



# JAPAN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

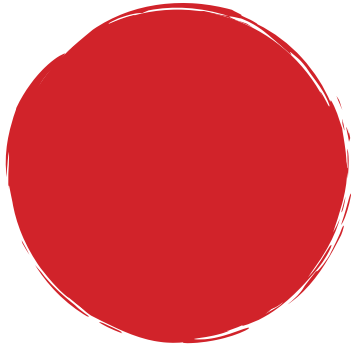
ANNUAL REPORT  
FISCAL YEAR 2023



JAPAN GOV  
THE GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN







# CONTENTS

	<i>Message From the Director</i>	iii
	<i>Abbreviations and Acronyms</i>	v
	<i>Executive Summary</i>	vii
<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION TO THE JAPAN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (JSDF)</b>	<b>1</b>
	1.1 Objectives	1
	1.2 Financial Overview	3
	1.3 Types of Program Grants	4
<b>2</b>	<b>OVERVIEW OF FISCAL YEAR 2023 PORTFOLIO</b>	<b>5</b>
	2.1 Recipient-Executed Grants	5
	2.2 Fiscal Year 2023 Results and Implementation Experience	6
	2.3 Disbursements of Active and Closed Grants	9
	2.4 Seed Funds	11
<b>3</b>	<b>PROJECT OVERVIEW</b>	<b>13</b>
	3.1 Livelihood Support	14
	3.2 Improved Nutrition and Early Childhood Care and Development	18
	3.3 Inclusive Education	20
	3.4 Environmentally Sustainable Agricultural Practices and Climate Change	22
	3.5 Local Governance and Accountability	24
	3.6 Basic Health and Sanitation Services	27

<b>4</b>	<b>OUTREACH, KNOWLEDGE, AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>31</b>
4.1	Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF) Dialogue Series	31
4.2	JSDF Management and Administration	32
4.3	Japan's Visibility Strategy	32

<b>5</b>	<b>LOOKING FORWARD</b>	<b>35</b>
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<b>ANNEX</b>	<b>BACKGROUND TABLES</b>	<b>37</b>
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#### LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.3.1	FY23 Portfolio Cumulative Disbursement Performance of Recipient-Executed Grants by Region	9
Table 2.3.2	FY23 Portfolio Cumulative Disbursement Performance of Recipient-Executed Grants by Global Practice	10
Table 2.4.1	Seed Fund Accounts Approved During FY23	11
Table A.1	Regular Program Grants Active During FY23 – Recipient-Executed	37
Table A.2	Regular Program Grants Approved in FY23	40

#### LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1.1.	Composition of JSDF FY23 Active Portfolio of Recipient-Executed Grants by Region (US\$)	5
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#### LIST OF BOXES

Box 1.1.1	JSDF Grant Approval Process	3
Box 3.1.1	Promoting Social Inclusion and Self-Reliant Livelihood Activities in Armenia	15
Box 3.3.1	Livelihoods for Youth Community Support Project – Kyrgyz Republic	21
Box 3.4.1	Youth Employment and Rural Entrepreneurship Project – Bhutan	23
Box 3.5.1	Community Benefit Sharing Pilot Project – The Solomon Islands	25
Box 3.6.1	India Digital Financial Inclusion of Informal Sector Project	29

#### LIST OF MAPS

Map 3.1	Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF) FY23 Active Projects	13
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# MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

**MAITREYI BORDIA DAS, DIRECTOR**

Trust Funds and Partner Relations  
Development Finance

More than two decades have elapsed since the Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF) was created in 2000. The world is a very different place, with many countries still struggling to rebuild economies battered by global—and overlapping—economic, health, climate, and food crises. Yet, for the poorest and most vulnerable people, the priorities remain the same; food, access to health care, education, and quality jobs continue to endure at the top of the list.

Thanks to the unwavering commitment of the government of Japan and a strong partnership with the World Bank, the JSDF multisector grant program provides much-needed support to poor and vulnerable people across the globe. Innovation, responsiveness, results, skills development, and flexibility represent the hallmark of JSDF-funded projects. With women and young people at its core, the JSDF designs interventions that challenge the status quo, introduce innovative solutions to solve long-standing problems, and offer the potential to deliver impact at scale.

Many projects underway in fiscal year 2023 suffered delays early in the process of implementation due to the coronavirus disease

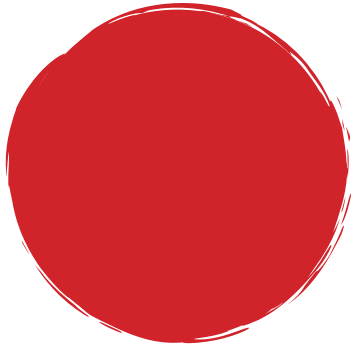
2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, but the majority of these eventually picked up speed and are now showing results. Overall, the projects that were most successful—and consistently exceeded their targets—were those that involved both communities and local institutions in the design and execution of their interventions. Of the grants that closed in fiscal year 2023, notable project stories from Armenia, India, the Solomon Islands, Bhutan, and the Kyrgyz Republic are featured in this report.

The government of Japan has contributed a total of US\$854.3 million to the JSDF, from the time of its inception to the date of this report. In fiscal 2023, JSDF grants directly benefited 994,581 people, over half of whom were women. Approximately 23,690 people were trained in livelihood opportunities, 14,769 people were provided with alternative employment opportunities, and 72,572 people participated in nutrition and early childhood care and development interventions. Local governance and accountability projects benefited 76,531 people, and projects aimed at providing access to basic health and sanitation services improved the lives of 12,426 people.

Thanks to a focus on sustainability and scalability, JSDF grants continue to act as pilots for World Bank operations, or other development partners and governments, to replicate and scale up. The World Bank's reaffirmed commitment to ending extreme poverty and boosting prosperity for a sustainable, livable planet closely aligns with the

objectives of the JSDF to strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable people in poor communities and provide direct assistance during global crises. As we look at fiscal year 2023, there is little doubt that the JSDF–World Bank partnership supports both institutions, while driving transformational change in the communities they jointly serve.



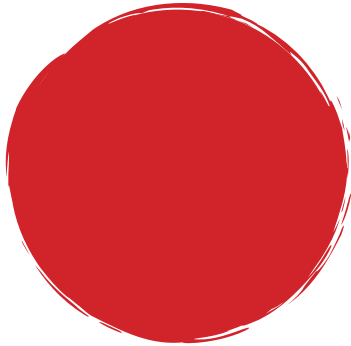


# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>BARMM</b>	Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
<b>CASA 1000</b>	Central Asia South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project
<b>CBSP-2</b>	Community Benefit Sharing Pilot (second phase)
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus disease 2019
<b>DFTPR</b>	Development Finance Vice Presidency, Trust Funds and Partner Relations Department
<b>FY</b>	Fiscal year
<b>GDP</b>	Gross domestic product
<b>IDA</b>	International Development Association (of the World Bank Group)
<b>IT</b>	Information technology
<b>JICA</b>	Japan International Cooperation Agency
<b>JSDF</b>	Japan Social Development Fund
<b>LY4</b>	Livelihoods for Youth Community Support Project (Kyrgyz Republic)
<b>PDR</b>	People's Democratic Republic
<b>SEWA</b>	Self-Employed Women's Association (India)
<b>TICAD</b>	Tokyo International Conference on African Development
<b>YERE</b>	Youth Employment and Rural Entrepreneurship Project (Bhutan)







# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF) is a partnership between the government of Japan and the World Bank that supports a broad array of innovative activities that benefit the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in developing countries across the globe.

JSDF offers a unique value proposition compared to other World Bank funding. The fiscal year 2023 grant portfolio highlights the following features as key drivers of success:

- **Designed with and managed by communities:** Participatory, community-led design is built into the core of JSDF-funded interventions. Many grants are also implemented by local nongovernmental organizations and civil society organizations, a feature that has resulted in better engagement, more precise targeting of those who most need support, more effective knowledge transfer, and increased sustainability.
- **Innovation:** Pilot activities, designed to test out innovative, locally-relevant solutions, are key to bringing transformative change. JSDF grants are focused on providing opportunities to apply creative thinking to long-standing problems, with high potential for positive impact.
- **Forward-looking:** JSDF projects are required to identify exit strategies to ensure that successful interventions continue even after the project ends. This approach has helped many projects secure follow-up funding from local or national authorities, other development partners, or World Bank lending, to scale up and expand interventions.
- **Youth involvement in fragile and conflict-affected areas:** Engaging with youth—particularly young women—in regions marred by violence and war has yielded positive results for women's psychosocial well-being and has led to youth taking an active role in building more peaceful societies.

## ABOUT THE JAPAN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

JSDF grants are aligned with the Fund's strategic framework and designed to reach the poorest and most marginalized groups—those difficult to reach through mainstream interventions. To qualify, grants must:

- **Innovative:** Projects are designed to pilot innovative development approaches or ideas that respond directly to the needs of the poorest and most excluded groups in society. Some projects comprise entirely new innovations, while others replicate approaches that have not yet been adopted in the country but have been successfully tested elsewhere.
- **Respond to the vulnerable and marginalized:** Projects support community-driven development by empowering vulnerable or marginalized groups to participate in efforts that improve their livelihoods.
- **Promote rapid response:** Projects provide expeditious and demonstrable results and deliver sustainable benefits to all stakeholders.
- **Focus on capacity development:** Projects build capacity and participation, as well as empower and strengthen local communities, nongovernmental organizations, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders, to engage target groups in development initiatives.

## FISCAL YEAR 2023 PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

Japan's contributions to the JSDF, from its inception in 2000 to fiscal year 2023, amount to US\$854.3 million, of which net allocations to JSDF grants or accounts represent US\$686.9 million. As of the end of fiscal year 2023, cumulative disbursements amounted to approximately US\$641.9 million, or 93 percent of total allocations. The majority of fiscal year 2023 active grants or accounts are on track to achieve their development objectives, with some even surpassing their original targets. The grants or accounts that closed in fiscal year 2023 all achieved their development objectives, and most of these exceeded their targets.

- The fiscal year 2023 portfolio covered in this annual report is valued at approximately US\$117 million, including both recipient-executed grants and World Bank-executed implementation support. The portfolio consists of 68 disbursing accounts that were active at any time during the fiscal year 2023 period, including ongoing activities and newly approved grants, as well as those grants that closed during the reporting period.
- Grants implemented in fiscal year 2023 were aligned with the JSDF strategic framework and covered all six JSDF thematic priority areas, all of its regions of intervention, and nine World Bank global themes. These grants also aligned with the country development strategies embodied in the Country Partnership Framework between the World Bank and partner country governments.

- Four new JSDF projects were approved by the government of Japan in fiscal year 2023. In Djibouti, a project to promote resilience to gender-based violence will strive to improve survivors' access to basic health and sanitation services and protect at-risk women and girls. In the Philippines' Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), the focus will be on improving learning outcomes of re-enrolled and out-of-school children. In Mongolia, an innovative project will harness digital technologies to improve the livelihoods of pastoral livestock communities. In Rwanda, a JSDF grant will support community health worker

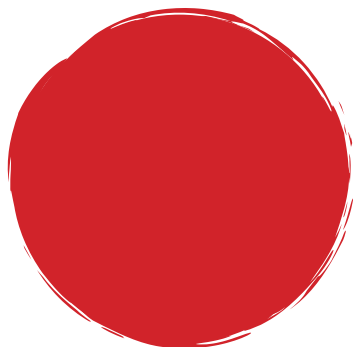
cooperatives to improve their operational and financial performance. These projects are listed in the annex.

- Five projects, amounting to US\$12.2 million in recipient-executed funds, closed during fiscal year 2023.
- At the end of the reporting period, there were 25 ongoing projects, worth US\$90.2 million in recipient-executed funds.
- Three seed fund accounts were approved in fiscal year 2023, for US\$167,055. Seed funds help World Bank teams to strengthen the design and preparation of project proposals.





# 1



## INTRODUCTION TO THE JAPAN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (JSDF)

### 1.1 OBJECTIVES

The Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF) is a collaborative development effort between the government of Japan and the World Bank. It was established in June 2000 to mitigate the far-reaching effects of the global financial crises of the late 1990s on the poorest and most vulnerable groups. The government of Japan is the sole financier of the JSDF.

At the outset, the JSDF provided direct grant assistance to the most disadvantaged groups in countries that were the most severely impacted by global crises. The Fund's scope was subsequently broadened to support innovative interventions that would provide opportunities to improve the livelihoods of the most excluded groups in eligible developing

countries. These modestly-sized projects provide funding to initiatives that deliver rapid results to reduce poverty and foster long-term social development and livelihood improvement. The JSDF also supports unique pilot projects with demonstrable and sustainable development outcomes that can be scaled up or replicated with funding from recipient governments, the World Bank, or other development partners to reach larger groups of marginalized and highly vulnerable people.

JSDF grants are provided to eligible recipients in partner countries. Unlike most World Bank-financed projects executed by governments at the central level, JSDF grants are often executed by nongovernmental organizations, civil society organizations, or local governments. They are implemented at the community level.

# GRANTS FOCUS ON SIX THEMATIC AREAS

1



## LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT

Improve access to employment and livelihood opportunities for poor and vulnerable people.

2



## IMPROVED NUTRITION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT

Improve access to basic health and nutritional services, particularly for adolescent girls, pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children under five years old. Improve access to early stimulation and learning programs for young children in the poorest and most disadvantaged communities.

3



## INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Improve basic educational opportunities for children in remote rural areas, those with disabilities, and girls.

4



## ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Promote agricultural productivity of small and marginal farmers and increase environmentally sustainable farming methods.

5



## LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Improve information for poor and vulnerable people of their legal rights and ensure access to mechanisms for enforcement of those rights. Improve community engagement and local government capacity.

6



## BASIC HEALTH AND SANITATION SERVICES

Improve access to better health and sanitation services.

## **BOX 1.1.1**

### **JSDF GRANT APPROVAL PROCESS**

JSDF-funded projects are centered around community-driven development and participatory project design. All JSDF projects require sponsorship by a task team within the World Bank who can navigate the application process. This ensures that proposed projects are aligned with World Bank strategic priorities in the country and in the relevant global practices.

Within the World Bank, JSDF grants are processed using institutional procedures specific to investment projects financed through trust funds. These guidelines follow a two-stage vetting process that requires the review and endorsement of the relevant global practice(s) and the country management unit at each stage. The government of Japan also reviews packages at each stage of the approval process to confirm alignment with its strategic priorities.

World Bank task teams also engage with the Embassy of Japan and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) country representatives in the recipient country to ensure harmonization, promote synergies, and avoid duplication of development interventions.

To ensure stakeholder ownership and project effectiveness, JSDF could provide up to US\$75,000 to selected World Bank teams, whose proposals meet JSDF standards, to enable them to carry out in-country consultations with potential beneficiary communities and other key stakeholders during the design phase.

## **1.2 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW**

Since its inception in June 2000, the government of Japan has contributed approximately US\$854.3 million to the JSDF. Net allocations to JSDF grants and accounts as of the end of fiscal year 2023 totaled

US\$686.9 million. Cumulative disbursements as of the end of fiscal year 2023 were approximately US\$641.9 million, or 93 percent of total allocations. A significant portion of the unallocated balance has been committed to future projects under various stages of preparation.

### 1.3 TYPES OF GRANTS

JSDF grants and accounts currently fall into two categories:

1. **Regular grants**

Regular program grants and accounts support innovative activities that provide direct benefits to poor and underserved groups, who are not reached by mainstream programs, through tailored approaches that deliver results in the short-term. All grants include capacity building to empower and strengthen local communities, nongovernmental organizations, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders, and also allow them to effectively engage JSDF target

groups in development through learning by doing. During fiscal year 2023, there were 30 projects under implementation, for a total allocation amount of US\$111.6 million, of which the recipient-executed portion was US\$102.4 million.

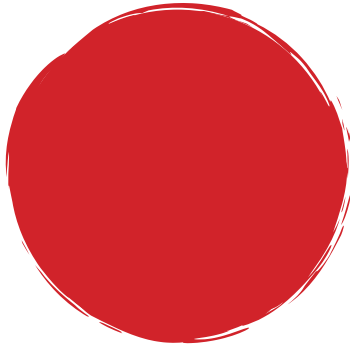
2. **Seed funds**

Three seed fund activities were under implementation during fiscal year 2023, for a total allocation amount of US\$167,055.

The Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) V and the Afghanistan Special Window—two high-profile JSDF programs featured in past reports—came to an end in fiscal year 2022.







# 2

## OVERVIEW OF FISCAL YEAR 2023 PORTFOLIO

### 2.1 RECIPIENT-EXECUTED GRANTS

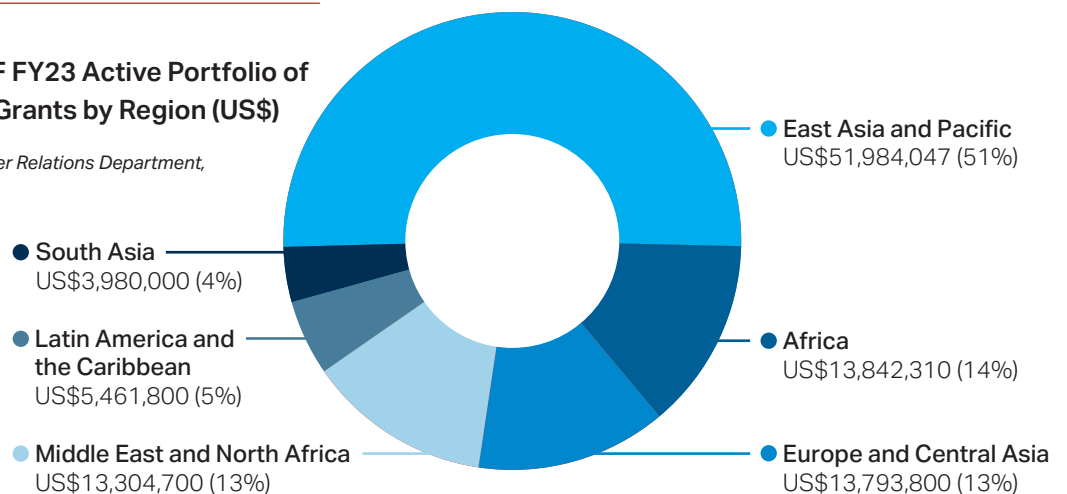
The fiscal year 2023 portfolio consisted of 30 recipient-executed grants, for a total of US\$102.4 million. Five grants closed in this period, and 25 continued operations into the next fiscal year. The East Asia and Pacific region held the largest proportion of active grants at 51 percent of the total grant amount, followed by Africa at 14 percent, and the Europe and Central Asia and Middle East and North Africa regions, each representing 13 percent of the total allocation. Latin America and the Caribbean, at

5 percent, and South Asia, at 4 percent, had the smallest shares of the active portfolio.

This distribution of funds reflects a marked change from the regional split of the previous reporting period, with a relative increase in the share of the portfolio in East Asia and Pacific—previously 24 percent of the active grant amount—and a reduction of the share of the portfolio in Africa, which previously accounted for 34 percent of the active grant amount. This change owes in part to the completion of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) V program. Figure 2.1.1 provides a breakdown of active recipient-executed grants by region.

**FIGURE 2.1.1**  
Composition of JSDF FY23 Active Portfolio of Recipient-Executed Grants by Region (US\$)

Source: Trust Funds and Partner Relations Department, World Bank 2023.



Five recipient-executed grants closed in fiscal year 2023, with disbursements of US\$11.4 million, representing 94 percent of the total grant amount of US\$12.2 million. All five grants were part of the regular program.

Four new projects were approved in fiscal year 2023 to support interventions across three JSDF priority areas and three regions. In Djibouti, a project to promote resilience to gender-based violence will strive to improve survivors' access to basic health and sanitation services and protect at-risk women and girls. In the Philippines' Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), the focus will be on improving learning outcomes of re-enrolled and out-of-school children. In Mongolia, an innovative project will harness digital technologies to improve the livelihoods of pastoral livestock communities. In Rwanda, JSDF's grant will support community health worker cooperatives to improve their operational and financial performance.

A list of all recipient-executed grants under implementation during fiscal year 2023 is provided in the annex.

## 2.2 FISCAL YEAR 2023 RESULTS AND IMPLEMENTATION EXPERIENCE

### Key Results

In fiscal year 2023, JSDF grants directly benefited 994,581 people, with projects reaching 58 percent of women on average. Results include:

- JSDF-funded grants in Armenia, Cambodia, Bhutan, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Kosovo, Kyrgyz Republic, Morocco, Rwanda, Ukraine, Uzbekistan,

Vietnam, and West Bank and Gaza reached over 991,648 people, providing life skills, business development support, quality employment, and financial and digital literacy training. Several projects worked exclusively with poor and vulnerable women and youth; therefore, the total percentage of women who benefited from livelihood improvements exceeds 90 percent. Overall, 23,690 people were trained in livelihood opportunities, and 14,769 people were provided with alternative employment opportunities.

- In Cambodia, Djibouti, and Ghana, a total of 72,572 people, including children, benefited from projects aimed to improve nutrition and early childhood care and development. Of these, basic education or nutrition services reached 11,876 individuals, comprising children under five years old and pregnant or lactating mothers. Interventions also aimed at improving feeding practices for small children, establishing community-based childcare and nutrition services, and strengthening the role and the skills of local social and health workers.
- Projects in Burkina Faso and Mongolia focused on providing equal schooling opportunities to 15,000 disabled or otherwise disadvantaged children and youth, to help them prepare to enter the job market.
- Sustainable agriculture and climate change adaptation was the focus in Nicaragua, where a JSDF grant worked with 896 farmers and small agri-food value-addition businesses to adopt improved, climate-smart, nutrition-sensitive agricultural technologies and increase nutrition for at least 10 percent of women and children in farmer households.

- Strengthening institutions, fostering accountability, and community engagement projects benefited 76,531 people in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Rwanda, the Solomon Islands, and Zambia; 4,478 people were trained on legal rights and alternative dispute resolutions.
- Improved access to health services, support to victims of gender-based violence, and training of health professionals was the focus of JSDF support in Djibouti, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam. Projects in Nicaragua and the Solomon Islands supported improved access to water and sanitation. Together, these projects reached a total of 12,426 people, 7,039 of whom obtained access to improved water, sanitation, or healthcare services. In addition, 2,649 local activists and community members were trained to improve hygiene or sanitation practices.

## **Implementation Experience**

Most of the projects underway in fiscal year 2023 faced some disruptions early in implementation due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, causing delays and requiring a great amount of flexibility and adaptability. Most projects rose to the challenge and found ways to circumvent the impact of lockdowns and limited in-person interactions, while others were required to wait and only increased the speed of implementation once movement restrictions were lifted. Many projects were restructured or extended to enable them to complete delayed activities, or to provide the opportunity to disburse unused funds. Restructuring proposals also often involved reallocation of funds and changes in implementing agencies or institutional arrangements.

Successful project implementation often hinges on sound design. Projects that drew on past experience in similar contexts; conducted extensive, in-depth consultations with prospective project participants; or were able to take a holistic, multisectoral approach were among those that exceeded expectations and moved beyond their original development objectives. Conversely, projects whose design was not as detailed or lacked a deep understanding of the communities where they were going to be implemented, those that had an unclear targeting strategy or whose objectives were not clearly defined, and those with problematic monitoring and evaluation systems, presented implementation issues that hindered the achievement of expected results.

The fiscal year 2023 portfolio was characterized by high levels of engagement for women and youth—particularly in the areas of employment, business development, education, and access to health services—and the introduction of digital technology for training, access to financial services, and communication. Projects that spent a significant amount of time and effort to strengthen local institutions and train their staff were among the most successful in reaching their objectives, as well as potentially making a lasting impact.

## **Sustainability**

JSDF places strong emphasis on piloting innovation: projects are required to include evaluation plans and identify exit strategies in order to ensure the continuation, replication or scale-up of successful interventions after the project ends. This approach has helped many projects secure follow-up funding from local or national authorities, other development partners, or World Bank lending. Among the

five projects that closed in fiscal year 2023, two had established clear linkages to World Bank-financed operations at the time of closure:

- The Community Benefit Sharing Pilot in the Solomon Islands successfully piloted an intervention that is being scaled up through a US\$5 million grant by the International Development Association (IDA), approved in September 2023. This second phase of the Community Benefit Sharing Pilot (CBSP-2) integrates key lessons learned from the JSDF grant and carries forward activities that have been assessed as impactful during the pilot phase, such as training, and access to infrastructure and services. When the first pilot project closed at the end of fiscal year 2023, construction work had begun on the Tina River Hydropower Development Project. Benefits are expected to flow to the communities by the time the CBSP-2 is completed. For more details on the Community Benefit Sharing Pilot, read the story featured in section 3.5 of this report.
- The Livelihoods for Youth Community Support Project in the Kyrgyz Republic complemented the Central Asia South

Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project (CASA 1000) Community Support Program, a community-driven development project funded by the World Bank.

The CASA 1000 Community Support Program works to improve the social and economic infrastructure and livelihoods of communities living along the 450-kilometer CASA 1000 transmission line in the Kyrgyz Republic. The companion US\$2.8 million JSDF grant was designed to increase the impact of the program by providing training and capacity development to local economic actors, focusing on skills development and innovative livelihoods for youth, and strengthening economic infrastructure investments. Lessons learned from the innovations piloted under this JSDF project are informing the design and implementation of community projects in the CASA 1000 Community Support Program, which, in turn, is preparing the communities to maximize the benefit of their share in energy revenues from the broader government program, CASA 1000. For more details on the Livelihoods for Youth Community Support Project, read the story featured in section 3.3 of this report.

## 2.3 DISBURSEMENTS OF ACTIVE AND CLOSED GRANTS

The aggregate cumulative disbursements of the 30 recipient-executed grants in the fiscal year 2023 portfolio amounted to US\$38.6 million, or 38 percent of the total grant amount of US\$102.4 million, as presented in table 2.3.1.

The East Asia and Pacific region had the largest number and volume of grants by

region, with a total of 11 grants. Cumulatively, the region had disbursed 21 percent of its allocation of US\$52 million by the end of fiscal year 2023. The region with the highest disbursement rate was South Asia, with two grants fully disbursed for a total of US\$4 million, followed by Europe and Central Asia, in which five grants were active during the reporting period, following an average disbursement rate of 66 percent from the US\$13.8 million allocation.

**TABLE 2.3.1**  
FY23 Portfolio Cumulative Disbursement Performance of Recipient-Executed Grants by Region

Source: Trust Funds and Partner Relations Department, World Bank 2023.

Region	# of Recipient-Executed Grants	Total Grant Amount (US\$)	Amount Disbursed as of End FY23 (US\$)	% Disbursed
East Asia and Pacific	11	51,984,047	10,749,552	21%
Africa	5	13,842,310	7,992,778	58%
Europe and Central Asia	5	13,793,800	9,087,205	66%
Middle East and North Africa	5	13,304,700	3,694,859	28%
Latin America and Caribbean	2	5,461,800	3,134,265	57%
South Asia	2	3,980,000	3,960,689	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>102,366,657</b>	<b>38,619,347</b>	<b>38%</b>

Table 2.3.2 provides the breakdown of cumulative fiscal year 2023 disbursements by World Bank global practice.

**TABLE 2.3.2**  
**FY23 Portfolio**  
**Cumulative**  
**Disbursement**  
**Performance**  
**of Recipient-**  
**Executed**  
**Grants by Global**  
**Practice**

*Source: Trust Funds and Partner Relations Department, World Bank 2023.*

Global Practice	# of Recipient-Executed Grants	Total Grant Amount (US\$)	Amount Disbursed as of End FY23 (US\$)	% Disbursed
Social Sustainability and Inclusion	12	54,976,100	14,201,311	26%
Health, Nutrition and Population	5	13,614,400	5,912,972	43%
Agriculture and Food	3	6,736,532	3,397,944	50%
Transport	2	5,600,000	1,510,801	27%
Social Protection and Jobs	2	5,550,000	5,300,000	95%
Education	2	5,504,605	2,495,299	45%
Finance, Competitiveness and Innovation	2	5,130,000	3,831,532	75%
Governance	1	2,750,000	1,046,952	38%
Urban, Resilience and Land	1	2,505,020	922,537	37%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>102,366,657</b>	<b>38,619,347</b>	<b>38%</b>

## 2.4 SEED FUNDS

The JSDF Seed Fund Program awards grants to World Bank teams to assist in the stakeholder consultation processes, with a special focus on grassroots communities. The program selectively provides World Bank-executed accounts up to US\$75,000 to help World Bank task teams develop frameworks that meet JSDF criteria for moving to the project preparation stage.

JSDF encourages stakeholder consultations that will help to ensure project ownership and to align the activities with the needs of prospective project participants. Engaging with the poorest

and most vulnerable people often requires outreach to marginalized groups, who reside in remote or otherwise difficult-to-access areas. JSDF seed grants allow World Bank teams to better engage with these groups through a participatory process, which in turn leads to investments that are better informed and more focused on impacting these groups.

The collaboration with local nongovernmental organizations and other community organizations at the design and preparation phases is critical for ensuring project effectiveness and sustainability. Three seed fund accounts, for a total of US\$167,055, were approved during fiscal year 2023, as shown in table 2.4.1.

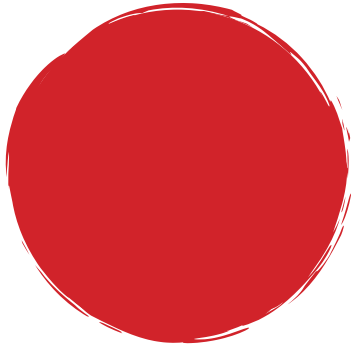
**TABLE 2.4.1**  
**Seed Fund**  
**Accounts**  
**Approved During**  
**FY23**

*Source: Trust Funds and Partner Relations Department, World Bank 2023.*

Name	Closing Date	Amount (US\$)
JSDF Seed Fund Philippines Developing Community-Driven Development Approach for Peacebuilding in BARMM	9/15/2022	67,885
Preparation for Lebanon JSDF Microwork Project	4/30/2024	50,000
(Seed Fund) Voice, Representation, and Action by Women with Disabilities for Inclusive Healthcare and Livelihoods	12/15/2023	49,170
<b>Total</b>		<b>167,055</b>







# 3

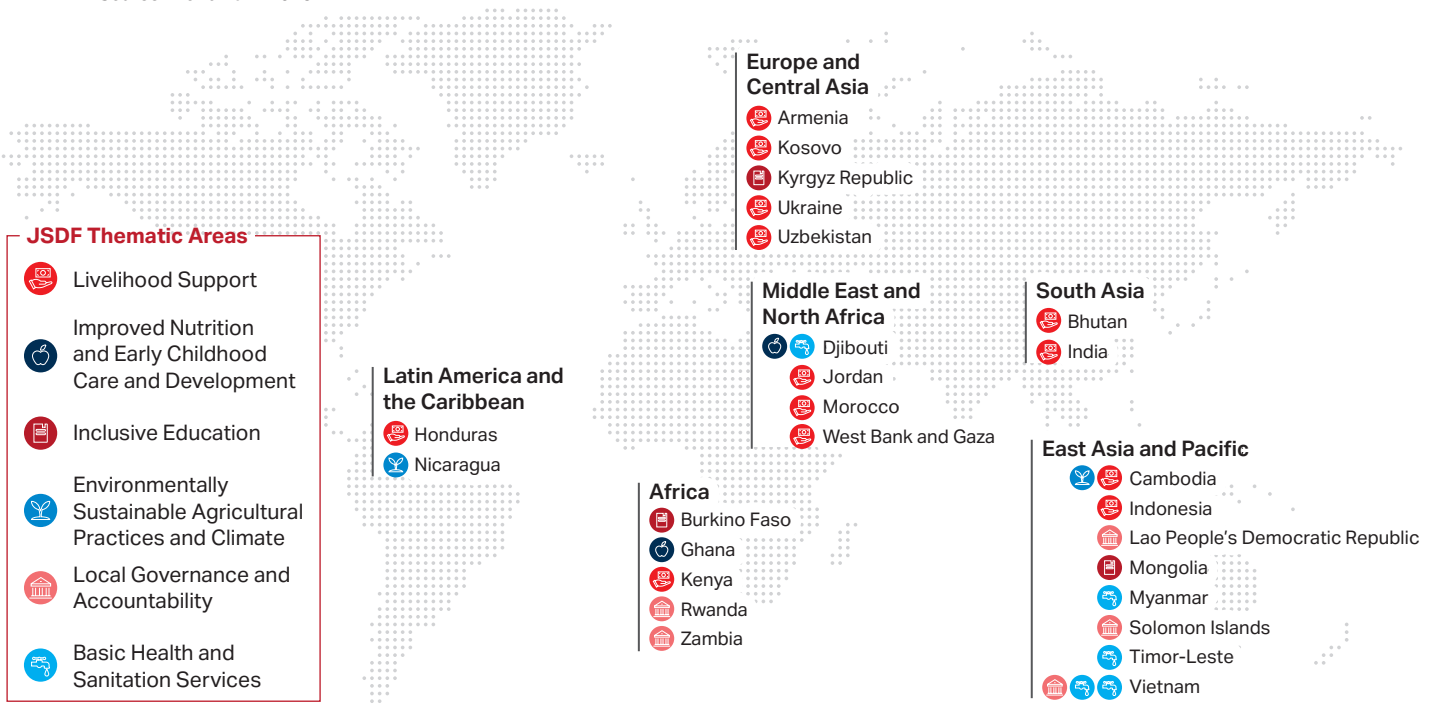
## PROJECT OVERVIEW

Of the 30 projects under implementation in fiscal year 2023, five closed during the reporting period, and the remaining 25 continued operations into the new fiscal year. The fiscal year 2023 portfolio

showed a remarkable diversity and breadth of interventions, with a wide geographic coverage and interventions spanning all six JSDF thematic areas, as depicted in map 3.1.

**MAP 3.1**  
**Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF)**  
**FY23 Active Projects**

Source: World Bank 2023.



# GRANT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

The performance of a project toward achieving its project development objective is assessed by comparing the actual values of outcome indicators to their respective targets at grant closure. Project design teams develop the outcome indicators in alignment with the JSDF results framework and determine target values in collaboration with the implementing agencies during the design and preparation stages. In some cases, refinements or revisions to the indicators and target values are carried out during the implementation period—often at midterm review—to address emerging challenges.

World Bank task teams are responsible for supervising grant implementation. As a part of supervision, teams assess the overall performance of projects toward meeting the development objective, as well as the implementation progress. Teams report their assessments through the submission of implementation status reports for review by World Bank management. The procedure for implementation status reports for JSDF grants is identical to the process followed for World Bank loans and grants. The teams rank the progress relative to the achievement of project development objectives, as well as the pace and quality of implementation, in accordance with a six-point scale: highly satisfactory, satisfactory, moderately satisfactory, moderately unsatisfactory, unsatisfactory, and highly unsatisfactory.

## 3.1 LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT



With nearly 700 million people still living on less than US\$2.15 a day, the world will likely miss its goal of ending extreme poverty by 2030. Not only do these people often lack the skills, tools, and resources to improve their livelihoods, they are also acutely vulnerable to external shocks, such as climate-related disasters or public health emergencies. Global efforts to create income opportunities and improve poor people's living conditions, while addressing inequalities faced by women and young people, are crucial for building stronger, more stable economies for everyone.

The JSDF continues to underscore livelihood support as a defining theme of its portfolio, with 14 grants totaling US\$36.8 million active in this area during fiscal year 2023. Through its interventions, the JSDF helps vulnerable women and youth in isolated or disadvantaged communities gain the skills and knowledge to build successful businesses, find quality jobs, and increase their incomes. Working in partnership with grassroots organizations and local institutions, JSDF grants provide business development skills, information technology (IT) and financial literacy training, and employment opportunities to more than 814,000 people, lifting them out of poverty while building resilience within their communities.



## Recipient-Executed Grants that Closed in Fiscal Year 2023

### YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROJECT—BHUTAN

2020–2022

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$1.25 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Agriculture and Food

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Generate new and more productive employment for the poor and vulnerable youth in southwestern Bhutan.

### INDIA DIGITAL FINANCIAL INCLUSION OF INFORMAL SECTOR PROJECT

2019–2023

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.73 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Finance, Competitiveness, and Innovation

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Foster increased use of digital financial services by women engaged in informal activities.

### LIVELIHOODS FOR YOUTH COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROJECT—KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

2019–2023

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.73 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Social Sustainability and Inclusion

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Support innovative livelihoods development and the employability of an estimated 4,000 young women and men in about 20 target communities to improve socioeconomic opportunity and inclusion.

### PROMOTING SOCIAL INCLUSION AND SELF-RELIANT LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES IN ARMENIA

2020–2023

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.70 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Social Protection and Jobs

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Increase access to social assistance benefits and services, and provide self-employment support for about 11,000 extremely vulnerable people in Armenia.

## Active Grants

### INTEGRATED SOCIAL SERVICES FOR VULNERABLE YOUTH—JORDAN

2017–2023

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.80 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Social Sustainability and Inclusion

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Improve the quality of life for vulnerable youth by increasing the provision of services to young people, enhancing youth participation in decision-making related to these services, and empowering local nongovernmental organizations, service providers, and communities.

### COMMUNITY-BASED SOCIAL SERVICE DELIVERY PROJECT—UKRAINE

2018–2023

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.85 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Social Protection and Jobs

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Improve access of vulnerable people to social protection services.



**THEMATIC AREA:**  
**Livelihood  
Support**



### **BOX 3.1.1 PROMOTING SOCIAL INCLUSION AND SELF-RELIANT LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES IN ARMENIA**

**2020–2023**

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.70 million

Following the Velvet Revolution of 2018, Armenia's new government embarked on a series of reforms to fight corruption, improve governance, and promote transparency. Despite the country's best efforts to tackle inequalities and foster economic growth, the combined effects of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and the global financial crisis severely impacted the country's poor and vulnerable people.

Launched in 2020, the JSDF-funded grant, Promoting Social Inclusion and Self-Reliant Livelihood Activities, was designed to address the pressing needs of the poorest and most vulnerable people in the country, including unemployed youth, female-headed households, families with children, and disabled people.

Given the limited availability of jobs—particularly in rural areas—the project promoted self-employment as a way to lift people out of poverty. Thanks to the project's support, 3,300 people started their own business in the agricultural sector and beyond, including in animal husbandry, beekeeping, dairy production, greenhouse farming, poultry farming, trade in feed, health-related services, bakeries, tourism, training and event organization, as well as fast food services. The project also provided 11,000 people with better access to social assistance benefits, as well as crucial support for entrepreneurship.

"Our goal is to motivate [project participants], encourage them, and create solid preconditions to independently overcome social difficulties and change their lives through effective employment programs," said Narek Mkrtchyan, Minister of Labor and Social Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, at a project event in 2022.

Social workers, hired and trained by the project, played a pivotal role in empowering future entrepreneurs to build sound business practices and increase their income. They provided guidance, connected entrepreneurs with self-employment opportunities, and fostered engagement with customers.

Of the 300 businesses launched with support from the project, 225 were still in operation by the end of the project. Notably, 40 percent of these sustained businesses were run by women—a result of the project's focus on promoting long-term entrepreneurial ventures among women.

One successful example comes from Vagharshapat, where a businesswoman applied to the Armenian General Benevolent Union for financing to build a greenhouse for growing strawberries. Her request was granted, and the funds she received helped her to expand her business.

In addition to creating new thriving business ventures, the project distributed sub-grants to selected local entrepreneurs, which resulted in a 25 percent increase in their household incomes. The project also facilitated access to social assistance benefits and services to 6,000 people, half of which were women.

Thanks to its coordinated approach, the project made a community-wide impact that goes beyond providing much-needed income sources for vulnerable people. Examples of successful entrepreneurs reinvesting in the community abound, according to the project evaluation report. In one instance, "Beneficiaries from Ararat Marz donated a portion of their products to a local child protection center," said the report authors. "In another, in Shirak Marz, beneficiaries directed funds collected during a trade fair toward the medical treatment of another beneficiary." Sometimes, seed funds can truly make communities grow.

## **IMPROVING THE LIVELIHOODS OF MISKITO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN LA MOSKITIA—HONDURAS**

*2020–2024*

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.72 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Social Sustainability and Inclusion

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Promote socio-economic productive activities to improve the livelihoods of Miskito indigenous peoples in Honduras.

## **SUPPORTING YOUTH-INCLUSIVE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT IN KOSOVO**

*2020–2024*

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.79 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Social Sustainability and Inclusion

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Improve the socioeconomic inclusion of at least 3,000 marginalized youth in vulnerable communities in Kosovo through youth-driven civic engagement and skill-building activities.

## **ENHANCING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR RURAL WOMEN—UZBEKISTAN**

*2021–2024*

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.73 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Social Sustainability and Inclusion

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Increase economic opportunities for vulnerable rural women through skills development and improved access to finance and markets.

## **COMMUNITY-BASED RURAL ROADS MAINTENANCE—MOROCCO**

*2019–2025*

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.85 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Transport

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Provide livelihood improvement opportunities to disadvantaged rural inhabitants and maintain the accessibility and usability of rural roads.

## **CAMBODIA SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD FOR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES PROJECT**

*2022–2025*

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.75 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Agriculture and Food

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Improve the livelihoods of indigenous communities in the provinces of Ratanakiri and Mondulakiri through innovative farming practices, complemented by off-farm and non-farm activities.

## **IMPROVED LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES AND ACCESSIBILITY FOR UNDERSERVED URBAN COMMUNITIES IN MERU, KENYA**

*2022–2025*

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.75 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Transport

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Create employment opportunities in labor-based road maintenance and improve underserved urban communities' access to basic services, such as schools, health facilities, and markets.

### PALESTINIAN HERITAGE TRAIL: INCREASED ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND IMPROVED LIVELIHOOD FOR FRAGILE COMMUNITIES PROJECT— WEST BANK AND GAZA

2022–2025

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.40 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Finance, Competitiveness, and Innovation

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Increase economic opportunities and improve the livelihoods of Palestinians in fragile communities along the Palestinian Heritage Trail, across the West Bank, with a special focus on women and youth.

### INCLUSIVE LIVELIHOODS FOR POOR RURAL COMMUNITIES IN EASTERN INDONESIA PROJECT

2023–2025

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.73 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Social Sustainability and Inclusion

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Increase access to livelihood opportunities for populations vulnerable to poverty and food insecurity in 80 villages in Maluku and East Nusa Tenggara provinces in Eastern Indonesia.

## 3.2 IMPROVED NUTRITION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT



Malnutrition is a multifaceted and complex issue, affecting health and well-being, productivity, and economic development. Taken together, undernutrition and obesity—both a result of malnutrition—affect nearly 76 million children under five years old, predominantly in poor households worldwide. At this rate, the world is well off-track on both the undernutrition and the obesity targets for 2030. In poor communities, women and girls are also more likely than men and boys to stay hungry when food is scarce, exacerbating gender inequalities and further limiting their opportunities for learning and leading healthy, productive lives.

In fiscal year 2023, three active JSDF grants reached 119,767 people in Cambodia, Djibouti, and Ghana for a total investment of US\$8.1 million. These grants for improved nutrition and early childhood care and development helped to establish quality sustainable, community-based childcare services, while providing pregnant and lactating women, mothers, fathers, and adolescents with basic education on childcare, nutrition, and feeding practices for small children. Rather than focusing solely on nutrition supplements, the projects involved community leaders, as well as local social and health workers, to raise awareness on nutrition. Village-based entrepreneurs and farmers were also involved in the production of more diverse, nutritious foods to enhance local food systems and increase the availability and intake of more diverse dietary options. The sale of these products in turn helped to increase household incomes.



## Active Grants

### GHANA IMPROVED FEEDING PRACTICES FOR FIRST 1,000 DAYS PROJECT

2020–2023

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.86 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Health, Nutrition & Population

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Improve feeding practices among 5,520 targeted women of reproductive age (including pregnant and lactating women) and 4,900 children under two (the so-called “first 1,000 days of life”) in Kassena, Nankana, Sekyere East, and Kintampo South Districts.

### CAMBODIA COMMUNITY-BASED CHILDCARE FOR GARMENT FACTORY WORKERS PROJECT

2020–2024

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.70 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Social Sustainability and Inclusion

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Establish quality sustainable, community-based childcare services for garment factory workers that improve employment and labor outcomes, reduce unpaid household childcare, and improve child development.

### EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES FOR BETTER NUTRITION PROJECT—DJIBOUTI

2023–2025

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.50 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Health, Nutrition, and Population

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Increase access to community-based child and adolescent/youth nutrition services in target areas.



### 3.3 INCLUSIVE EDUCATION



Although an estimated 15 percent of the world’s population has some form of disability, most education systems struggle to provide special needs students with adequate materials and the personalized attention they require. Social exclusion, poor teacher training, and inadequate facilities hamper school attendance and retention for disabled children and young adults. Without access to quality education, they tend to be poorer and less likely to find quality employment than people without disabilities.



JSDF projects in Burkina Faso and Mongolia have been actively working to support children with disabilities and youth with socioemotional challenges from vulnerable communities in accessing quality education and training. In fiscal year 2023, JSDF investments in inclusive education amounted to US\$5.5 million. A total of 15,000 disabled and vulnerable students were enrolled in school and engaged in learning through adjustments to the school physical environment, specialized curricula and training packages, and innovative youth competitions.

#### Active Grants

##### **ENTREPRENEURSHIP-FOCUSED SOCIOEMOTIONAL SKILLS FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE YOUTH IN RURAL MONGOLIA**

2019–2023

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.75 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Education

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Train vulnerable, disadvantaged youth in 25 of Mongolia’s poorest rural districts, across five provinces, with socioemotional skills for improved performance in school and preparation for entry into self-employment.

##### **IMPROVING EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES—BURKINA FASO**

2021–2024

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.75 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Education

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Increase the access and quality of education for vulnerable children, with a focus on children with disabilities, in the five poorest regions—Eastern, Central-East, South-West, Plateau Central, and North—of the country and Ouagadougou.





**THEMATIC AREA:**  
**Livelihood**  
**Support**



### **BOX 3.3.1 LIVELIHOODS FOR YOUTH COMMUNITY SUPPORT PROJECT — KYRGYZ REPUBLIC**

**2019–2023**

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.73 million

Home to almost 7 million people, the Kyrgyz Republic grapples with persistent socioeconomic challenges. Despite abundant natural resources and potential for economic growth in energy production, agriculture, and tourism, the country remains one of the poorest economies in the Europe and Central Asia region. People living in rural and mountainous areas are among the most vulnerable. Isolation, limited access to basic services, and economic slowdowns are affecting the livelihoods of two-thirds of the Kyrgyz population.

Rural women and youth are among the poorest and most at-risk. Compared to men, women find fewer job opportunities or are confined to informal and lower-paid positions. High childcare costs and gender norms also often prevent them from seeking employment. So far, government efforts to regulate the economic sector have not resulted in improvements to the overall business environment, especially for small- and medium-sized enterprises, further reducing employment opportunities.

Launched in 2019, the Livelihoods for Youth (L4Y) Community Support Project is an innovative project aimed at enhancing economic participation for youth and women, supporting youth-centric businesses, economic infrastructure, and digital platforms, and contributing to poverty reduction and shared prosperity. The project closely aligned with established initiatives, such as the Central Asia South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project (CASA 1000), CASA 1000 Community Support Program, and the World Bank Country Partnership Framework for the Kyrgyz Republic. It focused on vulnerable subdistricts in the southern region, especially the Fergana Valley, and contributed to addressing diversity and conflicts while emphasizing gender equality and benefits for women.

Designed as a complement to the CASA 1000 Community Support Program, L4Y ran education programs in business planning and provided business development support to 300 young individuals, including in digital technology. In its four years of operation, L4Y successfully provided skills development and training to 3,948 young people and women, leading to a 1,670 percent increase in income. Through its focus on business development, the project contributed to a 25 percent rise in the number of self-employed young people, furthering their economic independence.

Its focus on equal participation, empowerment of women, and lifelong learning were highly successful and resulted in a 93 percent completion rate among young women. In addition, the project's accomplishments in skill development, income generation, and economic inclusion among young people has resulted in 88 percent of youth reporting a deeper sense of economic inclusion. Both results clearly indicate commitment and motivation, better community integration, and the participants' willingness to actively contribute to shaping the local economy.

The project's tangible achievements in skills development, income generation, and community integration highlight the transformative impact of dedicated efforts to foster economic opportunities for youth and women. As the Kyrgyz Republic navigates its socioeconomic landscape, projects like L4Y exemplify the potential for positive change and sustainable development.

### 3.4 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES AND CLIMATE CHANGE



Driven by population growth and rising incomes in developing countries, the agricultural sector has been hard-pressed to meet the growing demand for food and other agricultural products. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations warns that this rise in productivity has come at high costs: the decline in soil fertility, energy overconsumption, and pollution, coupled with conflict over access to land and water, threaten social cohesion as well as our collective capacity to produce nutritious, healthy food for all.

Climate change poses an additional threat to our food systems and to sustainable development, severely undermining progress toward eradicating hunger, malnutrition, and poverty. Transforming the agricultural sector to reduce its contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and to help farmers prepare for the inevitable shifts in climate is a priority.

In this context, JSDF provides grants to build resilience to climate change and boost sustainable agricultural production, in order to provide nutritious, healthy food for poor and vulnerable households. In fiscal year 2023, its agriculture and climate portfolio consisted of a US\$2.7 million grant to strengthen the agricultural productivity, climate resilience, and nutritional security of 1,590 farmers and small agri-food value-addition businesses, as well as support the organization of small, local start-up firms to provide extension services to farmers in Nicaragua.



#### Active Grants

##### **NICARAGUA DRY CORRIDOR NUTRITION-SENSITIVE AGRICULTURE PROJECT**

2021–2025

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.74 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Agriculture and Food

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** To strengthen agricultural productivity, climate resilience, and nutritional security in selected municipalities of the Dry Corridor of Nicaragua.



THEMATIC AREA:  
Livelihood  
Support



### BOX 3.4.1 YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROJECT — BHUTAN

2020–2022

GRANT AMOUNT: US\$1.25 million

In the high mountains of Bhutan, quality jobs for young people living in remote, isolated communities are hard to find. This is especially true for women, who face an unemployment rate of 15.4 percent, compared to the national average of 2.1 percent. The impressive 88 percent growth in gross domestic product (GDP) between 2000 and 2019 has yet to trickle down to rural Bhutan, which is home to half of the country's population, and where people still mostly practice subsistence farming. Faced with limited employment opportunities in agriculture, the younger generation has no choice but to migrate to urban centers or abroad, only to find that quality jobs are unavailable to them due to inadequate education and training.

In response to this challenge, the JSDF-funded Youth Employment and Rural Entrepreneurship (YERE) Project was designed to generate new, quality employment for poor and vulnerable youth in rural areas, and to help them create self-employment opportunities. The project focused on nurturing essential technical and business skills, instilling an entrepreneurial mindset, and creating financial incentives in the form of grants for unemployed youth wishing to start their own business. The project focused on sectors such as livestock rearing, mushroom production, food processing, handicrafts, and eco-tourism services, which have been identified based on a "One Village–One Product" strategy. Through this approach, each village specializes in the production of quality goods or services where they have a comparative advantage, community wisdom, and tradition.

To deliver training, mobile mentoring teams identified motivated youth and provided customized technical advice and guidance to help them prepare their business plan and launch their business. They coached and trained them on financial literacy, accounting, governance, record keeping, marketing, and IT, including how the latter applies to running and growing a business.

As a result of its interventions, the project created jobs for 368 young trainees, of which 206 were women, exceeding its initial target. Of the 127 grant recipients who established a new, youth-led enterprise, 107 were operational six months after receiving project support, and 60 percent of the total were fully operational and were generating business income. Among existing youth-led enterprises that received project support, 57 percent experienced increased profitability. These enterprises, in turn, created 33 new jobs. For participating farmers, project results are mixed, as productivity gains from training have proved difficult to measure, and the generic five-day training was not sufficiently geared toward enhancing productivity and product quality.

Overall, participating youth were very satisfied with the training and financial support, according to a survey conducted by the evaluation team. They reported improvements in their entrepreneurial mindset and appreciated the much-needed financial push to launch or upgrade their business.

## 3.5 LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY



Good governance and accountability are the building blocks of just and equitable societies. They are essential to well-distributed economic growth, human capital development, and social cohesion. The recent emergence of multilayered crises—the COVID-19 pandemic, the global food and energy crises, and the war in Ukraine—have put many governments and their institutions to the test. In the face of uncertainty and eroding purchasing power, people need strong, transparent, and accountable institutions to rely on and trust.

JSDF's fiscal year 2023 portfolio in support of local governance and accountability totaled US\$13.3 million in grants, benefitting 191,736 people. Projects in Lao People's Democratic Republic, Rwanda, the Solomon Islands, Vietnam, and Zambia helped people to exercise their rights due to expanded access to legal services and counseling, improved citizen participation in local decision-making, and provided training and support to local government officials.



### Grants Closed in Fiscal Year 2023

#### COMMUNITY BENEFIT SHARING PILOT PROJECT—THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

2018–2023

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.80 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Social Sustainability and Inclusion

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Establish the institutional arrangements and capacity for benefit sharing communities to manage a share of the revenues from the operation of a large-scale infrastructure investment project and improve their basic services and economic opportunities.

### Active Grants

#### PUBLIC INFORMATION AND AWARENESS SERVICES FOR VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES IN LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

2021–2024

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.51 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Urban, Resilience, and Land

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Improve access to legal information and counseling services for 15,000 poor and vulnerable people, of which 60 percent are women.

#### ADVANCING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT PROJECT—RWANDA

2021–2024

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.73 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Social Sustainability and Inclusion

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Improve the well-being of individuals and communities, and enhance the engagement of citizens by national and local governments in villages.

**VOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY:  
COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT FOR  
IMPROVED LOCAL SERVICE DELIVERY  
PROJECT—ZAMBIA**

2022–2025

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.75 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Governance

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Increase economic opportunities for vulnerable rural women in the project areas through skills development and improved access to finance and markets.

**IMPROVED DELIVERY OF LEGAL AID  
FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE  
PROJECT—VIETNAM**

2022–2026

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.50 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Social Sustainability and Inclusion

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Improve the delivery of legal aid and promote the legal empowerment of beneficiaries in the Northern Mountain region.



**THEMATIC AREA:**  
Local Governance  
and Accountability



**BOX 3.5.1 COMMUNITY BENEFIT SHARING PILOT PROJECT —  
THE SOLOMON ISLANDS**

2018–2023

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.80 million

When the first large-scale renewable energy project—the Tina River Hydropower Development Project—was launched in 2017 in the Solomon Islands, the cost of electricity was high, connectivity to the grid was low, and diesel made up 99 percent of electricity production. Located on the Tina River tributary, 30 kilometers southeast of Honiara, the project involved building a dam, tunnel, powerhouse, and transmission line on customary land. Its goal was to reduce the cost of power and improve reliability of its supply by diversifying production.

Learning from experience with similar large-scale projects, particularly in areas with complex land tenure tribal rules, the project conducted an extensive process of free, prior and informed consent consultations with landholders and affected communities, to ensure their involvement and to create shared benefits. The JSDF-funded Community Benefit Sharing Pilot Project was launched in 2018 to establish the appropriate enabling environment, institutional arrangements, and operational procedures for the community benefit sharing mechanism and to ensure that revenues from the operation of the hydropower plant were equitably distributed within the communities whose land was being used to build the infrastructure.

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Keeping community needs at the forefront, the Community Benefit Sharing Pilot Project successfully developed the institutional arrangements and operational procedures for the community benefit sharing mechanism, and in 2023 created the Bahomea and Malango Community Benefit Sharing Trust Association. An interim governing body for the Community Benefit Sharing Fund—tasked with redistributing a portion of the revenue through non-cash development benefits to host communities—was also formed.

The project also set up 16 new solar-powered water supply systems and upgraded two existing ones. These investments were instrumental in improving water access to 4,360 people and reducing the distance to the nearest water source, for the benefit of women and children, who are most often responsible for fetching water for household consumption.

Working in conjunction with Solomon Power, the project connected the communities to the grid for the first time in April 2023. Going beyond the initial scope, the grid now reaches 141 households, allowing 776 rural residents constant access to home lighting and the possibility to use working tools and household appliances, even to generate some money. “Some households produce ice blocks and store them overnight for selling to generate a little income,” said a woman from Tina. Reliable access to electricity is expected to provide opportunities for new local businesses, and financing of grid extensions and household connections has become a priority for the community.

The project also connected six schools and two clinics to the grid and improved water access. “We no longer dismiss classes because there is no access to running water at the school,” said a teacher at the Rate Community School. Reduced disruptions and improved services are not the only benefits. Electricity-powered tools can now be used to make faster, more durable repairs or improvements when needed. For teachers, access to IT tools and equipment to prepare classes has resulted in better educational outcomes: “Now we can make photocopies and distribute them to all students, which is helping with learning, especially for slow learners,” said another teacher.

Finally, the project opened up the job market. In total, 339 community members received training in income and job-related skills, and a job-seekers database was established to connect those in search of employment with potential employers.

Navigating the intricate interplay of cultural, legal, and economic factors is one of the project’s primary successes. The second is its focus on inclusivity, engagement, and empowered community leaders. Together, they are a testament to how a holistic approach to large infrastructure projects can benefit communities and governments alike and move entire nations toward common goals.

## 3.6 BASIC HEALTH AND SANITATION SERVICES



The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the fragility of health systems worldwide, as well as the need for government to invest in quality, affordable, and accessible healthcare for all. Access to safe drinking water and sanitation services is still a challenge, particularly in rural areas of developing countries, exposing millions of people to premature death and illness caused by contaminated water and pollution. At the same time, non-communicable diseases, such as cancer, heart disease, and diabetes are on the rise, and months of lockdowns, economic hardship, and war have taken a toll on the mental health of millions. With less than one mental health worker per 100,000 people in low-income countries and only 2 percent of government health budgets going toward treatment and prevention, mental health is widely underestimated and underfunded.

The JSDF dedicated US\$36 million to providing 107,000 people with access to health care services, including services for the elderly, counseling, and care for survivors of gender-based violence, and worked with community leaders and local healthcare institutions to strengthen their preparedness and response to COVID-19 and future health emergencies.



### Active Grants

#### ENHANCING COMMUNITY-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT—MYANMAR

2020–2023

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$25.00 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Social Sustainability and Inclusion

**THEMATIC AREA:** Basic Health and Sanitation Services

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Enable poor rural communities to benefit from improved access to and use of basic infrastructure and services through a people-centered approach.

#### REDUCING INCOME- AND HEALTH-RELATED VULNERABILITY OF OLDER PERSONS—VIETNAM

2020–2024

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.75 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Health, Nutrition, and Population

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Increase the participation of older persons in income-generating activities and their use of community-based health and social care services in six provinces in Vietnam.

## **STRENGTHENING PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE TO COVID-19 AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL IN VIETNAM**

*2021–2024*

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.75 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Health, Nutrition, and Population

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Strengthen the capacities of communities, including community leaders, health and other sectors, civil society organizations, and vulnerable populations in their preparedness and response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as for other health emergencies in the project's provinces.

## **TIMOR-LESTE COVID-19 AND HEALTH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING SUPPORT PROJECT**

*2022–2025*

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.75 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Health, Nutrition, and Population

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Strengthen the capacities of communities in their preparedness for and response to COVID-19 and other health emergencies.

## **PROMOTING WOMEN'S AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE—DJIBOUTI**

*2023–2025*

**GRANT AMOUNT:** US\$2.75 million

**GLOBAL PRACTICE:** Social Sustainability and Inclusion

**DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE:** Improve girls' and women's access to skills development and livelihoods support, raise community awareness and mobilization in the fight against gender-based violence, and improve the quality of psychosocial counseling services utilized by survivors of gender-based violence.







## BOX 3.6.1 INDIA DIGITAL FINANCIAL INCLUSION OF INFORMAL SECTOR PROJECT

2019–2023

GRANT AMOUNT: US\$2.73 million

While India's booming IT sector has been transforming the country's economy over the past two decades, women operating in the informal sector were being left behind. In the 88 percent of households in India with a mobile device, women were 23 percent less likely to own a mobile phone and 68 percent less likely to use the Internet than men, particularly in rural areas. Yet, mobile phones are an essential tool for accessing digital finance and mobile banking. They also offer convenience, safety, privacy, and access to more advanced financial offerings.

Funded by a JSDF grant and managed by the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), the India Digital Financial Inclusion of Informal Sector Project aimed to increase the participation of women from low-income and marginalized households in digital financial services. Through training in digital and financial literacy, SEWA members were given the knowledge and tools to keep pace with contemporary market requirements, improve their livelihoods, and increase their incomes.

Reaching 771,713 women, the project emphasized both connectivity and training, and played a crucial role in supporting SEWA in the digitization of its services and social enterprises, enhancing overall efficiency and productivity.

In addition, the project developed and rolled out the SEWA app, an informal sector application for women, featuring a self-paced e-learning platform and push notifications on relevant information, such as government schemes, among others. The app had over 5,000 users at project closure. The project also markedly strengthened SEWA's capacity to deliver digital and financial literacy training by building a network of 500 master trainers. As a result, each block or district now has local resource persons that women can turn to for support and guidance in the years to come. Linkages with private fintech firms and national banks have also been established, to ensure the sustainability of the project's interventions.

"[The India Digital Financial Inclusion of Informal Sector Project] has been very supportive in helping build capacities of our members in strengthening their digital and financial capabilities. The flexibility provided in adapting the practical grassroots experiences has been very helpful for us in implementation," said Smitaben Kiritbhai Vaghela, SEWA's Project Coordinator.

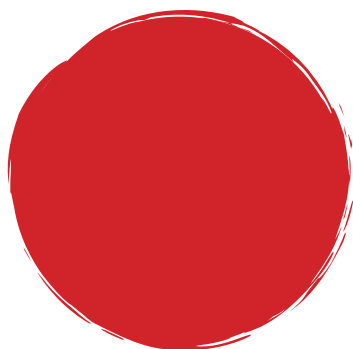
Recognizing that the lack of smartphone ownership among women was the main obstacle to accessing digital financial services, SEWA also encouraged women to purchase a mobile phone and helped them obtain affordable loans through SEWA Bank.

The benefits of the participants' newly acquired skills became quickly evident. According to the authors of the project completion report, "The skills gained by project beneficiaries proved particularly useful during the lockdown restrictions of the first two COVID-19 waves in India in 2020 and 2021. SEWA members were able to receive and send money to family members stuck in other cities/states, help their children attend classes through online platforms, place orders through WhatsApp for groceries through SEWA's agriculture products supply-chain, use WhatsApp for sharing medical and health-related information, and hold virtual meetings with other SEWA members and SEWA staff."

"As we had made our members digitally literate through this program, all of us could stay connected with each other, and also help each other in terms of advice, consultation, health guidance, [and] awareness, and at the same time continued to train digitally," said Smitaben Kiritbhai Vaghela. "Members could transfer money digitally to their families in times of need. We started a 24-hour helpline, which was managed by our digitally-trained team members."



# 4



## OUTREACH, KNOWLEDGE, AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

### 4.1 JAPAN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (JSDF) DIALOGUE SERIES

Launched in fiscal 2012, the JSDF Dialogue Series brings together World Bank task teams, JSDF implementing agencies, and project participants to share results and lessons learned with Japanese practitioners, academia, civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, and other Japanese stakeholders. The JSDF Dialogue Series is organized jointly with the Tokyo Development Learning Center and the World Bank's Tokyo office, and takes place during the World Bank's annual consultation with Japan.

#### *Livelihoods for Youth Community Support Project in the Kyrgyz Republic*

In June 2023, the JSDF Dialogue Series highlighted the Livelihoods for Youth Community Support Project in the Kyrgyz Republic.

The US\$2.7 million grant aimed to enhance economic participation of vulnerable young women and men in 20 communities by providing employment and business development support to nearly 4,000 people. A story on this project is featured in section 3.3 of this report.

Speakers at the event included high-level officials from the government of Japan and the World Bank:

**Maitreyi Bordia Das** — Director, Development Finance Vice Presidency, Trust Funds and Partner Relations Department, World Bank

**Toru Oe** — Director, Multilateral Development Banks Division, Ministry of Finance, Japan

**Luiza Nora** — Task Team Leader and Senior Social Development Specialist, World Bank

**Naveed Hassan Naqvi** — Country Manager, Kyrgyz Republic, World Bank

**Koichi Omori** — Senior External Affairs Officer, World Bank

## 4.2 JSDF MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

The Development Finance Vice Presidency, Trust Funds and Partner Relations Department (DFTPR) is responsible for managing the JSDF. The JSDF is overseen by a small management team under the leadership of the DFTPR's director. Management functions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Policy and program formulation, and business development—leading the formulation of the strategic priorities of the programs, establishment of sector or thematic windows, and management of the development of proposals and results frameworks.
- Conducting quality at entry reviews of concept notes and grant proposals submitted by the task team leaders prior to submission to the Ministry of Finance of the government of Japan for approval.
- Management of the flow of funds from the government of Japan.
- Review and clearance of restructuring papers, implementation completion reports, and project operations manuals.
- Ensuring the timely submission of the letters of representation by task team leaders, which confirm the eligible expenses under the project and the undertaking of an audit.
- Carrying out oversight missions to visit project sites to assess implementation performance and interact with stakeholders and project participants.

In addition, the World Bank submits an annual or biennial report on new grant approvals and the

achievement of development results for active and closed grants to the government of Japan. From 2019 through 2022, the JSDF shifted to a biennial reporting cycle, thereby combining two years of activities, and an annual reporting cycle was reestablished as of 2023. The annual reports are posted on the JSDF website. The World Bank also provides annual audited financial statements and quarterly unaudited financial statements to the government of Japan.

For the first time in June 2023, the JSDF Secretariat and the World Bank's Tokyo office organized an information session on the JSDF in Tokyo. The event primarily aimed to increase Japanese nongovernmental organizations' familiarity with the features and results of the JSDF program, the application process, and the types of projects that it supports. The JSDF program manager encouraged these organizations to partner with World Bank teams and international and local nongovernmental organizations to pursue JSDF funding to benefit poor communities and vulnerable groups.

## 4.3 JAPAN'S VISIBILITY STRATEGY

The JSDF prioritizes Japan's visibility as a leader in innovative development programming and its generous, large-scale contributions that underscore its commitment to development.

JSDF and Japan logos are used in project-related documents, videos, and press releases. Officials of the Embassy of Japan are invited to participate in project-related ceremonies, including signing and launch events and field visits. The JSDF management team meets with officials of the Embassy of Japan and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) during

oversight missions to brief them on the team's observations regarding the implementation progress of JSDF grants. The JSDF team also distributes a guidance note on donor visibility to World Bank task teams and implementing agencies.

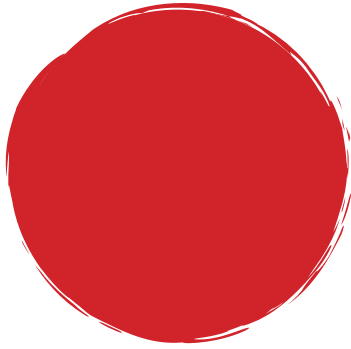
The government of Japan and its citizens have been steadfast and generous in their support to the JSDF over the last 23 years. The JSDF values the importance of donor visibility, and the fund has strengthened its efforts to make project participants aware of Japan's financial contributions. Maintaining the strong partnership among the government of Japan, World Bank task teams, grant implementing agencies, and other stakeholders during implementation is essential to the JSDF's continued success. To that end, the JSDF management team has prepared a communications toolkit that is shared during project implementation and knowledge-sharing events. World Bank task team leaders and implementing agencies are required to help promote the visibility of Japan's contribution and build local awareness of the JSDF in recipient countries through the following types of activities:

- Publications, training programs, seminars, and workshops financed by JSDF grants should clearly indicate that the activities in

question have received funding from the JSDF.

- The Japanese national flag logo should be used in publications financed by the JSDF, as well as in banners and any other materials distributed at seminars and training programs supported by the JSDF.
- All World Bank press releases issued with respect to JSDF grants should refer to the financial contribution by the government of Japan.
- Recipients are required to ensure that JSDF-financed activities are well covered by local print and electronic media, and that all related publicity materials, official notices, reports, and publications explicitly acknowledge Japan as the development partner providing funding.
- Project launch activities in the field are required, to the extent possible, and recipients are required to invite Japanese Embassy officials and members of the local and international press to these ceremonies.
- World Bank task team leaders are encouraged to invite Japanese embassy officials and senior government officials to project launch ceremonies.





# 5

## LOOKING FORWARD

In a continuously evolving global environment, the Japan Social Development Fund's mission and its agile modus operandi remain as relevant as ever. Working with grassroots institutions, often as add-ons to larger World Bank investments, and featuring innovative solutions or approaches, JSDF grants fill a space most other donors or governments do not reach. By leveraging participation in decision-making and engagement right from the design phase, JSDF teams empower future project participants to define their options. Most often, these are young, disadvantaged girls and boys, and women. The results of such hands-on, tailored approaches to project design have been found to be overwhelmingly positive. Participatory design will therefore continue to be the focus of the JSDF, as it reaches poor, underserved, and vulnerable communities in developing countries.

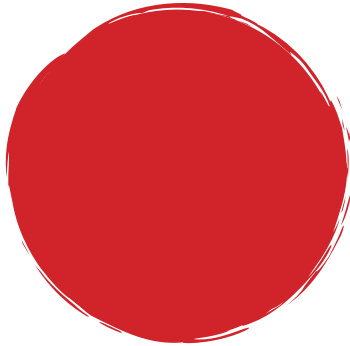
The introduction of innovative solutions and piloting novel approaches have also been

key to making JSDF grants so attractive for other donors to watch and replicate. Because innovation inherently involves risk, the grants are flexible enough to allow for swift readjustments or changes as needed. The ability to abandon activities that cannot be implemented or add new ones during the lifetime of the project is an important mechanism to mitigate risk and will continue to be part of how the JSDF operates.

As demonstrated over the past several years, multilayered crises hit poor communities in developing countries the hardest. The accelerating impacts of climate change add a layer of vulnerability that can only be addressed by channeling greater investments in adaptation and resilience at the local level. JSDF is well positioned to respond to this growing challenge due to its focus on developing locally owned, people-centered solutions, and its continued efforts to work with the private sector and non-traditional partners to secure new sources of funding and deploy innovative services.







## ANNEX

# BACKGROUND TABLES

**TABLE A.1**  
Regular Program  
Grants Active  
during FY23 –  
Recipient-  
Executed

Source: Trust Funds  
and Partner Relations  
Department, World Bank  
2023.

Country	Trust Fund Name	Closing Date	Grant Amount (US\$)
Armenia	Promoting Social Inclusion and Self-Reliant Livelihood Activities in Armenia*	6/30/2023	2,700,000
Bhutan	Youth Employment and Rural Entrepreneurship Project*	12/31/2022	1,250,000
Burkina Faso	Improving Education of Children with Disabilities	10/30/2024	2,752,310
Cambodia	Cambodia Community-Based Childcare for Garment Factory Workers Project	3/31/2024	2,700,000
Cambodia	Cambodia Sustainable Livelihood for Indigenous Communities Project	12/31/2025	2,746,732
Djibouti	Empowering Communities for Better Nutrition Project	3/31/2025	2,504,400
Djibouti	JSDF–Djibouti: Promoting Women's and Community Resilience to Gender-Based Violence	11/30/2025	2,750,000
Ghana	Improved Feeding Practices for First 1,000 Days Project	8/31/2023	2,860,000
Honduras	Improving the Livelihoods of Miskito Indigenous Peoples in La Moskitia	2/28/2024	2,722,000

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**TABLE A.1**  
**Regular Program**  
**Grants Active**  
**during FY23 –**  
**Recipient-**  
**Executed**  
*(continued)*

Source: Trust Funds  
and Partner Relations  
Department, World Bank  
2023.

Country	Trust Fund Name	Closing Date	Grant Amount (US\$)
India	India Digital Financial Inclusion of Informal Sector Project*	4/30/2023	2,730,000
Indonesia	Indonesia Inclusive Livelihoods for Poor Rural Communities in Eastern Indonesia Project	6/30/2025	2,730,000
Jordan	Jordan—Integrated Social Services for Vulnerable Youth	11/30/2023	2,800,300
Kenya	Improved Livelihood Opportunities and Accessibility for Underserved Urban Communities in Meru, Kenya	6/30/2025	2,750,000
Kosovo	Supporting Youth Inclusive Local Development in Kosovo	7/31/2024	2,785,000
Kyrgyz Republic	Kyrgyz Republic: Livelihoods for Youth Community Support Project*	1/15/2023	2,730,000
Lao People's Democratic Republic	Public Information and Awareness Services for Vulnerable Communities in Lao PDR	7/31/2024	2,505,020
Mongolia	Entrepreneurship-focused socioemotional skills for the most vulnerable youth in rural Mongolia	12/31/2023	2,752,295
Morocco	Morocco—Community-Based Rural Roads Maintenance	6/30/2025	2,850,000
Myanmar	Enhancing Community Driven Development Project	12/31/2023	25,000,000
Nicaragua	Nicaragua Dry Corridor Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture Project	3/31/2025	2,739,800
Rwanda	Rwanda: Advancing Citizen Engagement Project	12/31/2024	2,730,000
Solomon Islands	Solomon Islands Community Benefit Sharing Pilot Project*	5/31/2023	2,800,000
Timor-Leste	Timor-Leste COVID-19 and Health Systems Strengthening Support Project	4/30/2025	2,750,000
Ukraine	Ukraine Community-Based Social Service Delivery Project	10/31/2023	2,850,000

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**TABLE A.1**  
**Regular Program**  
**Grants Active**  
**during FY23 –**  
**Recipient-**  
**Executed**  
*(continued)*

Source: Trust Funds  
and Partner Relations  
Department, World Bank  
2023.

Country	Trust Fund Name	Closing Date	Grant Amount (US\$)
Uzbekistan	Enhancing Economic Opportunities for Rural Women	12/31/2024	2,728,800
Vietnam	Strengthening Preparedness and Response to COVID-19 at the Grassroots level in Vietnam	12/31/2024	2,750,000
Vietnam	Vietnam Reducing Income- and Health-Related Vulnerability of Older Persons Project	12/31/2024	2,750,000
Vietnam	Improved Delivery of Legal Aid for the Poor and Vulnerable Project	7/31/2026	2,500,000
West Bank and Gaza	Palestinian Heritage Trail: Increased Economic Opportunities and Improved Livelihood for Fragile Communities	12/31/2025	2,400,000
Zambia	Voice and Accountability: Community Empowerment for Improved Local Service Delivery Project	6/30/2025	2,750,000

Note: Each recipient-executed grant was accompanied by a World Bank-executed account for implementation support, typically amounting to up to 9 percent of the recipient-executed grant amount, but these are not included in the table data. \*Indicates projects that closed during the reporting period, while the others were still active as of the end of fiscal year 2023.

**TABLE A.2**  
**Regular Program**  
**Grants Approved**  
**in FY23**

Source: Trust Funds  
and Partner Relations  
Department, World Bank  
2023.

	Project Name	Approval Date	Amount (US\$) Including World Bank- Executed and Recipient- Executed Grants/ Accounts	Project Development Objectives
1	Djibouti— Improving Access to Gender- Based Violence Services for Survivors and At-Risk Populations	11/14/2022	3,000,000	Improve access of girls and women to skills development and livelihood support, raise community awareness and mobilization in the fight against gender-based violence, and improve the quality of psychosocial counseling services utilized by gender-based violence survivors.
2	Mongolia— Innovative Virtual Cooperatives to Empower Pastoral Livestock Communities in Mongolia*	01/24/2023	3,000,000	Improve the livelihoods of remote pastoral livestock communities in targeted locations by harnessing digital technologies and services.
3	Philippines— No Bangsamoro Child Left Behind in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM)*	06/07/2023	3,000,000	Improve learning outcomes of re-enrolled out-of-school children and retained at-risk children in 100 pilot elementary schools in the Lanao del Sur and Maguindanao provinces in BARMM.
4	Rwanda— Support to Community Health Workers Project*	06/07/2023	3,000,000	Strengthen the capacity of female-led community health worker cooperatives to improve their operational and financial performance.
	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>12,000,000</b>	

Note: \*Indicates projects that were approved by the government of Japan in fiscal year 2023, but the associated trust fund grants/accounts were not yet activated by the end of the fiscal year; they are not included in the portfolio under consideration for this report, which consists of the trust fund grants/accounts active during fiscal year 2023.





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