

The Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development was held in Yokohama in May 2008, and July's G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit also took up Development and Africa as one of its main themes. With Africa now in the spotlight around the world, an important issue is what type of assistance is fitting for Japan. Komatsu considers actions to enrich the lives of people in local communities to be supportive in the truest sense. This column introduces two types of Komatsu's activities for fulfilling its corporate social responsibility as concrete examples of this assistance.

Case
1Supporting Education in the Republic of South Africa
The Komatsu DenRon Community Development Centre

In the suburbs of Plettenberg in southern South Africa stands a small building known as the Komatsu DenRon Community Development Centre. Here some 30 young people are acquiring the basic educational skills they need to find employment.

Educational Gaps Stemming from Historical Racial Discrimination and Poverty

Even among African countries with rapidly developing economies, the Republic of South Africa stands out for having good vocational opportunities. Still, not all people receive basic education at the level needed for employment. The areas surrounding large cities such as Johannesburg or Cape Town benefit from government-funded primary education to a certain extent, but the educational system is still insufficient in towns farther removed.

As you move away from the seaside of the Plettenberg resort area on the country's southern coast, poverty becomes widespread, with a large number of unemployed people who did not receive satisfactory primary education or who were unable to go to school during the apartheid era.

Providing Educational Support from DenRon and Komatsu

Despite large numbers of job seekers in Plettenberg, local building materials/stone quarry company DenRon was experiencing a chronic shortage of skilled workers and operators. DenRon realized that the only way to solve this lack of skilled human resources was to provide the educational opportunities to bring local unemployed people to the minimum level necessary for employment. Komatsu Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd. (KSAf) agreed with its customer DenRon's thinking, and in July 2007 the two companies established the Komatsu DenRon Community Development Centre. DenRon provided the premises and equipment, while KSAf covers the costs of teachers' salaries and transporting students to school.

A day at the Centre begins by the school van picking up the students at various locations. Classes begin at 8:30 AM in numeracy and literacy. Students take a course load tailored to their particular needs, with each subject having four levels. Students completing Level 4 English enroll in computer classes twice a week.



The Centre's van brings students to their classes from three different areas.

Creating a Springboard towards Employment through Continuing Education

The Centre's first graduation ceremony was held in September 2007 for ten students completing the highest level of education. Many of them went on to attain full-time employment as hotel employees, salesmen, and waiters, with DenRon also hiring some of the graduates.

The Komatsu DenRon Community Development Centre is neither large-scale nor glamorous. However, it emphasizes perseverance, the most important attribute in human resources development and education. KSAf has a strong desire to maintain this project and it intends to fund the Centre's operating expenses every year on an ongoing basis. The Embassy of Japan has also expressed interest in cooperating with the Centre as an endeavor consistent with the South African government's policies in improving the employment rate of persons who experienced racial discrimination.

KSAf intends to continue this assistance in a way practicable for the company, providing support that is appropriate for a Japanese company and for Komatsu.



KSAf then-President Yasuyuki Dan (currently KSAf Chairman) at left and DenRon Director Dennis Derbyshire at right, on the opening of the Komatsu DenRon Community Development Centre in July 2007

To the People of Komatsu

An excerpt of a letter from Centre graduate Maluxole Kleinboo

While I have spent time in jail, I now have a new perspective on life after achieving Level 4 in both literacy and numeracy.

I am now employed at a major department store. For the first time ever, I have experienced a sense of self worth. I am very thankful to both Komatsu and DenRon. Thank you so much.



The graduating class of March 2008, with Maluxole Kleinboo at the far right

Demonstrating Corporate Social Responsibility Targeting Human Resources Education

Komatsu Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd. President Mike Blom

We at Komatsu Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd. (KSAf) are developing CSR initiatives focused on training and development of human resources. Besides our activities in Plettenberg introduced here, we are also considering human resources development projects in several regions in which we offer sales and after-sales service. One such project will be kicked off in Botswana within 2008.

While the high prevalence of HIV is a serious issue in South Africa, awareness is low particularly in rural areas with substantial numbers of people living in poverty. KSAf is looking at how we can work with organizations to improve HIV awareness among these communities we operate in.



Case 2

Expanding Anti-personnel Landmine Removal into Africa with a Good Partner

Komatsu's demining machine for anti-personnel landmines was first used in September 2007 in Afghanistan. In Asian countries, notably Afghanistan and Cambodia, and various countries in Africa, there are large amounts of anti-personnel landmines as a legacy of conflicts in those countries. Landmines still give rise to an unending number of victims and regional development is being impeded. Komatsu recently expanded its removal of anti-personnel landmines to Africa.



A demining machine for anti-personnel landmines arriving in Afghanistan

Collaborating with an NPO

Komatsu announced collaboration with non-profit organization (NPO) Japan Mine Action Service (JMAS) in January 2008 for the removal of anti-personnel landmines. JMAS is staffed primarily by people who have retired from the Japanese Self-Defense Forces possessing a wealth of experience and technical expertise. Since 2002 JMAS has cleared landmines and unexploded ordnance, dug wells, and run educational programs, assertively providing technical and human resources support in cooperation with various governmental organizations around the world. Demining machine technologies at Komatsu will be combined with the experiences and know-how of JMAS to bring recovery to affected areas much more quickly, a valuable contribution to those regions.

Joint activities with JMAS will foster community development, first in Cambodia and second in Angola in Africa.



Komatsu Ltd. President and CEO Kunio Noji (left) and JMAS President Mitsuo Nonaka at the January 2008 signing of an agreement for the Cambodia reconstruction project

Supporting Communities Consistently from Landmine Removal through to Development

First, in the Cambodia reconstruction project already underway, quicker landmine clearing using demining machines will be followed by revitalization and reconstruction of the local community on the resulting safe area. The project will include the development of farmland, the building of wells and schools, and the construction or repair of roads and bridges. Komatsu will lend out the demining machines and various construction equipment free of charge, cover operating expenditures and the costs of shipping the equipment to Cambodia, and prepare replacement parts for the vehicles. The construction equipment was shipped from Japan at the end of May and from July the persons to conduct the demining received training.

Subsequent operations in Angola have been proceeding according to a plan in cooperation with the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Japanese trading companies. A third local survey was carried out in January 2008 that almost finalized the area for demining. Since then, necessary procedures have been taken, including coordination with both the Japanese and Angolan governments, so that the demining vehicle can arrive in Angola in August and training can start in September.

Demining begins to be meaningful once mine clearance gets underway using demining machines to build a basis for people's livelihoods. Komatsu's partnership with JMAS will be the foundation for tangible and consistent achievements that will enrich the lives of the people in local communities.