

## How to compose study tour for training <Part 4>

### Case study: Study tour in the upland rice course

This issue introduces a case study of study tours for “Area-focused training course on upland rice variety selection techniques for sub-Saharan Africa” courses (2006 – 2012) conducted at JICA Tsukuba by AAI. These courses comprised a three-month training period from mid-July to the beginning of November. The training curriculum was prepared with a particular focus on practice, meaning that the percentage of study tours in the entire training was less than 10% of the course. Most of the visit destinations were day trips within Ibaraki prefecture, where around 70% of upland rice cultivation in Japan was concentrated. In addition, regarding seed production technology, we visited Toyama prefecture which is famous for production of rice seed in Japan. Only 3 days were allocated for the visits, since the whole training period was relatively short. Excluding the beginning of August when the training was just starting, the visiting time was automatically decided to take place in middle to late August, because busy days were expected after September due to yield surveys and report writing by the participants. That period was suitable for observation of rice in any region of Japan, since rice plants were approaching the ripening stage. However, it was necessary to consider schedule adjustment carefully, because it overlapped with the period of Obon (Japan’s traditional lantern festival). Table 1 shows candidates of destination for these visits, which were selected to understand present conditions of seed production in Toyama prefecture.

Table 1. Candidates of the study tour destination

No.	Subject of Training	Destination
1	Production of breeder’s seeds and foundation seeds	Toyama Agricultural Research Institute
2	Role of extension workers in seed production mainly on field examination	Agriculture and forestry promotion center supervising seed production farms
3	Seed production technology	Seed production farm and agricultural cooperative

Considering the flow of seed production, we started from production of breeder’s seeds and foundation seeds (No.1 in Table 1) on the first day, followed by No.2 and No.3 on the second day. Fortunately, No.2 and No.3 destinations were close, so it was possible to visit them on the same day. In the morning of the second day, we visited the production site first, and then we were provided lectures in the afternoon. Since the above-mentioned destinations can cover the main subjects of the study tour,

we searched for other visit destinations in the vicinity for additional training subjects on the third day. After several adjustments, finally we decided to move from Toyama to Kyoto on the third day, visiting field trials of upland rice at the university farm, and research activities of African agriculture at the Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies of Kyoto university. Although it was not the main subject of this study tour, it was useful to learn the field researches related to the keywords of “upland rice” and “Africa”, which were unique destinations among the entire training program. Accordingly, the training schedule of the study tour was determined as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Training schedule of the study tour

Day	Morning program	Afternoon program
Day 1	Moving to Toyama	Toyama Agricultural Research Institute
Day 2	Seed production farm and agricultural cooperative in Toyama	Agriculture and forestry promotion center in Toyama
Day 3	Moving to Kyoto; University Farm, Faculty of Agriculture, Kyoto University	Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto University; Returning to Tsukuba

After determining the training schedule, the next step was making appointments with the host organizations. Careful consideration was necessary so as not to impose excessive burden to the relevant organizations in Toyama, since they were very popular as a destination in other JICA training courses. By the way, a study tour is different from a day trip, which visits multiple destinations in one itinerary; therefore, schedule adjustment is sometimes rather difficult. Even in this course, one of the visits was cancelled in the interests of our host’s convenience and was transferred to an alternative destination. In addition, thoughtful preparation is essential for the implementation of an efficient study tour. For example, a study tour tends to have a group of around 10 overseas participants, so detailed itinerary such as train timetable should be taken into consideration along with the timing of breaks for meals and/or restrooms.

Because this course was newly established in 2006, there were many trials and errors in coordination with visit destinations which were also new. However, such coordination work became easier as we repeated the course and gained better understanding of visit destinations and had more information about their actual situations.