

**THE CHALLENGE OF
DEVELOPMENT NGO ADVOCACY IN JAPAN**

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Aya Okada, Master of International Development
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Since the late 1980s, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) engaged in international development in Japan have become increasingly interested in incorporating advocacy into their operations. Despite the enthusiasm, however, NGO advocacy in Japan has been rather stagnant, not yet experiencing a dramatic boost. Given such situation, this paper analyzes the challenges development NGOs in Japan face in undertaking advocacy work. In doing so, the paper dissects NGO advocacy into aim, approach, and audience.

During the 1980s and 1990s, development NGOs in Japan faced an unfavorable legal structure that led these organizations to suffer from chronic financial instability. Forced to emphasize fundraising for service delivery, many of the development NGOs in Japan did not have the capacity to undertake other types of public communication programs, i.e. advocacy. The restricted environment allowed only a limited number of NGOs to engage in advocacy during this period, which were mostly policy recommendation to the Japanese government through lobbying.

The unfavorable legal structure began to show dramatic change in the 2000s. The new NPO Law enacted in 1998 and the new tax system for nonprofits instituted in 2001 eased the financial issue of development NGOs, thus allowing them to incorporate more advocacy work. Increased involvement to advocacy led to successful implementation of *Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa Campaign* of 2005, a major turning point of NGO advocacy in Japan. In addition to lobbying the decision-makers, the campaign intentionally attempted to mobilize the general public. This expansion of approach and audience led to a new challenge in NGO advocacy in Japan; the Japanese public with a tendency to regard NGOs as fundraisers for service delivery rather than advocates now stands as the new obstacle.

The paper thus finds a shift of NGO advocacy challenge in Japan from 1980s and 1990s to 2000s. In-between these two periods, constraining factor shifted from incapacity for advocacy resulting from unfavorable legal structure to unreceptive audience. The new stage for NGO advocacy in Japan thus calls for careful attention to the qualitative aspect of advocacy work, i.e. messages articulated and delivered to the audience.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION: DEVELOPMENT NGOS AND ADVOCACY

1.1 CALL FOR ADVOCACY

Since the late 1980s, advocacy, in addition to service delivery, has come to be an important aspect of the work of development NGOs, or non-governmental organizations engaged in international development. The call for advocacy was especially strong for those NGOs based in the Northern industrialized countries, often called the Northern NGOs or NNGOs (Lewis, 2001; Lindenberg and Bryant, 2001; Edwards, 1999; Clark, 1991; Korten, 1990).

Underlying this trend were two growing recognitions widely spread across the development industry. On the one hand, development agencies came to realize the limited effect of service delivery through project works in developing countries; simply providing *band-aids* to the *symptoms* of poverty came to be recognized as insufficient for the ultimate aim of poverty alleviation. In response emerged a call to tackle the *roots* of poverty by attempting to transform fundamental structures, such as unfair trade mechanisms and multilateral/bilateral lending that led to stock-piling of debts in developing countries. At the same time, there was also a significant rise of development agencies in the Southern recipient countries. Local NGOs gradually increased in size and capacity to the extent that they began to displace Northern NGOs “as implementers, or even as channels for aid from government or multilateral agencies (Coates and David, 2002, p.503).”

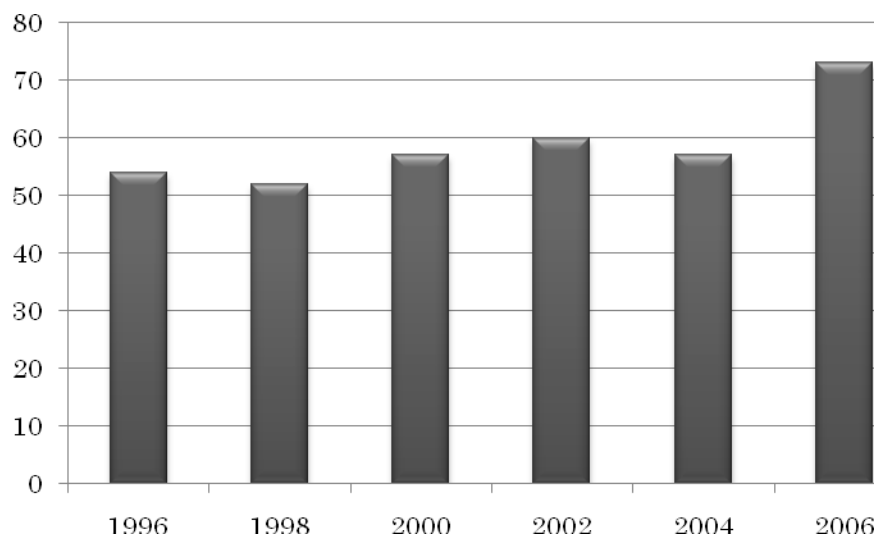
In such context, Northern NGOs “began to experience more and more confusion about their roles and identity, and by the mid-1990s this had produced a constant stream of rethinking and reorganizing for the future (Edwards, 1999, p.198).” One consequence was to seek a new role in advocacy, which accorded with the “call from the Southern organizations to do more campaign and policy work (Chapman and Fisher, 2000, p.151).”

Development NGOs in Japan¹ have been no exception to this trend. While the majority of development NGOs began their work as service delivery organizations during the 1970s and 1980s, several NGOs have shown increasing interest in incorporating advocacy into their operations. A series of bi-annual surveys of Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC)² for example, shows steady increase in the number of development NGOs engaged in *adobokashi*, a Japanese word used to express advocacy. By 2006, at least one out of four development NGOs in Japan claimed to be involved in advocacy (please refer to Appendix for the list of NGOs engaged in advocacy as of February, 2008).

¹Two terms are used to refer to development NGOs in Japan: *kaihatsu* (meaning development) *NGOs* and *kokusai-kyoryoku* (meaning international cooperation) *NGOs*.

²JANIC is an umbrella organization of all development NGOs in Japan (somewhat similar to Interaction in the United States). This survey is the only source of quantitative data for development NGOs in Japan.

Figure 1.1 Development NGOs Involved in Advocacy in Japan



Source: Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004).
Data for 2006 are obtained from JANIC online database, accessed February 3, 2008.

In addition to increasing involvement in advocacy among individual NGOs, several collaborative advocacy campaigns have taken place in Japan since the late 1990s. Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines (JCBL) established in 1997, Jubilee 2000 Japan for debt cancellation, and *Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa* (“Don’t let it be, world poverty”) Campaign in 2005 are some of the major examples. Also in January 2007, more than 100 organizations came together to establish “2008 Japan G8 Summit NGO Forum” to “appeal message of the civil society in international policy processes on the global issues through the G8 Summit to be held in Toyako, Hokkaido in 2008.³” Furthermore, some of the recently established organizations explicitly claim to be advocacy NGOs, i.e. Japan Results established in 1989 and Oxfam Japan in 2003.

³<http://www.g8ngoforum.org/>

Contrary to increasing interests, however, promoting advocacy work has been no easy task for development NGOs in Japan (Kuroda and Imata, 2003). For example, while many organizations claim to be involved in advocacy, it has always been a limited number of the same NGOs taking initiative (Shigeta, 2005, p.223-234). This view is also reflected in the fact that only eight out of 67 NGOs who claimed to be engaged in advocacy in JANIC's online database explicitly use the word *adobokashi* in their websites or organizational pamphlets, while 22 organizations did not refer to advocacy or any related activities (see Appendix).

The aim of this paper is to analyze the obstacles development NGOs in Japan face in undertaking advocacy work. In doing so, I apply the framework of distinguishing NGOs' advocacy work into aim, approach, and audience. I also distinguish NGO advocacy in Japan into two periods, from 1980s to 1990s and from 2000s onwards. While the primary aim remained the same, approaches and audiences of NGO advocacy significantly expanded in between these two periods, thus transforming the nature of challenge NGOs face in promoting advocacy.

1.2 THE CHALLENGE OF NGO ADVOCACY

In the recent decades, there has been increasing literatures on so-called translational advocacy networks (e.g. Keck and Sikkink, 1999) or on transnational civil society (e.g. Florini, 1999). They are "self-organized advocacy groups that undertake voluntary collective action across state borders in pursuit of what they deem the wider public interest (Price, 2003, p.580)." Della Porta and Tarrow (2005) call the work of these organizations "transnational collective action," specifically referring to "coordinated international campaigns on the part of networks of activists against international actors, other states, or international institutions (p.7)." Through rich

collection of case studies, researchers have shown the potential influence these transnational actors have in creating norms and setting policy directions both at state and international organization level. This paper builds on these studies by focusing on development NGOs' advocacy efforts in Japan. Although Japan is one of the major donor countries around the world, there has been limited understanding of the work of development NGOs in Japan, especially in terms of its advocacy efforts. This paper intends to be one of the preliminary steps to fill in this gap.

The work of transnational advocacy networks, as easily imagined, faces various challenges, barriers, or obstacles. Four potential sources of barriers can be identified from literature to date. The first challenge discussed mainly in civil society studies is the effect of states' legal and regulatory systems. States, through direct and indirect tools, influence nonprofits' incentives for establishment as well as their organizational configurations (Salamon, 2002). These tools include social regulation (e.g. granting of groups' legal status) and economic regulation (e.g. tax benefits, grants, and contracts). Studies have revealed that state policies and tools as well as their influence on nonprofits vary across countries around the world (Salamon, 1997). Japan has been one of the countries being examined through this political-institutional approach (Imada, 2006; Pekkanen, 2003; 2000; Amenomori, 1993).

Among various state pressures, direct influence of grants from authorities merits further attention for development NGOs. In general, it is argued that the more NGOs receive funding from the government or from international organizations, the less autonomy or independence they enjoy, thus less incentive to engage in advocacy that may result in criticizing their funding sources (Minear, 1987; Edwards, 1993).

Barriers to advocacy may also be found within NGOs themselves. Many studies on development NGOs indicate the tendency of these NGOs to focus on service delivery in developing countries (Minear, 1987; Clark, 2003), thus lacking adequate human resources and budget on advocacy (Kuroda and Imata, 2004, 2003). Norrell (1999) also states that organizational structure that grants advocacy a more prominent role is also lacking among development NGOs. Hudson (2002) elaborates this point in that “misunderstandings, marginalisations, and questions about the values of advocacy in some cases translated into uncertainty, lack of clarity, and tensions about the appropriate position of advocacy within NGOs (p.408).” Attempting to enhance advocacy work in such an environment is difficult, resulting in absence of clear strategy and failure to develop alternatives to current orthodoxies (Edwards, 1993).

Finally, barriers to advocacy may be found on the part of audience society. While few studies make this point, Kim (2007) argued in the context of Japan that because the Japanese society tends to regard advocacy as part of political activities, engagement of *non-governmental* organizations in this field is often considered undesirable.

In this paper, I build on these literatures while specifically expanding on the first and fourth barriers in discussing development NGOs’ advocacy challenge in Japan. In the first half of this paper, I take the political-institutional approach in examining the advocacy challenge of 1980s and 1990s. I extend the institutional influence on NGOs’ organizational configuration to program level. In the second half of the paper, I take the cultural approach to examine the audience barrier, the advocacy challenge of the 2000s.

As Della Porta and Tarrow (2005) indicated, recent transnational collective actions “organize around particular campaigns or series of campaigns, using a variety of forms of

protests, adopting and adapting repertoires of protest from the traditions of different movements (p.12).” I argue in this paper that transformation of movement strategy has certainly taken place in NGO advocacy in Japan, especially since the 2000s. The paper thus attempts to show how such transformation is leading to a shift of barriers in NGO advocacy in Japan.

1.3 FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS:

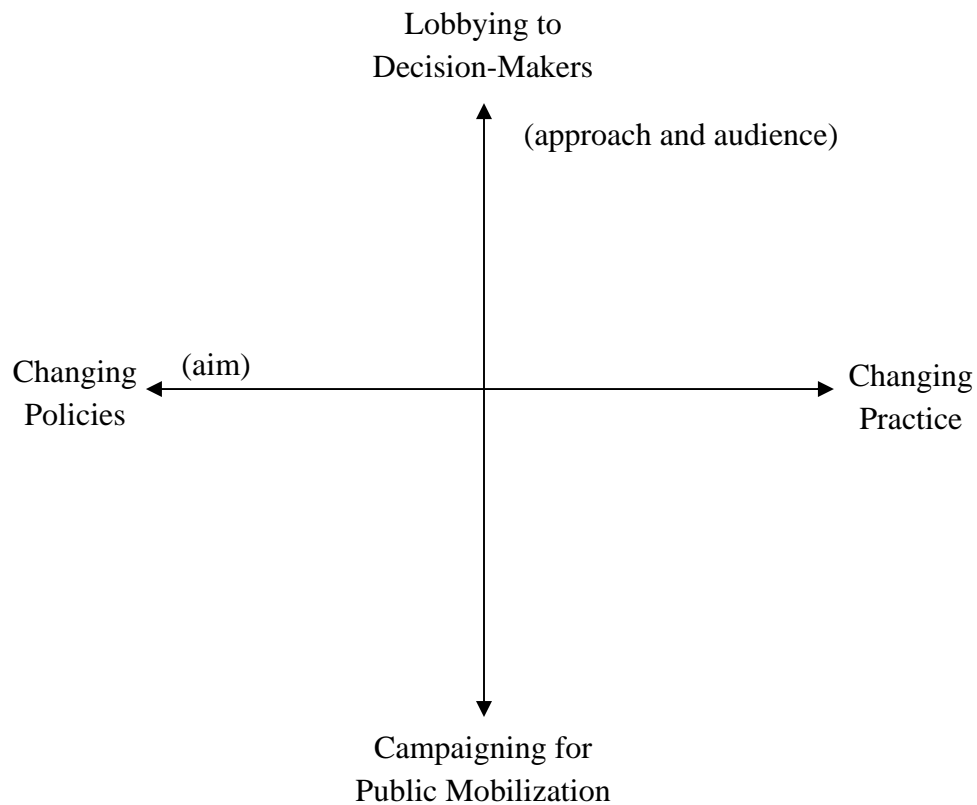
AIM, APPROACH, AND AUDIENCE OF ADVOCACY

Advocacy is a term defined differently in various studies. Accordingly, the scope of advocacy varies among studies, researchers, and also NGOs. Rather than applying a particular definition to understand the Japanese case, this paper looks into how advocacy is understood by NGOs in Japan. In doing so, I distinguish advocacy into three interrelated components: aim, approach, and audience.

With regard to aim, advocacy may attempt to influence either policies of authority/institution or practices that involve unequal power relationships (Jordan and Van Tuijl, 2000, p.2052). The definition of advocacy Hudson (2002) states is a clear example of the former aim: “Advocacy is seen as involving efforts to change institutions’ policies in ways that are expected to favor the poor and marginalized (p.404).” Jordan and Van Tuijl (2000), on the other hand, defines advocacy to include broader function, i.e. practice - “NGO advocacy is an act of organizing the strategic use of information to democratize unequal power relations (p.2052).” To achieve the advocacy aim, specific approaches are taken by development NGOs. The two main advocacy approaches are lobbying and campaigning to mobilize the general public; research and policy analysis, development education, and networking complement these approaches (Norrell,

1999, p.10-11). Approaches determine the audience of NGO advocacy. Lobbying is often targeted toward decision-makers of governments and international organizations, while campaigning tends to have general public as their primary audience.

Figure 1.2 Framework for Analyzing NGO Advocacy



This paper attempts to analyze NGO advocacy in Japan from these three interrelating perspectives (Figure 1.2) in showing a shift of advocacy challenge among development NGOs in Japan.

1.4. OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

The paper consists of two chapters, distinguished into two time-periods. The first chapter focuses on 1980s and 1990s, when the unfavorable legal structure for nonprofits confined development NGOs' public communication programs to fundraising for service delivery, resulting in incapacity to undertake advocacy work. Advocacy was sidelined, leading to lack of budget and human resources among development NGOs. Despite the restricted environment, a few NGO did manage to engage in advocacy work during the 1980s and 1990s. The chapter will discuss three cases of advocacy efforts by development NGOs during these time periods, which show the trend of policy recommendation to the Japanese government through lobbying. Tactics taken by development NGOs in undertaking advocacy work will also be discussed.

The second chapter turns attention to NGOs' advocacy efforts of 2000s. With the new NPO Law enacted in 1989, the issue of financial instability among development NGOs was eased to a certain extent among many development NGOs. Also with the new tax system introduced in 2001, development NGOs were allowed for the first time in their history to obtain tax-deductable status for incoming donations. With more room for advocacy, development NGOs began to expand its advocacy approach from mere lobbying to campaigning to mobilize the general public. The audience accordingly expanded from governments to including the Japanese public. *Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa Campaign*, a Japanese platform of *Global Call to Action against Poverty* in 2005, was a symbolic turning point in this regard. I take this campaign as a case study to show the new obstacle NGOs face in promoting advocacy in Japan - the Japanese public, unfamiliar with development NGOs' advocacy work, have trouble understanding what advocacy aims for, thus narrowing interpreting its aim as fundraising for

service delivery. The paper explores this point through criticisms of the *Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa Campaign*.

2.0 STRUGGLEING IN AN UNFAVORABLE ENVIRONMENT:

ADVOCACY EFFORTS FROM 1980s TO 1990s

Development NGOs in Japan began to emerge during the late 1970s, mostly as service delivery organizations focusing on providing education and healthcare in the developing world. Commitment to advocacy work was not seen until the late 1980s and early 1990s when a small number of NGOs began lobbying the Japanese government for changes in Official Development Assistance (ODA) policies.

This chapter explores the obstacles that prevented development NGOs in Japan from engaging in advocacy work during the 1980s and 1990s. In so doing, I mainly take the political-institutional perspective, a view that emphasizes the influence of state action and political institutions on organizational dimensions of civil society. Studies on civil society have applied this theory to understand the lagged development of civil society in Japan (Amenomori, 2007; Pekkanen, 2003). I build on these studies to show the influence of Japanese legal structure for nonprofits on development NGOs' priority-setting at program level. Until the late 1990s, legal structure surrounding nonprofit organizations in Japan was disadvantageous to development NGOs, especially in terms of financing. I argue that public communication programs of development NGOs had no choice but to concentrate on fundraising for service delivery, resulting in incapacity to do other types of programs, i.e. advocacy.

A few development NGOs, nonetheless, did manage to undertake some advocacy work

during the 1980s and 1990s. Their attempts were mostly making policy recommendations to the Japanese government and other related agencies through lobbying. The second half of this chapter will analyze examples of such advocacy efforts. The cases will show strategies taken by development NGOs to overcome the disadvantageous environment.

2.1 UNFAVORABLE LEGAL ENVIRONMENT:

LEGAL STRUCTURE FOR NONPROFITS

From historical perspective, the nonprofit sector in Japan can be characterized as having a dual structure of “the government-controlled nonprofit sector” and “the newly emerging nonprofit sector” (Matsubara and Todoroki, 2003). This unique structure derives from the reluctance of the Japanese government to adopt policies that officially authorize nonprofit organizations until the late 1990s. Development NGOs were one of the pioneering fields in the “the newly emerging nonprofit sector” that begun to emerge in the late 1970s to 1980s (Hayashi and Imada, 1999, p.111).

2.1.1 Government-Controlled Nonprofit Sector

Legal structure regarding the nonprofit sector in Japan is based on the Civil Code, enacted in 1898. Article 34 states:

Any association or foundation relating to any academic activities, art, charity, worship, religion, or other public interest which is not for profit may be established as a juridical

person with the permission of the competent government agency.

Organizations established under this law are named public-interest legal persons (PIPs: *koueki-houjin*), further distinguished into aggregate corporation (*shadan-houjin*) and foundation (*zaidan-houjin*). In relation to PIPs, Article 67 of the Civil Code states:

1. The business of a juridical person shall be subject to the supervision by the competent government agency.
2. The competent government agency may issue to the juridical person any order which shall be necessary for the purpose of its supervision.
3. The competent government agency may, by exercising its authority, inspect the status of the business and property of a juridical person at any time.

The Civil Code, as implied by these articles, grants extensive authority to “competent government agency (ministry or other government agency mostly related to the work of relevant organization)” in dealing with an organization seeking for PIP status or already with the legal status.

Influence of competent agency comes both at the time of initial approval for legal status, and after the approval has occurred. When a nonprofit organization first seeks for PIP status, the application proceeds to screening at the competent agency. The criteria used for this screening mechanism are not very clear except for few items, e.g. financial requirements to possess 300 million yen (approximately \$2.7 million⁴) in capital. Bureaucrats have the discretionary power to make approval decision. It is not hard to imagine, then, that organizations whose objectives or

⁴Calculated at the rate \$1=110 yen. This rate has been applied to all dollar statistics in this paper.

styles differ from the competent agency find it difficult to gain approval. Under this legal monopoly, declined organizations are not allowed to make any objection.

Once a PIP status is approved, an organization will enjoy tax breaks as well as the legitimacy granted by the government. However, PIP organization continues to be under authority of the competent agency. As logistical issues, PIPs must submit reports on annual activities, list of assets, accounts of changes in membership, financial statements for the past year, and planned activity reports as well as budget estimates for the coming fiscal year. Not only so, competent agencies are granted with monitoring and sanctioning power; they may make on-site inspections and audits at any time, issue supervisory orders (Article 71), impose fines on directors for violating any order of the competent agency (Article 84), and may even cancel and dissolve a PIP (Article 68).

For PIP organizations, close coordination with competent agencies and compliance with bureaucrats' preferences becomes more important than mass membership under this extensive oversight of competent agency. There were many obedient PIPs that came to host a large number of retired bureaucrats and receive operating income; some PIPs were even established with funding from government ministries (Pekkanen, 2003, p.121).

If an organization wishes to obtain legal status other than the PIPs, its establishment had to be based on other special laws as stated in Article 33 of Civil Code. Examples of such are: Private School Law (1947) for educational corporation, Medical Law (1949) for medical corporation, Religious Corporation Law (1951), and Social Welfare Service Law (1951) for social welfare corporations. A majority of the public-interest legal persons established based on Article 34 have institutionalized as specified corporations under these special laws. The

supervisory conditions for these organizations are basically the same as PIPs.

It was therefore virtually impossible for an organization to be a legal corporation and at the same time be truly “non-government” and “private” in Japan (Imada, 2006, p.20). In other words, nonprofits in Japan were strictly supervised by government agencies, virtually being QuaNGOs. The Japanese Civil Code has been amended several times after its enactment in 1898, but never the articles related to nonprofit organizations⁵. This situation has often been referred to as the inadequacy of the Civil Code in Japan.

The Japanese society did not question such government policies and legal structures on nonprofits as people had a high level of belief on government and relied on them as the major public service provider (Matsubara and Todoroki, 2003, p.30; Ouchi, 2004, p.39). Salamon (1996) pointed out, in the introduction for the Japanese version of his book, that in Japan:

strong bureaucracy, one of the main byproducts from the end of nineteenth century, and huge enterprises that emerged after the World War II, left no space for these private voluntary associations that are distinctive in the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany....While it is fundamentally a “right” in most of the developed countries to establish nonprofit organizations, in Japan it is considered as a “privilege” that is given and deprived by individual government agencies (pp.i-iii).

⁵On May 26, 2006, three new laws regarding PIPs were passed in the national parliament. These laws are to mitigate oversight by individual government agencies for the first time in 110 years.

2.1.2 The Newly Emerging Nonprofit Sector

The Japanese Civil Code, however, does not deny freedom of association. In the 1970s, civil society organizations in the field of welfare, education, environment and international development began to emerge apart from “the government-controlled nonprofit sector.” Development NGOs were one of the pioneering fields of this “newly emerging nonprofit sector.”

These newly emerging organizations had to choose from two paths as they began its operation in Japan - either to obtain legal status under the Civil Code and accept government oversight or to remain as non-legal private voluntary organizations. Choosing the latter makes it difficult for an organization to act as an economic agency, e.g. restriction on obtaining public subsidies, tax breaks, tax incentives for incoming donations, and inability to open bank account under the organization name (thus a donation appears as if given to an individual, e.g. director). These restrictions were considered to be a potential constraint to organizational growth.

Some development NGOs, established in the early days of the sector history in the 1960s and 1970s, did choose to obtain legal status. For example, International Organization for Cultivating Universal Human Spirit (now renamed OISCA or Organization for Industrial, Spiritual and Cultural Advancement) established in 1961 is a foundation; Asia Rural Social Leadership Institute (now renamed Asian Rural Institute) established in 1973 is registered as an educational corporation (for more examples, see Appendix).

However, most of the organizations in the field of international development chose the latter path and remained as non-legal voluntary organizations until the early 2000s (Figure 2.1). These NGOs preferred to avoid bureaucratic interference, despite the constraints on its operations.

Figure 2.1 Development NGOs With/Without Legal Status



Source: Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (1996, 1998, 2000).

2.1.3 Emphasis on Fundraising for Service Delivery

The inadequate legal structure for nonprofit organizations brought about substantive impact on development NGOs' public communication programs towards the Japanese society. Without legal status, financing was a critical issue at all times for majority of development NGOs (Kuroda and Imata, 2002, p.4). In order to sustain the organization and to advance its mission, development NGOs had no choice but to focus public communication on fundraising to maintain service deliveries in the Southern development countries.

The situation was further exacerbated by the lack of a giving culture in Japan. Ouchi (2004), for example, pointed out "exchange etiquette" as an inhibitive factor of charitable giving in Japan. Ouchi says that in Japan:

human relationships are built and nurtured through repaying the obligations that one assumes to the other by respect, loyalty, and obedience. Japanese are willing to help people with whom they have a clear relationship such as families, relatives, and friends to meet reciprocal social responsibilities. Conversely, the etiquette of giving and receiving makes Japanese reluctant to contribute to unknown people beyond their sphere of obligations or in an indiscriminate manner (p. 47).

On the other hand, Matsubara and Todoroki (2003, pp.4-6) say that although there is a culture of giving in Japan, the amount of giving per person is small compared to other countries. There are two explanatory factors for this small amount of giving. One of such factors is the ancient Chinese concept of *intoku-youhou* which teaches that while good deeds may bring benefits, they should be performed in a secret manner. Thus, people tend to value a small amount of giving in secret manner, rather than a big amount of money that stands out. *Yokonarabi-ishiki* or the distinctive inclination of Japanese people to “follow the group” is another underlying factor. *Yokoharabi-ishiki* is a common Japanese tendency to see one’s identity in terms of one’s group or colleagues, and to seek for similar standards as others. Therefore, people preferred to give what others are giving, and avoided giving amounts that stand out. Through this process, charitable giving has remained in small amounts, in regard to collectivism and group harmony.

Thus, among the Japanese public who do not place importance on visibility and recognition, it was difficult for the culture of giving to nurture. Lack of giving culture meant further difficulty in fundraising for “the newly emerging nonprofit sectors” - in addition to inadequate legal structures, lack of giving culture forced development NGOs in Japan to place

further focus on fundraising in their public communications⁶. While forced to devote its public communication to fundraising for service delivery by the legal structure yet discouraged to do so by lack of giving culture, development NGOs found themselves in a double-bind situation. Under this condition, development NGOs were deprived of its capacity to undertake advocacy work. Lack of capacity for advocacy meant lack of budget and human resources for implementing advocacy. Until the late 1990s, most organizations did not have full-time advocacy staff (Matsumoto, 2004, p.152) nor any budget for advocacy.

2.2 ADVOCACY EFFORTS

Despite the disadvantageous situation, some development NGOs nonetheless did attempt to engage in advocacy work in the late 1980s and 1990s. The impetus came not only from NGOs themselves, but also from social background of Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA). In 1989, Japan became the top donor in providing the largest amount of ODA around the world. In response, several studies, books, as well as media coverage on Japan's contribution to international development was seen. Increasing attention to ODA, ironically, brought the Marcos scandal to the front page, invoking suspicions of ODA among the Japanese public. The scandal revealed strong ties the Japanese government and Japanese business enterprises have had in implementing ODA project in the Philippines, with funds recycling to the coffers of Japanese firms. The Marcos scandal also revealed how the Japanese ODA had contributed to sustaining

⁶Matsubara and Todoroki (2003) make an interesting point that some nonprofits have even given up fundraising (which means these organizations have given up further organizational development). According to Economic Planning Agency (1999), 79.6% of nonprofit organizations without corporate status no longer engaged in fundraising activities.

corruption of authoritarian regime in the Philippines. By the early 1990s, Japanese people came to question the management of increasing ODA; development NGOs were also stimulated to make policy recommendation for ODA reforms, a tradition which continues to date.

To engage in advocacy, development NGOs had to overcome a disadvantageous legal structure to secure sufficient financial and human resources. In doing so, NGOs followed several strategies. First, NGOs formed networks or alliances rather than acting individually. Examples are Reconsider Aid Citizens' League (REAL) established in 1986 as Japan's first NGO dedicated to changing Japanese aid; Mekong Watch established by 12 Japanese NGOs engaged in environmental or development NGOs in Indochina; and Citizen-NGO Liaison Council for ODA Reform (renamed as ODA Reform Network in 2000) established by more than 50 Japanese NGOs in 1996.

In addition to alliance building, NGOs in Japan took the strategy to work closely with international alliances, networks, and coalitions. Especially in the earlier days, NGOs also approached and collaborated with environmental organizations who were already actively engaged in policy recommendation in Japan. These strategies are evident in the following three advocacy efforts made by NGOs during the late 1980s and 1990s. Through these advocacy works, NGOs became "a conduit of global norms and a successful advocate for change in Japan's ODA and foreign policy (Hirata, 2002, p.97)."

2.2.1 Lobbying to Cancel an ODA Loan Project in India

In 1987, the Japanese government began a project to loan 2.85 billion yen (around US \$450

million) to the Indian government for building a large-scale hydroelectric plant in Narmada Valley in India. Because the loan was intended to supplement Sardar Sarovar Dam project promoted by the World Bank, it caught the attention of the global anti-Narmada campaign. International activists claimed that the dam would influence the lives of over 100 thousand people living in 230 villages, forcing them to resettle without any opportunity to have their voices heard.

Stimulated by these international activists, NGOs in Japan began to lobby the Japanese government to cancel the project. With Friends of the Earth taking initiative, NGOs approached legislators, Diet members, and bureaucrats in the four ministries involved in the project: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of International Trade and Industry, and Economic Planning Agency.

NGOs' lobbying efforts were amplified when the Narmada Dam issue became a subject of Congressional special hearing in Washington D.C. This incident gave NGOs in Japan more credibility to deal with this issue, and also gave rise to further interest among Japanese politicians.

In April 1990, NGOs held the first International Narmada Dam Symposium (or the Tokyo Symposium), bringing together international activists as well as Japanese Diet members, journalists and academics. Legislators by this point were motivated to join the NGOs, and asked for a preliminary assessment of the loan project to the four cooperating ministries. What came out was in favor of NGOs' claims – the director of the Economic Cooperation Bureau at Ministry of Foreign Affairs admitted that while the government had repeatedly claimed that they had sent several missions to India for preliminary studies, only one mission was sent in reality. Worse yet,

this mission had not even produced a single report. With this, the Japanese government decided to cancel the project, despite the previous three years of work and the half built plant. This was the first time in history that the government yielded to the pressure from NGOs in Japan.

2.2.2 Lobbying to Cancel a Pesticide Project in Cambodia

In 1992, the Japanese government initiated an ODA project to provide pesticides to Cambodia to promote agricultural productivity. The project budget was 500 million yen (approximately US\$4.5 million), of which 350 million yen was allocated for three tons of agricultural chemicals. Because the three types of insecticides to be provided (diazinon, ferverlate, and fenitrothion) were considered harmful to local environment and people, NGOs in the fields of development and environment gathered together to terminate this project. Leading agencies were Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC) and Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC). Japan Tropical Forest Action Network (JATAN) and the Pacific-Asia Resource Center (PARC) also joined the network. NGOs claimed that some of these pesticides were strictly restricted in the United States, and that Cambodia had no legislation or other means for controlling safe use of these pesticides. While the project was established in response to the request of the Cambodian government, NGOs were also suspicious about the fact that prior to this request, two Japanese firm (Sumitomo Chemical Co. and Nippon Kayaku Co.) tied to the Japanese government had advised the Cambodian government on which pesticides to order.

The issue was first criticized by CCC and international organizations located in Cambodia, i.e. International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and Food and Agriculture

Organization (FAO). In December 1992, NGOs submitted a letter of protest along with policy recommendation to the Japanese Embassy in Phnom Penh and to the Cambodian Ministry of Agriculture. Another letter was sent in January 1993, although no response came from the Embassy. Also in December 1992, Japanese NGOs lobbied Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan to state the need for re-appraisal of pesticide aid.

In February 1993, JVC held a symposium and submitted a statement to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, demanding the project to be terminated. In July 1993, JVC in Phnom Penh brought a professor, a member of an International NGO Pesticide Action Network North America, to do research on Cambodia's agricultural conditions and to meet Cambodian officials in the Ministries of Agriculture, Environment and Health, as well as the Japanese Ambassador. In October 1993, CCC again submitted a petition to the Japanese Embassy and the Cambodia Ministry of Agriculture. JVC also initiated a memorandum among expatriate agronomists in Cambodia, and also set up meeting for them to discuss with the Japanese Embassy. Mass media began to seriously consider this issue at this point.

In 1993, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) finally acknowledged in an internal report that sending pesticides to Cambodia was a mistake, leading to the cancellation of the project.

2.2.3 Anti-Landmine Movement

In October, 1996, Canada sponsored an international strategy conference in Ottawa to discuss a legally binding international agreement to ban antipersonnel (AP) land mines. A follow-up conference was held in Brussels in June, 1997, that launched formal negotiations on a ban treaty,

announcing a declaration to affirm the commitment of the participating states to sign the treaty in December, 1997.

The Japanese government was reluctant to take part in this Ottawa process, despite its interest in landmine issues. Japan had provided ODA to assist landmines victims in Cambodia in 1997, and had hosted a conference on demining technology in March, 1997. Reluctance of the Japanese government came from the constraints of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty; United States was against signing the treaty insisting Korean Peninsula to be exempted to ensure the security of U.S. troops in South Korea. The United States also claimed for certain types of AP mines be exempted from the treaty, and to delay the enforcement period as long as nine years. Japanese Defense Agency, afraid of taking different stance as the United States, argued that the circumstances surrounding Japan are different from other pro-Ottawa countries, and that Japan should not sign the treaty.

While Japan did observe the Brussels conference, it did not sign the Declaration right away. In response to this situation, the Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines (JCBL) was established in July 1997 as a local branch of International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) “to pressure the Japanese government to fully support the Mine Ban Treaty and contribute to the elimination of landmines throughout the world (Hirata, 2002, p.116).” About 40 NGOs joined JCBL, including Association on Phnom Penh, Citizens’ Forum on Cambodia, and Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC).

JCBL lobbied officials and politicians in the Japanese government to participate in the Ottawa process. In August of 1997, JCBL submitted a petition to Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, followed by another letter later that month. NGOs did succeed in bringing Japan to

participate in the Oslo Conference held also in August 1997, which adopted the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of AP Mines. However, Japan did not sign the treaty following the withdrawal of the United States.

Several incidents, nonetheless, came in favor of JCBL: the death of Diana Princess of Wales who previously worked to ban landmines; the new Foreign Minister Keizo Obuchi in favor of anti-landmines; the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to ICBL and Jody Williams, the ICBL Coordinator. JCBL's credibility was boosted, which encouraged further lobbying efforts by NGOs in Japan.

In mid-November 1997, JCBL handed in person a petition to Foreign Minister Obuchi, urging him to sign the Mine Ban Treaty, which was scheduled to be established in Ottawa in December that year. Obuchi decided to fly himself to Ottawa to join the signing ceremony and announced that the Japanese government would contribute 10 billion yen (approximately US\$90.9 million) for mine clearance and victim assistance from 1998 to 2003.

Getting the Japanese government to sign the Treaty, however, was not the final goal for JCBL. Their goal had then transformed into pressuring the Japanese government to ratify the treaty. The Defense Agency was the strongest opponent in this ratification process as U.S. troops stockpiled landmines on their bases in Japan. Nuclear test explosions by India and Pakistan in May 1998 further delayed ratification; the same section of Ministry of Foreign Affairs was in charge of both landmines and nuclear arms control issues.

In response to these unfavorable conditions, JCBL lobbied politicians who were known to be in favor of the Mine Ban Treaty. After the Ottawa process, several politicians had formed a League of Diet Members to Promote a Comprehensive Ban on Antipersonnel Landmines. In

1998, JCBL hosted a symposium on landmines with the Canadian Embassy where officials from Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Defense Agency, as well as politicians gathered together. Also in 1998, the League arranged a meeting between JCBL and Obuchi, who had then become a Prime Minister, together with officials from Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

These lobbying efforts successfully led the Diet to finally pass a domestic law to ratify the Mine Ban Treaty. On September 30, 1998, the Diet passed the Law Concerning the Prohibition of the Production of Antipersonnel Landmines and the Regulation of their Possession. The Mine Ban accordingly became effective in Japan on March 1, 1999. This ratification led to increasing allocation of Japanese ODA for promoting demining activities and victims' rehabilitation.

2.3 ADVOCACY IN THE 1980s AND 1990s:

LOBBYING FOR POLICY RECOMMENDATION

During the 1980s and 1990s, the unfavorable legal structure surrounding nonprofits led development NGOs to suffer from chronic financial instability and also the incapacity to take public communication programs other than fundraising for service delivery, i.e. advocacy. Despite the constraints on budget and human resources, however, few NGOs did manage to engage in policy recommendations for ODA reform through lobbying politicians, legislators, and bureaucrats. The three cases in this chapter showed this trend, as well as the tactics development NGOs took to overcome the disadvantageous conditions: 1) forming networks and alliances rather than acting individually, 2) connecting with international networks and alliances, and 3)

connecting with environmental NGOs with more experience in making policy recommendation to the government.

Because NGOs' advocacy during the 1980s and 1990s began mainly as policy recommendations for ODA reform through lobbying, the primary audience was decision-makers in the Japanese government. Accordingly, rarely did we see NGOs intentionally approaching the general public as part of their advocacy efforts – a trend we begin to see in the 2000s.

3.0 MOBILIZING THE PUBLIC: ADVOCACY EFFORTS OF 2000s

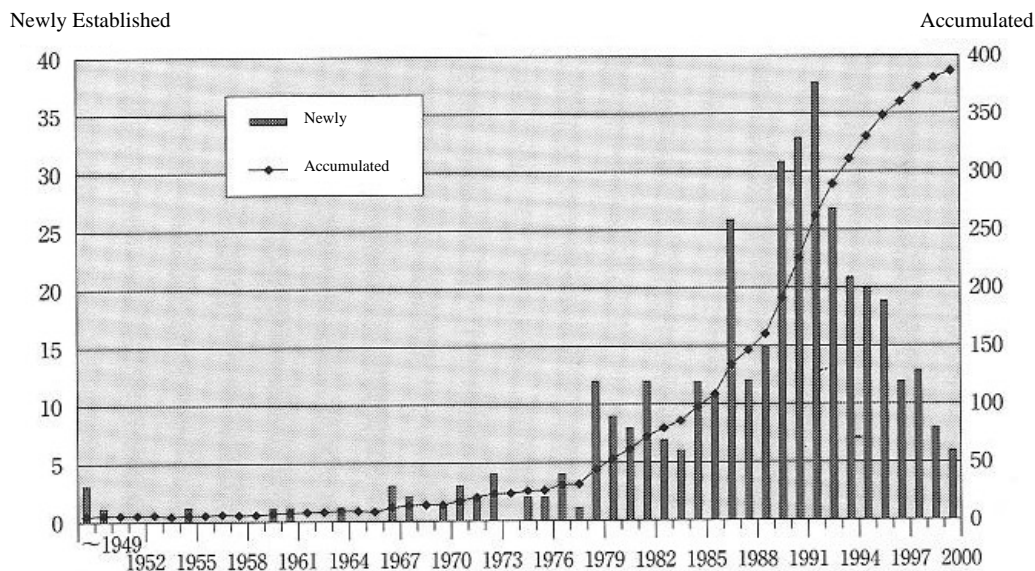
The second chapter turns attention to NGOs' advocacy efforts of 2000s, when the approach began to expand from solely lobbying to campaigning to mobilize the general public. While the primary aim remained as changing policies, the audience of NGO advocacy expanded from governments to the Japanese public.

For development NGOs in Japan, the millennium began with new legal structure. The NPO Law enacted in 1998 allowed many development NGOs to obtain legal status without strict government oversight; institution of Approved Specified Nonprofit Corporation in 2001 also provided an opportunity to obtain tax-deductable status for incoming donations. The issue of financial instability was thus eased to a certain extent, allowing development NGOs to incorporate more advocacy work into their operations. This scaling-up of advocacy led to the success of *Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa Campaign* of 2005, a major turning point of NGO advocacy in Japan. I take this campaign as a case study to show the shift in challenges that NGOs face in undertaking advocacy work; cultural analysis show that because the Japanese public tends to regard NGOs as fundraisers for service delivery rather than advocates, most people misunderstood the aim of this advocacy campaign as fundraising. The paper explores criticisms of *Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa Campaign* to examine this point.

3.1 THE NEW LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

As public interests toward international cooperation and development continued to expand with extensive media attention on famine in Africa, the global environmental crisis, and the slogan of “internationalization” in the Japanese society, the number of development NGOs continued to increase throughout the 1980s and 1990s. As Figure 3.1 shows, the number grew dramatically in the early 1990s.

Figure 3.1 Number of Development NGOs in Japan



Source: Yumoto (2003, p.271)

In response to this expansion, official authorization of “the newly emerging nonprofit sector” began to be discussed as an urgent need. The Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake of 1995 became an important turning point; the tragedy made it evident to the Japanese society that (Postwar-Japan International Cultural Exchange Society, 2005, p.115):

1. It is impossible to fully rely on government administration,

2. There are philanthropic resources that would complement such limitation of government in the Japanese civil society, and
3. In order to effectively use such resources, there must be professional civil society organizations.

The earthquake thus boosted social recognition of “the newly emerging nonprofit sector” of which development NGOs were a part.

3.1.1 The New NPO Law

In 1998, the Japanese government enacted Specified Nonprofit Activities Promotion Law⁷ (known as the NPO Law) to promote free civic activities that contribute to the society and to allow those organization obtain legal corporate status relatively easily without constraints from government agencies. The stated aim of this law is:

...to contribute to the public interest by promoting the sound development of specified nonprofit activities as voluntary activities, such as volunteer activities, performed by citizens to contribute to society through the incorporation of organizations that conduct these specified nonprofit of activities. (Chapter 1, I).

Organizations that fall under the following 12 categories were to be considered eligible for obtaining the legal status of specified nonprofit corporation⁸.

⁷In some cases, the law is translated as the Special Nonprofit Organizational Law (e.g. Pekkanen, 2000).

⁸The authorized fields of nonprofit activities expanded from 12 to 17 with the amendment of NPO Law in December 2002 (effective May 1, 2003): promotion of science and technology, promotion of economic activities, development of vocational expertise or expansion of employment opportunities, protection of consumers, administration of organizations that engage in above activities or provision of liaison, advice, or assistance in connection with the above activities.

1. Promotion of health, medical treatment, or welfare
2. Promotion of social education
3. Promotion of community development
4. Promotion of science, culture, the arts, or sports
5. Conservation of the environment
6. Disaster relief
7. Promotion of community safety
8. Protection of human rights or promotion of peace
9. International cooperation
10. Promotion of a society with equal gender participation
11. Sound nurturing of youth
12. Development of information technology

This new law was a massive deregulation of government oversight compared to then-existing institution of public-interest legal persons (PIPs) discussed in Chapter 1, opening up a new opportunity for “the newly emerging nonprofit sector” to gain legal status (Yamaoka, 2000, p.15-16). The deregulation was evident in two levels. First, the application procedure was clearly relaxed. Should an organization decide to apply for legal status under this new law, they will need only to provide the following documents to the competent agency⁹: 1) the articles of incorporation, 2) a list of officers, 3) a list of ten or more members, 4) a document to verify the purposes of the organizations and non-affiliation with criminal (gangsters) organizations, 5) a

⁹Competent agency for any organization with an established office in one prefecture is prefectural government, while Economic Planning Agency (EPA) handles those with offices in more than one prefecture.

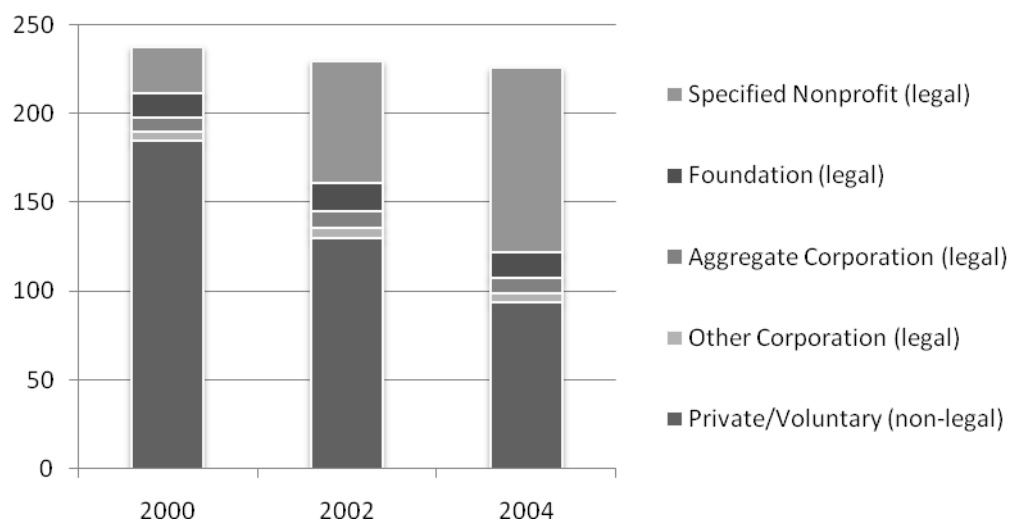
prospectus. 6) a list of founders, and 7) minutes of a meeting that decided incorporation, 8) a list of assets, 9) a document to state the fiscal year, 10) operating plans and budget estimates for the year of incorporation and the following year. There is no longer a requirement of minimum asset holding for incorporation. Time needed for approval is also shortened - while it took several years to get approval under the Civil Code, this new Law requires the competent agency to make decisions within four months. Competent agencies no longer have the arbitrary discretion in making approvals (*Ninka*); they will now give certifying approval (*Ninsho*) to applying organizations. Accordingly, competent agencies cannot express any excuse for refusing to give “certifying approval” as long as the applying organization meets all the requirements.

The second level of deregulation was the curtailing of government/bureaucratic oversight. As long as an organization submits the following documents to the competent agencies who then ensure public access to all information, public authority have no reason to deprive nonprofit organizations of their legal status: activities report, inventory of assets, balance sheet, statement of revenues and expenditures, list of officers, a document stating the names of all of those officers on the list of officers that received remuneration, and a document stating names and addresses of ten or more members.

Development NGOs fall under the ninth category of this new NPO Law, international cooperation. As Figure 3.2 shows, many development NGOs exploited this opportunity and obtained legal status of “specified nonprofit corporation.” Freed from the “legal straightjacket imposed on civil-society organizations (Pekkanen, 2000, p.113),” development NGOs can now sign contracts, open bank accounts, hire staff, own property, sign lease agreements for office space, undertake joint projects with domestic government bodies, all under the organizational name. With these operational ramifications, many of the organization were able to expand its

capacity further to engage in advocacy in its public communication programs. Out of the 67 organizations involved in advocacy today, 43 organizations (64%) gained the legal status of specified nonprofits (see Appendix)¹⁰.

Figure 3.2 Types of Legal Corporate Status of Development NGOs



Source: Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (2000, 2002, 2004).

3.1.2 Approved Specified Nonprofit Corporations

The New NPO Law, while giving development NGOs opportunities to obtain legal status, did not take into account the issue of giving tax-deductible status for incoming donations. A tax system that allowed greater flow of funds for nonprofits through tax-deductible donations, a crucial issue for those in “the newly emerging nonprofit sector,” was not dealt with until October, 2001 when the government finally established a system called “Approved Specified Nonprofit

¹⁰For complete list of all Specified Nonprofit Organizations, see <http://www.npo-homepage.go.jp/ninshou/nponinshou.html>

Corporations (*nintei NPO houjin*).” This was the first institution in the history of Japan that specifically provided support to financial basis of those in “the newly emerging nonprofit sector.”

Under this system, donors may claim to write-off tax for contributions made to Approved Specified Nonprofit Corporations. In order for an organization to obtain this new status, an organization must meet several requirements to be approved by the head of National Tax Agency. The conditions are not easy for an organization to meet; as of January 1, 2008, only 74 organizations out of over 20,000 specified nonprofit corporations have gained the this tax exempting status. The requirements were relaxed in 2006 to allow more organizations to qualify for obtaining the new status, e.g. deregulation of public support test, a numeric indicator that shows if the organization is supported by the public or not. As of March 11, 2008, 76 Specified Nonprofit organizations have been granted the approved status under this new system, of which 20 organizations are involved in international development (26.3%)¹¹. Of these 20 organizations, 8 organizations are engaged in advocacy (see Appendix).

3.2 ADVOCACY EFFORTS: LOBBYING TO CAMPAIGNING

NGO advocacy in Japan during the 1980s and 1990s focused on influencing the Japanese government mainly through lobbying. However, given more capacity for advocacy with the new legal environment, NGOs began to employ a different approaches in their advocacy efforts. While the primary aim remained to influence government policies, NGOs began to intentionally

¹¹For the list of Specified Nonprofits with tax-deductable status, see <http://www.nta.go.jp/tetsuzuki/denshi-sonota/npo/meibo/01.htm> (Retrieved March 25, 2008).

mobilize the Japanese public to increase credibility of their policy recommendations. One of the most symbolic advocacy efforts in this regard is *Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa Campaign* of 2005. In the following section, I will take a closer look at this case to elaborate the shift of challenges in NGO advocacy.

3.2.1 The Turning Point: *Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa Campaign*

Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa Campaign (meaning “don’t let it be, world poverty”) is a collaborative national advocacy campaign for worldwide *Global Call to Action against Poverty*¹². Bringing together 68 NGOs, the Campaign was officially established in May 26, 2005 to raise public awareness toward international development and to appeal to the Japanese government to prioritize poverty alleviation in its agenda for G8 Summit, Millennium Plus Five Summit, and the Sixth WTO Ministerial Conference. Initial funding came from Oxfam UK and NOVIB in Holland.

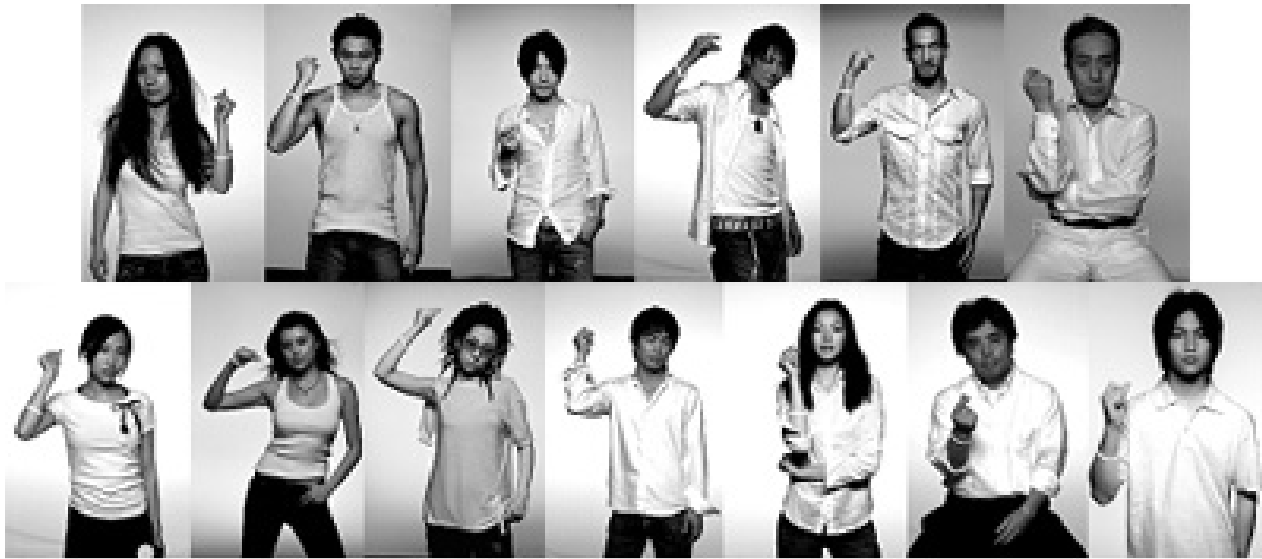
Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa Campaign was “the first full-scale advocacy movement in Japan (*Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa Campaign*, 2008, p.15).” The Campaign aimed at delivering a message to the politics and societies in Japan to “change the system that creates global poverty,” rather than providing direct support to developing countries. Advocacy was defined as “activities that aims to transform the ways and means of politics and others by gathering people’s voices as seen in policy recommendation and rights movement (ibid, p.4).”

¹²The Global Call to Action against Poverty, or GCAP, is a global alliance of trade unions, community groups, faith groups and campaigners working together across more than 100 national platforms. GCAP calls for action from the world’s leaders to meet their promises to end poverty and inequality. Examples are The ONE Campaign in the United States and Make Poverty History Campaign in the United Kingdom (GCAP website: www.whiteband.org).

What made this Campaign distinctive from those of 1980s and 1990s as described in the previous chapter were the missions. There were two missions for *Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa Campaign* – the first mission states traditional advocacy approach in Japan, “to support civil society organizations’ policy recommendation activities for poverty alleviation.” The second mission took another approach in encouraging participation of the general public in Japan – “to encourage individuals in Japan to learn the reality of poverty around the world as well as the structure that creates such poverty, to raise “voice” to “do something about world poverty”, to build public opinion, and to develop and create a social culture for making actions (Ibid, p.4)”.

The highlight of the second mission was the white-band campaign, where the Japanese public were encouraged to wear white-bands to show solidarity. As numbers of celebrities including actors/actresses, musicians, and athletes began to wear white-bands and joined the Campaign’s “clicking film (a short commercial message where they snap their fingers every three seconds to show that children around the world are dying at this same rate)”, *Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa Campaign* caught extensive media attention. From July, 2005 to June, 2006, 4,648,754 white-bands were sold all across the country. In part recognized as a fashion, the white-band approach successfully mobilized the public, including those who had never shown interest in international development.

Figure 3.3 A Snapshot from the Japanese “Clicking Film”



Source: *Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa Campaign* website (accessed February 12, 2008).

In addition to white-bands, huge advertisements were seen in Yomiuri Shinbun and Asahi Shinbun, two of the major newspapers in Japan¹³ (Figure 3.4). Tokyo became one of the sites for the LIVE 8 charity concert on July 2nd, just before the G8 Summit in Gleneagles, along with London, Philadelphia, Paris, Rome, Berlin, Toronto, Johannesburg, Edinburg, and Moscow. A major film festival was held in Tokyo, and also an event at Shiba Park with 3,500 participants where as a finale, a huge white-band appeared on Tokyo Tower (Figure 3.5).

¹³Circulation statistics for Yomiuri Shinbun are approximately 10 million papers a day, and 8 million for Asahi Shinbun.

Figure 3.4 Newspaper Advertisements



Summary translation:
Attention Politicians!
 Do you know Millennium Development Goals?
 We can't 'let it go' the upcoming general election;
 but we can't also 'let go' the UN World Summit to be
 held three days after the election.

Appeared in newspapers on July 27 and 28, 2005.



Summary translation:
 A child dies every three seconds from lack of food
 and dirty water. To change such situation, we
 need your voice, not money. Please wear the
 white- band to show your voice to end poverty.

Appeared in newspapers on September 6 and 7,
 2005.

Source: *Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa Campaign* website (accessed February 12, 2008).

Figure 3.5 Event at Tokyo Tower



Source: *Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa Campaign* website (accessed February 12, 2008).

The policy recommendation efforts as well as the white-band movement led to several transformations on foreign aid policies of the Japanese government. For example, the Prime Minister of Japan announced at the G8 Summit in 2005 to increase the official development assistance by 10 billion dollars; the government also announced an increase of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Furthermore, they promised to double the amount of ODA to Africa in three years.

3.2.2 Misunderstandings and Criticisms

Despite the success in mobilizing the public, inquiries on the use of white-band sales flowed into the Campaign office. The Social Responsibility Report of *Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa Campaign* (2008) states that a typical question can be summarized as follows:

“I bought the white-band as a donation because I thought poverty alleviation was important. But I heard the money raised is not be used for education or food in countries in Africa, but for information provision and policy recommendation on poverty. Is that true? (p.6)”

This question directly relates to the core aim of the Campaign. The primary point of the Campaign, as stated in its mission, was not fundraising for direct service delivery in developing countries but to gather voices of the Japanese citizens.

Misunderstanding of the campaign aim led to severe criticisms across the media and on the internet. A cover story in *Newsweek Japan* titled *Did White-Band Save Africa?* (March 29, 2006) showed a typical example of such criticism. The article referred to a woman who bought the white-band for 300 yen (approximately US\$2.75) who was shocked to learn that the money raised does not go to Africa. She said, “I felt cheated, and became suspicious of those celebrities (in the Campaign ads).”

Criticisms were also seen in newspapers. For example, a housewife posted the following message in *Asahi Shinbun* on October 7, 2005:

“I learned about the white-bands on BBC this spring. I sympathized with the people around the world who felt distressed about people living in extreme poverty, and bought the white-bands. According to the official Campaign website, profits of white-bands are used for production, distribution and activity fees. Advertisement fees also come from the activity fee that account for 40 percent of total profits. I learned that not all the money goes to poor people. It’s easy to participate with 300 yen. It may be the easy way to inform the public of this social movement. But I think it’s important for us to nurture a critical perspective rather than just riding the wave of trend.”

Following the mission, the Campaign had initially planned to use the profits made from sales of white-bands for running the Campaign per se - the aim of the Campaign was explicitly stated as advocacy, influencing policies of the Japanese government. However, the public unfamiliar with the word “advocacy” had misunderstood the aim of the Campaign as fundraising for service delivery, and insisted that the Campaign should use the profits for development projects in the Southern recipient countries.

This inclination for fundraising for service delivery among the audience was also pointed out by Kuroda and Imata (2004), the two important figures in running *Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa Campaign*:

Generally speaking, the Japanese donors still expect the Japanese NGOs to deliver services (in education, health, environment, etc.) in communities in developing countries. They do not want their money to be used to lobby Japanese government for policy change, or for public awareness raising campaign in global issues (p.3).

In response to severe criticisms, the Campaign decided to donate 250 thousand US dollars to The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and 50 thousand dollars to related civil society activities. The Campaign further decided that the profits made through sales of individual NGOs are to be used by relevant NGOs for their projects. Although initially planned as an advocacy campaign, *Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa Campaign* had to incorporate the aspect of fundraising for service delivery into their initiative.

The success of bringing together numbers of NGOs into one campaign, gaining media attention, and encouraging the Japanese public to participate in the Campaign was, without doubt, an achievement of development NGOs’ efforts to elevate their advocacy work. However, their

intention was hampered by the Japanese public, who expected development NGOs to be fundraisers, not educators nor advocates.

3.3 THE NEW CHALLENGE OF NGO ADVOCACY

With an eased legal environment since the early 2000s, development NGOs have increasingly become capable of promoting active advocacy in Japan. *Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa Campaign* of 2005 was a reflection of enhanced advocacy efforts, which came to be a turning point in terms of approach and audience of NGO advocacy in Japan. In this campaign, NGOs elaborated their approach from mere lobbying to intentional mobilization of the general public. Encouraging the public to wear white-bands was one of the symbolic attempts in this regard, a new experiment for NGO advocacy in Japan.

NGOs faced a new challenge, however, as they began to deal with the general public. The public unfamiliar with the word *adobokashi* (a Japanese word for advocacy) misunderstood the aim of the advocacy campaign as fundraising for service delivery, insisting that the campaign should use the profits for development projects in the Southern recipient countries. This showed how the public recognizes development NGOs as fundraisers, neither as advocates nor educators; this public recognition stands as the new barrier for NGOs to promote advocacy in Japan.

4.0 CONCLUSION: THE NEXT STAGE FOR NGO ADVOCACY IN JAPAN

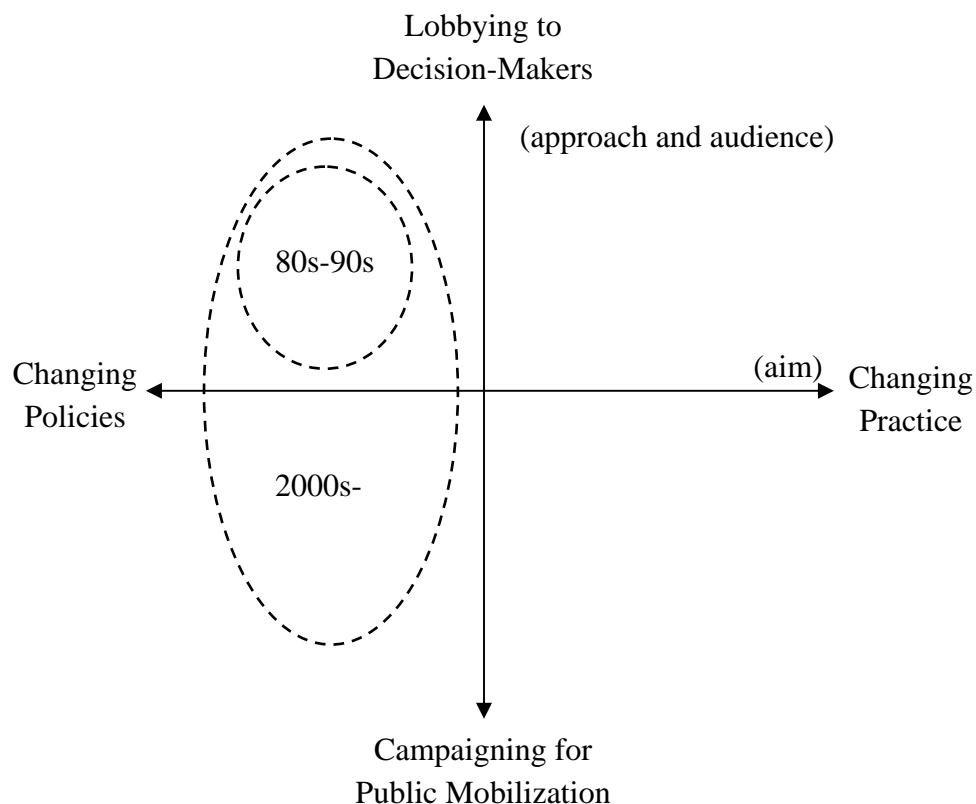
4.1 NEW APPROACH, NEW AUDIENCE, NEW CHALLENGE

In analyzing the obstacles development NGOs in Japan face in undertaking advocacy work, the paper showed expansion of approach and audience from 1980s and 1990s to 2000s onwards. During the 1980s and 1990s, development NGOs in Japan faced an unfavorable legal structure that led these organizations to suffer from chronic financial instability. Forced to emphasize fundraising for service delivery, many of the development NGOs in Japan did not have sufficient capacity to undertake other types of public communication programs including advocacy. The restricted environment only allowed limited number of NGOs to engage in advocacy work during this period. These efforts turned out to be mostly policy recommendation to the decision-makers, i.e. politicians and bureaucrats in the Japanese government, through lobbying.

Unfavorable legal structure began to show dramatic change as we approached the millennium. The new NPO Law was enacted in 1998 and the new tax system for nonprofits was instituted in 2001. These two frameworks gradually eased the issue of financial instability among development NGOs, thus allowing them to incorporate more advocacy work into their operations. Enhanced engagement in advocacy led to successful implementation of *Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa Campaign* in 2005, which came to mark a major turning point of NGO advocacy in

Japan. Although the aim of advocacy efforts remained as changing policies primarily of the Japanese governments, we saw a huge gear shift in approach and audience - not only were NGOs engaged in lobbying the decision-makers, but they intentionally employed a campaign approach to mobilize the public, through “white-bands” and various events. This expansion of approach and audience brought about new challenge to NGO advocacy in Japan – NGOs now face the Japanese public who has the tendency to regard development NGOs as fundraisers rather than advocates. The public thus have hard time understanding what advocacy aims for, as reflected in the criticisms of *Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa Campaign* that mostly insisted on sending money to Africa for direct service delivery.

Figure 4.1 Expansion of Approach and Audience in NGO Advocacy in Japan



To summarize, as advocacy approach and audience expanded from 1980s and 1990s to 2000s onwards (Figure 4.1), the challenge for NGO advocacy accordingly shifted from incapacity resulting from unfavorable legal structure to unreceptive audience. The new stage for NGO advocacy in Japan thus calls for careful attention to the qualitative aspect of advocacy work, i.e. messages articulated and delivered to the audience. As Lindenberg and Bryant (2002) states, “a process of education is required to explain what advocacy entails and to break through old stereotypes (p.181).” Development NGOs in Japan needs to become increasingly conscious about wording and images used in their advocacy work so as to educate the Japanese public of their roles as advocates, not necessarily fundraisers for providing services in the developing world.

NGO advocacy in Japan today seems to be making a good start in this regard. On March 22, 2008, G8 Summit NGO Forum announced a launch of new campaign called “One Million *Tanzaku* ¹⁴ Project.” In this campaign, the Japanese public is encouraged to make short statements of what they envision the world to be in the future¹⁵. The approach taken in this project is clearly an intentional mobilization of public to enhance citizens’ voice towards the governments of Japan and other G8 countries, without involving a fundraising aspect.

Capacities for advocacy among individual NGOs have also been enhanced from 2005 to date, which could potentially lead to raising NGO awareness towards qualitative aspect of advocacy work. One example is World Vision Japan, who introduced a post exclusively for doing advocacy in 2007 and a new budget category of “advocacy” in 2008 (World Vision Japan,

¹⁴*Tanzaku* is a small piece of paper that people in Japan write wishes to hang on bamboo for traditional star festival called *Tanabata* on July 7th.

¹⁵G8 Summit NGO Forum News. <http://www.g8ngoforum.org/2008/03/1004.html> (accessed April 6, 2008).

2008)¹⁶. Furthermore, some NGOs and advocacy campaigns have already begun to engage in fundraising exclusively for advocacy. Besides the two primary advocacy campaigning body, *Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa Campaign* and G8 NPO Forum, Kansai NPO Council is a remarkable example. Though limited in time from April, 2007 to March, 2008, the Council called for “Contributions to Support Policy Recommendation for ODA Policies” (the Council uses *adobokashi* (a Japanese word for advocacy) and policy recommendation interchangeably) with the aim of 500,000 yen (about US\$4500). While it remains unknown whether Kansai NPO Council was able to achieve this target amount, the attempt itself is worth noting. There are also enhanced grant opportunity for NGO advocacy. “Advocacy Start-Up Initiative” established by *Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa Campaign* is a prominent example. This is a grant opportunity to encourage individual development NGOs’ advocacy work. Because the Japanese government do not offer any grant programs to support NGO, this initiative merits attention.

4.2 ACADEMIC AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Being one of the few studies that closely examines NGO advocacy in Japan, this paper has two core implications. First, the analysis shows the importance of understanding NGO advocacy in local context in which its work is embedded. In Japan, advocacy was virtually considered as a work aiming to change policies rather than practices. It was also considered to be closely linked to lobbying until very recently, a tradition reflected in the fact that several NGOs’ refer to “advocacy (*adobokashi*)” followed by “policy recommendation (*seisaku teigen*)” in parenthesis

¹⁶Only Japan Results, Oxfam Japan, and Action Against Child Exploitation have “advocacy” as independent budget category among the 67 organizations listed in Appendix.

(see Appendix). It is also interesting to see how advocacy efforts are often not linked to development education; the two functions are considered as distinctive. The study thus shows a unique interpretation of NGO advocacy in Japan.

The second implication of this study is a practical recommendation. As the barrier for NGO advocacy shift to unreceptive Japanese public, NGOs in Japan must become increasingly conscious about the message to be articulated in advocacy. In creating advocacy message, NGOs must presume lack of understanding among the audience as to what advocacy aims for, and seek for a message that makes a clear distinction from fundraising for service delivery.

4.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings of this paper imply three agendas for future research. The first agenda involves in-depth analysis of the Japanese public's perception towards development NGOs. Why does the Japanese public tend to regard development NGOs as fundraisers, neither as advocates nor educators? How did the Japanese public come to have such recognition? For limited amount of resources available being outside Japan, I was only able to indicate the trend through the criticisms of *Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa* Campaign in this paper. Further analysis of NGO history in Japan combined with media analysis, i.e. newspapers, merits attention. Content analysis of textbooks used in Japanese school education, with regard to how "NGOs" or "international development" is taught may also prove worthwhile.

The second research agenda is to explore why development NGOs in Japan seek to promote advocacy despite the unreceptive public. What are the driving forces for these NGOs to

pursue the role of advocates? In-depth analysis of motivations among individual NGO in engaging in advocacy work, e.g. through interviews to NGO staff members, would be an interest research agenda in thinking about the incentives of NGO advocacy in Japan. One potential factor is the outside influence, i.e. international advocacy campaigns and international NGOs. Many of the advocacy cases examined in this paper certainly implied a significant role played by the international advocacy campaigns in stimulating Japanese NGOs to launch their initiatives. For example, lobbying efforts to cancel the ODA loan project in India was stimulated by the global anti-Narmada campaign; the anti-landmine campaign was clearly influenced by the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL); and *Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa Campaign* was stimulated by the Global Call to Act Against Poverty (G-CAP). Notice, however, that these outside influences were mostly international advocacy campaigns, not necessarily international NGOs. While it is true that some of the advocacy efforts were led by international NGOs - Friends of the Earth Japan again in the case of Narmada ODA loan project, and Oxfam Japan in the case of *Hottokenai Sekai no Mazushisa Campaign* – domestic NGOs were also as active in taking initiatives (e.g. Japan International Volunteer Center in the case of Pesticide ODA project). This trend also seems to be reflected in Appendix, where only 13 organizations out of 67 organizations involved in advocacy in Japan are international NGOs. In exploring the incentives for advocacy among NGOs in Japan, we must consciously distinguish domestic and international NGOs; moreover, we must carefully take into account the distance between international NGOs in Japan and their international partnerships/coalitions.

The third future research agenda is a more practice-oriented study taking a closer look at the message framing process of advocacy campaigns in Japan. How would NGOs frame its

advocacy message so as to attract and transform unreceptive audience? Would NGOs need to take further different approaches in advocacy efforts, or make stronger link between advocacy and other programs, e.g. educational efforts? Examining these questions would contribute to enhance NGOs' advocacy efforts in Japan, given the importance of qualitative aspect of NGO advocacy as discussed in this paper.

Appendix: List of Development NGOs Involved in Advocacy in Japan

	Name	International/ Domestic	Overall Budget Scale (million yen)	Reference to Advocacy Work in Website/Pamphlets (if any, in the words used by individual organizations)	Legal Status	Tax-Deductible Status
1	Japan Volunteer Center	Domestic	Over 100	Research, Policy Recommendation	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	Approved Specified Nonprofit Organization
2	WE21 Japan	Domestic	50 - 100	N/A	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
3	Earth Tree	Domestic	10-20	Global Education	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
4	CARE International Japan	International	Over 100	N/A	Foundation (PIP)	N/A
5	Campaign for Children of Palestine	Domestic	50 - 100	N/A	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
6	Shaplaneer	Domestic	Over 100	Awareness Raising, Educational Programs, Study Tours, Development Education	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A (in process)
7	SHARE	Domestic	50 - 100	Awareness Raising	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
8	JOICFP	Domestic	Over 100	Advocacy	Foundation (PIP)	Specified Public Interest Enhancement Corporation (PIP)
9	Save Chernobyl Chubu	Domestic	20-50	N/A	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
10	NPO 2050	Domestic	50 - 100	N/A	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
11	Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation	Domestic	50 - 100	Research, Policy Recommendation, Awareness Raising, Educational Programs	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
12	Development Education Association and Resource Center	Domestic	20-50	Development education	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
13	Action Against Child Exploitation	Domestic	5-10	Policy Recommendation, Awareness Raising, Educational Programs, Networking	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
14	Africa Japan Forum	Domestic	20-50	Research, Policy Recommendation, Networking, Promoting Understanding	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
15	Japan Team of Young Human Power	Domestic	Over 100	Awareness Raising	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	Approved Specified Nonprofit Organization
16	Asian Women and Children's Network	Domestic	20-50	Movement for Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Violence	N/A	N/A
17	Kansai NPO Alliance	Domestic	50 - 100	Research, Policy Recommendation	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
18	Free the Children Japan	International	10-20	Advocacy (Information Provision to Raise Awareness)	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
19	People's Forum on Cambodia, Japan	Domestic	Under 5	Policy Recommendation	N/A	N/A
20	Larigrans Japan	Domestic	10-20	Awareness Raising	N/A	N/A
21	A SEED JAPAN	Domestic	50 - 100	Policy Recommendation, Awareness Raising	N/A	N/A
22	Global Village	International	10-20	Reflecting on social/economic structure	N/A	N/A
23	Asia Health Institute	Domestic	Over 100	Educational Programs	Foundation (PIP)	N/A
24	Japan NGO Network on Indonesia	Domestic	Under 5	Dialogue with Government/International Organizations, Policy Recommendation	N/A	N/A
25	Jumma Net	Domestic	5-10	Policy Recommendation	N/A	N/A
26	Fukuoka NGO Network	Domestic	5-10	Educational Programs	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
27	People to People Aid	Domestic	10-20	Advocacy (Policy Recommendation)	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
28	Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines	Domestic	20-50	Advocacy (Policy Recommendation)	N/A	N/A
29	Third World Shop	Domestic	5-10	N/A	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
30	Musashino Network for Pinatubo Rehabilitation	Domestic	Under 5	Education for International Understanding	N/A	N/A
31	HANDS	Domestic	Over 100	Advocacy (Policy Recommendation Based on Research), Organizing Symposium, Information Provision	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
32	Kansai NPO Council	Domestic	10-20	Advocacy	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
33	Interband	Domestic	Under 5	N/A	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
34	FoE Japan	International	Over 100	Information provision, Awareness Raising	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
35	21 Century Association	Domestic	5-10	Advocacy	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	Approved Specified Nonprofit Organization
36	Supa	Domestic	20-50	Organizing symposium, Educational Programs	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
37	Action with Lao Children	Domestic	50 - 100	N/A	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
38	Japan International Center for the Rights of the Child	Domestic	5-10	Promoting Declaration of Rights of the Child	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
39	Hunger Free World	Domestic	Over 100	Organizing Events/Symposiums, Study Tours, Educational Programs, Information Provision	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
40	Indonesia Education Promoting Foundation	Domestic	5-10	N/A	N/A	N/A
41	PEACEBOAT	International	5-10	N/A	N/A	N/A
42	Peace Winds Japan	Domestic	Over 100	Information Provision, Education for International Understanding	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
43	Nagoya NPO Center	Domestic	10-20	N/A	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
44	JACSES	Domestic	20-50	Research, Policy Recommendation, Information Provision	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
45	VERDA LERNEJO	Domestic	Over 100	N/A	N/A	N/A
46	International Society for MangroveEcosystems	Domestic	50 - 100	Information provision, Citizenship Education, Research	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
47	Saitama NGO Council for International Cooperation	Domestic	Under 5	N/A	N/A	N/A
48	Asia Pacific Resource Center	Domestic	50 - 100	N/A	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
49	ODA-NET	Domestic	Under 5	Policy Recommendation, Campaigning	N/A	N/A
50	Oxfam Japan	International	20-50	Policy Recommendation	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
51	Japan-Nepal Educational Cooperative Society	Domestic	5-10	Educational Programs, Study Tours	N/A	N/A
52	Kyoto NGO Association	Domestic	Under 5	Educational Programs, Research	N/A	N/A
53	Japan Asian Association and Asian Friendship Society	Domestic	Over 100	Educational Programs	Aggregate Corporation (PIP)	N/A
54	AMDA	International	Over 100	N/A	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
55	JEN	Domestic	Over 100	N/A	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	Approved Specified Nonprofit Organization
56	Sapporo Jiyu Gakko "Yu"	Domestic	10-20	Research, Policy Recommendation	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
57	Shanti Volunteer Association	Domestic	Over 100	Research, Policy Recommendation	Aggregate Corporation (PIP)	Specified Public Interest Enhancement Corporation (PIP)
58	Network Earth Village - Environment and Peace NGO	International	Over 100	N/A	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
59	People's Hope Japan	International	Over 100	N/A	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	Approved Specified Nonprofit Organization
60	Medicins Sans Frontier Japan	International	50 - 100	N/A	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	Approved Specified Nonprofit Organization
61	World Vision Japan	International	Over 100	Advocacy	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	Approved Specified Nonprofit Organization
62	Educational Support Center	Domestic	Under 5	Research	N/A	N/A
63	Japan Results	International	Under 5	Advocacy (Policy Recommendation)	N/A	N/A
64	Japan Action Network on Small Arms	International	Under 5	Awareness Raising, Campaigning for Arms Trade Treaty	N/A	N/A
65	Caring for Young Refugees	Domestic	50 - 100	N/A	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	Approved Specified Nonprofit Organization
66	Ehime Global Network	Domestic	5-10	N/A	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A
67	Somneed	Domestic	50 - 100	N/A	Specified Nonprofit Corporation	N/A

Source: JANIC Online Database (accessed February 3, 2008) and pamphlets and websites of individual NGOs (accessed from February 4 to March 3, 2008)

Note 1) Six organizations involved in international cultural exchange and service delivery for foreigners in Japan were excluded from the list (JANIC Database relies on self-certification of individual NGOs; thus not all NGOs are necessarily involved in international development)

Note 2) 1 million yen = approximately US\$9090 (calculated at the rate \$1 = 110 yen)

Note 3) PIP = Public-Interest Legal Persons (see 2.2)

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