguay, Turkey, and Kazakhstan. Of these countries Vietnam, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Myanmar and Paraguay showed an increase in the number of applicants exceeding the global trend of 86% growth between FY1998 and FY2002. This can be said to show, although indirectly, that Cultural Grant Aid was having an impact on these countries.

3.3. Evaluation of the appropriateness of the processes

For the appropriateness of the implementation process, the following three points were verified: the provision of implementation procedures, cooperation with related organizations, and whether a verification process existed.

(1) Provision of implementation procedures

In regard to the provision of implementation procedures, guidelines for implementing Cultural Grant Aid had been prepared and revisions were made periodically in line with changes in circumstances. In addition, the contents of the manual dealt with how Cultural Grant Aid relates to other aid schemes, and also gave indications of effective aid implementation.

(2) Cooperation with related organizations

Discussions with the recipient countries were held at every stage of the project development, requests, and ex-ante investigations. Discussions with other donors are held as necessary, and arrangements are made to report on aid from other donors when submitting an application for a project in order to avoid duplication.

(3) The existence of a verification mechanism

In regard to the existence of a verification mechanism, ex-ante investigations, surveys on the use of equipment, and follow up surveys are undertaken. Furthermore, evaluation of the Cultural Grant Aid scheme has been introduced and will be used from hereon. While ex-ante investigations do not serve to identify concrete targets, they endeavor to predict the impact of equipment procurement and the degree of equipment utilization. Conducting surveys on the use of equipment is the process by which the recipient countries report on the utilization level of equipment, and these surveys provide an important source of quantitative data for evaluation. Since FY2000, as a result of findings from the surveys on the use of equipment and follow up surveys, follow up projects have been initiated to provide additional assistance to further enhance the results of projects deemed to have been very beneficial.

4. Recommendations

In view of the above findings, the EAM has made the following recommendations:

4.1. Restructuring the objectives chart of the scheme

It goes without saying that measuring the degree of promotion of culture and education is not easy. Nevertheless it is essential to systematize the objectives of Cultural Grant Aid and to establish indicators to determine the degree of its achievement.

The government of Japan has indicated the significance (final goals) of Cultural Grant Aid as “assisting the development of culture and education in developing countries as well as promoting cultural exchanges with these

countries and enhancing friendly relations and mutual understanding”. However, the roadmap to the achievement of the final goals has not been clearly defined, so the logical chains between individual projects and the final goals in the overall scheme are not clear. Furthermore, indicators correlating to the objectives of projects are not set, so it is difficult to determine the degree of achievement of the objectives. Therefore, it is essential to systemize the objectives and to set meaningful indicators in order to monitor the progress of Cultural Grant Aid schemes underway and to manage the schemes efficiently.

There is a need to take into consideration the expected changes in the role of ODA when restructuring the objectives chart for Cultural Grant Aid is undertaken. Soon 30 years will have lapsed since the Cultural Grant Aid scheme was first introduced and during that period there have been a number of changes in the ODA Charter as well as in the environment surrounding ODA both in Japan and in international community. To accommodate such changes, it is necessary to perceive the role of the Cultural Grant Aid scheme from a broader perspective. For example, “peace-building”, indicated as an important issue in the new ODA Charter, may be considered as one of the goals of the Cultural Grant Aid.

4.2. Flexible implementation of Cultural Grant Aid scheme

To attain the goals of Cultural Grant Aid, it is important to cooperate with other aid schemes. It is also worthwhile to consider reviewing the conditions of eligibility of Cultural Grant Aid. Cultural Grant Aid is, in principle, designed to provide equipment. However, there is a concern that facility conditions and other environmental factors may inhibit the benefits of the aid from being fully realized. By taking into consideration more flexible conditions for eligibility, the Cultural Grant Aid scheme might also be made available for the construction and maintenance of facilities that accommodate equipment. For example, Cultural Heritage Grant Aid could be implemented to facility-related projects. The scheme of Cultural Grant Aid, against which this evaluation has been carried out, may be more efficiently utilized if it were to fund not only equipment for restoration but also facility improvement.

4.3. Improving the autonomous evaluation process

At present ex-ante investigations and surveys on the use of equipment are carried out to verify the project and to monitor equipment usage. If the objectives to be attained are to be presented with indicators, there will be a need to introduce a mechanism that will enable periodical monitoring and verification of the indicators. This will contribute to the improvement of expertise in managing the projects. Furthermore, the sense of ownership of the recipient country/organization can be strengthened by entrusting the recipient country/organization with an autonomous ex-ante evaluation. This will also contribute to raising awareness in regard to the effective use of grant aid.