Solving Food and Nutrition-Related Issues

The Ajinomoto Group is working to solve issues in the field of food and nutrition in communities around the world. These efforts include the Ajinomoto International Cooperation Network for Nutrition and Health (AIN) program, which seeks to improve nutrition in developing countries, as well as a variety of other initiatives implemented worldwide by group companies and foundations.

### AIN program improves nutrition in developing countries

As a group of companies that contributes to human health globally, the Ajinomoto Group considers the improvement of nutrition in developing countries an important mission.

From 1999 until 2015, the AIN program has supported 75 projects in 14 countries, led by local people and rooted to the native environment and their food culture. The number of beneficiaries has reached 140,000 people, with a total of 280 million yen in assistance.

The Ajinomoto Group provides assistance for teaching materials and other purposes to NGOs and NPOs around the world and to governmental and educational institutions. Every year, proposals that aim to improve food and nutrition are solicited by the program; the projects are selected based on investigations by experts and onsite inspections by employees of the Ajinomoto Group.

Improving nutrition is explicitly given as an important issue in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were adopted as the 2030 goals by the UN General Assembly in September 2015. Through food and nutrition in its initiatives, the AIN program also contributes to increasing women and minority empowerment and education. With the SDGs, the AIN program will further evolve as an international cooperation initiative for creating a healthy society through nutritional improvements.

#### Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture

The AIN program is also linked to many of the other SDGs (such as goals 3, 4, 5, 6 and 17).

### Projects currently supported under the AIN program in fiscal 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Starting FY</th>
<th>Period (in years)</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Project name</th>
<th>Implementing organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Project for improving children’s nutrition condition, achieving self-support</td>
<td>Caring for Young Refugees</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>of foodstuff and expanding preschool education by providing lunch at nursery</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition in Ethnic Minority Areas</td>
<td>Plan Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Development of School Meal Project with local people’s participation in</td>
<td>Japan Bangladesh Cultural Exchange Association (JBCEA)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>collaboration of 2 districts in Bangladesh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>Promoting healthy living for low-income families in Cusco, Peru</td>
<td>Adventist Development and Relief Agency Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Improvement of the women’s lives in fishing community through food</td>
<td>PARC Interpeople’s Cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>processing; Penang, Malaysia</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Improvements in nutrition and health by canteen and nutritious training for</td>
<td>International NGO Kamonohashi Project</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>the ultra poor</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>Project to support educational activities for mothers to improve the</td>
<td>International Life Sciences Institute Japan</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>quality of complementary food in rural Vietnam</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Bangladesh nutrition initiative: Nobo Koli</td>
<td>World Vision Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>Project of food processing for better nutrition in Myanmar</td>
<td>Terra People ACT Kanagawa/TPAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>East Timor</td>
<td>Comprehensive program on nutrition and food for young mothers to improve</td>
<td>Alliance of Friends for Medical-care in East Timor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the health situation of their malnourished children</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Nutrition improvement for families and community development by empowering</td>
<td>Japan Lay Missionary Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>mothers in the poor areas of Phnom Penh</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>New Efficient Food for Desert — Development &amp; Extension of Mascovy Duck</td>
<td>OISCA Japan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
California program projects column

Cambodia

Nutrition improvement for families and community development by empowering mothers in the poor areas of Phnom Penh

Organization: Japan Lay Missionary Movement

Major accomplishments
More than 60 nutrition improvement seminars were conducted in total. The mothers learned and practiced how to make highly nutritious well-balanced meals at home using available ingredients.

Key point for success
The local staff underwent training under the instruction of NGOs and health care centers to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills.

Purpose
Improve nutrition by improving the nutritional knowledge of mothers, and by making full use of this knowledge in food preparation

Main activities
- Health care and hygiene, nutrition education
- Living environment, literacy and arithmetic education
- Guidance on planning and demonstration on preparing highly nutritious meals using available ingredients
- Providing lunch meals to children at the Children’s Home
- Organizing the cooking event “food festival”

In the future
To train Community Health Workers for the second phase of this project, with the aim of enabling them to plan and conduct their own nutrition improvement seminars for mothers in the area.

Project site: Area 17, Ruessei Village, Stueng Meanchey Quarter, Mean Chey District, Phnom Penh City
Assistance period: FY2012-2014
Number of beneficiaries: 539

Vietnam

Alternative child nutrition improvement project through strengthening food security

Organization: Save the Children Japan

Major accomplishments
The food gap was reduced with the percentage of malnourished children in the area down by approximately 1.4%.

Key point for success
Spread of low-cost Nutrition Gardens that are based in the natural environment; strengthening of ownership by the government

Purpose
- Secure food supply in the area
- Improve nutritional condition of children under 2 years old
- Investigation of the food gap situation: Identified that the period in which produce cannot be harvested and people are prone to malnutrition in a year is up to half a year
- About 1,000 families participated in Nutrition Garden trainings. Most adapted the guidelines.
- Raising of domestic livestock such as rabbits, silky fowls, and pigs
- Together with the children, investigation of natural foods that can be harvested in the surrounding environment
- Microfinance implementation for needy women

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In the future
By further involving the government (Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development) from the beginning of leadership training, a smooth transfer to the government in the future is anticipated.

Project site: Van Chan District, Yen Bai Province
Assistance period: FY2012-2014
Number of beneficiaries: 3,700

(Ajinomoto Group Sustainability Report 2015)
The Ajinomoto Group is committed to making social contributions all around the world. The Group’s wide array of activities focus primarily on the fields of food and nutrition.

Working with group companies, the Ajinomoto Group has established foundations in four countries that award scholarships and engage in other initiatives tailored to the local culture and lifestyle, seeking to meet the specific needs of each country.

### Improving childhood nutrition

#### Thailand

**Building 50 canteens at 50 schools**

In 2010, the Ajinomoto Foundation in Thailand launched a project to build canteens at 50 schools in five years to mark the 50th anniversary of Ajinomoto Co., (Thailand) Ltd. Working with Thailand’s Ministry of Education, local governments and educators, and NGOs, the project supports the health of children by giving each school a hygienic environment for school meal preparation. The project completed 50 school canteens in 43 provinces by fiscal 2014 serving more than 10,000 students. The foundation will continue this project from fiscal 2015 onward, with consideration given to extending the project to the entire country (77 provinces) by 2019.

The Ajinomoto Foundation is preparing to provide nutritional education, starting in 2015, to local residents, students, and teachers at the elementary schools that have received project support, in order to further improve the eating habits of Thai students. Through its support for better diet and health among children, the project is putting into practice the concept on which Ajinomoto Co., (Thailand) Ltd. is based: “Ajinomoto always grows with Thais.”
Helping to create a dietician education program, national certification system and legal framework in Vietnam

The Ajinomoto Group has launched the Vietnam Nutrition System Establishment Project (VINEP) in 2011 in an effort to expand nutrition-related programs and education in Vietnam. The project emerged from joint research conducted by the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) and the Institute for Innovation of Ajinomoto Co., Inc. in 2009.

Until now, there has been no education system for training dieticians in Vietnam or even a certification system for dieticians. In March 2012, Ajinomoto Co., Inc. and Ajinomoto Vietnam Co., Ltd. signed an agreement with Hanoi Medical University and NIN to train dieticians as part of VINEP. The Nutrition and Dietetics Laboratory was established at the Hanoi Medical University in October that year with funding from the Ajinomoto Group. In November, Vietnam’s Ministry of Education and Training approved the country’s first four-year bachelor program in dietetic science and nutrition at Hanoi Medical University. There were 44 students in the inaugural class in September 2013, 35 students for the second class in 2014, and 58 students for the third class in 2015. Every year, the Ajinomoto Vietnam Co., Ltd. presented full-year scholarships to the students who placed in the top 10 on the entrance exam for the program.

Ajinomoto Co., Inc. and Ajinomoto Vietnam Co., Ltd. have been assisting the development of the undergraduate program curriculum and course materials for a professional program, as well as conducting lectures on nutrition physiology at the professional program. However, it is important to create a social system so that the graduates of these programs can actively work as dietitians. Through the Group’s efforts, a regulation specifying the status of dietitians (job code) was passed and put into effect by the Vietnamese government in October 2015. This marks the achievement of making the dietitian a nationally recognized profession, and serves as a basis for gaining employment in civil service.

Going forward, the Group aims to establish various systems by 2017 to help make working as a dietitian easier, through the creation of specific standards for working as a nutritionist (nutrition standards) and a licensing system, among others.

In 2014, five students and several instructors from Hanoi Medical University visited Japan for a two-week nutrition science training under a JICA collaborative project. It provided an opportunity to deepen their understanding of Japan’s nutritional system and the Ajinomoto Group’s corporate research in the field of amino acids and nutrients, as well as to think of future activities and initiatives related to nutrition in Vietnam. In 2015, in addition to the training curriculum similar to that in fiscal 2014, the Group is working on an initiative to conduct Japan-Vietnam trainings toward the creation of nutrition standards, which will contain the necessary working standards for these students when they graduate and become dietitians, using the International Promotion of Japan’s Healthcare Technologies and Services in 2015. Through these initiatives, the nutritional environment at hospitals, schools, etc., will further improve with the establishment of educational systems to foster expert dietitians who will be involved in nutritional management in hospitals and schools, among others.

1. Vie ˆn Dinh duong
2. In cooperation with the Japan Dietetic Association, Jumonji University, and the Kanagawa University of Human Services
3. Operated by the Japan International Cooperation Agency, this project promotes private-sector technology to facilitate social and economic development in developing countries.
4. This program is funded by “The International Promotion of Japan’s Healthcare Technologies and Service in 2015” conducted by the National Center for Global Health and Medicine under the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan.

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1. Helping to create a dietician education program, national certification system and legal framework in Vietnam
2. Explaining the nutrition survey method to students
3. Practical training of sensory evaluation using vegetable soup and umami seasoning
4. Students creating presentation materials
5. Scholarships awarded to second batch students by Ajinomoto Vietnam Co., Ltd.
6. Student trainees participating in a discussion with three Japanese registered dieticians from Ajinomoto Co., Inc. (front row), five Hanoi Medical University students (second row from left), instructors and other concerned staff of Ajinomoto Co., Inc.
Vietnam

School meal project

Ajinomoto Vietnam Co., Ltd. has been implementing a five-year School Meal Project since fiscal 2012, in partnership with Vietnam’s Ministry of Education and Training, Ministry of Health, National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), and local governments. The project aims to improve food nutrition for students by enhancing the availability and variety of school lunches, as well as providing nutritional education.

In fiscal 2014, aside from support for the building of the school kitchen model in Ho Chi Minh, this project was launched in the cities of Hanoi and Haiphong. Moreover, a software system for calculating nutrients during menu preparation is under development. The goal of these initiatives is to make nutritionally balanced school meals widely available at elementary schools in Vietnam by fiscal 2016.

Initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal 2012</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ho Chi Minh</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Held project meeting with 350 school principals</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Exchanged opinions concerning new menus with 800 school lunch staff, health personnel, and parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developed and introduced pilot menu</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Held project meeting with 110 principals</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Developed a menu with NIN and culinary experts</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Fiscal 2013</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ho Chi Minh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provided schools with menu books and nutritional education materials for students, and carried out nutritional education</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Held meeting to compare notes on new menus and pilot programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developed a menu with NIN and culinary experts</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Held orientation to promote use of menu books and nutritional education materials for students</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Held discussions with Vietnam’s Ministry of Education and Training about implementing the project</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Fiscal 2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ho Chi Minh</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Supported the design and building costs of the school kitchen model in Ho Chi Minh</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Held orientation regarding adoption of the school kitchen to related schools and institutions in the city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Held meeting to promote the adoption of school menus to 20 schools with school meal facilities, in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Menu books are prepared for each region.

Key steps of the project

1. Standardize elementary school lunch menus in major cities
2. Develop kitchen models to improve school cooking facilities
3. Develop and distribute nationwide menu-design software

Reference


Passing on and promoting food culture

France

Bringing the rich and diverse Japanese food culture to European people

France is the country where gourmets gather from around the world, and is also the most attuned country in Europe to Japanese cuisine. In the 1980s, there were only about 50 Japanese restaurants in Paris and its suburbs, mainly yakitori (barbequed chicken) restaurants. Today, there are more than 2,000 Japanese restaurants offering a selection ranging from traditional luxury foods such as sushi to light meals such as ramen. Recently, with the increased interest in Western-style Japanese food, more and more people want to know about the diverse world of Japanese food and incorporate its skills and ingredients in their everyday meals.

Since 2007, Ajinomoto Europe S.A.S. has held seminars on Japanese cuisine as part of a program at the Maison de la Culture du Japon à Paris. In addition to showcasing Japanese cuisine, the seminars expose participants to the many different aspects of Japanese cuisine by teaching from how to use basic seasonings that bring out the umami of ingredients, and make dashi, to the latest trends in Japanese food, so that participants can make and enjoy diverse Japanese cuisine at home. These demonstrations also talk about the social background behind Japanese cuisine, touching on the culture and history of Japan.

Since the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011, Ajinomoto Europe S.A.S. has been engaging the people of Paris in supporting people in the hardest-hit areas through food culture exchange programs focusing on the products of the Tohoku region.

Seminars on “Sanriku food” assisting areas devastated by the Great East Japan Earthquake

Food culture seminar on the nature of Japanese food
Japan

Safeguarding and promoting the culture of washoku

The Ajinomoto Group is actively involved in safeguarding and promoting “Washoku, traditional dietary cultures of the Japanese,” which was officially designated as an Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO in December 2013.

Since its establishment in February 4, 2015, the Group has been a member of the Washoku Association of Japan (hereafter, Washoku Japan), which is the only officially recognized association in Japan supporting the spread of initiatives to safeguard and promote washoku according to the spirit of the convention for Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Washoku Japan launched the activities of three subcommittees (Survey & Research Dept., Rising Awareness & Enhancement Dept., and Skilled Art & Knowledge Dept.) and a Liaison Conference.

To celebrate November 24 as Washoku Day, the association has been organizing events such as dashi tasting and testing of the five basic tastes including umami via lunches at elementary schools and other facilities.

Reference

Japan Safeguarding and promoting the culture of washoku

Since 2006, Ajinomoto Co., Inc. has organized classroom workshops for youth to taste dashi and umami firsthand, teaching them about Japan’s proud food culture. Employees visit schools and talk about the five basic tastes including umami and dashi, which are the foundations of washoku. Schoolchildren learn about the world-renowned dashi culture of Japan and make dashi themselves. The project is expected to exceed 1,000 schools and reach 77,000 students in fiscal 2015.

Washoku cultures have been registered as an Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO. The fun workshops teach youth about the importance of food and foster their interest in the traditional dietary cultures of the Japanese.

The Ajinomoto Umami Science Square opens

To mark the 100th anniversary of the Kawasaki Administration & Coordination Office, Ajinomoto Co., Inc., the exhibit facility Ajinomoto Umami Science Square was built on its grounds and opened in May 2015.

This facility aims to provide scientific information on umami and amino acids that are fun and easy to understand, based on the research conducted so far by the Ajinomoto Group. Moving forward, the Group plans to enhance the variety of contents by introducing the Ajinomoto Group’s business activities such as the production process of the umami seasoning AJI-NO-MOTO®.

An authorized daycare center was invited to build in the adjacent land to help reduce the childcare waiting list for children living in the vicinity of the office. A café was also constructed as place for relaxation and refreshment.
Activities of the Ajinomoto Group’s charitable foundations

The Ajinomoto Group has established foundations in four countries that award scholarships and engage in food and nutrition activities tailored to meet the specific needs of each country and region.

**Ajinomoto Foundation for Dietary Culture**  
(Established in Japan in 1989)

**Main activities**

- Operates the Dietary Culture Library
- Holds public symposiums and public lectures
- Plans and runs food culture forums (interdisciplinary panel discussions on food culture)
- Publishes and distributes *vesta*, a magazine on food culture, and other materials
- Collects and exhibits documents and color woodblock prints related to food culture

**Food Culture Symposium on the Connection between Food and Faith jointly hosted with Mie Prefecture**

Food and faith share a deep connection with life and living. Held on October 15, 2014, in Ise City to coincide with Kannamesai, the festival for the year’s new rice harvest. Participants explored food and faith from the perspective of food culture.

**Food Culture Forum**  
Annual theme: From wild to domesticate

A wide range of experts discussed how humans started domesticating wild animals as beasts of burden or as food, as well as how it affected humans. Held three times in June and September 2014, and March 2015. One of the speakers of the year was His Imperial Highness Prince Akishinonomiya, who discoursed on the various uses of animals from the example of fowls and chickens.

**Research aid for safeguarding and promoting washoku**

As part of the foundation’s activities toward safeguarding and promoting washoku cultures, research aid is being given to studies on (1) regional cuisine and (2) washoku cultures via the school lunch. (October 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015)

**Ajinomoto Scholarship Foundation**  
(Established in Japan in 2005; forerunner Suzuki Scholarship Foundation established in 1957)

**Main activities**

- Grants scholarship to international students.
- Grants scholarships to students from five ASEAN countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam) for a total of three years of study in a master’s course (majoring in one of the sciences, including one year as a research student) at the University of Tokyo.
- Provides student loans for Japanese students taking upper division classes at the undergraduate level or in science programs in graduate school.

**Scholarships being awarded to international students and ASEAN international students**
**Ajinomoto Foundation**  
*(Established in Thailand in 1976)*

**Main activities**
- Runs a project to build canteens at 50 schools to mark the 50th anniversary of Ajinomoto Co., (Thailand) Ltd.
- Administers support for a building educational facilities at a camp for university student volunteers
- Provides support (scholarships) for students majoring in science, technology and engineering
- Supports the budget for construction of teacher housing for schools in remote areas
- Promotes employee volunteer projects (providing lunch to children of low-income households)
- Provides support to people in the colder regions of north and northeast Thailand (has provided 2,070 coats and 11,988 blankets to 13,000 local residents and students at 5 schools in 6 provinces)

Reference: See “Building 50 canteens at 50 schools” on p. 129.

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**INSTITUTO AJINOMOTO**  
*(Established in Brazil in 1999)*

**Main activities**
- Donates to Japan-related organizations and NPOs
- Supports a sports organization for children with disabilities
- Implements activities to contribute to the local community (donates school supplies to elementary schools, etc.)

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**Fundación Ajinomoto para el Desarrollo de la Comunidad**  
*(Established in Peru in 2003)*

**Main activities**
- Supports projects to prevent anemia and malnutrition in children, in alliance with other institutions such as the World Food Programme (WFP)
- Trains schoolchildren to become role models and active promoters of healthy food habits at their schools
- Holds health and nutrition workshops and lectures (75 events in fiscal 2014, with 2,444 participants in total)
- Provides economic support (scholarships) for students majoring in dietetics
- Sponsors the “Ajinomoto Foundation Prize” (a contest to promote bibliographic research among university students)