

Press Release

Young Japanese Volunteers Call on Vice Prime Minister Lasama

6 February 2014



On 6 February, 4 Japanese volunteers paid a courtesy call on H.E. Fernando Lasama de Araujo, Vice Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, at the Palacio Governo. Also present in the meeting were Mr. Yoshitaka Hanada, Ambassador of Japan, and Mr. Hirohiko Takata, Chief Representative of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Those young Japanese volunteers are members of the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers, or JOCV, a government-sponsored cooperation program. The Government of Japan started the JOCV program in 1965, 20 years after the total devastation of World War II, and has dispatched nearly 40,000 volunteers to about 90 developing countries all over the world. The JOCV program has served as a means to deepen the scope of bilateral development cooperation by providing young specialists in more than 100 technical fields as well as strengthening the bonds with local practitioners and people in need through direct collaboration at the grassroots level. The inception of the JOCV program in Timor-Leste in 2010 was a pleasant increment to Japan's cooperation with

Timor-Leste, which dates back well before the restoration of independence.

Twenty volunteers have so far been sent to Timor-Leste and, of those, 12 are currently active in the country. Their fields of specialty range from police martial arts training to prosthetics, from nutritional education to computer technology, to name but a few.

During the courtesy call on Vice Prime Minister, the volunteers introduced their activities in Timor-Leste and described the lessons learned and their aspirations to grow as a person through learning from Timorese partners.

Mr. Lasama warmly welcomed them and praised their high motivation and dedication to work with Timorese counterparts in bringing about better conditions for Timorese in need of assistance.

The Embassy of Japan, along with JICA, expresses its gratitude to Mr. Lasama for this courtesy call as it has had the JOCV volunteers well recognized for the first time since 2010 by the Timorese leadership as well as by the public.

JICA is expanding the JOCV program in Timor-Leste in the coming months, both in terms of the number of volunteers and areas of activity. The number will have reached well above 20 by April, 2014.

For more information, please contact the Economic Cooperation Section in the Embassy of Japan, Dili at 332311/2