2 DECADES OF POVERTY REDUCTION AND PARTNERSHIP

THE STORY OF THE JAPAN FUND FOR POVERTY REDUCTION
2000-2021
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A nomadic herder in Mongolia.
About the Book

This book tells the story of the first 2 decades of the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR), from how it started to how it has evolved—shaped by changes in the world, especially in the Asia and Pacific region and in its host organization, the Asian Development Bank.

Since its creation in 2000 to 2021, JFPR has met some impressive milestones, including project approvals exceeding $1 billion and the creation of 520 projects across 36 developing member countries. However, numbers alone do not tell the whole story. The clearest way to show the impact of JFPR’s work is in the voices of those who have benefited, as well as those who have worked with JFPR to bring the projects to fruition, either as project officers or partners.

With so many projects, there are too many individual stories to tell here. Still, through a selection of featured project profiles, this book captures what a JFPR-funded project can achieve and how people across the region have been empowered to transform their lives.

Under normal circumstances, this book would have been published in 2021, but as with almost every area of life, the publication had a setback due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. In 2020 and 2021, efforts were heavily focused on how best to respond to the impact of the pandemic on vulnerable communities across the region, as well as managing the rest of the existing project portfolio under unexpected working conditions. COVID-19 has certainly been disruptive, but it has also presented an opportunity to support communities in new ways and adopt new work modalities.

As JFPR was renamed the Japan Fund for Prosperous and Resilient Asia and the Pacific in 2022, a new dawn of renewed enthusiasm and commitment to development work emerged. While it closes the chapter of its first 2 decades, it is hoped that this book will serve as a reminder—and a witness—to the countless lives touched and transformed by JFPR.
FOREWORD

Message from the ADB President

I am pleased to present this book celebrating the 2 decades of the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR), recently renamed the Japan Fund for Prosperous and Resilient Asia and the Pacific. While offering a history of the fund, this book also honors the spirit and perseverance of its beneficiaries, members of the poorest and most vulnerable communities in the region.

Founded in 2000, JFPR embodied the commitment of the Government of Japan to support populations affected by the 1997–1998 Asian financial crisis. In the following years, JFPR responded swiftly to other crises affecting the region. For example, the fund provided much needed support in the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and the 2008–2009 global financial crisis, and during the COVID–19 pandemic.

JFPR has supported dozens of Asian Development Bank (ADB) developing member countries, deploying over $1 billion to more than 500 projects. JFPR is notable for its innovative approaches to poverty reduction and social development, which puts communities at the center of its work. This has brought additional resources to ADB loans and grants, through last-mile interventions and capacity development for partners to ensure lasting project results.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the Japanese people, whose goodwill and steadfast commitment has made it possible for JFPR to carry out this important work.

As JFPR continues its valuable service to the region, there are many opportunities to build on the lessons, achievements, and momentum of the past 2 decades. I look forward to JFPR’s ongoing role in helping to build a more prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable future for Asia and the Pacific.

Masatsugu Asakawa
President
ADB

JFPR has played a crucial role in supporting poverty reduction over the last 2 decades. I am honored to celebrate this milestone, and to look ahead at its continued contributions in the years to come.

ADB President’s opening keynote
JFPR Anniversary Event
28 June 2022
FOREWORD

Message from the Government of Japan

The Government of Japan is pleased to celebrate with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) the 21 years of the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR) with this milestone publication, 2 Decades of Poverty Reduction and Partnership: The Story of the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction, 2000–2021, and to look toward its future to be built upon the achievements to date.

The history of JFPR dates back to ADB’s adoption of its 1999 Poverty Reduction Strategy, which had poverty reduction as its overarching goal as eradicating poverty was still a significant and imminent challenge for the region after the 1997 Asian financial crisis. As the Government of Japan’s response, JFPR was established in May 2000 to support ADB’s efforts by providing grants, with a focus on activities with innovative and demonstrative impacts on poverty reduction that specifically targeted poor and vulnerable communities in ADB’s developing member countries (DMCs).

Since then, the Government of Japan has contributed to JFPR nearly $1 billion to provide grant and technical assistance projects across 36 DMCs, demonstrating its commitment to supporting ADB’s poverty reduction program through its direct impact on poor people as well as capacity building among ADB’s operations. In supporting poverty reduction, JFPR has played a crucial role during times of tremendous need, including:

- in the aftermath of the financial crises of 1997 and 2008;
- after disasters, such as the Indian Ocean tsunami, Typhoon Yolanda, and the Nepal Gorkha earthquake; and
- in response to health crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are pleased to see, through the images of this coffee-table book, how Japanese people’s contributions have touched the lives of millions across the region. The years of hard work by every stakeholder and implementing partner undoubtedly empowered the lives of our beneficiaries. We are also glad to see how our partnership with ADB has grown stronger over the years with joint and complementary efforts in aligning our shared vision, commitment, and priorities for more effective and efficient delivery of assistance.

Turning to what lies ahead for JFPR, we decided in 2021 to enhance the fund to help ADB’s DMCs achieve resilient recovery from the ongoing pandemic crisis and enhance preparedness for the next crisis under the new name, the Japan Fund for Prosperous and Resilient Asia and the Pacific, from 2022 onwards. The fund also aims to help build a sustainable society and foundation for a prosperous future while bolstering vulnerable groups. To this end, in addition to poverty reduction, the new JFPR focuses on universal health coverage, climate change and disaster risk management, quality infrastructure investment, and public finance management.

As the region recovers from the current crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic, and faces new uncertainties, we believe that the new JFPR will be more impactful than ever as our next-level work builds on the achievements and momentum of the past 2 decades. While mitigating the immediate impacts of crises and addressing long-term development needs, the new JFPR will keep committed to lifting remaining populations above the poverty line and bringing everyone on a sustainable path to prosperity and resilience.

We commend this book in showcasing JFPR’s achievements through the past 21 years as well as how it complemented ADB’s mission to eradicate extreme poverty. We hope that ADB continues to play a lead role for more sustainable, resilient, and inclusive growth in Asia and the Pacific. Meanwhile, Japan upholds its commitment to continue supporting ADB through the new JFPR.

Kentaro Ogata
Deputy Vice Minister of Finance for International Affairs
Ministry of Finance
Government of Japan
Mother and child walking in Arkhangai province, central Mongolia.

PART I

JAPAN FUND FOR POVERTY REDUCTION
Seaweed farmers in Palawan, Philippines
see related story, p. 132.
At a Glance

- **208** Approved Project Grants
- **$614.4 Million** Total Amount of Approved Project Grants
- **$614.4 Million** Total ADB-Approved Projects
- **$412.9 Million** Total Amount of Approved Technical Assistance Projects
- **520** Project Grants and Technical Assistance

**TOTAL CONTRIBUTION OF GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN**

- **$966.3 Million**
- **$20 Million** BIGGEST PROJECT GRANT
- **Emergency Assistance and Early Recovery for Poor Municipalities Affected by Typhoon Yolanda**
- **$20 Million** 1ST JFPR PROJECT GRANT APPROVED IN 2000
- **Assisting Girl Street Children at Risk of Sexual Abuse**
- **$20 Million** 1ST JFPR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE APPROVED IN 2010
- **Asian Bonds Online Website Project Phase III**

**MONGOLA**
- Country with the Highest Number of JFPR Projects
- Country with Biggest JFPR Portfolio (Cumulative Amount)

**AFGHANISTAN**
- **312** Approved Technical Assistance Projects
- **$412.9 Million** Total Amount of Approved Technical Assistance Projects

**15 PROJECTS AT $80 MILLION**

**Glance At**
- PROJECT GRANTS AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
- FOR TOTAL ADB/PROJECTS
- TOTAL CUMULATIVE AMOUNT

**A seller keeps shop at a traditional market on the shores of the Inle, Myanmar.**
2 Decades of Poverty Reduction and Partnership

Bhutanese beneficiaries of the JFPR project Advancing Economic Opportunities of Women and Girls.

This Bhutanese mother, shown here with her son, improved her skills in weaving and increased her income following training under a JFPR project.
21
Years
of JFPR

2000
JFPR ESTABLISHED IN MAY

2000
1ST PROJECT GRANT APPROVED: Assisting Girl Street Children at Risk of Sexual Abuse $1 million, Indonesia

2000
ADB’s Poverty Reduction Strategy approved

2001
Afghanistan War; India and Pakistan 7.7 magnitude earthquake; international assistance for Afghanistan resumed

2001
ADB’s Long-Term Strategic Framework 2001-2015 approved

2002
1ST PROJECT GRANT PROVIDED TO AFGHANISTAN: Community-Based Gender-Sensitive Basic Education for the Poor $4 million

2004
Indian Ocean tsunami

2004
8 Indian Ocean tsunami-related project grants to India, Indonesia, Maldives, and Sri Lanka approved $16 million total

2007
Global financial crisis

2007
100TH PROJECT APPROVED: Access to Health Services for Disadvantaged Groups in Ulaanbaatar $2 million, Mongolia

2008
JFPR’s Revised Operational Framework: To include technical assistance with project grants under one umbrella

2008
ADB Strategy 2020 launched

2009
Myanmar returned to civilian rule and opened its economy

2010
1ST TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE APPROVED: Asian Bonds Online Website Project Phase III $1 million, regional

2011
200TH PROJECT APPROVED: Implementing Effective Climate Change Adaptation Policy $4.7 million, Indonesia

2015
Cyclone Pam: Cyclone Pam School Reconstruction $5 million, Vanuatu

2015
Nepal 7.8 magnitude earthquake

2015
ADB’s Comprehensive Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic launched

2017
ADB Strategy 2020–2025 launched

2018
JFPR COVID-19 Window launched

2018
1ST COVID-19 WINDOW APPROVED: Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 through Community-Led Interventions $2 million, regional

2020
ADB’s Long-Term Strategic Framework approved

2020
ADB’s Poverty Reduction Strategy approved

2021
JFPR ENHANCED AND RENAMED AS JAPAN FUND FOR PROSPEROUS AND RESILIENT ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

2021
500TH PROJECT APPROVED: COVID-19 Response for Affected Poor and Vulnerable Groups $2.4 million, Palau

2021
JFPR COVID-19 Window launched

1ST PROJECT GRANT PROVIDED TO MYANMAR: Enhancing Rural Livelihoods and Incomes $1 million, Indonesia

3TH PROJECT APPROVED: Emergency Assistance and Early Recovery for Poor Municipalities Affected by Typhoon Yolanda $20 million, Philippines (largest grant amount provided)

5TH PROJECT APPROVED: COVID-19 Response for Affected Poor and Vulnerable Groups $2.4 million, Palau

7TH PROJECT APPROVED: Implementing Effective Climate Change Adaptation Policy $7 million, Indonesia

9TH PROJECT GRANTED: Access to Health Services for Disadvantaged Groups in Ulaanbaatar

4TH PROJECT APPROVED: Advancing Time Release Studies in Southeast Asia $1 million, regional

3TH PROJECT GRANTED: Assisting Girl Street Children at Risk of Sexual Abuse $1 million, Indonesia

1ST PROJECT GRANT APPROVED: Assisting Girl Street Children at Risk of Sexual Abuse $1 million, Indonesia

2004
2001
2000
1999
1997
Asian financial crisis

JFPR ESTABLISHED IN MAY

ABD's Poverty Reduction Strategy approved

ADB’s Poverty Reduction Strategy approved
The Asia and Pacific region, home to three-fifths of the world’s population, has undergone a profound economic transformation. From the late 1960s, Asia and the Pacific has experienced unprecedented economic growth and social development. However, this progress has been uneven, leaving many people still below the poverty line. In fact, the region was home to two-thirds of the world’s poor in 1990—an estimated 900 million people.

Moreover, extreme events such as financial crises, disasters triggered by natural hazards and climate change, conflict, and most recently the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, have since pushed millions more people, whose relative prosperity was already marginal, over the edge into poverty.

In a Time of Crisis, an Opportunity to Help

In 1997–1998, the Asian financial crisis hit. It began with a cascade of currency crises, devalued stock markets, and fears of a widespread economic meltdown. Governments and central banks in the region quickly got to work. In 2000, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the People’s Republic of China, Japan, and the Republic of Korea (ASEAN+3) launched the Chiang Mai Initiative, the first regional currency swap arrangement to address short-term liquidity difficulties in the region. This supplemented existing international financial arrangements and included an agreement to cooperate on economic surveillance and bond market development to arrest the contagion. Japan was at the forefront of these efforts.

Meanwhile, behind the alarming financial markets headlines, there was another story. It was the story of people whose lives were already a struggle, the poorest people across Asia and the Pacific, who soon felt the harsh impact of the Asian financial crisis on their daily lives. In the wake of the crisis, progress toward ensuring more widespread and equitable prosperity was set back, and the aftershocks continued through the early 2000s.

The Government of Japan’s long-standing commitment to official development assistance has been unwavering. It was actively involved in assisting crisis-affected countries through the Asian Currency Crisis Support Facility, administered by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). As part of its broader response to the Asian financial crisis, the Government of Japan came to the aid of many countries.

A livelihood development program increased the self-employment opportunities of people in Sri Lanka.
2 Decades of Poverty Reduction and Partnership

Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction

aid of Asia and the Pacific’s most vulnerable populations, entrusting ¥10.0 billion, the equivalent of $92.6 million, to ADB’s stewardship to establish the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR) in May 2000. ADB was ideally positioned to help, because it had just approved its own Poverty Reduction Strategy, based on pro-poor growth, social development, and good governance.

As ADB strove to reorient projects to have more impact on poverty reduction, investing in services that particularly benefited women and children, JFPR had another important role to play. JFPR was set up to support innovative poverty reduction and related social development activities and, in alignment with the ADB’s Poverty Reduction Strategy, add value to projects financed by the bank.

Many Projects, One Focus: Direct, Positive Impact on Poor People

The focus of the fund was clear: disburse grant financing to support well-targeted poverty reduction and social development activities that have a direct positive impact on poor people and on socially or economically excluded or vulnerable groups. These projects should stimulate the capacity of poor people to help themselves and promote widespread community and civil society organization participation. The aim was to make a systematic impact on ADB’s operations in its developing member countries (DMCs) and approaches toward sustainable poverty reduction.

The ADB Board paper, Cooperation with Japan, Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction, laid out the vision of JFPR, with scope for four types of financing. First, JFPR could finance small-scale, basic economic and social services to poor people, such as community water supply and sanitation, village clinics, and skills training centers. By pilot-testing these initiatives, JFPR could amplify its impact by making the case for innovative and demonstrative approaches to be rolled out more widely.

Second, JFPR could support special development fund activities, a funding mechanism that channels funds to small-scale projects to open access to jobs and services from which communities and individuals have otherwise been excluded. This could be community infrastructure, such as water supply, or targeted programs for reproductive health, microfinance, or child nutrition. Such projects could be designed to add value to related ADB-financed projects.

Third, JFPR could bring nongovernment organizations (NGOs) on board as active participants in project design, implementation, and monitoring. Thus, JFPR could not only execute a particular project but also leave behind a legacy of strengthened NGO capacity. This too could be linked to ADB-financed projects.

Finally, JFPR could also build the capacity of central and local governments and community-based organizations, specifically targeting poor people with innovative approaches. Such projects could improve health and hygiene education, or water quality surveillance, for example, and could facilitate local governments to improve their service delivery.

In October of its founding year, the vision of the fund came to life with the approval of its first project, a $1.0 million grant to Indonesia, Assisting Girl Street Children at Risk of Sexual Abuse. By the end of that first year, another four projects had been approved, comprising three projects working to improve the lives and livelihoods of slum communities in the Philippines and a low-cost sanitation and health education program in Papua New Guinea. By the end of the year, the fund had approved $7.5 million in grants.

An Evolving, Enduring Partnership

JFPR’s activities gained momentum. At the end of 2005, it had approved over $174 million for 72 projects in 18 countries, as well as one regional project. Throughout, the aims of the fund remained the same: to foster long-term social and economic development through projects that directly reduce poverty, and that are innovative, impactful, and sustainable. The fund also evolved and grew, responding to the changing needs of...
2 Decades of Poverty Reduction and Partnership

poor people. This included responding to major world events, such as the outbreak of conflict in Afghanistan in 2001, as well as an earthquake the same year that affected India and Pakistan.

However, it was the 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean that presented both the biggest challenge to JFPR’s mission, and the biggest opportunity to date to make a difference. Over the following years, JFPR approved a range of projects in response to the tsunami in India, Indonesia, Maldives, and Sri Lanka. All are prime examples of JFPR’s flexibility and responsiveness to disasters triggered by natural hazards (see feature, p. 34).

Throughout these years, JFPR maintained its alignment with ADB’s operational priorities. A 2007 Special Evaluation Study by ADB’s Operations Evaluation Department (now called the Independent Evaluation Department) found that JFPR’s work strongly supported ADB’s Poverty Reduction Strategy, and that individual projects also aligned well with ADB’s country partnership and national poverty reduction strategies.

The fund had established itself within ADB as a valuable program that improved the bank’s ability to practically deal with poverty-related problems, and there was strong demand for JFPR projects, evidenced by a substantial project pipeline. The projects were getting results. Of the 17 sample completed projects evaluated in the study, 65% were rated successful, and 23% were rated highly successful.

This success was attributed to JFPR projects being designed at a manageable scale, in ways that were highly relevant to the real needs of poor communities. Project officers tended to remain closely involved throughout. Co-opting highly motivated NGOs with strong links to the community also contributed to good implementation results.

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2 ADB placed on hold its assistance in Afghanistan effective 15 August 2021. ADB Statement on Afghanistan | Asian Development Bank, November 2021, Manila. This report was prepared based on information available for Afghanistan as of 31 July 2021.
After Fast Growth, Time for Reflection

JFPR had its roots in helping communities weather the stormy international conditions of the late 1990s. By the time of the 2008–2009 global financial crisis, JFPR had accumulated significant experience that the Government of Japan was able to draw on. It announced relief measures during ADB’s Annual Meeting in Bali in May 2009. Funds amounting to $100 million for over 3 years were committed to help the region’s most vulnerable communities at this time of greater need.

In 2009, JFPR also revised its operational framework to bring both grants and technical assistance (TA) projects into view. This was the result of a review the following year of JFPR’s operations and an effort to formulate priority investments, and enhance government capacity in energy sector assessment and investment analysis. TA projects would also be used for preparatory technical assistance. One such project was for a river flood and bank erosion management program in Bangladesh, which supported analysis and preparation of the program in accordance with the standards and expectations of the government and ADB.

With two modalities in tandem—grants and TA—JFPR went into its second decade in an even stronger position to build government capacity and help the poorest and most vulnerable communities in Asia and the Pacific, and by the end of 2010 had approved projects in 23 countries as well as several regional grant and TA projects.

Continuous Improvement

The continuous effort to improve the way in which JFPR’s operations are managed was maintained through the 2010s. For example, in 2010, trade and investment facilitation was added as a priority area for TA. When ADB conducted its Strategy 2020 midterm review in 2014, it was a natural moment for JFPR to review its processes to ensure it remained in alignment with ADB. In 2016, JFPR’s TA portfolio prioritized quality infrastructure projects that improved disaster resilience, reduced environmental burdens and social costs, increased economic efficiency, improved safety, and developed local human resources, recognizing the importance of promoting quality infrastructure investment as affirmed during the G7 Ise-Shima Summit.

The following year, JFPR piloted a fast-track process for project approvals, responding to calls for a simplified process that reduced the administrative burden on project officers. In 2018, as ADB was on the cusp of launching its new corporate vision—Strategy 2030—JFPR also revised its policy guidelines, introduced more flexibility to funding modalities with additional financing made available to JFPR project grants, and examined the ways in which ADB’s DMCs could be strengthened. More recently, JFPR continued to flexibly and swiftly respond to an emergent crisis with the COVID-19 Window.

Diversity and Common Cause

Nearly $1 billion that JFPR has received in contributions from the Government of Japan has been actively put to use across the entire region. From rural to urban, from mountaintop to coast, JFPR has helped to build resilient communities, not only through physical infrastructure and institutions, but also through capacity building for communities, NGOs, and governments. This capacity building and NGO collaboration is key to ensuring the sustainability of JFPR projects.

JFPR projects cover many sectors and themes, and they range in size from under $1.0 million, to multimillions of dollars. JFPR approves funds for both grant projects and TA for projects that can show fast results as well as those that may take years or even decades to bear fruit. They also include emergency response to disasters triggered by natural hazards and support to fragile and conflict-affected situations.

Across this incredible diversity in scale and modality, what they all have in common is a drive to work directly with communities, with strong support from the central and local governments, in collaboration with those having vital local knowledge, including NGOs. Another key unifying factor that has kept JFPR’s response coherent and relevant is its resonance with the evolution of ADB’s broader mission and strategy, and complementarity with ADB operations.

Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction
### Project Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People benefited directly and indirectly from JFPR projects</td>
<td>18,891,046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hectares of land cultivated, planted, restored, and developed</td>
<td>28,736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People received capacity-building programs</td>
<td>1,653,868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilometers of road constructed, rehabilitated, or improved</td>
<td>4,920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beneficiaries received micro financing and start-up funds for livelihood activities</td>
<td>99,473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-kind livelihood support given</td>
<td>667,823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classrooms constructed, repaired, or upgraded</td>
<td>1,756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational materials distributed</td>
<td>705,966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houses electrified and heated</td>
<td>42,617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households provided access to water</td>
<td>12,033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People directly and indirectly benefited from JFPR projects</td>
<td>17,996</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Notes:**
1. Figures are based on project completion reports. Some reports presented no quantitative indicators.
2. Project results are based on 74% of total project grants and 64% of total amount of approved projects.
3. Households are computed as four members.

---

**Educational Materials Distributed**

- Such as textbooks, teaching and learning materials, and publications

**Houses Electrified and Heated**

- Such as hospitals, community health facilities, community centers, dormitories, hostels, dwellings, training centers, markets, food storages, and other civil works such as bridges, culverts, irrigation and water supply systems, rainwater harvesting structures, electrification systems, and micro-hydro and solar systems

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**Classrooms Constructed, Repaired, or Upgraded**

- In-kindergarten, primary, and secondary schools

---

**People Received Capacity-Building Programs**

- Such as trainings, workshops, awareness-raising, and advocacy activities

---

**In-Kind Livelihood Support Given**

- Such as farming tools and equipment, livestocks, seedlings, and mobile phones

---

**Notes:**

1. Figures are based on project completion reports. Some reports presented no quantitative indicators.
2. Project results are based on 74% of total project grants and 64% of total amount of approved projects.
3. Households are computed as four members.
An elderly couple at their farm in Bac Ninh province, Viet Nam.

Wounry from Mon State, Myanmar shows how fabrics are processed using natural dyes to help protect the environment.
Children playing in a stream after heavy rainfall along the Doctor K.I. Singh Highway in Doti District, Nepal.
Financial crises have a large and long-lasting effect on the real economy, and they hit the poorest segment of society the hardest. The 1997–1998 Asian financial crisis was the impetus for the creation of JFPR and responding to the impact of such catastrophic economic events on poor people is in the fund’s DNA. In fact, the first JFPR project, which empowered vulnerable street children in Indonesia, was a direct response to the effects of the Asian financial crisis (see sidebar).

From Speculation to Inflation
The Asian financial crisis remains one of the most significant events in the region’s post-World War II era. The main international response came from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as well as the World Bank, ADB, and bilateral support from governments around the region. The crisis began in Thailand, where a severe balance-of-payments crunch led to speculative attacks on the Thai baht that the currency’s peg to the United States dollar in the end could not withstand. The Government of Thailand was the first of several in the region to seek a rescue package from IMF and other multilateral donors.

From Thailand, the crisis spread to the Republic of Korea, triggered by excessive borrowing by the country’s conglomerates coupled with a foreign exchange crisis. Indonesia was the next country to experience currency exchange jitters and capital flight. Ripples were felt elsewhere in the region, notably in the Philippines and Malaysia. In the wake of market crises came a wave of social consequences that hit poor people the hardest: runaway inflation, unemployment, and depressed economies.

Speedy Response
For ADB, the speed and severity of the Asian financial crisis came as a shock, but it had to respond quickly. It pivoted to lending once again to the Republic of Korea—which had not taken a loan from the bank in almost a decade—and engaging with the financial sector in Indonesia and Thailand, where most of its projects had thus far been in nonfinancial sectors. From December 1997 through to early 1999, ADB approved 10 major loans and TA projects totalling more than $8 billion in these three economies, as well as a $950 million partial credit guarantee to Thailand. As well as programs focused on reforms to the private sector and financial markets, ADB also increased its support to social safety net programs, in recognition of the heavy burden the crisis put on the most vulnerable sections of society in affected countries.

ADB also became the secretariat for the Asian Bond Markets Initiative (ABMI), which was launched in December 2002 by ASEAN+3 to develop local currency bond markets as an alternative source of funding to bank loans denominated in foreign currencies. This was to minimize the currency and maturity mismatches that had made the region vulnerable to a sudden reversal of capital inflows. In its role as secretariat, ADB has continued to provide technical support to the ABMI since.

From 2000 to 2007, JFPR projects both directly and indirectly responded to the impact of the Asian financial crisis, in support of ADB’s broader response. Projects in countries affected by the crisis mostly supported the agriculture sector, in particular for livelihood projects. Such projects accounted for 70% of the $5.5 million allotment in Indonesia, and all of the $3.6 million allotment in Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) and $2.8 million in the Philippines. The social sector was another key area, with projects to improve people’s livelihoods, health, and education. For example, a project in the Philippines increased social protection for poor women vendors. In Indonesia, there was a food fortification project and a community-based education project. Finance projects include one for microfinance in Indonesia and Lao PDR and financial cooperatives and microinsurance in the Philippines.

Lessons Learned
JFPR-financed projects also took the lessons learned from the Asian financial crisis to support the ASEAN+3 Economic Cooperation Framework. Within this, JFPR contributed to the ABMI, including funding for the Asian Bonds Online website (see p. 30).

Similarly, in the wake of the 2008–2009 global financial crisis, ADB provided support to both public and private sectors and strengthened regional cooperation, as well
as offered policy advice and knowledge sharing. JFPR played its unique part by focusing on mitigation of the social impact of the crisis. This was achieved through increased allotments to livelihoods (approximately half of total allocations went to agriculture, natural resources, and rural development), education (such as skills development to boost employment opportunities), energy, and finance. It was at this time that JFPR also expanded its scope to include TA grants to strengthen public sector management, such as facilitation of public–private partnerships, capacity building, and strengthening of regional cooperation.

JFPR has learned important lessons from its work to reduce the impact of financial crises on the poorest and most vulnerable communities in Asia. This experience stood JFPR in good stead when faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, which not only caused loss of life and impaired people’s health but also damaged the region’s economy. As a result, developing Asia experienced its slowest rate of growth in 6 decades, and the pandemic has, at time of writing in 2022, set back poverty reduction efforts by 2 years. JFPR COVID-19-related projects in response to this (see pp. 66–72) are another way in which the fund has responded to financial crises.

Empowering the Most Vulnerable Street Children

Girl street children are far more likely than their male counterparts to fall prey to sexual exploitation. A 1999 social mapping survey of 12 Indonesian cities found that of an estimated 170,000 street children, one in five were girls, but most programs focused on boys.

The vulnerability of girl street children increased in the wake of the Asian financial crisis, with more of them than ever employed in the sex industry. For JFPR, this was a fitting group to be the beneficiaries of its first grant in 2000.

Innovative Approaches

The $1.0 million project Assisting Girl Street Children at Risk of Sexual Abuse took on board what local NGOs had long been saying: that a lack of attention and resources left girl street children’s needs largely unaddressed. The program set out to create a model approach in one city, Yogyakarta in Central Java, chosen partly because of the presence of NGOs already trying to address the service gap for girls. The idea was to develop a model that could then be adopted in other cities.

The project comprised counseling for girl street children who were either at risk of sexual abuse or had experienced it. It also created an opportunity to try out and evaluate different approaches to prevention and rehabilitation. The aim was to reduce the numbers of girl street children and the incidence of related child prostitution and sexual abuse and help girls who had already been affected.

Acceptable, Appropriate, Sustainable

The emphasis was on developing culturally acceptable and cost-effective programs to help address the needs of nearly 34,000 girl street children in Indonesia. To do this in a sustainable and innovative way, partnerships with government agencies, NGOs, and the private sector were essential. The project was also designed to complement other ADB initiatives in Indonesia.

Information transparency is critical to smooth functioning of financial markets, and the bond market is no exception. Since it was started in 2004 with support from ADB, Asian Bonds Online has been a one-stop source of intelligence on bond markets in emerging East Asia. In 2010, when JFPR began funding technical assistance projects, the first beneficiary was Asian Bonds Online to expand its provision of information, data, and analysis related to emerging East Asian bond markets.

On first glance, the $1.0 million Asian Bonds Online Website Project, Phase III might seem somewhat removed from the typical beneficiaries of JFPR support: those experiencing poverty. However, supporting good information flow about emerging economy bond markets has an important function in poverty reduction. As a go-to information center for institutional investors, the website helps increase transparency, liquidity, efficiency, credibility, and the depth of bond markets in the region. It can help lower funding costs for Asian bond issuers and facilitate cross-border capital flows.

In turn, this enables the private and public sectors of Asian countries to raise and invest long-term capital and effectively manage credit, maturity, and currency risks, thereby reducing their financial vulnerabilities and promoting stability.

As JFPR’s first foray into supporting the development of the bond market for emerging Asia, the success of this project encouraged it to subsequently include assistance to similar initiatives in the sector, such as the $800,000 Preparing the Bond Guarantee Fund for India project, approved in 2012.
Stalls at Bogyoke Aung San Market in Yangon, Myanmar.
The Asia and Pacific region is highly prone to natural hazards. From earthquakes and tsunamis to tropical cyclones and floods, the region’s significant exposure and vulnerability to natural hazards is exacerbated by poverty—and disaster events, in turn, bring poverty and suffering in their wake. Many of these events, most notably in recent history the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, draw an immediate response from the international community, in terms of on-the-ground humanitarian assistance and then significant investment afterward to help countries and communities recover.

As the region’s development bank, ADB has been heavily involved in both post-disaster recovery and reconstruction, and disaster risk reduction and preparedness.

In fact, in 1987, ADB became the first regional multilateral development bank to adopt a disaster and emergency assistance policy, establishing a special emergency rehabilitation program loan facility for small island DMCs. In 1989, the policy was widened to make post-disaster support available to all ADB DMCs. The policy was further revised in 2004, broadening its scope to cover risk reduction and to extend post-disaster support beyond rebuilding infrastructure to strengthen or rebuild institutions, develop appropriate policies, and train people. The most recent disaster and emergency assistance policy was introduced in 2021, maintaining a holistic approach to disaster risk management, including the introduction of focused financing arrangements for residual risk, and emphasizing the need for integrated actions to enhance disaster and climate resilience.

Preparedness, Resilience, Prevention
ADB’s Strategy 2020 also addressed disasters triggered by natural hazards, committing to mainstream disaster risk management and provide post-disaster support. Strategy 2030, ADB’s most recent corporate strategy, strengthened the focus on disaster resilience further by including “tackling climate change, building climate and disaster resilience, and enhancing environmental sustainability” as one of its seven operational priorities. Measures outlined in the strategy include risk-sensitive land use management, integrated flood risk management, climate- and disaster-resilient infrastructure design, the strengthening of early warning systems, and emergency response plans. Strategy 2030 also indicates that ADB will provide assistance for disaster response, including support to build back better, and that it will strengthen DMCs’ financial preparedness for disaster response. The strategy acknowledges that 7 of the 10 countries in the world with the highest estimated disaster risk are ADB DMCs (Bangladesh, Cambodia, the Philippines, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, and Vanuatu).

In parallel with ADB’s evolving policy, and complementing its disaster-related work, JFPR has shown time and again that it is there to help, taking on the mission of responding to such devastating events with practical, timely, community-oriented support to address the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable people. JFPR provides a flexible but focused instrument that complements and reinforces ADB’s wider disaster response efforts. This complementary support includes small-scale humanitarian assistance, fast-tracked early recovery, and longer-term reconstruction. Through TA projects, it also adds knowledge sharing, and local and national capacity building. Thus, JFPR can help ADB quickly respond to all types of disasters across Asia and the Pacific. By 2022, JFPR had approved 15 disaster and emergency response projects across the region.

One of the earliest disaster-related projects funded by JFPR was a $3.4 million grant, approved in 2002, Sustaining Income and Basic Human Needs of the Poor in Disaster Prone Areas of Gujarat. The project included...
provision of community rainwater harvesting structures for drinking water, setting up of community-owned tool centers, and support for transport needs for commodities and goods.

Devastating Tsunami

In the past 20 years, the disaster that stands out from all others is the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, which occurred on 26 December, causing nearly 228,000 deaths and unprecedented damage across 14 countries, particularly Indonesia. The projects JFPR financed there, as well as others in India, Maldives, and Sri Lanka, played an important part in ADB’s response which, with assistance totalling $777 million, was the bank’s largest response to a single disaster triggered by a natural hazard.

These JFPR projects helped to restore destroyed livelihoods and protect communities from future disaster shocks. Similarly, JFPR responded with practical community support to other disasters, notably for education and livelihood restoration, replacing destroyed schools with disaster-resilient structures after the Bhutan earthquake in 2010, Typhoon Haiyan (known as Typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines) in 2013, and the Nepal earthquake and Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu in 2015.

Over the course of its work in disaster resilience and response, JFPR has learned important lessons, including the need to address gaps in disaster risk management to build countries’ capacity, including improvements to the policy and legal framework. In addition, although disasters demand an immediate response, the process of restoration provides an opportunity to strengthen resilience to future hazard events by building back better.

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The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami not only took lives, it also destroyed livelihoods. “Disastrous tsunami waves took away all our belongings, leaving us only the clothes on our backs,” explained M. Yamuna Mendis, a survivor of the tsunami and a beneficiary of one of the post-tsunami recovery projects of JFPR. For the survivors, making a sustainable living was an overwhelming challenge. A $2.5 million JFPR project, Sustainable Livelihood Development for Coastal Communities in the Special Province of Nanggroe, Aceh Darussalam, was one of three JFPR grants to Indonesia in response to the disaster, all of which were implemented by international NGOs. A complementary project was the $1.5 million Rehabilitation of Coral Reefs and Mangrove Resources in the Special Province of Nanggroe, Aceh Darussalam.

New Ways with Nature’s Bounty

Between them, these two projects supported local communities to create green and secure livelihood development programs centered on five new key products: handline development programs centered on five new key products: handline, patchouli oil, and chocolate. The project was based on 37 livelihood clusters established in 8 subdistricts and included the creation of a livelihood database with 2,637 members, and a set of 45 livelihood-learning DVDs, which reached 13,000 users. The project also comprised village learning points. The third grant, Restoration of Microenterprise and Microfinance in Aceh, provided $2.0 million to improve financing access to rebuild microenterprises in Aceh, most successfully to women. Thanks to a loan from the Grassroots Microfinance Partnership by Bank BPD Aceh, Mitra Dhana Foundation, a financial cooperative, lent up to $500 loans to 2,502 poor women clients.

Income and Infrastructure

Similarly, in Sri Lanka, JFPR approved a $2.0 million project to improve the quality of life for tsunami-affected poor people through a cash-for-work program. This program, Post-Tsunami Utility Connections for the Poor, had double impact: it generated much-needed income for beneficiaries, and it also rehabilitated the line drainage systems of the tsunami-affected local government roads. This is turn helped beneficiaries by restoring sustainable local road networks, vital to recovery and resumption of livelihood activities.

This JFPR project was designed to blend with other income generation projects by the government and worked closely with NGOs for implementation. “All our assets and belongings were taken away by tsunami water to the sea. We were helpless and faced a sad situation,” wrote a group of 34 project beneficiaries. “Fortunately, the program helped us rehabilitate access roads and overcome our difficult situation. It also helped us improve our day-to-day economic life. Thank you very much.”

The same year, another $2.0 million project, Public Works Restoration and Rehabilitation of Line Drainage Systems of Tsunami-Affected Local Government Roads, also used a cash-for-work modality to generate income for tsunami-affected communities and rehabilitate road drainage systems.

Meanwhile in Maldives, a $1.0 million project, Restoration of Livelihoods of the Tsunami-Affected Fishers and Farmers, aimed to enable farmers in the 26 worst-affected agrarian communities to restart their agricultural livelihood activities. The project had another aim too: to build the capacity of community-based organizations to participate in the farming activities of the beneficiary communities. The project was successful, providing loans to 390 households, and through capacity development, training, and a handbook produced in local languages, helped hundreds of farmers improve their profits.

Safe for the Future

An important part of post-disaster recovery is ensuring that communities are protected from similar dangers in future. After the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the Government of Sri Lanka established a coastal conservation zone, and relocated villagers who had been living there. JFPR stepped up with support to help these communities access utility connections on their new location. The $2.0 million project, Post-Tsunami Utility Connections for the Poor, was executed by two agencies at the heart of ensuring safe and reliable utility supplies to beneficiaries: the Ceylon Electricity Board and the Water Supply and Drainage Board. NGOs were brought on board to help identify and assist the beneficiaries in applying for the grants, as well as to monitor the supply of connections.
2013 Typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines: Relief and Hope in the Wake of Disaster

“I thought I would never see my family again. This was the first time we encountered such a devastating tragedy,” said Myrna Ecija, a resident of the Eastern Visayas, a month after Typhoon Yolanda rampaged across the Philippines. On 8 November 2013, the typhoon (known as Typhoon Haiyan outside the Philippines) made the first of six landfalls in the country, leaving behind a trail of destruction on an unprecedented scale. It was one of the country’s worst-ever typhoons on record. Tsunami-like storm surges, strong winds, and heavy rain inflicted huge loss of life, property, and infrastructure. By the time it left the Philippine area of responsibility on 9 November, Yolanda had caused more than 6,000 deaths, displaced over 4 million people, and caused an estimated $12.0 billion in damage.

Help Where It Was Needed
ADB quickly swung into action, mobilizing more than $900.0 million in assistance for relief, recovery, and reconstruction of Yolanda-hit areas. This included $20.0 million from JFPR, the single biggest grant in the history of the fund. The grant, Emergency Assistance and Early Recovery for Poor Municipalities Affected by Typhoon Yolanda, aimed to mitigate the huge social and financial impact of the typhoon on poor people in the Eastern Visayas.

Even before disaster struck, this was already one of the poorest regions in the country. JFPR identified 74 poor municipalities for targeted support, including restoration of local government unit infrastructure, access to emergency employment and livelihood support, and provision of basic emergency maternal and child health care services. Looking beyond the immediate crisis, the grant was also used to improve communities’ resilience to future disasters.

Work for Today, Plan for Tomorrow
Working with locally connected NGOs, JFPR facilitated repair of over 150 classrooms. Thousands of families were provided with livelihood support packages, unconditional cash transfers, cash-for-work programs, and formation of community-based enterprises. Local government units, as well as dozens of schools and communities drafted disaster contingency plans. Power supply was restored to schools, rural health units, and hospitals, and new equipment and supplies were distributed to health institutions and rural health units. In an area prone to natural hazards and with increasing intensity of extreme weather events expected as a consequence of climate change, these measures helped build community resilience.
New Schools Bring Post-Yolanda Hope, Health, and Stability

School-aged children were especially hard-hit by the effects of Typhoon Yolanda. Not only did they live through a traumatic experience, but they also lost the structure—literal and figurative—of school. Across the affected area, 6,000 classrooms were destroyed and a further 15,000 were partially damaged in 2,905 public elementary and 470 public secondary schools. The framework of their daily life was shattered too.

Makeshift Classrooms

Soon after, teachers tried their best to create some sense of normalcy for the children. At Bislig Elementary School, the only one in the district, students were taught in makeshift classrooms, using salvaged chairs and desks. There were no toilets or wash areas. Children like Honeylette Molina, whose family barely survived the rising waters that flooded their house, put a brave face on it. "For a long time, our classroom was a tent," she said. "But we would get wet when it rained and hot when it was sunny."

However, the situation was far from ideal, especially given what the children had been through. "Our school is almost 90% damaged and we have used up our budget to keep the classes going," said Mario Roa, the then-principal of the Bislig Elementary School, a few weeks after the typhoon struck. "Major challenges now include sanitation, getting enough teaching materials, and providing psychological care for traumatized children."

Built Back Better

Fast forward a year, and Honeylette and her classmates were back in a proper classroom. The grant funding from JFPR, implemented by the Philippines’ Department of Social Welfare and Development, had paid for the construction of new schools, which were exemplars of how to “build back better.” The schools were strongly constructed, remained damage-free from succeeding earthquakes and typhoons that affected the area, and featured spacious, fully equipped classrooms.

The new design included separate toilets for girls and boys. The new wash area has enabled the school to start a school-wide toothbrushing program. "We are very grateful. Our school is now 70% back to normal," said Wilma Bayaya, principal of Bislig Elementary School at the time. "With the school rehabilitation project, recovery is almost complete."

The students were also very appreciative. "Now that our classroom has been repaired, things are better, and we find it easier to study. Our teachers can hold class even if it's raining or hot," said Honeylette.

Honeylette went on to graduate as class valedictorian, finished high school in Tolosa with high honors, and took up a bachelor of science in civil engineering at Eastern Visayas State University.

(Left top to bottom) A year after Typhoon Yolanda hit, new classrooms built in Bislig Elementary School in Leyte provide children with the opportunity to learn in a clean, safe environment.

(Below) The Build Back Better concept was adapted in rebuilding infrastructure after Typhoon Yolanda.

Honeylette Molina, 12, a Typhoon Yolanda survivor and class valedictorian of Bislig Elementary School in Tanauan, Leyte.
(Hint photo) Honeylette, 8 years after surviving Typhoon Yolanda.

Construction workers rebuilding schools in Leyte.
We now have new facilities in our school. Our students, from a primary level, they get the opportunity to enjoy such facilities. Even if the earthquake comes, I don’t think this building will have a crack on the wall, because it’s made of concrete and if the earthquake happens to occur, we are not in fear.

Tashi Wangchu
Primary school teacher,
Thangrong Community Primary School
Mongar, Eastern Bhutan

Other Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction Disaster-Related Projects

2009 Bhutan Earthquake
In 2010, a $3.0 million grant, Upgrading Schools and Integrated Disaster Education Project, used a “build back better” approach to reconstruct and upgrade four heavily damaged schools in Trashigang and Mongar. In addition, it trained engineers at the Ministry of Education in earthquake-resilient building design and construction quality management, operation, and maintenance. It also strengthened local disaster risk management through community-based and school-based training.

(Left) A school student listens to his teacher while in class.
(Below) Students playing tug-of-war as part of their school activity.
2015 Nepal Earthquake
A $15.0 million grant, Disaster Risk Reduction and Livelihood Restoration for Earthquake-Affected Communities, rebuilt schools, provided microloans to restart livelihood activities, and improved disaster preparedness awareness and education in the 14 districts most severely affected by the disaster.

Trees planted on river slopes for landslide prevention along the Doctor K.I. Singh Highway, Nepal.

Father and son walk along the Mahakali Highway in Dandeldhura, Nepal.

2015 Cyclone Pam, Vanuatu
A $5.0 million grant, Cyclone Pam School Reconstruction Project, also successfully used a “build back better” approach to construct and rebuild disaster-resilient school infrastructure, which would also double as community emergency shelters during disasters. It added to local disaster resilience capacity by training the community, students, school administrators, and provincial education officers.

(Left) The project rebuilt four junior secondary schools in Tafea province, Vanuatu, making them more resilient to future disasters and climate change risks.

(Below) Students from Kwataparen Secondary School in Tafea province, Vanuatu.
Addressing the Impact of Conflict, Fragility, and Vulnerability

A significant proportion of ADB’s DMCs is categorized as either fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCAS), small island developing states (SIDS), or both.

ADB has sought to pay special attention to FCAS, first with its approach Development in Weakly Performing States in 2007, and then its 2013 Operational Plan for Enhancing ADB’s Effectiveness in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations. The Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations and Small Island Developing States Approach that was approved in 2021 continued this special focus. Also, since 2010 ADB’s operational engagement with the Pacific SIDS has been guided by its Pacific Approach frameworks. Projects in FCAS and SIDS require a deep understanding of the country context, a recognition that there is likely low local capacity, nimbleness in identifying opportunities, and the patience to forge real relationships. In addition, projects in these countries include increased flexibility in processes and procedures, so that they are more responsive to specific country needs.

ADB’s engagement with Afghanistan has been focused on agriculture, natural resources, and rural development, energy, and transport, along with capacity building, institutional development, and sector reforms. Up until August 2021 (footnote 2), ADB had committed 168 public sector loans, grants, and TA projects totalling $6.4 billion to Afghanistan. This includes $100.0 million assistance in 2020 to address the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and support poor and vulnerable groups, including Afghan women. ADB also provided $40.0 million in emergency assistance, $2.7 million to procure personal protective equipment, and a $50.0 million grant to procure COVID-19 vaccines and strengthen the country’s capacity to implement the vaccination program.

In 2012, ADB reengaged with Myanmar following the announcement at the Joint Annual Meetings of the IMF and the World Bank in Tokyo that the international community would support Myanmar’s reforms and its return to the international financial system. ADB began providing assistance packages mainly to support improvements in agriculture, human capital, rural development, energy, and transport. By January 2021, ADB had committed 120 public sector loans, grants, and TA projects totalling $3.7 billion to Myanmar.

* ADB has placed a temporary hold on sovereign project disbursements and new contracts in Myanmar effective 1 February 2021.
Strengthening Fragile Communities

Over the past 2 decades, JFPR has complemented ADB’s work in both FCAS and SIDS. JFPR has been of instrumental support not just on specific projects but in capacity building to support sector and country road maps that ADB has worked on with individual countries.

JFPR’s support to Afghanistan began in 2002 with a grant project, Community-Based Gender-Sensitive Basic Education for the Poor. From 2000 to 2021, JFPR funded 14 projects in Afghanistan with a total value of $142.0 million. These projects focused on multiple aspects of recovery and rehabilitation, including an employment project for the settlement and integration of returning refugees and displaced persons; a rural recovery project using community-based irrigation rehabilitation; projects on sustainable livelihoods; and community-based, gender-sensitive basic education for poor people.

Since 2012, JFPR approved 20 projects in Myanmar, with a total value of $63.6 million. As with JFPR’s support to Afghanistan, its projects in Myanmar also covered diverse key development issues, in particular support for sustainable livelihoods. For example, there was a 2013 project worth $12.0 million, Enhancing Rural Livelihoods and Incomes, and in 2015 a $3.0 million project, Economic Empowerment of the Poor, Women in the East-West Economic Corridor. Other notable projects include the 2013 $10.0 million project, Greater Mekong Subregion Capacity Building for HIV/AIDS Prevention.

JFPR also funded 11 projects across 6 SIDS, and 16 projects in 6 countries that meet both FCAS and SIDS criteria. Energy was an important theme in SIDS projects, including those for sustainable, renewable, and disaster-resilient supply. Some of the other projects addressed crucial health-related needs such as vaccination and COVID-19 responses.

What are Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations and Small-Island Developing States?

Fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCAS) is a term to describe places that are affected by fragility and conflict. FCAS may have spillover effects that have wider impact on regional or subregional stability. Economic development and sociocultural practices are deeply affected by the drivers of conflict, especially where the conflict is long term. The term FCAS usually refers to a country, but it can also be used to describe subnational pockets of fragility. Small island developing states have specific social, economic, and environmental vulnerabilities, such as geographic remoteness and dispersion, small populations, narrow economic bases with high import and export costs, and increasing exposure to natural hazards and climate change.

As a poor rural country, Afghanistan relies heavily on agriculture, which in turn needs stable access to irrigation. However, decades of conflict left much of the country’s irrigation system in disrepair. In 2012, JFPR approved a $10.0 million grant to tackle the country’s widespread and uneven poverty by supporting irrigation works in four target provinces in Northern Afghanistan. Having access to irrigated farmland is especially important to Afghanistan’s women, as they provide much of the farm labor in the country.

The Community-Based Irrigation Rehabilitation and Development project rehabilitated more than 150 traditional small-scale irrigation systems at an estimated civil works cost of $40,000 per system. The project used a community contracting system to enable rural communities to implement projects in their areas and increase local economic opportunities. This approach also created a sense of ownership and maximized the involvement of local communities.

Potato farmer, Afghanistan.
Biding Their Time until the Price is Right

Nature has its own rhythm, and the cycle of the seasons cannot be controlled. However, for those who make their livelihoods working the land, timing when to take their produce to market can be the difference between poverty and prosperity.

Take potatoes, for example. Farmers in the central Afghanistan province of Bamyan found that if they sold their crop immediately after harvest, the price was at its lowest, but 3–5 months later, the same crop could yield 2 or even 3 times more. In 2012, ADB approved a project, Enhanced Agricultural Value Chains for Sustainable Livelihoods, to help the farmers of Bamyan store their crops. It became one of the most successful projects of JFPR in the country.

Safe and Sound Underground

The $18.5 million grant project worked with local farming communities and constructed over 2,500 vegetable storage facilities that will keep crops safe from pests, in a climate-controlled environment that requires no power to operate. Then, when the market time is right, the potatoes and other food crops can be sold for the best price. The project has an important gender dimension too: many women cultivate the fields while the men seek work elsewhere. “I can make a considerable income from selling potatoes after harvest by storing them until the market price is at its peak,” said farmer Gul Bahar of the crops she cultivates on her 1.2 hectare farm in Bamyan.

Impact Beyond Food

The project also covered two other provinces, Balkh and Nangarharanawa, an area known for its edible oil. Support from the fund brought much-needed improvements to production management, improving quality and enabling farmers to command a higher price for their products. In all, more than 12,000 farmers, of whom one-fifth were women, received training through the project, and it helped 55 women’s associations and community organizations. The project shows how relatively simple changes to the way things are done can yield a bumper crop of improvements for communities.
In countries with large rural populations, such as Myanmar, improving rural livelihoods can go a long way toward addressing development challenges. In 2013, JFPR approved a $12.0 million grant, Enhancing Rural Livelihoods and Incomes, for a range of community-driven development initiatives to support more than 87,000 households across project sites in Shan, Ayeyarwady, and Taninthayi.

The project successfully used a model that promoted community cohesion, with local organization and participation every step of the way. Community members identified their priority needs, designed the project, managed the allocated funds, and went on to implement the plan and monitor and evaluate its impact on the community. The communities decided to focus on access to clean water, the construction of roads, jetties, and community centers, and increasing economic opportunities in animal husbandry, agriculture, and fishing.

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Back to the Community

The profits from this increased trade get plowed back into the community, explained Cai Zar Myoe, a fish broker from Pamma Waddy, Ngaputaw Township. “We use any profit we make on our children’s education and health care, so our family’s well-being has really improved.”

The project’s holistic approach not only worked in northern Myanmar, it also showed how fostering ownership, not dependency, can be replicated across the country.

Knowledge is Power

Alongside investments from the ADB in road projects in Myanmar, in 2013, JFPR approved a $10.0 million grant to support the Ministry of Health and Sports to implement an HIV awareness and prevention project. The Greater Mekong Subregion’s Capacity Building for HIV/AIDS Prevention Project comprised infrastructure investment, health worker capacity building, community education, and outreach programs to deliver HIV health services to vulnerable groups.

The project was much-needed, said Thandar Aung, assistant director of the HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Department at Mawlamyine General Hospital, Mon State. “Most people don’t know how HIV can infect them and how they can prevent it. So, we need to provide health education and HIV/AIDS awareness training to the community, even in schools and on construction sites.”

The project entailed constructing and equipping new regional integrated communicable disease control buildings and new rural health centers in remote areas to improve access to health care, particularly among ethnic groups.

The Road to Freedom from Fear of HIV

In areas underserved by transport infrastructure, a new road brings opportunities for trade, tourism, and investment. However, it can also bring with it increased risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, due to an influx of migrant and local workers to development sites. Local communities can be affected, especially in areas with low knowledge of HIV, as well as sex workers, people who use drugs, and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities.

We Use It, We Build It

“All the villagers use water and infrastructure so we’re aware we must help build it,” said Kyi Khaing, a villager from Sat Kone, Ngaputaw Township. “Working together as a community on these projects wasn’t difficult as they improve all our lives.”

While access to clean water improved the community’s health, a road connecting two villages meant both could reach the nearest boat jetty. “It is easier for us now to buy and sell goods and have other business opportunities during all the seasons,” said village committee leader Thien Zaw, from Yone Chaung, Ngaputaw Township. “This is why we selected this concrete road to be built as a priority.”

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Knowledge is Power

Alongside investments from the ADB in road projects in Myanmar, in 2013, JFPR approved a $10.0 million grant to support the Ministry of Health and Sports to implement an HIV awareness and prevention project. The Greater Mekong Subregion’s Capacity Building for HIV/AIDS Prevention Project comprised infrastructure investment, health worker capacity building, community education, and outreach programs to deliver HIV health services to vulnerable groups.

The project was much-needed, said Thandar Aung, assistant director of the HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Department at Mawlamyine General Hospital, Mon State. “Most people don’t know how HIV can infect them and how they can prevent it. So, we need to provide health education and HIV/AIDS awareness training to the community, even in schools and on construction sites.”

The project entailed constructing and equipping new regional integrated communicable disease control buildings and new rural health centers in remote areas to improve access to health care, particularly among ethnic groups.

Reaching High-Risk Groups

However, physical infrastructure is just one part. Finding ways to educate people who have limited knowledge and low education is also vital. “It’s not easy to persuade the ethnic people to do blood tests as this is something they’ve likely never done before,” said Min Nyi Nyi Zin, a health volunteer working with the region’s migrant workers and ethnic groups.

The project reached high-risk populations through both formal public health channels such as rural health services and community outreach through collaboration with ethnic organizations, strengthening the grassroots public health service network for HIV prevention.
Traditional handicrafts such as weaving have endured for centuries because they provide their makers with a livelihood and produce things of beauty. However, artisans can sometimes benefit from a modern touch, in the form of some good marketing. In 2015, JFPR approved a $3.0 million grant for a project that would take the stunning fabrics and other local products of Myanmar’s Mon State to a wider market, with a stamp of pride: the “Made in Mon” brand.

The project, Economic Empowerment of the Poor and Women in the East-West Economic Corridor, supported over 1,000 people across Mon State to brand and market their locally produced fabrics, handmade soaps, snacks, and other foodstuffs.

Weaving Home

For weavers like San Aye, the project meant more than sales—it also meant she could ensure her daughters stayed close by, rather than needing to become migrant workers away from home, or manual laborers in tough conditions on farms or rubber plantations. “If my daughter didn’t have this job she would have to work somewhere with less income or work in the fields farming or as a laborer,” she said.

The project upgraded handicraft production and processing facilities, provided design, manufacturing, and marketing advice, and facilitated access to microfinancing. This helped the artisans involved to extract the highest value-added for their products and retain more of the profits for themselves.

Being part of this project also empowered the women involved. “When we started we had little to show so people doubted we, as women, could do this,” said Ni Ni Aye, a cookie maker from Kwin Yeik village in the Chaungzone township. “Now we can show a lot of progress and products.”

(Left) Daw San Aye and daughter are traditional fabric weavers from Mon State, Southeastern Myanmar. (Bottom) A weaver proudly showcases naturally-dyed materials used for fabric weaving. (Opposite page) Biscuit makers proudly sporting the “Made in Mon” brand on their aprons.
Building More than Roads: Building Communities Too

For the residents of Walupim village, Enga Province, in Papua New Guinea’s Highlands region, the coming construction of a new road network was wonderful news. The roads, made possible by a $100.0 million loan agreement between the government and ADB, would transform their ability to get goods to market, and connect with the rest of the country.

There was just one problem: to benefit from the 2,500 kilometers of new roads that were coming to the Highlands region, they also needed access roads right down to their local communities. That is where a $2.0 million grant from JFPR could make all the difference, extending the reach of an existing ADB project, and leveraging its impact down to the village level.

Communities Know Best

The 2009 project Extending the Socioeconomic Benefits of an Improved Road Network to Roadside Communities relied heavily on community participation. In this way, beneficiary communities in the Southern Highlands and Enga provinces could be fully engaged in the process of creating feeder roads, markets, pedestrian footpaths, and small infrastructure along the way. Over 80 kilometers of rural feeder roads were either constructed, rehabilitated, or maintained, using do-nou, a traditional Japanese method of paving roads by using soil packed in bags, as well as other local materials.

The Road to Prosperity

Across its lifespan from 2009 to 2013, the project did much more than extend the road network. It also increased the skills of over 400 community members through agricultural, alternative livelihood, and microenterprise projects. It boosted community awareness and behavior change, with activities focused on social inclusion, gender, and health, and pilot-tested initiatives that gave women better access to safe transportation services.

“We are so proud of the project,” Walupim residents said. “The roads were neglected for so many years, and people had to walk distances to get into public motor vehicles to get to town. We are happy now that we can take cars or public motor vehicles from home.”

Community members, mostly women, working on roadside clearing in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea.
Residents of Kandep District, Papua New Guinea, participated and worked together in roadside clearing.

The project extended the socioeconomic benefits of ADB’s Highlands Region Road Improvement Investment Program to roadside communities adjacent to project roads in selected districts in Southern Highlands and Enga provinces.
2 Decades of Poverty Reduction and Partnership

Stories of Impact: Crisis Response

A flower vendor from Myanmar.

Elderly women from Myanmar.
Facing COVID-19 Together with Communities in Need

Virtually every person in the world has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic since it began in March 2020. The pandemic revealed weaknesses in the health sector across the region, and underscored the vulnerability of entire populations and economies, not just those living at or near the poverty line. In addition to loss of life, the pandemic has resulted in an economic contraction that pushed an additional 162.0 million people below the poverty line of $3.20 per day. Modelling shows that it has also pushed about 75 million to 80 million people into extreme poverty.

The global response to COVID-19 has been enormous, both by individual governments and through United Nations agencies. The COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) program, co-led by the World Health Organization; Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance; and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations was quickly established to try and ensure fair and equitable access to the vaccines that were being developed. COVAX also supported efforts to accelerate the development and manufacture of COVID-19 vaccines.

ADB has played a central role in the COVID-19 response in the region, contributing more resources, TA, and knowledge than any other international organization or development bank.

Safe and Equitable Vaccine Access
ADB’s $9.0 billion Asia Pacific Vaccine Access (APVAX) facility was launched to provide rapid and equitable access to high-quality and safe vaccines to ADB’s DMCs and boost the strengthening of health systems. In addition to loans, ADB used over $156.0 million of its resources for TA projects to help DMCs get life-saving commodities including personal protective equipment and emergency medical supplies, and to plan and mobilize resources for their vaccination campaigns.

To help ADB DMCs strengthen their pandemic response and address the needs of the most vulnerable people, the Government of Japan allocated $75.0 million for the COVID-19 Window through JFPR in May 2020.

The JFPR team quickly went to work deploying funds where they could have the most impact while supporting ADB’s overall COVID-19 response and broader development objectives. Through the COVID-19 Window, JFPR also provided critical technical assistance that augments the impact of APVAX.

**Focused and Flexible**

The COVID-19 Window funding is both focused and sufficiently flexible to meet changing needs during a pandemic. It has been used to support coordinated community and health system responses through timely and demand-driven knowledge sharing. For example, through regional TA projects, pandemic-related lessons from civil society-led initiatives have been shared, along with innovations and best practices with health authorities.

The funding supports cross-sector connections for pandemic response and economic recovery, such as in Fiji, where airport, transport, and health links have been strengthened for improved disease prevention and detection at points of entry.

The COVID-19 Window also addresses acute gaps in health systems that have value for long-term health service delivery. Noteworthy projects under the COVID-19 Window include a $5.0 million project in India, Supporting COVID-19 Response and Vaccination Program. This support was processed and provided at the peak of India’s COVID-19 cases from May to June 2021 and was immediately approved both by the Government of Japan and ADB. The project provided operational support for vaccine delivery, and crucial assistance to address the acute oxygen shortage in the country in 2021 as well as issues with waste management, cold chain, and private sector engagement.

JFPR also provided $5.0 million to Mongolia to support improved testing, vaccine delivery, and post-immunization surveillance. In Sri Lanka, JFPR funding was utilized to advance critical life-saving infrastructure by equipping and modernizing the ambulance service and to provide infection prevention and control training to frontline health staff.

(Below) G.R.L. Narasimha Rao, a refrigeration mechanic, explains how some equipment works to Vinjaram primary health care staff, D. Venkateswara Rao (white coat) and B. Sireesha, during a training session at PHC, Vinjaram, Eluru district, Andhra Pradesh.

(Bottom) Quality assurance of the first batch of 1,780 jumbo oxygen cylinders in preparation for dispatch from a warehouse in Kandla Special Economic Zone in Kutch, Gujarat State.
Community-Led

In 2020, two regional TA projects, each with $2.0 million in funding, were approved: COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control through an Integrated Water, Sanitation, Hygiene, and Health Approach promotes better integration of water, sanitation, hygiene, and health approaches into ADB projects to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19 and other water and sanitation-related public health emergencies in seven DMCs. The knowledge and support TA promotes innovative and evidence-based water, sanitation, hygiene, and health approaches with a particular focus on reducing inequalities and vulnerability and targeting solutions for poor people and disadvantaged communities. In addition to the response and impact mitigation of the current COVID-19 pandemic, the TA supports the strengthening of enabling environment, knowledge management, and capacity development to build resilience for future pandemics. As an example, the TA is supporting the development of evidence-based water, sanitation, and hygiene behavior change communication strategies in Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Uzbekistan, which are integrated with urban and water sector investments projects.

The Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 through Community-Led Interventions project assists seven DMCs in implementing their pandemic response measures in cooperation with civil society organizations. They are being supported to provide community-based mitigation and prevention, social protection for vulnerable communities, including elderly care, and economic support for those with livelihoods affected by COVID-19.

In Mongolia, for example, the project included basic needs support in the form of care packages, social campaigns, training for community health workers and hotline support operators, and training and in-kind support for livelihood interventions. In the Philippines, the project distributed food packs and installed pop-up handwashing facilities, trained community health workers, and supported contingency and preparedness planning workshops for leaders and representatives of local government units and communities.

* Armenia, Cambodia, Cook Islands, Lao PDR, Mongolia, the Philippines, and Thailand.
As the Pandemic Continues, So Does JFPR Support

The COVID-19 pandemic still rumbles on, and many of ADB’s DMCs continue to grapple with a range of challenges presented by the pandemic. As a result, JFPR is also continuing its support.

A further four grants and one TA project with a combined value of $17.0 million were approved in 2021 and are ongoing:

- **Cook Islands**—Supporting Safe Recovery of Tourism and Travel: A $2.0 million grant to increase economic resilience by strengthening the capacity and readiness of the country to receive tourists and support economic recovery from the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Nepal**—Prevention and Control of COVID-19 through WASH and Health Initiatives in Secondary and Small Towns: A $5.0 million grant to improve responses to future health emergencies by supporting water and sanitation projects, and behavior-centered community mitigation measures to contain the pandemic and manage community unease and misinformation.

- **Sri Lanka**—Health System Enhancement Project, Additional Financing: A $3.0 million grant to enhance the efficiency of the prehospital ambulance system by linking COVID-19 patients to designated hospitals for further treatment and management without compromising non-COVID-19 emergency services.

- **Cambodia**—Greater Mekong Subregion Health Security, Additional Financing: A $5.0 million grant to enhance COVID-19-related clinical care capacity in 14 provincial hospitals, equipping them with on-site oxygen generation capacity, oxygen therapy equipment, and ambulances.

- **Maldives**—Supporting COVID-19 Response and Vaccination Program: A $2.0 million TA project to rapidly strengthen health system resilience and capacity, and develop long-term COVID-19 pandemic response and vaccination plans.

From COVID-19 to Universal Health Coverage

Experience gained by JFPR in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic is proving invaluable as the fund embraces universal health coverage (UHC) as one of its priorities. Continued response to the COVID-19 pandemic dovetails with UHC through three key aspects: response, resilience, and preparedness.

JFPR hopes to help countries sustain a flexible pandemic response, including ongoing procurement of next generation vaccines, diagnostics, and therapeutics. JFPR can also support building resilient health systems through the establishment of national centers for disease control to prevent, detect, and respond to disease outbreaks and emerging health threats and by improving coordination on cross-border health security concerns. Another area of resilience is investment in primary care, laboratory surveillance systems, and health workforce capacity building, all of which strengthen the region’s ability to anticipate and manage infectious disease outbreaks. Finally, JFPR can help to strengthen pandemic preparedness through projects aimed at strengthening country-level pandemic preparedness plans and systems, improving capacity gaps in core international health regulations domains, supporting sustainable pharmaceutical manufacturing and supply chains, regulatory system strengthening, and clinical trial capacity building.

Ultimately, the connection between COVID-19 response and UHC presents an opportunity to prioritize longer-term health strengthening, ensure pandemic responses address identified needs and contribute to UHC, and also include essential public health capacities for health emergencies in UHC-related work.
Villagers going to a COVID-19 campaign at a health center in O Kandor village, Santepeal commune, Sarpeyon district, Cambodia.
PART III

STORIES OF IMPACT: COUNTRY AND REGIONAL PROJECTS

Lady farmer in Bangladesh.
Farmer tending the soil in Bangladesh.

Vendors at a traditional market near Inle Lake in Shan State, Myanmar.
Insurance for a Rainy Day

For farmers like Saiful Islam, who works the land in Tanore, Rajshahi district, Bangladesh, the effects of climate change cannot be ignored—more frequent droughts, more intense flooding, more regular storms. These are all sadly familiar to the country’s small and marginal farmers. When weather events like Cyclone Sidr in 2007 decimate crops, farmers are left to bear the losses.

What would make all the difference to farmers like Saiful Islam is crop insurance. This enables them to plan and save for the longer term, whatever the weather. Saiful Islam and his fellow farmers did not traditionally have access to crop insurance though, because insurers could not easily connect with them.

In 2013, IFPR contributed $2.0 million in financing for a pilot program Weather Index-Based Crop Insurance, specifically targeting small and marginal farmers in the three districts of Rajshahi, Sirajgonj, and Noakhali. Saiful Islam was the first to sign up among the 9,641 farmers in the scheme. “I am very proud that I am the first farmer insured for agriculture in Bangladesh,” he said.
In Innovation and Regulation, the site of the first pilot, nearly 5,300 farmers enrolled. Mobile banking was used to speed up transactions and facilitate claims settlement and reduce the risk of fraud. The program worked with local insurance partners to distribute and administer the insurance product, and also with the Government of Bangladesh to make sure the right policy and regulatory frameworks were in place. The project had a neat innovation too: by joining forces with the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, it was able to incorporate satellite-based rainfall data as a supplementary information source.

After the pilot project proved successful, the government included it in its annual program for FY2019–2020 as a nationwide roll out of the scheme. “Agriculture insurance is a blessing for farmers, and we want it for all kinds of crops,” said Rafiqul Islam, another farmer from Tanore. “We are very much eager to join in the insurance.”

Farmers harvesting their crops.

Farmers beneficiary with his family.

Equipment at the automatic weather stations.

A farmer relies on weather information provided through the mobile phone.
BHUTAN

Weaving Her Way to Prosperity

In Ugyentse, a corner of southwestern Bhutan, Tshering Yangchen sits at her loom, weaving beautiful fabrics that will sell for a handsome price in bigger towns. As a subsistence farmer, she had the same limited economic options as generations of women before her, but the establishment of a self-help group that runs a weaving center in her town has been transformational.

“We had no income before the weaving program started. It was only after this weaving center opened that we started to earn some money,” says Tshering. “I benefited a lot from this program. Now I can spend the money to buy the things my family and I need.”

The weaving center in Tshering’s town is one of the enterprises set up under a $2.0 million JFPR project, Advancing Economic Opportunities of Women and Girls, approved in 2011. The project aimed to give women in rural Bhutan economic opportunities and a stronger say in how their communities are run.

Worms, Fungi, and Waste

Weaving is just one of the practical and innovative endeavors set up under the project. In the nearby village of Yoseltse, a 12-woman enterprise uses earthworms to produce organic fertilizer to sell in the market, and turn mushroom spores into a high-value crop. They also use animal waste to produce an inexpensive cooking fuel for use at home.

“I used firewood to cook meals, but we had to walk to the forest and back to collect wood,” says villager Norbu Zangmo. “We couldn’t use electric stoves because they are expensive to run. Now we can use biogas instead, and we are very grateful.”

When women have economic power, they can exert more control over the affairs of their community too. “Thanks to development and technology, our lives are changing,” said Kinzang Dorji, chair of the Yoseltse Self-Help Group. “Now women are empowered, and their opinions matter when decisions are taken.”
This training has been very helpful to me. Now, I don’t depend on others for support.

Karma Dema
Village electrical entrepreneur and electrical technician trainee
In the early 2000s in Cambodia’s capital Phnom Penh, the water and sanitation system had failed to keep pace with the city’s rapid urbanization, leaving many communities at risk from water and sanitation-related diseases. An ADB $20.0 million loan project to improve water supply and drainage brought essential improvements to the city’s physical infrastructure. In addition to water treatment facilities and drains, the project gave the city an opportunity: self-help and community-based efforts to improve environmental sanitation could do double duty by also generating income for poor people.

Sewists in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
Community Contribution

Alongside the ADB project, in 2002 JFPR approved a $1.0 million grant, Income for the Poor through Community-Based Environmental Improvements in Phnom Penh, to target poverty reduction through income generation in low-income neighborhoods. This project had four components: community-based infrastructure improvements in low-income areas; public awareness campaigns on environmental and sanitation hygiene; comprehensive community-based solid waste management practices; and policy advocacy.

As well as meeting its own goals, the project pioneered the concept of community contribution to the construction of public infrastructure. It proved that communities, including poor people, can and will make a significant contribution to the development of infrastructure such as water supply, drainage, and road improvement.
It is hard to imagine something more fundamental to health and well-being than fresh, clean drinking water. However, for hundreds of thousands of people in West Bengal, India, their water supply did not meet these simple criteria. Instead, their drinking water supplies were contaminated by high levels of arsenic, fluoride, and salt.

In 2018, when ADB approved a $240.0 million loan for the West Bengal Drinking Water Sector Improvement Project, JFPR came on board with a $3.0 million grant. The JFPR component project, Enabling and Skilling Communities for Sustainable Water Services in West Bengal, contributes to two outputs of this complex, large-scale project: the construction of smart, climate-resilient, and sustainable drinking water infrastructure, and strengthened institutional and stakeholder capacity to deliver continuous drinking water services. The project has a distinct focus: supporting the gram panchayat (village) smart water supply system and stakeholders’ management skills; capacity building for drinking water service delivery; and community awareness on water conservation, public health, and sanitation. The project also entails a pilot for innovative fecal sludge and sewage management interventions, which can be an exemplar for rural areas of West Bengal.

As with most JFPR projects, the emphasis is on working directly with communities, engaging them in decision-making, and collaborating with knowledgeable and capable locally embedded NGOs. That way, the complex system behind every simple glass of water can be sustainable, inclusive, and resilient.

(Below) Community consultations in a rural area in West Bengal ensure people are well informed about the project.

(Opposite page top) Women are well engaged in the community and participate in decision-making.

(Opposite page left) The community shares a common water source for their everyday needs, including food preparation.

(Opposite page right) Attendees listening attentively during the consultation.
Kindergarteners with special needs in the pilot are provided with specialized equipment to help their learning.
KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

Special Needs Education
Where it Belongs: In the Mainstream

The Kyrgyz Republic emerged from the post-Soviet era with near universal literacy and high levels of educational attainment. However, in the decade that followed, the quality of education in the country deteriorated because of economic transition and political upheaval. There was a shortage of teachers, and a lack of in-service training. At the same time, teachers were leaving and the workforce was aging. Rural schools in particular suffered, and the consequences were even worse for children with special needs.

Across-the-Board Support

In 2007, JFPR approved a $1.0 million project grant, Improving Access to Quality Basic Education for Children with Special Needs. This project sought to bring children with special needs into the mainstream of education and give them the opportunity to learn alongside other children.

In the following 4 years, the project contributed to the creation of a policy, legal, and institutional framework for the inclusion of children with special needs into mainstream education. It also raised awareness of special needs among teachers, parents, and communities; and provided tangible, practical support too: the physical infrastructure, furnishings, and equipment needed to integrate special needs children.

More Enrollment, Higher Scores

The project saw an increase in the enrollment of special needs children into mainstream schools and an improvement in their academic performance. One of the strongest outcomes from the project was teacher training. In all, 115 teachers from special schools and 17 kindergarten education workers were trained on how to implement special needs education.

The project acted as a catalyst for more widespread training of teachers in special needs education across the country. Importantly, it also raised wider awareness of children with special needs and their right to learn.
Got a Ger? Then We Have a Classroom!

The traditional Mongolian tent, or ger, has served the needs of nomadic peoples across central Asia for millennia. Strong, portable, practical, and traditional, the ger continues to be an important part of Mongolia’s way of life.

Now, thanks to a JFPR grant-funded project, the ger has been adapted as the perfect home for kindergarten classrooms in rural subdistricts, provincial centers, and remote districts of the capital Ulaanbaatar. A $2.9 million grant approved in 2009, Early Childhood Education for Rural, Nomadic, and Migrant Children, facilitated local communities to build low-cost ger kindergartens. By the time the project was completed in 2014, it had set up 135 kindergartens, giving many Mongolian children access to early childhood education that they otherwise would not have had.

Tradition and Technology

The beauty of a ger is that it can be put wherever it is needed, and this model of early years education can respond quickly to demand for kindergarten places. The 23rd Khan Uul subdistrict, for example, had a large migrant population, but no kindergarten before the ADB project.

The kindergarten ger model has solved a challenging problem for parents like Tungalag, who struggled to find a way to get his son Altanbayaar into a kindergarten.

"Some are just too far away, and even if we managed to take our son to those distant places, their kindergarten capacity is low.”

On the outside, the JFPR-funded ger looks traditional, but on the inside, it has all the amenities of modern school, including solar power, modern heating, and modern technology.

From the City to Steppe

The impact of the project is far-reaching too: the ger kindergarten model is easily replicable wherever there is a demand for kindergarten spaces, from other parts of the capital, to remote areas.

This project is part of a range of education-related support that JFPR has provided to Mongolia over the years, including a 2006 grant for non-formal skills training for unemployed youth and adults, and subsequent projects to reform technical and vocational education and training, and to improve school dormitories for primary school children. Together, these projects have supported Mongolians’ investment in their future by educating the children and youth of today.
2 Decades of Poverty Reduction and Partnership

Tourists flock to Mongolia for its magnificent nature, but for the nomadic people who have long called the steppe home, this can be a double-edged sword. On one hand, tourism accounts for 12% of the country’s economy. On the other, if this rapidly growing industry is not carefully managed, it can imperil precious and fragile ecosystems.

One such place is Khuvsgul Lake in Northern Mongolia. The area is a major tourism attraction for trekking, camping, and horse riding. “The number of tourists visiting Khuvsgul Province has increased in recent years; 70% of residents in Khatgal village benefit from tourism one way or another. So, the upside of the rise in tourism is the increased household income. But the drawback is tourism activities are polluting the lake water,” said Tsennidavas Nasanjargal, president of Khatgal Tourism Association.

Multisector Approach

The area is also the site of JFPR’s first tourism project, Integrated Livelihoods Improvement and Sustainable Tourism in Khuvsgul Lake National Park. Between 2016 and 2020, the $3.0 million JFPR grant project brought together residents, tour operators, and local government to work hand in hand to promote community-based ecotourism. It also provided small loans to communities, which have helped locals, such as herder and small business owner Oyun Jargal, set up or expand businesses. “I learned about packaging for my yogurt products. They are more market friendly now and my income increased,” she said.
As a result of the project, pasture and livestock management by herders was improved, so that herders could improve the quality and quantity of fodder and prevent overuse of the delicate grasslands. In addition, waste—a common headache for areas popular with tourists—became better managed, with management teams to collect garbage and maintain 50 new all-weather eco-toilets. A long-term water quality monitoring program for Khuvsgul Lake was also implemented. These efforts were further supported in 2016 when JFPR approved an additional $1.1 million in TA for sustainable tourism development in Khuvsgul and Khentii provinces.

The success of these projects encouraged the Government of Mongolia to commit to further support for sustainable tourism. In 2019, Mongolia’s first lending project for tourism was approved by the government. Termed the Sustainable Tourism Development Project, the project is supported by a $38.0 million loan from ADB. The project was designed and processed with $1.1 million JFPR grant and applied the lessons and experience gained under the grant project. This project complements the grant project by addressing priorities for livelihoods, green infrastructure, waste management, and protected area management at Khuvsgul Lake National Park and Onon-Balj National Park, the birthplace of revered Mongolian leader Chinggis Khan.
A group of herders rest after a day of hard work.
I used to earn MNT2 million to MNT3 million annually at best. After receiving a loan and attending training, I purchased more livestock and increased the number of products I make and improved the product packaging. My annual income has now increased to MNT10 million.

Naranchimeg Khorolsuren
Herder and small business owner

As we are preserving the land when the grass is growing, the pastureland is enriched with more plant varieties.

Enkhbaatar Khajid
Leader of herder group in Alag-Erdene district
The dumps around here are being cleaned up. Now new waste containers are located here to take garbage.

Sainbayar Jamsran
Leader of community waste management team

Thanks to the microfinancing, I bought materials for making clothes. My income increased by selling them directly to customers.

Ts. Ikhzaya
Small business owner
Pristine fresh water, Khuvsgul Lake National Park, Mongolia.
Empowering Survivors of Domestic Violence and Those Who Help Them

Tackling domestic violence requires a multipronged approach that both supports affected women and girls, and increases the capacity of key stakeholders to help them. In Mongolia, a $4.0 million JFPR-funded project, Combating Domestic Violence Against Women and Children, aimed to do just that. The project, which began in early 2019 and will run through to the end of 2023, has three aims: to deliver a multidisciplinary response and livelihood assistance services to domestic violence survivors; increase the capacity of key officials and staff responsible for protection and rehabilitation services for domestic violence survivors; and improve the behavior of key stakeholders on prevention, reporting, and protection of survivors.

Skills and Self-Esteem

This mission is being accomplished through a diverse range of subprojects, including the renovation of four shelters for domestic violence survivors in three provinces and the construction of a fifth in the capital Ulaanbaatar. A pilot women’s economic empowerment program trained 115 survivor women of domestic violence on legal and financial literacy and business proposal development, and offered them psychosocial counseling too. A second round of training focused on business development, leadership and communication skills, accounting, and marketing, which not only equipped survivors with important income-generating skills but also increased their self-esteem.

“I initially thought I am developing only my skill set through the program, but later I realized that the knowledge I have gained and the initiatives I’m taking through the small grant will benefit my entire family,” said Natarigii, a small-scale grant recipient under the pilot Women’s Economic Empowerment Program. “I also learned new ways of helping my children manage their emotions and building a relationship with support from my family members.”

Community Initiatives

The project also funded 30 community-driven initiatives across the country to increase public awareness and boost outreach capacity and quality services through multidisciplinary teams, one-stop service centers, and shelters. A national study on the prevalence of domestic violence among persons with disabilities to learn more about their experiences and how they are perceived resulted in recommendations that have informed a design of follow-up outreach services to this group.

Behavior change communication is an effective way to improve the recognition of domestic violence and encourage reporting and protection of survivors. The project includes community- and school-based outreach campaigns to increase understanding of domestic violence recognition, consequences, reporting lines, and to raise awareness of the domestic violence helpline service, which deals with distress calls for referral to police and provides psychosocial and legal counseling.
2 Decades of Poverty Reduction and Partnership

Stories of Impact: Country and Regional Projects
No Longer Helpless in the Face of Gender-Based Violence

Violence against women and girls is a global scourge: one in three women worldwide has experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime. Despite the global nature of the problem, addressing it is a very local matter, requiring work with communities based on their unique situation.

In 2009, JFPR approved its first ADB grant project to address domestic violence in rural communities in Nepal. The Establishing Women and Children Service Centers project set out to help women and children in rural districts feel less vulnerable and helpless in the face of violent crimes such as rape, domestic violence, polygamy, allegations of witchcraft, child abuse, child marriage, and trafficking. The scale of the problem was daunting according to United Nations data, over 60% of domestic violence cases in Nepal went unreported at that time.

Safe Space

The $750,000 JFPR project initially set up in five districts. The centers gave women a safe space to report the violence perpetrated against them and their children, and offered a place of refuge, but they also acted as a focal point for civil society and people who work on gender-based violence to come together and better coordinate their work. The project went beyond the centers themselves to build connections between communities and law enforcement.

Benefits for Women, Girls, and Whole Communities

The project has been transformational, not just for women, who are direct beneficiaries, but also the community at large. "The networks in each district run community awareness campaigns and preventive strategies to reduce violence and abuse, encourage reporting of cases to improve access to justice, and encourage confidence in the legal system," said Kiran Rana, a police superintendent in the Women and Children Service Directorate.

"Our efforts are beginning to bear fruit. Reporting cases of gender-based violence has increased by more than 46% in the districts with the program, indicating growing trust in the justice system," Rana added.

Amplified Impact

The project’s success was amplified too. Both the Government of Nepal and the United Kingdom’s official development assistance agency saw how successful the JFPR project was, and together with ADB’s Gender and Development Cooperation Fund they funded an expansion of the project to more districts. "The project has shown the right path to Nepal police in terms of strengthening the women and children service centers in other districts," said Bimala Thapa, Nepal Police deputy inspector general and project manager. "It built our self-confidence and increased our self-esteem."

Policing of gender-based violent crimes improved. Training for police officers, including gender-responsive investigation and counseling skills, proved invaluable when they stepped up their community outreach. Modules developed under the project have also been institutionalized in the required training for Nepal’s police force.
TAJIKISTAN

Shock-Proofing Communities against Climate Change

One of the key ways JFPR amplifies the impact of its funding is to attach to larger ADB-financed projects and pool resources. A prime example of this team spirit is a $5.0 million hybrid grant and TA project ($3.0 million grant, $2.0 million TA), Water Resources Management in Pyanj River Basin, approved in 2016. This extended the impact of an extensive ADB assistance package to boost agriculture production and food security by improving water resource management of the Pyanj River Basin in Tajikistan.

The Backbone of Agriculture

The flood-prone Pyanj River Basin, the largest in Tajikistan, is the country’s breadbasket, with the most extensive agriculture production, but it is also its poorest river basin and includes the most food-insecure zone.

“Tajikistan is vulnerable to food insecurity due to its limited productive irrigated land, underdeveloped agriculture, and limited resilience to climate change,” explained Shanny Campbell, country director of ADB’s Tajikistan Resident Mission. The project will address the problems of low agricultural yields, low income, and food insecurity in the target areas. The project will rehabilitate and modernize irrigation and drainage systems, strengthen institutions engaged in water resources management, and upgrade capacities of water user associations and farmers.

Aligned with Country Needs

The JFPR funding was earmarked for the establishment and management of river basin organizations and the development of a river basin management plan. This aligned well with the ADB country partnership strategy, with its focus on food security through climate-resilient technologies, value chain development, and improving water resource management. The output also includes (i) demonstrations to promote profitable farm management and efficient water use, (ii) production of high-quality seeds, and (iii) capacity development of beneficiaries.

Embankments along the Pyanj River.
Beneficiaries from Tajikistan.
When Technology Protects Tradition

In 2011, Thailand experienced its worst floods in more than 50 years, a stark reminder that the country’s social and economic growth was being imperiled by climate change. Water resources management featured strongly in Thailand’s 11th National Economic and Social Development Plan, but this needed more than government efforts. Community participation was essential if water resources were to be successfully and sustainably managed. After all, local communities have both a common interest and collective wisdom about their area that can and should be integrated into resources management.

A $1.0 million TA project approved by JFPR in 2016 played an important role in fostering this community stewardship of precious water resources. The Strengthening Integrated Water Resource Planning and Management at River Basin Level project not only brought community and government stakeholders together, it also gave them the tools they needed to fully collaborate.

Technology and Wisdom

The project developed an integrated water resource management simulation tool at the river basin level. This computer-generated modeling tool enabled users to test the hydrologic impact of different water resources management approaches in a river basin. The multi-stakeholder consultative dialogues, including with local communities and supported by training sessions on the integrated water resource management modeling package, helped in forging consensus on principles and processes of river basin management.

By extensively testing the modeling tool, modifying it along the way to suit the local context, and then successfully piloting it in two major river basins, the JFPR project laid the groundwork for the tool to be applied to all 25 river basins across Thailand. This was highly appreciated by key stakeholders, especially from the Department of Water Resources of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

“"The benefit of the integrated water resource management approach is that it can cover all aspects of information and by considering all aspects together we can better manage water resources in the river basin," said Ruangrit Ngamlert, general operation assistant at the Phrae Water Management Center.

Protecting Heritage

The project also had downstream benefits, at the ancient city of Ayutthaya, a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization World Heritage Site. The combination of cutting-edge technology and local knowledge enabled the city to come up with a disaster risk mitigation plan. “Local community participation is very crucial," said Pratheep Pengtakol, Director of the 3rd Regional Office of Fine Arts, Ayutthaya. "People are living with the historical sites, and they all belong to the people."
Micronutrients that Pack a Macro Punch

People in the many countries where iodized salt and iron-fortified flour are the norm almost certainly take these simple nutrition health interventions for granted. Such fortification is not technically difficult, nor is it expensive to implement, but when it is missing from the food supply chain, there can be severe consequences, including stunt bean, anemia, and development impairment.

In the late 1990s and 2000s, in five post-Soviet-era Asian countries in transition, a withdrawal of food subsidies and breakdown of distribution networks to rural areas meant that citizens, most notably mothers and young children, were undernourished, including suffering from deficiencies in micronutrients such as iodine and iron. Imports of iodized salt from Ukraine, the major supplier for the whole region during the Soviet era, had stopped, and micronutrient-enriched food from Europe and elsewhere was unaffordable to most people.

Fortification

In 2001, the first JFPR project to tackle nutrition (and the first JFPR project in Central and West Asia), Improving Nutrition for Poor Mothers and Children in Asian Countries in Transition, was approved to tackle micronutrient deficiencies in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. By working with countries to fortify both salt and flour, the aim of the project was to reduce maternal mortality and enhance cognitive development for young children.

Collaboration

The project brought together key stakeholders from all five countries including public health service agencies, federations of flour millers and salt producers, NGOs that focus on women and children, representatives of external assistance agencies, and senior central and local government officials to create policy commitment to salt and flour fortification. In selected pilot sites in poor areas, the project supported governments to work with flour millers, bakers, and salt producers to upgrade processing and marketing technology, and funded a year’s supply of fortifications. As with every JFPR project, this one also included strong community engagement, through partnership with a national NGO in each country.

The proof of the pudding, of course, is in the eating: by 2007 when the project ended, it had successfully increased the intake of iodized salt and iron-fortified flour, and all countries had introduced regulations on required levels of fortification.

(Opposite page left) Beneficiaries of the Improving Nutrition for Poor Mothers and Children in Asian Countries in Transition project.

(Below) Fortified flour.
Global Epidemic, Local Solutions

“Nothing about us without us,” is one of the key lessons learned in the global response to the AIDS epidemic. JFPR’s first HIV/AIDS-related project took this maxim to heart. Approved in 2001, the $8.0 million grant project, Community Action for Preventing HIV/AIDS, worked with the governments of Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Viet Nam to strengthen national AIDS responses through community-based HIV prevention activities and capacity building.

At that time, Cambodia had a severe, heterosexually transmitted, generalized HIV epidemic, driven by brothel-based commercial sex. In Lao PDR, there had been no seroprevalence survey, so the extent of HIV transmission was unknown, but its porous borders with countries that had high HIV prevalence rates made it vulnerable. Meanwhile, in Viet Nam, the epidemic was concentrated in the population of people who inject drugs, a notoriously hard to reach population.

Local Needs, Local Response

While all three countries had a multisector strategy for HIV/AIDS, the national responses needed strengthening, especially at provincial and district levels. The project comprised surveillance surveys, and analysis and dissemination of vital surveillance data, but it was clear that it was also necessary to empower communities and NGOs.

The project supported NGOs to train thousands of teachers and community workers in HIV prevention and control, and other community-based HIV prevention activities. These used participatory approaches for community education, promotion of sexually transmitted disease screening and treatment among vulnerable groups, and implementation of safe blood practices. The project trained peer educators to engage with sex workers, truck drivers, and police officers on HIV prevention education. The project’s monitoring and evaluation component was also carried out by an NGO.

Beneficiaries provided with free condoms. HIV education billboard at Bavet, Cambodia, near the Viet Nam border crossing.
Amid some of the region’s most strikingly beautiful coastline, graced with coral reefs, silver sand beaches, and abundant sea life, many small communities struggle to make a living. So it was for villages in Berau, East Kalimantan, Indonesia and Balabac, Palawan in the Philippines, situated at the center of the world’s largest coral region, with the highest coral biodiversity in the world. Fishing communities on the remote islands and coasts there were among the poorest of the poor, reliant on unsustainable fishing practices, coral reef exploitation, and illegal turtle hunting.

From 2012 to 2019, a $2.0 million JFPR project, Developing Sustainable Alternative Livelihoods in the Coral Triangle Fishing Communities in Indonesia and the Philippines, sought to address that by helping communities find more sustainable ways to make a living, and thrive alongside nature, not at its expense.

Making the Most of Nature’s Bounty
In Berau, the project provided training on fisheries food processing, product packaging, certification, and marketing, so that products could be more profitably sold, for example to neighboring hotels and resorts. It also introduced alternatives to traditional handicrafts. “Before we made souvenirs from turtle and scallop shells, but we’ve since begun to focus on coconut shell materials to make lamps and pendants,” explained project beneficiary Werdiyanto. JFPR is very helpful to us in improving alternative livelihoods and then improving the quality and quantity of the products we’ve made.”

Over in Palawan, Filipino project beneficiaries have been able to turn away from unsustainable fishing, thanks to training and support. “We provided training in goat and poultry rearing, carpentry, masonry, welding, food processing, and mat making,” explained Josefina Maria Ferril-Pavico, executive director of the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development, the project implementer on Palawan.

Working Mothers
The project brought villagers in both places much-needed business and financial literacy skills and mentoring on how to run group businesses. It had a strong gender element too, empowering women to take on project management, and generate alternative sources of income. In all, 70% of the 902 project beneficiaries were women, and they accounted for 217 of the 461 alternative livelihood units. “Mothers feel happy with the activity. Our income increases so mothers are not unemployed,” says Palawan entrepreneur Ida. “Thank you JFPR for providing assistance to us. We are not unemployed and have our business.” The project was featured at Expo 2020 in Dubai as an exemplar of livelihood and enterprise development, and an inspirational global best practice.

Welding was among the trainings provided to the local community as an alternative livelihood.
2 Decades of Poverty Reduction and Partnership

Goat rearing in Balabac, Palawan, Philippines.

Mat weaving in Balabac, Palawan, Philippines.
Dignified Care and Support in Aging Societies in Asia

Across Asia and the Pacific governments are grappling with a serious problem: how to ensure their rapidly aging populations age well, including supporting families and communities to be able to care for their older citizens. Demand for long-term care of older adults is accelerating as the region’s population rapidly ages, and figuring out how to finance and implement effective programs is a pressing issue.

In 2016, JFPR and the Republic of Korea e-Asia and Knowledge Partnership Fund cofinanced a multicountry TA project aimed at building the capacity of ADB DMCs to design policies and systems to improve their long-term care services.

Six Faces of Aging in Asia

The project covered six countries, whose diverse stages of demographic transition and experiences can help inform policy for others in the region: Indonesia, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga, and Viet Nam. With $2.0 million in TA from JFPR, Strengthening Developing Member Countries’ Capacity in Elderly Care contributed to developing an important knowledge base in the region on long-term care systems and services. The six country diagnostic studies conducted under the TA assessed the existing systems and services. The diagnostic studies identified what the six countries have in common, and what good practices might help other countries facing similar issues. This was essential as the first step to improvement is to understand the current situation.
The project also developed national strategic plans which identify priorities, institutional responsibilities, and investments required to improve care for older adults, considering the need to develop a continuum of services, human resources, financing, quality management systems, and partnerships. The project facilitated numerous regional knowledge sharing and networking activities.

The project revealed the complexity of preparing appropriate care and support systems for an aging population and underscored that a multistakeholder approach is required, with government stewardship providing the framework and ecosystem for effective collaboration of communities, private sector, NGOs, and governments to ensure a dignified old age for all. At the request of participating countries, a second TA project is building on this initial one, using the good practice findings to develop effective, affordable, accessible, and sustainable community-based long-term care services.

Stories of Impact: Country and Regional Projects

Three generations under one roof: Boonmee Supharatha with her daughter and her daughter’s niece in Ban Mai, Chiang Mai, Thailand.

(C) Caregiver Somchai Supharatha in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

(Middle) Mbah Zainab and her friends with their Angklung musical instruments in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

(Bottom left) Nguyen Thi Thu works in her field, Bac Ninh province, Viet Nam.

(Bottom right) Tran Thi Nga exercising in Bac Ninh province, Viet Nam.
PART IV

BUILDING ON ITS HISTORY, LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: THE ENHANCED JFPR
Chhea Nhem with fellow basket weavers in Kampong Thom province, Cambodia.
JFPR has achieved a lot in the past 2 decades, and the lessons learned through this experience have been plowed back into JFPR’s operations and also shared with communities, NGOs, and other key stakeholders. Over that time, the external environment within which JFPR works has undergone tremendous change. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has negated some of the gains and exposed vulnerable groups to new shocks.

Now the region is in the process of recovery, but the pace is uneven across and within countries, and inequalities are widening. As former Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso, the then-deputy prime minister and minister of finance of Japan and governor of ADB recently noted, “At this difficult juncture, it is important to provide sufficient support to vulnerable populations in order not to marginalize them in the pathway toward inclusive growth.”

The 21-year mark is an opportune time for JFPR to reflect on its work done so far, and then set out its priorities for the future. Enhancement of JFPR has been undertaken in three areas: establishing priority areas of work, leveraging the rich expertise within ADB, and renaming.

**Poverty Reduction and the New Priority Areas**

Going forward, JFPR will focus on Japan’s policy priority areas: universal health coverage (UHC), climate change and disaster risk management, quality infrastructure investment, and public finance management, in addition to poverty reduction. At the same time, JFPR will continue to adhere to its long-standing practice of providing small-scale grant support for poor people and vulnerable, last-mile support, cross-sector support, and promotion of community involvement and a participatory approach.

Promotion of UHC—a long-standing important policy issue for Japan—contributes to health systems strengthening, which in turn supports pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response, as well as inclusive and sustainable growth. UHC also helps countries across a wide spectrum of income levels address other emerging health issues.

Climate change and disaster risk management encompasses mitigation, such as working toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions and achieving universal and affordable access to energy. It also includes adaptation to increasingly severe and frequent natural hazards.

Quality infrastructure investment is key to both UHC and climate change risk mitigation. An important role that JFPR can play in this is to support ADB to actively share its knowledge with DMCs through project preparation and TA, and to promote quality infrastructure investment based on principles of inclusiveness, openness, sustainability, and governance, and also taking note of cybersecurity and data privacy issues.
2 Decades of Poverty Reduction and Partnership

(Above) Students from Vanuatu.

(Right and Opposite page) Smiling children. Laos People’s Democratic Republic.
All these measures require fiscal discipline and effective public finance management. JFPR will support governments to strengthen their domestic resources mobilization and public finance management capacity.

Going forward, JFPR will continue to evolve and emphasize new priority areas as needed to meet its overall objective of supporting countries to be resilient to crises, sustainable, and prosperous while protecting vulnerable groups.

**A New Name, a New Brand, a New Era**

On 1 September 2021, ADB’s Board of Directors approved renaming the original JFPR to the Japan Fund for Prosperous and Resilient Asia and the Pacific. The enhanced JFPR will help ADB’s DMCs achieve resilient recovery from the ongoing pandemic crisis and be better prepared for the future and any crises it may bring.

The name change is significant because it underscores JFPR’s commitment to building a sustainable society and laying the foundation for a prosperous future, while ensuring that vulnerable groups are not left behind, and that they too are on a sustainable path to prosperity and resilience.

Enhancing and renaming the original JFPR will take the fund to the next level, where it can work to build on the achievements and momentum of the past 2 decades, and further increase its development impact. JFPR looks forward to a bright future, supporting Asia and the Pacific achieve prosperity and resilience.
Virginia Harris and her daughter are beneficiaries of the Weno Water Supply Well Remediation project in the Federated States of Micronesia.

An elderly couple in Indonesia.
Men working together carrying sandbags in Assam, India.
Building on its History, Looking to the Future: The Enhanced JFPR

The New JFPR Brand

The cherry blossom represents renewal and optimism. It also symbolizes transience and the fragility of life, and the need for sustainability and resilience. Blue signifies the blue sky and sea—clean, fresh air and water—as well as peace and stability.
I feel very safe, I enjoy the facilities and the environment. New dining hall, new chairs, we are not sleeping on the floor but on proper beds, I feel very fortunate to be at this school.
— Joshua Kome, Year 9 student at Kwataparen Secondary School, Vanuatu

I feel I learned a lot about gender norms and equality and also feel more appreciated and empowered as a female. I also took things I learnt especially in the WASH programs and taught my family at home.
— Merian Loughman, Year 10 student at Kwataparen Secondary School, Vanuatu

The sources of pollution in Meghna will be checked at any cost and a master plan will be taken soon to ensure supply of drinking water for the city dwellers for the next 50 years.
— Taqsem A Khan, managing director at Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority, Bangladesh quoted in the Daily Star Newspaper article, 24 August 2019

We’re happy because of the new things that we can afford to buy for our children’s schooling. But more than that, we’re happy because their father does not have to leave us anymore.
— Sarita Sah, self-help group member, Nepal

Mothers feel happy with the activity. Our income increases so mothers are not unemployed. Thank you JFPR for providing assistance to us. We are not unemployed and have our business.
— Ida, entrepreneur, Kelompok bohesiian, Indonesia

We are very happy and satisfied from this program and the Government of Japan because all the problems we had in this canal are finished. Before we had to work about 3 days to bring the water for our lands. Now this issue is solved, and we save up 95% of water in different seasons. We have enough water for our crops, gardens and animals.
— Ali Ahnrad, farmer in Nan Wayee village, Afghanistan

I am very proud that I am the first farmer insured for agriculture in Bangladesh.
— Saiful Islam, farmer, Paba, Rajshahi district, Bangladesh

If an emergency happens, it takes less than 15 minutes to drive a sick person to a district hospital in Rasht Center.
— Hakimjon Kululov, doctor, Tajikistan

I will pass this on to my children. It makes me happy to pass on a good income.
— Muhammad Gade, cocoa bean farmer, Banda Aceh, Indonesia

If I had not been helped, I would never have been able to return home, since my husband died shortly after the tsunami due to an untreated illness. I am very grateful for the assistance of the Japanese people and the JFPR in particular. Thank you so much for looking after me.
— Rasyidah, Aceh tsunami widow, Indonesia

The school hostel has made it possible for me to continue my studies. I can also spend time with my friends. We also have internet facilities for research.
— Parbati Magar, student, Hunumanthorsor Secondary School, Kavre, Dolakha, Nepal

We lost everything in the devastation and chaos that followed the earthquake, including our cattle and chickens. But now, thankfully, I have a flock of hens that gives eggs and is a source of nourishment and income I thought I would never live to get.
— Saleema, 101-year old elderly, Leepa Valley, Pakistan

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— Ali Ahnrad, farmer in Nan Wayee village, Afghanistan

I am very proud that I am the first farmer insured for agriculture in Bangladesh.
— Saiful Islam, farmer, Paba, Rajshahi district, Bangladesh

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— Saleema, 101-year old elderly, Leepa Valley, Pakistan
I can now support my son’s education and wish him to get the highest degree of a university, which I could not provide to my elder son and only daughter, who got married at the age of 13, due to economic hardship... Thanks to the project and, with the help of the Almighty, I am sure to increase my business to earn an income of Tk200 a day in the near future to live a life much better than the past.

— Lal Banu, dressmaker, Bangladesh

We are very pleased that our school has been upgraded, so that we can provide full primary education (grades 1–6) to all children living on this island. We thank ADB and the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR) for their handy assistance to our urgent need.

— Lorn Rith, director of Boeung Kachhang Primary School, Koh Kong Province, Cambodia

On behalf of the 4,500 to 5,000 people comprising Nusrantullo makhsum Jamoat, Rasht Region, including Loiba, Mashknonak, Shul, and Shuli-Bolo villages, we express our sincere gratitude to ADB, the rural roads project implementation unit, and their staff, as well as for their financial support under the Community-Based Rural Road Maintenance Project, for the repair and improvement of rural roads... After the cold and snowy winter and the rainy spring, the roads generally were damaged, and improvement of rural roads under ADB’s JFPR grant had a significant importance in this area, making their life easier and providing easy access to schools, hospitals, and markets for buying and selling of crops, etc.

— Signed by 21 project beneficiaries from communities in Tajikistan

I tripled my income by joining the JFPR shrimp cluster. I handle three ponds with 25% profit sharing with the landowner. By combining traditional systems and with best management practices recommended by my facilitator, one pond I handle produces 300 kilograms of shrimp over 3.5 months. My total income from the three ponds is Rp10,500,000 (about $1,080) in 4 months. I am happy because now many landowners are interested in stocking shrimp again. The more ponds I handle the more money I make!

— Rusli, farmer JFPR Cluster 3, Aquaculture Livelihoods Services Center, Samalanga, Bireuen Aceh, Indonesia

We, the residents of Welipatanwela Grama Sewa Niladari Division Ambalantota Divisional Secretary Division, are grateful to the Asian Development Bank for providing us with a cash-for-work program paying SLRs400 per day per person. All our assets and belongings were taken away by tsunami water to the sea. We were helpless and faced a sad situation. Fortunately, the program helped us rehabilitate access roads and overcome our difficult situation. It also helped us improve our day-to-day economic life. Thank you very much.

— Signed by 34 members of the Society of Tsunami Affected People, Welipatanwela Ambalantota, Hambantota District, Sri Lanka

I am happy that my kids are now healthier.

— Fuarosa Heather, villager, Upolu, Samoa

The people, especially those who were severely affected, are happy because the Government of Japan and ADB built good roads, a relocation site, and school buildings. Their relocation site is already developed. They are given new hope.

— Governor Damian Mercado, Southern Leyte, Philippines

We are so proud of the project. The roads were neglected for so many years, and people had to walk distances to get into public motor vehicles to get to town. We are happy now that we can take cars or public motor vehicles from home.

— Residents of Walupim Village, Enga Province, Papua New Guinea
ADB stands ready to partner with the new Japan Fund for Prosperous and Resilient Asia and the Pacific with the same perseverance, transparency, and commitment to results that have been hallmarks of our work together over the past 22 years.

Masatsugu Asakawa
ADB President

Rural beneficiaries are grateful for their connectivity to power grids in Papua New Guinea.
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<td>TA9111-REG: Strengthening Developing Member Countries’ Capacity in Elderly Care</td>
<td>Project Implementation Team/Xuang-Phong Le</td>
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<td>Boys working with electronics.</td>
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<td>Ethnic minority women in Lao PDR wearing traditional dress.</td>
<td>G9134-LAO: Reducing Poverty Among Ethnic Minority Women in the Nam Ngum River Basin</td>
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<td>Happy elderly couple.</td>
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**At A Glance**

- **Mongolian schoolchildren.** G9138-MON: Early Childhood Education for Rural, Nomadic, and Migrant Children
- **Afghan potato farmer.** G9167-AFG: Enhanced Agricultural Value Chains for Sustainable Livelihoods
- **Indonesian girl with umbrella.** N/A

**School children in class.** G9108-KGZ: Improving Access to Quality Basic Education for Children with Special Needs

**Women baking.** T6594: Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 through Community-Led Interventions

**Elderly with care workers.** TA9111-REG: Strengthening Developing Member Countries’ Capacity in Elderly Care

**Rice farmers.** G9172-BAN: Pilot Project on Weather Index-Based Crop Insurance

**Smiling adult female.** G9165-SRI: Improvement of Rural Access Roads and Livelihood Development for the Poor

**At A Glance**

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<tr>
<td>Girl on bicycle.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ariel Javellana/ADB Multimedia Library</td>
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<td>Road workers in Afghanistan.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Jawad Jalali/ADB Multimedia Library</td>
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<td>Bus on the road.</td>
<td>G0006-SRI: Tsunami-Affected Areas Rebuilding Project</td>
<td>James Hutchison/ADB</td>
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<td>Beach coast with boats.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Achmad Ibrahim/ADB Multimedia Library</td>
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<td>Mongolian elderly person with health worker.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Eric Sales/ADB Multimedia Library</td>
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<td>Woman selling at a market.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Lester Ledesma/ADB Multimedia Library</td>
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<td>Schoolchildren in Vanuatu.</td>
<td>G9981-VAN: Cyclone Pam School Reconstruction Project</td>
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<td>Carpenters rebuilding schools.</td>
<td>G9175-PHI: Emergency Assistance and Early Recovery for Poor Municipalities Affected by Typhoon Yolanda</td>
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<td>Elderly couple wearing masks.</td>
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<td>Female adult beneficiary.</td>
<td>G9130-PNG: Extending the Socioeconomic Benefits of an Improved Road Network to Roadside Communities</td>
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<td>Male adult beneficiary.</td>
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<td>Female adult beneficiary.</td>
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<td>G9122-FSM: Wastewater Supply Well Remediation Project</td>
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<td>Women harvesting.</td>
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<td>School building.</td>
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<td>Female medical staff.</td>
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2 Decades of Poverty Reduction and Partnership
The Story of the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction 2000–2021

This book brings to life the first 2 decades of the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction (JFPR), from how it started to how it has evolved—shaped by changes in the world, especially in the Asia and Pacific region and in its host organization, the Asian Development Bank. JFPR has met impressive milestones, including project approvals exceeding $1 billion and the creation of 520 projects across 36 developing member countries. Through showcasing a selection of project profiles, this book serves as a tangible reminder—and a witness—to the countless lives touched and transformed by JFPR across the region.

About the Asian Development Bank

ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. Established in 1966, it is owned by 68 members—49 from the region. Its main instruments for helping its developing member countries are policy dialogue, loans, equity investments, guarantees, grants, and technical assistance.