

JAPAN SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

NEWS & UPDATES

SEMIANNUAL ISSUE# 03 | APRIL–OCTOBER 2025



Highlights

7 projects closed

5 new projects approved and active

April–October 2025



Dear partners and colleagues,

Welcome to the Fall 2025 issue of the Japan Social Development Fund (JSDF) News and Updates. In this issue, we highlight some important results delivered by JSDF projects. One of them, in Burkina Faso, provided inclusive education services to 19,127 children with disabilities and 31,839 other vulnerable children. Furthermore, you will find information about new projects, including summaries of two new projects recently launched in Myanmar and in Moldova.

In addition, we are pleased to share some highlights from our 25-year retrospective analysis of the JSDF portfolio from inception to date, as we mark the JSDF's 25th anniversary.



25 Years of the JSDF: Portfolio Trends

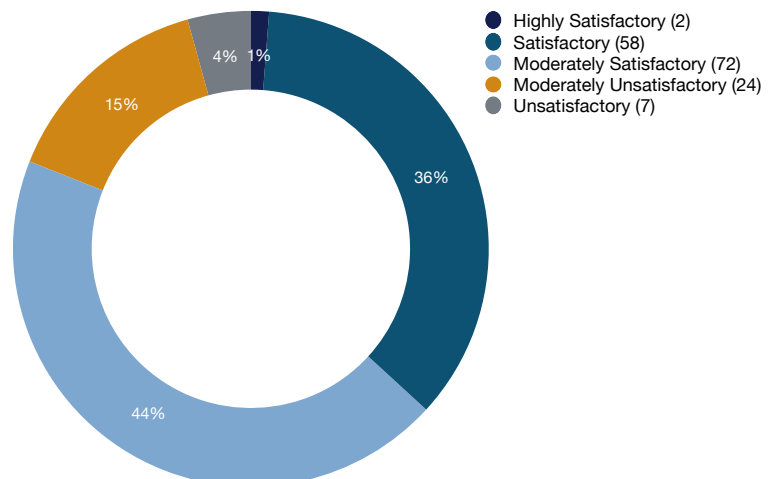
Since its inception, the JSDF has supported 371 standalone recipient-executed projects worldwide. From 2001 to 2025, it approved a total of US\$791.64 million in recipient-executed grants, underscoring its role as a key instrument for community-driven development.

Over the past 25 years, JSDF projects have been implemented in 98 countries across every World Bank region. Notably, 20 percent of these projects were delivered in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

Among the 163 closed projects reviewed by the IEG, nearly 81 percent received an outcome rating of moderately satisfactory or higher. This includes 2 projects rated highly satisfactory, 58 rated satisfactory, and 72 rated moderately satisfactory. Similarly, among the 148 projects with a final implementation status report, 86 percent received a final rating of moderately satisfactory or higher for achieving their development objectives.

Among the 337 projects that closed before 2025, 63 percent received an extension, averaging 15 months. As a result, the average project lasted 4.9 years, compared to the standard implementation period of 4 years. Overall, there has been a slight downward trend in average project duration over time.

Implementation Completion and Results Report Outcome Ratings of Closed JSDF Projects Assessed by the Independent Evaluation Group



Source: World Bank Trust Funds and Partner Relations Department 2025.
Note: Analysis covers all closed projects since inception that have been evaluated by IEG (163 recipient-executed grants).

Latest News

Between April and October 2025, seven projects completed their activities. Highlights from two projects activated over the same period include:



Moldova

The JSDF-funded Women's Empowerment through Gender-Based Violence Services was approved in May 2025 for a total financing of US\$2.75 million to implement an integrated, survivor-centered approach to supporting gender-based violence survivors in Moldova, including refugee women. The project will also help implement recent legal amendments to strengthen Moldova's institutional mechanism for combating violence against women and domestic violence. The project will be implemented by Association Gender-Centru.

Read more [here](#).

Myanmar

A JSDF-funded US\$25 million project in Myanmar, approved in March 2025, will support vulnerable communities and safeguard livelihoods by assisting food-insecure households to cover their basic food needs while maintaining or resuming food production and gradually decreasing their need for cash assistance. Project support consists of rapid response food, non-food, and livelihood packages, time-sensitive livelihood kits for crop and livestock production, technical and life skills capacity building, and rehabilitation of households and community productive assets. The project will be implemented by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the World Food Programme (WFP), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

Read more [here](#).



JSDF in Action

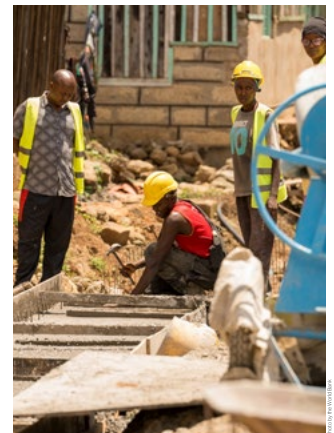
FROM CLASSROOMS TO ROADS: HOW ORDINARY CITIZENS ARE TRANSFORMING ZAMBIA AND KENYA

Two initiatives in Zambia and Kenya—supported by JSDF and the World Bank—are demonstrating how community-led approaches can enhance the impact of infrastructure investments through grassroots participation and local capacity strengthening.

In Zambia, a community-driven social accountability project is improving school governance, boosting attendance, and supporting safer, more inclusive learning environments.

[Watch the mini-documentary.](#)

In Kenya, a Japanese road repair technology is improving rural connectivity while enabling its citizens—especially youth and women—to launch small and medium enterprises and participate in local development. [Watch the mini-documentary.](#)



[Read their stories.](#)

Focus on Results

ADVANCING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN RWANDA

2021–2024 | US\$2.73 million grant

Rwanda has made remarkable progress in governance and economic development, underpinned by a strong commitment to decentralization. Strengthening participatory planning and inclusive decision making presented an opportunity to enhance service delivery and reduce poverty in underserved areas. In response, the government of Rwanda launched the Advancing Citizen Engagement (ACE) project to strengthen community participation, enhance rural livelihoods, and support more inclusive governance.

As a result of the project, ownership of high-value assets increased, as did household savings. Citizen participation and local government responsiveness also significantly rose—by the end of the project, 135,778 people were represented in village meetings, including 78 percent from poor and marginalized groups. This, in turn, ensured that local priorities were better reflected in decision-making.

Read the full story [here](#).



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

2019–2025 | US\$2.75 million grant

In Mongolia's rural areas, many young people face limited opportunities for employment and personal growth. With a labor market dominated by traditional herding, unpaid work, and informal self-employment, youth in these regions often lacks the skills necessary to pursue alternative livelihoods. To address this gap, the Entrepreneurship-focused Socioemotional Skills for the Most Vulnerable Youth in Rural Mongolia project set out to equip disadvantaged young people with socioemotional and entrepreneurial skills to improve their school performance and prepare them for self-employment.

At the end of the project, 8,773 young people benefited from training in socioemotional and entrepreneurship skills, of which 5,107 were young women. In addition, 2,431 participants improved their business capacity through entrepreneurship training. To ensure lasting impact, the project supported the establishment of entrepreneurial clubs, engaging over 2,147 youth in practical, hands-on business activities. A total of 1,398 young people, representing 343 teams, received financial support to launch small business initiatives, gaining firsthand experience in managing business projects.

Read the full story [here](#).



Updates from the JSDF Secretariat

JSDF Oversight Mission to East Asia and Pacific

The JSDF Secretariat visited projects in Timor Leste and Cambodia in September and October 2025, to ensure alignment of grants with the trust fund objectives, flag implementation issues, and identify best practices.

The team also met JICA and Embassy of Japan representatives to discuss the overall fit of the grant with their respective programs and with their visibility objectives. Furthermore, representatives from Japanese non-governmental organizations will participate in the Cambodia leg of the mission to allow them to observe how JSDF grants operate in the field.

JSDF Round 12 Call for Proposals

JSDF's annual call for proposals was launched in October 2025.



Coming Up Next

Projects set to close in the next six months:

- Improved Livelihood Opportunities and Accessibility for Underserved Urban Communities in Meru | [Kenya](#)
- Community-Based Rural Roads Maintenance | [Morocco](#)
- Palestinian Heritage Trail: Increased Economic Opportunities and Improved Livelihood for Fragile Communities Project | [West Bank and Gaza](#)
- Cambodia Sustainable Livelihood for Indigenous Communities Project | [Cambodia](#)
- Timor-Leste COVID-19 and Health Systems Strengthening Support Project | [Timor-Leste](#)
- Support to Community Health Workers Project | [Rwanda](#)
- Promoting Women's and Community Resilience to Gender-Based Violence | [Djibouti](#)



Contact Us

Questions? Comments? Please tell us what you like or missed in this issue. We will be delighted to hear from you. Reach out to the JSDF team at jsdfgrants@worldbank.org.

For more information, please visit the [Japan Social Development Fund](https://www.jsdf.or.jp/) website.

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