

## My fateful relationship with AAI and training at Tsukuba

I first encountered AAI in 1996 when I returned to Japan after three years' service as a JOCV. Even though I had a sense of achievement in the activities of JOCV to which I was devoted, I had concerns about the methods I had employed and the results I had achieved. Then, I happened to browse AAI's website, and saw the three phrases that resonated in my mind, providing clear direction for technical cooperation. These were "appropriate technology", "proper scale", and "participatory approach". The next week, I visited AAI at the Machida office. Since then, I continued to keep in touch with AAI and report on recent activities, and finally, I became a member of AAI this autumn.

So far, I have been involved in technical cooperation projects and development studies as a JICA expert and/or a member of consultant teams. In Ethiopia, many researchers tended to interpret "technology development" as meaning "new variety development", and also "participatory approach" as meaning "demonstration at research stations." On the other hand, extension workers in Iraq had difficulties in communication with farmers who are the basis of "participatory approach".



Observing a study tour (2018)

Through these experiences, I became keenly aware of the importance of human resource development for elaborating appropriate technologies and implementing technology dissemination comprehensively. In order to develop and disseminate "appropriate technology" through "participatory approach" within "proper scale", it is necessary to accumulate and analyze knowledge and know-how in terms of cultivation/ farming technology and

dissemination/education methodology. In addition, communication skills of extension workers are a key issue to extract topics for appropriate technology development based on various farmer's problems.

My relationship with the Tsukuba training course goes back to 1998, when I was involved as an assistant in group training courses of "vegetable cultivation technology" and "vegetable seed production technology". I was able to recognize the advantages of "technical training in Japan" in international cooperation through daily work. The training courses were effective in teaching useful Japanese technologies, fostering a pro-Japanese sentiment among participants, and in deepening public understanding through providing a chance of public disclosure of technical cooperation. I also feel a new possibility for the future role of "technical training in Japan" in overseas technical cooperation based on the know-how backed up by AAI's 18 years of experience in the Tsukuba training courses.



With a pre-dispatch trainee of JOCV (1998)

I myself experienced the "joy of self-improvement" with a sense of agreeable tension overseas, such as when I was on-the-job training in US agriculture and studying abroad in graduate schools. It will be enormously significant if participants can utilize acquired skills in their home countries, and they also would be a base and/or bridge for mutual understanding between Japan and their respective nations. I am happy that this fateful relationship has developed and enabled me to get involved in such a great opportunity.

(Terutaka NIIDE, August 2018)