Poverty, Inclusive Development, and Human Resource Cultivation in Africa Revisited: A Critique of Japanese Assistance for Self-Reliance[1]

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Abstract

Japan provides aid to African countries through Official Development Assistance and NGOs' activities by promoting recipient countries' self-reliance, especially in skill development, and a move away from dependence. This study examines discourses and practices related to self-reliance and dependence conducted by Japanese aid officials and academics to determine whether they are appropriate for the situations of African countries and people, from the viewpoint of "inclusive development from within." We critically trace aid practitioners' discourses, conduct a brief literature review on resource transfers, and examine cases of informal and formal manufacturing. We also consider Japanese *Kaizen* projects' implementation and applicability. We find that many aid activities involve vocational training to improve African peoples' ability to work and earn in the labor market. On the other hand, it is important to consider transfers of resources and knowledge apart from market transactions to better understand African people's efforts for survival and livelihoods. This is exemplified through case studies on the informal sofa manufacturing industry in Kenya and the formal leather-shoe manufacturing industry in Ethiopia. These cases indicate that workers at different levels perform self-learning, voluntary teaching, and mutual communication for skill development. Some pay for vocational courses, while others share their knowledge for free, thus combining self-reliance and interdependence. Finally, the Japanese *Kaizen*—

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according to its proponents' words, a bottom-up, on-site participatory method for improving collective skills—has not penetrated the informal sector and only partly penetrated upper strata of people in the formal sector in Africa. These results can guide future projects attempting to provide aid promoting "inclusive development from within" in Africa.

【Key words】 manufacturing, formal/informal sectors, interdependence, self-help efforts, Kaizen

Ⅰ. Introduction

"Boosting the transition from dependence to self-reliance (*jiritsu* in Japanese)" and "supporting self-reliance" are often set forth as objectives for the countries and people of Africa. This is done by many people conducting the practical work of "international development cooperation" or "Official Development Assistance" (ODA, hereinafter, collectively referred to as "aid")[2] as well as liberalist academics[3]. Further, these words are often heard from aid officials affiliated with not only the Japanese government but also non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

However, what "self-reliance" means as an ideal objective, and what self-reliance really is, are rarely discussed. First, let us assume that Africa and its people, especially those in poverty, are currently not self-reliant. Even so, there is little discussion about who is reliant upon what based on personal circumstances. When we can more correctly understand African people's livelihoods, can we implement appropriate aid for them?

In Africa, the 21st century saw relatively high growth across the region. This has been a factor attracting global interest, including that of Japan. However, Africa's growth has not been as high as emerging economies such as China for the same period, and major inter-regional differences in growth performance exist within a country. In addition, high growth during this period mostly became possible due to the boom in resources and primary products in international markets. Incoming foreign exchange revenues from the export of mineral resources and other primary products tend to be very unstable and thus unreliable and benefit certain social classes and groups, and such revenue becomes both a financial resource for the governments and a source of corruption. Nevertheless, there has been a ripple effect of high growth, and combined with the spread of information and communication technology, emerging social strata have improved their income without direct dependence on resources and primary products. An increasing number of people in Africa now enjoy middle-class consumption largely in excess of their subsistence levels. Although the absolute numbers and percentages of these people are still limited, it should be noted that they continue to expand.

Notwithstanding the positive aspects, overall, Africa's recent high growth is not

being shared equally, as indicated by the simultaneous increase in the absolute number of people in poverty. Furthermore, as the boom in resources and primary products collapsed in the latter 2010s, many African countries' growth rate flattened. In other words, Africa's early 21st century growth cannot be described as being the result of desirable "inclusive development from within."

Then, what is required for inclusive development from within? Clearly, it requires the participation of a wide range of people, as well as drastic restructuring of industrial frameworks into ones led by local production activities, such as manufacturing. To that end, there may be a need to build and improve manufacturing skills among people. Does Japanese aid serve a useful role in assisting the development of skills among those involved in manufacturing? Is this aid adapted to the actual thinking and circumstances of African people? If not, what should be done?

In this study, we examine the discourses and practices related to self-reliance and dependence of practitioners, including aid officials and academics, while focusing on their works. We then explore them from the viewpoint of whether discourses and practices appropriately fit the circumstances of African people and their livelihoods. It is argued that we should understand them by overcoming the dichotomy between self-reliance and dependence. Furthermore, it is possible that individual motivations to participate in skill learning projects differ, depending on the status and power of each worker in specific workplace situations. This, we argue, is a major hindrance to Japan's efforts toward skill improvement and poverty reduction, and thus new approaches are required to move forward.

The remainder of this article is organized as follows. In section II, we focus on critically tracing arguments of aid practitioners on self-reliance in the two dimensions of national and government-affiliated organizations, and of people. In section III, we explore the state of dependency in African societies by reconsidering the past literature on market transactions and other resource transfers. In section IV, we examine examples of the informal sofa manufacturing in Kenya and the formal leather-shoe manufacturing in Ethiopia. We also discuss people's interdependence in the sharing of manufacturing skills as well as people's thinking regarding work. In section V, we focus on arguments about Japanese *Kaizen* projects that have been expected to be useful for skill formation and acquisition in work settings and their actual implementation. *Kaizen* aims toward

collective self-help efforts and may represent the forefront of Japan's aid activities. Here, we critically examine whether Japan's improvement assistance meets the actual workplace situations, promotes skill improvement, and is useful for promotion of inclusive development from within and poverty reduction. Finally, the authors conclude in section VI by sharing their tentative thoughts on what is required to promote inclusive development from within.

Ⅱ. Discourses over self-reliance in developing countries and Africa

1. "From dependence to self-reliance" in nations and organizations

Izumi Ohno, an academic with experience working in key posts of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), is highly familiar with the circumstances and implementation of ODA. Ohno [2011: 83] pointed out that Japanese ODA emphasizes self-reliance (*jiritsu*) and self-help support (*jijo doryoku no shien*). According to her, this idea has been widely shared by other Asian countries in pursuing catch-up development. She also claims that, on the contrary, it is different from the approach of the West, which rather demands compliance with uniform political and economic conditionality based upon their own ideas in exchange for providing aid and do not emphasize respect for recipients' self-reliance. Ohno specifically argues that governments of recipient countries and government-affiliated implementing agencies directly benefitting from aid are the main entities that must work toward self-reliance. Self-reliance here means the functioning of recipient governments technically (and often financially) without excessively relying upon foreign aid, as well as government-affiliated agencies not depending overly upon the government. In many cases, the self-reliance described by ODA practitioners fits this pattern.

2. Agenda to bring people "from dependence to self-reliance" and the problematics thereof

Another pattern occurs when local people's associations manage the use of facilities that could not have been built without aid. For example, the title of an ODA project by JICA to provide water supply system assistance is the "Project for Sustainable Rural Development." This title is apparently shared with the host country (Senegal), and its French title is "Projet du Développement Rural Durable." Although the Japanese

language has words such as *jizoku kanou na*, corresponding to "sustainable" or "durable." The term *jiritsu*, meaning self-reliance, has been chosen for the Japanese version of the project's title. From reading the project summary, "self-reliance" here seems to refer to smooth management, operation and utilization of a water supply facility introduced via aid by an association organized by villagers. This presumes that members of the association must acquire knowledge and build the mechanisms required to not only use but also manage and operate the facility technically and financially.

The selection of *jiritsu* in Japanese may indicate attachment to the idea of *jijo doryoku no shien*, which is considered the traditional spirit of Japanese ODA.

Furthermore, a third pattern occurs when the word "self-reliance" is used in post-conflict societies in the vocational training of victims of conflicts who apparently lack the skills to earn a cash income or, more broadly, of women with low income. In other words, in discussions on aid, the term "self-reliance" is also used to refer to individual persons and not just host governments and agencies as well as associations.

For example, an article in ODA White Paper by Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs [MOFA 2015: 48], titled "Strictly Cultivating the Mindset and Skills Needed for Independence," introduces the aid project "Dressmaking Training for Women and Youth in Rwanda." Here, it appears that self-reliance (independence) is considered as enabling individual women to master the methods of Western dressmaking and achieve economic "self-reliance."

3. Deficiencies in the notion of "from dependence to self-reliance"

The expression "Strictly Cultivating the Mindset and Skills Needed for Independence" mentioned above may turn a few heads, even among those not suspecting that the ODA was provided with arrogance[4]. Therefore, it is interesting to clarify which Japanese aid stakeholders think about self-reliance in general and the above-mentioned expression in particular and how.

With regard to aid for individual persons, not only the government but also NGOs are proactively engaged in it and the tendency to emphasize people's self-reliance and mindset is not limited to ODA advocates. Rather, some NGOs are more likely to stress self-reliance; for example, one NGO stated the following on its website:

> There has been long-term, continuous, and large-scale economic aid for developing countries. Nevertheless, why is the economic disparity between the North and the South not yet narrowing? Therefore, what do people in poorer regions need for true self-reliance? The key ingredient required for poor people to rise from poverty-stricken environments and become self-reliant is fully mastering how to think and live on their own[5].

The above statement appears to indicate that although large-scale aid is provided to individual developing countries, it is wasted as people remain mired in poverty and dependency. Achieving self-reliance is regarded as people pulling themselves out of poverty. If we critically examine simple sentences found in an NGO's public relations material quoted above, we find a simplistic link between dependence on aid at the national level and people's poverty and dependence.

Another point to be discussed of the above statement is that a simplistic link is drawn between people who are poor and those not self-reliant. The basis of this discourse is that "learning *how* to think and live on their own" means the self-reliance of poor people. This indicates an underlying perception that poor people do not have the skill to live. Naturally, academics must inquire whether this is truly a correct observation on Africa.

As most African villages face harsh natural conditions, they largely differ from developed and some of East Asian countries that are mostly located in temperate zones with sufficient rainfall. Several African countries also experience human rights violations according to international standards, wherein people are victims of repression and violence. African populace, however, has managed to survive and has increased the number of families. Does it not, therefore, mean that Africa knows how to survive, even though it is different from developed countries and East Asian nations socio-economically? If we look at the livelihoods Africans have created for themselves and try to understand them, how would we describe them? Self-reliant, dependent, or something else?

Moreover, the organization implementing the project mentioned in the ODA White Paper [MOFA 2015] is an NGO that is different from the NGO that posted the public relations material on the website. The project was financially supported by the Ministry

of Foreign Affairs through the "Japanese NGO Grant Aid Project" scheme. According to interviews with the Japanese former staff member in charge of leading the project implementation at the time, what actually happened in Rwanda was as follows. During vocational training, trainees received their training-related transportation allowances paid to them based on a prior trilateral agreement between main stakeholders. While some trainees came to the training on time despite distant commuting routes, others frequently arrived late despite living nearby. The local staff members were concerned about this situation and started strongly urging everyone to try to be on time. The Japanese leader, as the leader of the training course, thought that punctuality would be essential for trainees to gain the trust of their future customers. Therefore, after much agonizing, the Japanese staff decided to adopt the rule under which trainees who could not come by the start time of the training would not receive their regular transportation allowances for that day. However, this was not an easy choice.

This is what MOFA [2015] meant by "Strictly Cultivating the Mindset and Skills Needed for Independence." This was successful in largely reducing tardiness, and some trainees told the former Japanese leader afterwards that the training had changed their work mindset. Unlike what was written in the White Paper, however, not all trainees found jobs after completing the training. After return to Japan, the former leader said to remember the pain of imposing strict time requirements upon the trainees who came from a society with a completely different sense of time and failures to help trainees obtain job they had envisioned[6]. Her words indicate the sincere thoughts and anguish of an aid practitioner facing the complex and difficult realities of aid implementation in the field that cannot be put in simplistic terms. Such thoughts and anguish from people in charge of field activities are not addressed in discussions of "from dependence to self-reliance," and they are not being conveyed to readers of the article such as that in the White Paper. A problem with the discussions of the government and some NGOs is that they tend to tie together two different things: aid dependency at the national level and apparent dependency or poverty at the individual people's level. On the other hand, there is a tendency to think that poverty is caused by a lack of working ethics to maintain *kiritsu* (discipline) regarding time and others, and that self-reliance means overcoming this ethical lack. Then, any academic interested in the societies of developing countries and international development cooperation should examine such

practitioners' perceptive tendencies.

4. Conceptual relationship between national self-reliance and people's self-reliance

We mentioned the phrase "self-reliance support" in relation to Izumi Ohno's arguments [Ohno 2011]. "Support for self-reliance" is fundamentally connected to the idea of "support for self-help"[7] mentioned in Japan's three ODA Charters[8]. We have already touched upon the connections between the two. Some doubts may arise when looking at these phrases. If partner countries or persons have the capabilities and conditions for self-reliance, then what does it mean to *support* them? If we consider self-reliance as important, then why do we lend a hand? Does not support or aid itself harm self-reliance?

These questions concerning "support for self-help" and "support for self-reliance," as described by Izumi Ohno [Ohno 2011], can be understood by placing Japanese aid and related thoughts and acts of those providing it in the context of comparison with the so-called Western aid. As Ohno points out, Western aid is often provided on the condition that the recipient country accept particular political and economic demands. These conditions are referred to as policy conditions or *conditionality*. Policy conditionality may also include environmental conditions related to environmental issues. Political conditionality include democratization (or introduction of multi-party systems) and respect for human rights, while economic conditionality include market-oriented policy demands, such as deregulation, trade liberalization, and privatization[9]. Market-oriented policy conditionality is often laid out by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. On the other hand, in case of aid from emerging countries such as China, economic benefits to the donor (e.g., securing resources and getting favorable treatments to exports) are set forth as the economic conditionality [cf. Brautigam, 2011].

Requests for policy conditionality have been eagerly sought by not only the IMF and World Bank but also Western bilateral donors since the structural adjustment programs of the 1980s. After the Cold War ended in 1989, there has been particular demand for political conditionality, paving the way for democratization. Such demands for policy conditionality apparently involve interference in the domestic affairs of the host country. This can be described as an arrogant action, and there has been growing

criticism that it is not actually effective or has numerous negative consequences. Economists on the African side have also strongly criticized the donors' shallow understanding of African economies and stated that dogmatic policy conditionality is constricting the options of recipient governments.[10]

In contrast with Western donors and international organizations, Japanese aid is thought to represent the nation's ethical debt for state crimes committed before and during World War II. Moreover, Japan rarely imposes policy conditionality on recipient countries. Eventually often having forgotten past crimes and the corresponding ethical debt, this was interpreted as providing aid not through arrogant instruction like the West but as an equal dialogue that respects the self-help efforts and independence of recipient governments and agencies or staff members in charge. This so-called self-help support approach was subsequently thought to have been successful in East Asian countries, as evident from the remarkable economic development in these countries during the 1980s to the 1990s [Watanabe 1991]. During the course, it was forgotten that Japan's relatively modest attitude was originated from ethical reflection over the past state crimes.

Ohno [2011], as mentioned above, claims that ideas and approaches to self-help support are shared by emerging nations in Asia and have succeeded in catch-up development, a common viewpoint among other influential academics [Shimomura et al. 2013].

Notwithstanding Japan's cautious stance toward policy conditionality, as demanded by Western donors and international organizations, the country has neither officially opposed them nor has it been free from the responsibility for them. In fact, Japan has cooperated in applying and enforcing political and economic conditionality in step with other donors [Shimomura et al. 1999]. For example, if Japan aggressively expanded aid to recipient governments that refuse the calls for democratization from abroad and suppress such calls at home, we would expect Japan to garner strong criticism from the international community, including the West. Since the beginning of the 21st century, China has been criticized as a "rogue aid" donor because it was perceived that the country, by aggressively providing aid to many developing countries without considering their domestic affairs, undermined policy conditionality effects. If Japan came under attack for "rogue aid"[11], that is, if it was accused of acting like China, it

would be completely unacceptable to the country's leadership and general populace.

Rather, excluding exceptional cases that we discuss later, like China, Japan does not hold national political and economic ideals about what societies in developing countries *should realize*, as the West and international aid organizations do. This is a common feature of aid from late-industrializing countries pursuing catch-up that are attempting to facilitate their own growth and industrial development while expanding international cooperation.

As mentioned, Izumi Ohno [2011] pointed out these same features. However, she does not inquire why it is common for aid from late-industrializing Asian countries to lack ideals. One answer is that they may prioritize their own industrial development during catch-up, rather than realizing an ideal developing country or world. It should be recalled that Japanese aid during the earlier high-growth period received the same criticism that China does in recent years[12].

Nevertheless, regarding Japanese aid, it must be stated that it is overall reactive and tends to follow the actions of other developed countries and international aid organizations in terms of democratization/human rights issues, as well as promotion of market economies. In that sense, it conforms to what Calder [1988] describes. However, as a donor country, Japan does not always behave in a manner characterized as "a reactive state" as Calder argues. For example, Japan, on its own, applied sanctions against India, Pakistan, and China for their nuclear tests by withholding aid. In addition, the "Guidelines for Environmental and Social Considerations" have been adopted by JICA, and, in principle, proper environmental and social conditions are requested for each project[13].

Moreover, the following reference to human rights is included in the "Guidelines for Environmental and Social Considerations":

> JICA respects the principles of internationally established human rights standards such as the International Convention on Human Rights, and gives special attention to the human rights of vulnerable social groups including women, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, and minorities when implementing cooperation projects. JICA obtains country reports and information widely about human rights that are issued by related institutions, and seeks to understand local human

rights situations by disclosing information about cooperation projects. Thus, JICA integrates local human rights situations into decision-making processes that relate to environmental and social considerations[14].

The ODA Charters also refer to respect for human rights, which was maintained by the Shinzo Abe administration under the Cabinet Decision on the Development Cooperation Charter. The human rights problems most relevant to self-reliance are repression, domination, and subordination. These points are discussed in the following subsection.

5. Self-reliance, dependence, and subordination

The word dependence refers to both reliance and subordination. This implies that the phenomena of reliance and subordination are related to each other.

When considering the human rights situations in developing countries (and more broadly, developed countries), subordination is seen widely. Subordination is not just a matter of repression by governments and/or political powers but is also observed among groups of people, such as families, neighbors, majority and minority groups, employers, and the employed. As indicated by JICA [2010], vulnerable populations such as "women, indigenous people, people with disabilities, and minorities" are likely to be driven by subordination, which is indivisible from reliance. Furthermore, depending on their circumstances, "vulnerable populations" may also include people who lack enough education, job, or land.

Perhaps the escape of vulnerable populations from repression ought to be described as "***kaihou***" ("liberation" or "emancipation") from subordination, rather than an advancement from dependence to self-reliance. Then, why do Japanese aid practitioners not use the word liberation or ***kaihou*** instead of self-reliance or *jiritu*? One reason is that the term "liberation" is accompanied by images of violent struggles, while Japanese people tend to keep away from armed resolution, due to constitutional pacifism, in relation to aid for developing countries. Thus, the implementation of aid is solely through non-military measures. Another reason is the Japanese lack of ideals mentioned above. Moreover, the "apolitical" nature of Japanese diplomacy—which seeks to avoid as much as possible the costs incurred from intervening in developing

countries' domestic affairs through sanctions—may be involved[15].

Here, the West's strong concern about democratization and human rights problems, which have often invited resistance by leaders of developing countries, has led to a divide that China apparently attempts to exploit by supporting repressive states with the justification of respect for mutual sovereignty and non-interference. If we consider the seriousness of political and human rights situations in several developing and African countries, the West's attitude cannot be simply dismissed as arrogant. This is all the more so when we consider global development, in which the central concept is the liberation of all human beings from repression and subordination and the gaining of freedom[16].

Another problem to be addressed is whether the livelihoods of poor people in developing economies, including vulnerable populations, ought to be described only in negative terms such as dependency and/or subordination, as seen in discussions by Japanese aid practitioners. In the next section, we consider the livelihoods of the poor, while specifically touching upon theories discussing Africa and several examples in the reality.

Ⅲ. Dependence as a way of life

1. Resource transfer between the people in Africa

African people's reliance or dependence on others has often been discussed in terms of reciprocity, redistribution, and/or the patron-client relationship in disciplines such as anthropology, economics, and political science. It is said that African people consider their interpersonal relationships to be assets, and it is well known that they put a lot of energy into building and maintaining networks. Moreover, by developing networks, people secure reciprocity and redistribution, which are useful in building their livelihoods themselves [Shimada 1999].

Reciprocity, redistribution, and mutual support, especially in rural and non-urban societies, have been repeatedly explored and discussed in the field of cultural anthropology. Readers of this article are requested to refer to the wealth of cultural anthropological findings. Here, we discuss points important for the urban society mainly in economics and political science.

2. Economic studies on resource transfer

The first academic to discuss reciprocity from an economic viewpoint was Karl Polanyi, who was one of the founders of economic anthropology and researching various societies including Africa through a discussion of reciprocity and redistribution. Polanyi emphasized that there are transfers of goods and services different from market transactions, and we should be conscious that there are economic mechanisms other than market systems. Additionally, he stated that human life and society cannot exist without non-market resource transfers, and that reciprocity, redistribution, and market exchanges are embedded within all societies. Based on this, Polanyi [1944; 1977] indicated that it is abnormal for the market economy to reign supreme as the modern society. The universal importance of Polanyi's economic view may be better understood if we consider that without non-market economic income redistribution by the state and mutual support, the lives of people in developed countries would not be possible. After Polanyi, massive academic literature has been accumulated on reciprocity and mutual support in Africa and redistribution by the state, particularly European welfare states. Resource transfers between individual people in African countries and redistribution by the state in developed countries are equivalent, and both have great significance for people's livelihoods. Moreover, many people and businesses working in African nations ruled by exogenous and young governments are not paying them income or corporate taxes, and they are also not receiving any benefits except basic education, simple health services, and low-grade infrastructure. As seen in section IV, this is significant in the informal sector, which provides most opportunities for work and employment. This means that government redistribution, as imagined in advanced countries, is very limited. If we consider this weak relationship between the state and people, it is clear that the self-reliance of the two cannot be described as being very closely linked.

In addition, we refer to some modern mainstream economists' idea of reciprocity: they found strategic characteristics in not only market transactions but also gifts and reciprocity, which indicates that strategic characteristics can be found at the individual level. The idea is that unilaterally providing another party with goods and services is by no means purely for the recipient's own good but is a type of insurance for the provider (or distribution of risk over time) so that the recipient can be relied upon when goods or services are required in return [Tanaka 2007; Xie 2006].

This understanding of reciprocity in modern mainstream economics may not be appropriate, as it presupposes that the daily actions of individuals are always made through conscious choices. As Polanyi [1977] points out, people do not always choose with consciousness to follow what their parents' generation had done through their own volition, and a major part of their choices and behaviors is unconscious. However, interpreting reciprocity as a necessary strategic means for foreseeing future needs for dependence in individuals' lives might itself be a viewpoint worth considering.

3. Patron-client relationship and political science

Although dependence is also mentioned in political science, it takes a different form. This is the patron-client relationship that is found in many forms in the African society. Clients expect and depend upon patrons to distribute a broad range of resources, including money, goods, and employment. In return, patrons expect clients to provide loyalty or services, though not necessarily proportional to the individual resources given. Explaining the patrimonial state of post-independence African nations, Takeuchi [2009] states that the patron-client relationship is an important concept, and African nations have rapidly become the so-called Post-Colonial Patrimonial States (PCPS) only a short time after gaining independence.

According to Takeuchi [2009], power holders in PCPS are connected to general populace through the patron-client relationship. On the other hand, he says that the possibility of violence is an inherent element of this relationship, and if patrons and clients do not meet each other's expectations, their relationship may be destabilized, leading to conflicts involving many people.

National power holders' connections with general populace through informal personal relationships have also been asserted by notable Africanist academics such as Hyden [1983; 1987], Bayart [1993], and Chabal and Daloz [1999], among other leading academics.

On the other hand, one author of this study (Takahashi) knows of a case in which a national-level influencer in an African country (executive at a major financial institution) was approached by ordinary people including those strange to him; he provided them with large sums of money but expected nothing in return. He said that such cases are not limited to him and widely spread [Kitagawa and Takahashi eds.

2016]. If we believe him, African societies may not merely involve the development of reciprocal patron-client relationships between acquaintance. We might have to broaden sense of ethical obligation toward redistribution among the political and economic elite and other powerful in resource distribution.

4. Beyond the study of non-market resource transfers: Acquiring "working skills"

The past literature indicates that African people connect the mutual support and reciprocal relationships in rural villages as well as the redistribution by states and power holders to market transactions to fabricate their livelihoods. When we consider the situation in Africa, where market economy is on the way of penetration into corners of society, there should be little argument against the present ODA and NGO aid promoting skill training for people to earn cash through employment in markets.

If we try to get close to African people and approaching their lives through practice and research, however, it may be indispensable to directly observe and discuss their own practices in "learning *how* to work by themselves." The reason is that there is an overwhelming number of working people who already know "how to work," whether or not received the skill training through foreign assistance or government policy measures.

Ⅳ. Learning how to work in Africa

1. Acquiring skills at worksites in Africa

In this section, we consider what self-reliance and dependence are in the reality through an exploration of the process by which people acquire skills to work in manufacturing worksites in African cities.

We focus on urban manufacturing because of the lack of specific research on the interdependence and skill acquisition of people working in cities. This has been particularly few in Japan in recent years. Yamada [2017] and Yamada and Otchia [2018], among others, have actively studied the effects of vocational training on auto mechanics and garment workers. However, overall, studies on skill learning in the urban manufacturing sector in Africa have been extremely limited.

In this section, we consider interdependence and self-reliance related to mastering

"how to work" through an introduction of skill acquisition for people working in the informal sofa manufacturing industry in Nairobi, Kenya, and the formal leather-shoe manufacturing industry in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In this study, craft and knowledge are assumed to be the two elements of working skills, that is, knowing "how to work."

In general, methods of learning craft and knowledge to work are divided into classroom and practical learning in vocational education and training, and into on-the-job training (OJT) and off-the-job training (Off-JT; training done outside of working hours) at worksites. More concretely, the methods to acquire skills at worksites include self-learning, copying, and repetitive practice on own accord. Most ODA to Africa has gone to vocational education and training. On the other hand, regarding foreign direct investment, corporations often conduct their own internal Off-JT and OJT.

In the following, we focus on the two elements of craft and knowledge and discuss the specific methods to acquire them.

2. Skill acquisition in Kenya's informal sofa manufacturing industry

The informal sector comprises a set of economic agents working without capture, assistance, or regulation by the government. Therefore, overall, they may be considered relatively independent of the government. Nevertheless, the informal sector plays a major role in the economies of low-income African countries. For example, in Kenya, it provides more than 80% of employment and income-earning opportunities for workers [Institute of Economic Affairs 2016].

This study partly focuses on informal sofa manufacturing in Kenya. Sofas are close to a necessity for African families, who enjoy chatting with their neighbors. They are thus manufactured and used widely. Nairobi, Kenya has four main clusters or industrial agglomeration areas, in which a number of sofa manufacturers are concentrated in specific districts. One of these is Cluster X, where sofas meant for low-income families are manufactured.

The following description is based on four field surveys conducted by the authors in Cluster X[17]. In X, there is a gradual stratification with a limited number of masters (who also work as sofa dealers or *showroom* owners; although one-third of the *showroom* owners are women, none of them are masters). These masters employ workers for piecework to manufacture sofas. Masters also work on their own and were all

previously ordinary workers.

The specifications and methods of manufacturing each sofa are determined by masters in consultation with customers, which are then followed by workers who work within the scope of their individual roles. This means, as explained later, that manufacturing ideas and concepts are guided by the masters, and workers carry out physical work according to the instructions given. Since the masters seem to enjoy the rewards and fun of manufacturing, workers yearn to become masters themselves.

However, masters and ordinary workers are somewhat different in their vocational training experience. Approximately 16% of the masters in Cluster X had experienced learning in formal vocational schools. The oldest master told one of the authors (Takahashi) that the standards for sofas that he learned and applied in a vocational school are now shared throughout X. If that is true, then vocational training has contributed to the introduction of fundamental knowledge of sofa manufacturing in X. On the other hand, workers do not study in vocational schools by themselves. This may be a part of the reason why, not workers but masters determine sofa specifications and production methods. While most workers hope to become masters, a few do not want it because they do not want the various burdens of thinking and ordering required of masters.

On the other hand, both masters and workers have graduated from primary schools, and some have completed secondary education or higher. On average, masters have higher education levels than workers. In addition, having a general school education appears to be essentially important in learning the minimum mathematical knowledge needed to acquire sofa manufacturing skills [Takahashi and Matsubara 2021: 243][18].

Most masters and workers in Cluster X have learned their sofa manufacturing skills for free from their own masters or senior workers. This is close to what is commonly called an apprenticeship. However, apprentices in X have no obligation to work for the masters from whom they learned like an indentured servant. When masters do not provide any opportunities for work, former apprentices are free to work for another master.

Under apprenticeships in Cluster X, workers acquire skills through OJT and on-site Off-JT, and it is rare for masters to bother to teach. Workers learn in the field by

imitating their masters, self-learning, and repetitive practice. In X, manufacturing work is done outdoors, which allows apprentices to imitate not only their own masters and senior workers but also other workers, and they sometimes ask for brief instructions from fellows.

In Cluster X, there is competition among masters and showroom owners, along with conscious and unconscious cooperation. It is important for sofa manufacturing and sales to update and increase the sofa models (form designs). There are currently at least 13 different models in X. Manufacturing occurs outdoors and the stores are small, so other masters and showroom owners always know immediately when someone introduces new models. Furthermore, sharing of knowledge on different models is accelerated by workers working for multiple masters.

The oldest master said that even if he taught his knowledge of sofa-making to others for free, he would be satisfied with only gratitude and respect in return. In addition, female showroom owners in other clusters told the authors that even if other showroom owners imitated the models they were selling, they would welcome it because of their friendship with them.

In Cluster X, workers who have completed their apprenticeships have the basic skills to make a sofa; therefore, masters can hire other workers while feeling assured of their skills even during sudden absences of their apprentices due to sickness or other reasons. Thus, masters can flexibly meet the changes in demand.

3. Skill acquisition in Ethiopia's formal leather-shoe manufacturing industry

In this subsection, we discuss skill acquisition in the leather-shoe industry in Ethiopia. The following data come from on-site factory research in the capital city of Addis Ababa, which were collected over 15 months in total between 2016 and 2019 conducted by one of the authors (Matsubara) herself. Ethiopia boasts the largest number of African livestock, and the government has designated manufacturing of products using leather and the promotion of their exports one of the key sectors of its industrial policy.

Feet-covering shoes were introduced at the start of the 20th century into the country, and leather-shoe manufacturing is believed to have started thereafter [Merab 1929: 408-409]. Matsubara surveyed skill formation at the manufacturing sites of six

leather-shoe manufacturing enterprises (two each of small, middle and large-sized companies respectively) located in Addis Ababa. The surveyed firms were all formal corporations. The larger the firm, the more machinery had been introduced, which apparently resulted in more precise division of labor between processes and skill specialization.

Only the largest of these firms with the longest history had its own facilities set up for Off-JT. It also has seconded workers for vocational training. In addition, middle- and large-sized companies had invited external experts to conduct OJT. For example, some workers received OJT guided by foreign experts from overseas firms that had been hired with assistance from the Ministry of Trade and Industry. In addition, other firms implemented occasional training led by skilled workers or external experts. The workers trained include those who could operate sewing machines.

The Ethiopian leather-shoe industry expanded greatly due to high economic growth following the end of the Ethiopian Civil War in 1991. Exports, however, have been sluggish, enterprises do not perform as expected, and workers' wages in leather-shoe manufacturing are lowest in leather industries, including tanning and finishing other leather products such as bags and jackets [UNIDO 2012]. Consequently, in addition to low wages, the work environments and work itself have been harsh, resulting in frequent turnover.

The high degree of instability in exports and industrial performance, coupled with high turnover, has led to the situation where firms generally do not invest much in workers' training. These make it very difficult to raise wages. Thus, a vicious cycle appears to have formed.

In a randomized controlled trial (RCT), Blattman and Dercon [2018] find that the wages of youths working in Ethiopian manufacturing factories were low compared with self-employed youths of the same age, and they had an annual turnover rate of 77%. Similarly, through participant observation by Matsubara, high turnover rates are confirmed in the leather-shoe manufacturing as well. Therefore, it is reasonable to say that many people have little expectation of promotion through the ranks in the firms' internal labor market.

Workers do not expect much from the firms that employ them, and they learn on their own to acquire and improve their skills. What Matsubara heard is that there are

a few cases of workers who received vocational training by paying tuition at public or private vocational training schools by themselves. However, how much cash workers spend on their own to acquire and improve skills differs from worker to worker. Here, it seems that their aspirations for promotion and better payment have a major impact.

A very few workers have experienced long-term vocational educations taking several years. They are mostly working for managing or supervising production processes at medium- and large-sized firms. On the other hand, most workers have experienced general education at primary or secondary schools. Basic literacy and/or mathematical competency seem to be necessary and useful for ordinary works in the Ethiopian leather-shoe manufacturing [Takahashi and Matsubara 2021: 251, 254-255].

A number of workers, to ensure better performance at the jobs they are assigned, receive OJT from their owners at small-sized firms, or from on-site supervisors or senior workers at middle- and large-sized firms. In addition, they imitate the work of their colleagues and thereby repeat their training while working. Depending on the worker, sometimes they also learn by using machines left idle by senior workers, both during and outside normal working hours, to improve their own skills by attempting tasks above the level at which they are working. Furthermore, there are cases wherein skill training is provided by senior workers to a few juniors during off-work hours.

Many small businesses, including the two researched, are assigned one room each in buildings called "industrial clusters" as part of government promotion policies and use it as the production site[19]. According to Matsubara's surveys of clusters in Addis Ababa, sharing of form design knowledge is not done for the manufacturing and sale of leather shoes. This is different from sharing of models and other knowledge in the Nairobi sofa manufacturing cluster seen in the previous subsection. This difference seems to be related to whether work is being done outdoors or indoors. On this point, we find that sharing of knowledge between business operators and workers varies depending on the circumstances.

Another difference from the Nairobi case in terms of knowledge development is support from an international organization for small- and medium-sized leather-shoe manufactures in Addis Ababa. The organization is UNIDO (UN Industrial Development Organization). While UNIDO's support is noteworthy, we should note that it, first of all, aims at knowledge development of entrepreneurs and managers.

4. Skill transfer and acquisition as "reciprocity"

As discussed above, in both Kenya's informal sofa manufacturing and Ethiopia's formal leather-shoe manufacturing industries, a lot of craft and knowledge are transferred between actors or acquired for free, regardless of whether they are in formal or informal industries. This is likely because the logic here is different from market transactions. In African manufacturing places, not only goods and employment but also skills are shared reciprocally.

Therefore, voluntary learning and interdependence on the part of workers are in tandem with personal interconnections.

V. *Kaizen* and collective self-help in African manufacturing sites

1. What is Kaizen?

Kaizen is a Japanese term that means "improvement". It is a series of methodologies formulated mainly by the leading Japanese automobile manufacturer Toyota to improve product quality, and production efficiency at manufacturing sites. *Kaizen* is defined as a "bottom-up, on-site participation-type continuous work improvement" by its proponents and engineers in charge [Imai 2010; Shimada 2018].

The Toyota Production System (TPS) of the Toyota Motor Corporation may be considered one type of *Kaizen* and may be used as a typical model case to explain *Kaizen* in more detail. According to Taiichi Ohno [1978], a leading Toyota engineer who systematized TPS, its required activities are as follows: 1. various wastes such as "seven wastes", *i.e.* overproduction, waiting, transportation, extra-processing, inventory, motion, and defects, are to be minimized; 2. wasted inventory stocks are eliminated by making production-side response just-in-time; 3. processes with difficulties in response are to be visualized; 4. inefficiencies and problems in production are to be shared with workers on-site, thus improving on-site problem-solving capabilities. *Kaizen* is very well-known with 5S: *seiri* (sort), *seiton* (set), *seiso* (shine), *seiketsu* (standardize), and *shitsuke* (sustain). It tends to be emphasized to start *Kaizen* with shining and cleaning working sites and products in order to improve quality.

The above four points may be considered as the reasons why *Kaizen* is considered a bottom-up and on-site participation. However, further empirical studies are required

to determine whether such ideals are truly and thoroughly realized.

2. Significance of dissemination of Kaizen by JICA in Africa

Kaizen has become widely known overseas because of the spread of Japanese manufacturing enterprises such as Toyota, transferring at least part of the *Kaizen* activities and it has some positive ripple effects. Here, we focus on how JICA has been actively developing technical cooperation in recent years to spread *Kaizen* to Africa, especially Ethiopia. The attempts to disseminate *Kaizen* in Africa through JICA's technical cooperation may be characterized in two ways.

The first is change in long-term concentration of JICA's technical cooperation in Africa in the agricultural sector. This had been ongoing since the 1980s. However, as of the 21st century, African countries have resumed high growth, and Japanese enterprises have taken great interest in them. Especially in Ethiopia, despite problems such as the already described weak export competitiveness and small relative and absolute sizes, manufacturing has rapidly grown. This is believed to have influenced JICA's actions.

Second, while the actual objective in much of past technical cooperation has been vocational training to raise the skill level of *individual* persons, the goals of disseminating *Kaizen* are different. It is an attempt to improve *collective* on-site skills according to the fourth major activity mentioned above.

The dissemination of *Kaizen* has gained attention among aid officials and academics involved in Japan's international development cooperation. This may be because it has been believed by Japanese decision-makers and aid officials that Japan has assisted East Asian countries to catch up in industrialization, and through this experience, as raising the skills of working people on the supply side lead to social development. This may also be due in part to the launch of "Poverty Reduction through Economic Growth," which was upheld by the Japanese government as one of its approaches to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) around the year 2000. The MDGs emphasized primary health and basic general education, as well as poverty reduction through resource distribution by governments underpinned by aid and debt forgiveness. Perception of the government of Japan, a major provider of development loans aiming at industrial development, was not identical with this emphasis. Japanese

perceive that their East Asian neighbors could reduce poverty because of growth through industrialization and tend to think Japan's support for skill improvement through aid for public vocational education and training including *Kaizen* by private channels are effective. They cannot be happy with focusing on basic general education. Therefore, the spread of *Kaizen* was launched with the expectation that self-help among African nations would lead to industrialization and economic growth, which could be reproduction of East Asian experience.

At the same time, JICA launched participatory development from the 1990s on. Thereafter, the Japanese government and JICA supported poverty reduction using an approach that differed from the West. As of the 2010s, Japan emphasizes inclusive development in the discussion on the Sustainable Development Goals. This means that *Kaizen* has been understood as a bottom-up, on-site participatory, collective skill improvement and self-help effort for the development of craft and knowledge. Therefore, the dissemination of *Kaizen* was chosen as a flagship activity of JICA's technical cooperation.

3. Motivation to participate in Kaizen: Japan's experience

This study also considers whether the *Kaizen* conducted in its starting place, Japan, was really bottom-up and on-site participation type, whether it really achieved participation from lowest-level workers, and whether it played a role in inclusive development and poverty reduction?

The answers to these questions were surveyed by labor sociologists until the 1990s, focusing on Japanese automobile manufacturing sites as the main subjects. These included a comprehensive review of *Kaizen* studies by Tsuchida [2005] who focus on workers' motivation to participate in *Kaizen*. Tsuchida and others first classify the labor of workers into the conception and execution processes, according to the definitions by Braverman [1998], a US researcher on labor affairs[20].

According to Tsuchida [2005], on-site supervisors and managers competing for salary increases and promotions were motivated to participate in *Kaizen* because they are partly entrusted with the authority of conception. General workers, however, are deprived of opportunities to participate in conceptual processes and thus are in a state of alienation wherein they do not feel worthwhile in working. Tsuchida [2005] finds that

it is appropriate to call general workers in Japanese automobile factories "low-leveled multi-skilled workers," while Braverman's [1998] extremely simplified classification is not applicable [Tsuchida 2005][21]. Thus, there is a stratification between the conception and execution roles, which leaves general workers with lack of motivation to participate in *Kaizen* and other improvement activities. This suggests that what actually occurred on-site is not bottom-up, which contrasts with the ideals of *Kaizen*. Furthermore, motivation for competition is low among workers who are not permanently employed or work at small and medium-sized enterprises. Thus, they sometimes do not get very involved in *Kaizen* [Tsuchida 2005].

The findings of Tsuchida [2005] about general workers and workers in small and medium-sized enterprises in Japan lacking motivation for *Kaizen* have empirical foundations on the basis of on-site researches. Then, considering the applicability of *Kaizen* may require thorough exploration of the different circumstances of individual workers. This includes exploring what sort of firm or workplace they work for, what is their position or status, and what is their competitive environment or working conditions. However, is the dissemination of *Kaizen* by JICA at African work sites conducted based on understanding of the problems indicated in Japan discussed above?

4. Cases of the spread of Kaizen by JICA in Africa

1) Comparative position of workers in Africa and JICA's support for Kaizen dissemination

How is *Kaizen* specifically disseminated in working places, how are the supports provided in Africa, and how is it perceived and discussed?

First, one of the problems preceding *Kaizen*'s discussion is that identified by Urwick and Brech [1957]: if workers in modern urban large-scale industrial systems have no interest in the overall success of their company, how can managers get them to cooperate? If this is the case, it is definitely difficult to motivate general workers to improve the quality of products or their productivity.

Urwick and Brech [1957] examined factory labor situations from the Industrial Revolution in the 18th to the early 20th centuries, which mostly involved unskilled labor. Therefore, their indications could not necessarily be applied to those of contemporary developed countries, where general workers are not always unskilled and are rather low-level multi-skilled. However, if we look at the low motivation of general workers

at large companies to participate in *Kaizen*, as pointed out by Tsuchida [2005], their arguments appear more applicable. Nevertheless, African countries have adopted urban factory labor recently. Hence, it is presumed that in many cases, workers are engaged in unskilled or lower multi-skilled labor. Consequently, the arguments of Urwick and Brech [1957] may be to some extent applicable.

Since JICA conducts *Kaizen* like most other activities based on government-to-government assistance, it is presumed that there is almost no activity to disseminate *Kaizen* to the informal sector by JICA or individual governments in any African country and the authors cannot find training programs supported by aid in general and Japan's *Kaizen*-related aid projects in particular for sofa production in Cluster X in Nairobi.

As mentioned before, however, the ripple effect of activities by Japanese private companies needs to be discussed from a different viewpoint. The authors met a farmer, who had previously worked at a Japanese-owned formal factory in Nairobi, had experience of working under Japanese staff, and then had owned land in a rural area in Kenya. He led us to the field of an experienced farmer, who enthusiastically engaged in improving land productivity and introducing new varieties and technology in the same rural village. The first farmer told the authors that "This is *Kaizen*" while observing the enthusiastic farmer's activities. He said that he learned the word "*Kaizen*" from a Japanese staff member while working in Nairobi[22].

Large Japanese firms, however, have made little headway in most of Africa. Compared with Asia, the scope of *Kaizen* dissemination through Japanese firms has been largely limited, which is the reason why JICA expects itself to take the lead of promotion of *Kaizen* in Africa. Thus, the fact that the word *Kaizen* was mentioned by a land-owning farmer is noteworthy.

In Ethiopia, the spread of *Kaizen* is the flagship initiative of Japan's technical cooperation for private industry assistance in Africa. The Ethiopian federal government has even established the Kaizen Institute, which has been strongly supported by national leaders such as the former Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. Ethiopia deserves special mention for its government's enthusiasm for *Kaizen*. Below, we examine cases of small and large-sized formal Ethiopian firms as examples of dissemination of *Kaizen* and consider how it has penetrated down to workers.

2) Case of Kaizen in a small enterprise in Ethiopia

One small-sized enterprise surveyed by Matsubara has its factory in a government-managed industrial cluster. The owner of the small firm has been receiving *Kaizen* training and has been actively trying to incorporate the "5S". This includes returning tools to their original location after use and cleaning the factory workplace both in the morning and before going home. However, it is still usual during production for the top part of finished shoes to be placed directly on the floor not clean during the working time by workers. This example indicates that workers do not fully understand the reasons and necessity of upholding the 5S and how product quality is to be improved by them.

3) Case of Kaizen in a large enterprise in Ethiopia

One large firm surveyed by Matsubara moved its factory to the present place in 2017. Thereafter, the position of an internal manager within the company was established with the aim of introducing *Kaizen* practices. This manager sometimes received training from the Ethiopian Kaizen Institute. In addition, *Kaizen*-like elements are often encountered in factories, such as the hanging of posters on stairwell walls indicating the seven wastes as the sub-section 1. However, even though *Kaizen* policies and their meaning have been disseminated at the upper levels of the firm, they have not reached all the workers. As part of implementing the 5S, it was decided that workers must clean their workplaces prior to closing up every day. However, sometimes their collected garbage ended up under conveyor belts instead of waste bins. Matsubara's 2019 survey found that workplace supervisors had to collect garbage after workers left their workplaces.

In addition, in Ethiopia, people eat with their hands, but the company does not give out soap to its workers. This means that they often do not use soap to wash their hands after lunch, and sometimes not all of the scraps clinging to their hands are cleaned off. Thus, occasionally, pieces of food clinging to hands after lunch stick to materials being manufactured into shoes. Based on these evidences, it is presumed that workers at the lower end of factory labor do not understand the need to maintain the 5S from the viewpoint of quality management and improvement.

As implied in these examples, even if a firm has adopted *Kaizen*, workers do not necessarily understand why they have to follow it. If they could be made to understand that adopting *Kaizen* leads to shortened manufacturing times and improved quality for products, then such cases would not occur.

As we have seen, there is a lot of turnover in Ethiopian leather-shoe manufacturing, and the retention rate of general workers by a single firm is low. Although there are certainly workers who have paid to improve their skills by themselves, their number is actually quite small. Consequently, when workers repeatedly change jobs within the same industry or transfer over to another one, there may be less motivation to try and improve the "collective skill" of a particular firm through *Kaizen*. Moreover, as to why workers who actually hope to improve their skills do not adopt or practice *Kaizen*, the true reasons remain unknown, although we must consider objective circumstantial factors to explain them.

We think the roots of the factors, overall, are presumably found in general workers' lack of interest in the success of the whole firm, as mentioned by Urwick and Brech [1957]. It may also be related to the fact that management is solely privileged to formulate conceptions, while general workers are left to execute them accordingly, as mentioned by Braverman [1998]. Also, in the Ethiopian leather-shoe manufacturing, low-level wages and high turnover rate of workers perhaps negatively impact their interest in the firm's performance and thus motivation to practice *Kaizen*. Such case may not be applicable to a few workers staying for a particular firm for long a time. These are a topic for future research and we will keep it in mind that individual workers' motivation for skill and performance improvement vary and probably the same in *Kaizen* vary as well.

4. Poverty reduction and Kaizen in Africa

As examined in this section, the dissemination of *Kaizen* in Africa has not reached the informal sector. *Kaizen* has been adopted in formal small-sized companies, although the motivation and understanding of general workers is low. Consequently, it is difficult to refer to this as a bottom-up, on-site participatory type *Kaizen*. In addition, wages in the Ethiopian leather-shoe industry remain low, making it difficult to conclude that

Kaizen has contributed to inclusive development and poverty reduction.

Thus, it is important to improve the objective circumstantial conditions of ordinary workers, so they could have at least some interest in improving the quality and productivity of their work, similar to the landowning farmers and managers of Japanese workplaces.

Ⅵ. Discussion and tentative conclusion

Aid has been provided in almost every corner of African countries. If you drive on a local highway for a day, you will see numerous signs for different aid projects. It is even harder to find places not infuenced by development or aid in an African country. It appears that aid projects serve in place of government action. Seeing this reality, it may be understandable that aid officials desire to extol self-reliance over dependence.

Aid, foreign direct investment, and development through raw commodity booms are characterized by too much external dependence on others, which should be certainly overcome. Thus, Africa's "inclusive development from within" should focus on local production activities in which most people including the poor should participate.

It is not appropriate to regard Africans' livelihoods with the dichotomic view between dependence and self-reliance, as the livelihoods should not be easily linked with external dependence at the national level. In the first place, however, any individual person across continents are dependent. While residents in developed countries could earn cash through market transactions, they depend much on the government's redistribution. African people may lack ability to earn income from markets but could depend on resources obtained through network of acquaintance which are often increasing by their own efforts, and redistribution by patrons. African people fabricate their livelihoods by combining their own efforts of work and dependence on others. The agenda of move away from dependence to self-reliance by aid pratitioners and other is irrelevant [Sato 2021].

To promote local industries in Africa, vocational training has emerged as a major area of aid, and, as seen in section II, many ODA and NGO activities have been carried out for vocational skill training to enhance peoples' ability to earn cash in labor markets. As confirmed in section III, however, to comprehensively grasp how people in Africa

live, attention needs to be paid to not only market transactions but also other transfers of resources and knowledge. Despite strong expectation of vocational training by governments and aid officials, observing manufacturing sites in Kenya and Ethiopia, its effects do not directly reach ordinary workers in general. On the other hand, we all should know that even ordinary workers, often poor or in the informal sector, know how to work as elaborated in section Ⅳ. There are various forms of self-learning, voluntary teaching, and active communication over skills. Some people share the results of their vocational training to those around them free of charge. In this sense, people here work by combining self-reliance and interdependence or mutual cooperation. They are neither totally dependent on somebody nor lack motivation for skill improvement. Aid activities including vocational training that ignores this point are inefficient and inappropriate.

African general workers' motivation for skill improvement, however, has not incorporated motivation to understand and practice *Kaizen* as seen in section IV. Mutual cooperation of Africans, also varying up to circumstances, have not been easily transformed into collective mobilization of them for *Kaizen.* Causes could be various and multi-faceted, which is again our issue to be explored more in detail in the future.

We would like to stress that for achievement of inclusive development from within, workers in informal firms, in small-sized enterprises, and at the bottom level of formal medium- and large-sized corporations in the manufacturing sector should never been left behind. Aid through Japanese ODA and NGOs are minimal there. It would be all the more difficult for support for *Kaizen* meaningful for them. UNIDO's assistance for Ethiopian small- and medium-sized leather-shoe manufacturers would be at least partly here.

Notwithstanding a series of difficulties, we think that there is still what aid can contribute to. Aid is functioning as a part of substitute for recipient government activities. Supports for development of basic general education is one important area. From the cases of both Kenya's informal manufacturing and Ethiopia's formal manufacturing, we have learned that general education is essential and meaningful basis for workers' skill formation. Japan may have to reconsider its concern apparently diverting from general education, especially primary education.

With regard to *Kaizen,* in the first place, it is not very successful in involvement of general workers in the manufacturing sector even in Japan. Then, it is not wise to

transfer *Kaizen* activities to Africa, without substantial reconsideration and perhaps fundamental changes of approaches.

We would recommend again, first of all, redirection of aid resources to the general education sector, which could lead to individual manufacturing workers' basic skill improvement and hopefully their potential ability to participate in the ***conception*** element of works. Then, it would be recommended to concentrate *Kaizen* supports for high-level workers in charge of planning, management and supervision.

If Japanese aid officials still attempt to pursue mobilize general workers for *Kaizen,* at the starting point, their working conditions, such as low wages and high turnover rate should be improved. While if retention rates are improved and may lead to reinforcement of entrepreneurs' motivation to strengthen training efforts for general workers to work in their factories, it may also bring about recovery of workers' interest in the whole firms' performance. Perhaps entrepreneurs' mindset is to be changed at first.

Kaizen may be by far most effective and necessary for entrepreneurs and managers leading manufacturing firms in Ethiopia and Africa. Aid could help create *Kaizen* for them aiming at promotion of their actions to improve workers conditions and motivations. To us, it seems to be very appropriate role for aid by Japan and JICA as contribution to Africa's inclusive development from within.

Aid should start from objective and thorough understanding of people's livelihoods and not from biased perception based on the donor's own belief such as "move away from dependence to self-reliance."

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Notes

1 This article is a modified English version of the paper presented by one of the authors (Takahashi) at the 2020 Autumn Conference Session Six of the Peace Studies Association of Japan (PSAJ) (the host school: Yokohama City University), which was substantially revised and augment by Matsubara.

2 There are subtle differences between the terms of "Cooperation" and "Aid" "Cooperation" implies more equal relations between stakeholders and nowadays includes collaboration with business, while "Aid" means more unilateral supports. In this article, however, both called "aid" since they basically refer to the same ODA (Official Development Assistance).

3 Among examples would be that the title of the 2020 Autumn Conference Session Six of the PSAJ, which was mentioned in Note 1, entitled "'bottom-up' assistance for self-reliance" in Africa.

4 According to a former NGO staff featured in the White Paper article, the title was given by the MOFA agent who interviewed the staff, not the staff or the NGO (interviewed by the authors on January 31, 2021).

5 Translated from the Wakachiai Project website (See References).

6 According to our interviews with the former NGO staff on January 31, February 28, and March 1, 2021. It should be noted that what is mentioned here is the opinion of the former staff, not of the NGO.

7 Please refer to Takahashi [1998] for the details on the nature and background of the idea of "support for self-help efforts," and its relationship with Japan's ODA. Besides, Udagawa [2017] discusses this idea from the viewpoint of international politics and the characteristics of Japan's aid diplomacy.

8 ODA Charter (Official Development Assistance Charter or Development Cooperation Charter) was first established in 1992, with the first revision in 2003 and the second revision in 2015, when the title was changed to "Development Cooperation Charter, as mentioned in Note 2.

9 Economic conditionality is usually requested by international development institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank rather than bilateral aid donors. Moreover, these two institutions do not directly request political conditionality due to limitation of their mandates. Therefore, it would not be a very accurate expression that "the Western donors" altogether are requesting them.

10 One of the latest examples is Cramer et al. [2020]. They repeatedly criticize not only the approach of international organizations and mainstream economists which sticks to narrow Neoclassical Economics, but also the approach of Dependency Theorists which often suggest a uniform and thus unrealistic policy prescriptions in any situation. They suggest promoting proactive government development policies be required, empirically based on the current situation and the effects of past policies in Africa.

11 Refer to, for example, the New York Times on February 15th, 2007.

12 Similar criticism was made for Japan in the earlier high growth period in the 1960s, which was emerging as a donor country, due to frequent adoption of aid modalities linked to procurement by Japanese companies and contracts with them [White 1964].

13 The Japan Bank for International Cooperation, one of the predecessors of JICA, formulated and started to operate this guideline as relatively early as in 2002, and it has been taken over after the integration of JICA in 2008 to this date.

14 JICA [2010] p.15.
15 It can also be inferred that government officials feel a scent of socialist movements in the word of "liberation" and opt for avoiding to use it.
16 This is obvious, for example, given the ideas of Denis Goulet, Amartya Sen, and others, who had a great influence on today's human-centered development thoughts. Goulet cited "life-sustenance", "self-esteem", and "freedom from servitude" as key elements of development [Goulet 1971] . It should be pointed out over again that the freedom of subordination, suppression, and restraint of individuals underlies Sen's capability and entitlement approaches which seem to have been well-known [Sen 1987].
17 One of the authors (Takahashi), with academic colleagues, conducted four-time field researches in Cluster X from 2018 to 2019. We made interviews and participatory observation to obtain data on 39 shop owners including masters and 163 workers finally.
18 Cramer et al. [2020] state a similar view in discussing industrial human resource development in Africa.
19 When a firm is assigned a building room by the government, they have no choice but becoming a formal firm.
20 The separation of *conception* and *execution* in labor is based on the idea of the separation of *thought* (*pensée*) and *execution* written in Friedman [1956], a French sociologist. Braverman focused on the history of the workplace up to 20th century, especially the separation of management work from other processes. He regarded it as the essence of the problem in the contemporary factory that, while *conception* and *execution* are divided between a manager and general workers and the manager takes power through *conception*, the alienation situation is caused in which the workers whose works are simplified into *execution* cannot find their job meaningful [Braverman 1998].
21 Here, a multi-skilled worker means a factory worker who has the ability to deal with multiple processes and engages in them.
22 The authors' interview with Farmer O in a village in Nakuru, Kenya in September 2019.