

# Comparative analysis of agricultural extension situation in individual countries <Part 7>

---

## Conclusion

In this series, we have compared the extension officers and the extension situation in each country which we have been involved in our work and discussed the differences from four entry points. The four entry points were (1) Agricultural Extension Officers' "Technical Capabilities", (2) "Distance to Farmers", (3) "Capability of Extension Department" such as budget, personnel, and system, and (4) "Cooperation between Extension Department and External Organizations" such as research institutes and the private sector. Looking back on the discussion, subjects can be divided into the human resource aspect of "Agricultural Extension Officers (AEOs)" and the organizational aspect of "Extension Department (ED)".

In our discussion, we mentioned that the technical skills required for AEOs need not be just specialized knowledge and skills, but rather comprehensive field skills such as observation, problem analysis, and communication skills to identify problems in the field. In order for AEOs to acquire such comprehensive field skills, it is extremely important for them to gain sufficient experiences in the field (AAINews No.110). At the same time, we pointed out that it may also be important to acquire a little specialized knowledge and skills in order for AEOs to take the first step to visit the farmers in the field and gain the trust of the farmer (AAINews No.111).

Throughout these discussions, it was interesting that we could confirm similar episodes in all countries in which AEOs were able to visit farmers with confidence by acquiring sufficient techniques, even though the distance between the AEOs and the farmers varied from country to country. It is also interesting that it was confirmed commonly that AEOs' capacity has improved by going out into the field.

We also discussed "Capability of Extension Department" and "Cooperation between Extension Department and External Organizations", but it was difficult to make a comparative study since these are associated with Government administrative systems, thus, the situations differ greatly from country to country. However, it seems that each country shares the need to formulate an extension dissemination plan to solve issues in the field as well as the importance of cooperation with

external organizations. The idea was introduced that each project put efforts into improving the extension system and function with various suggested initiatives. It was particularly interesting that inter-organizational collaborations beyond the boundary of existing frameworks of organizations promoted by the projects were often found.

This series has introduced a number of case studies, but it was originally started with the aim of comparatively analyzing the agricultural extension situation of each country and looking for "hints for future activities". In fact, it is difficult to propose "hints for future activities" that are universally applicable to countries with different social systems and agricultural environments. However, if we were to summarize and propose it, the list would look like this:

### **Suggestions for Improving Extension Capacity**

#### **To improve capacity of agriculture extension officers (human resources aspect)**

- In order to gain the trust of the farmers, provide AEOs with specialized knowledge and skills that they can rely on.
- Cultivate the ability to observe and analyze to investigate on-site problems and communication skill to the farmers.
- Include opportunities for AEOs to gain practical experience on the field in the project activities.

#### **To strengthen the Extension Department (organization aspect)**

- Show the importance of formulating an extension plan in line with the solution of local issues from the bottom-up perspective.
- A project to implement activities with an awareness of improving personnel exchanges and collaboration between organizations and departments.
- Maintain good relationships with private companies and aid agencies, and establish a system that enables the effective use of necessary information.

When involving in projects related to agricultural extension, we can contribute to improve the capabilities of personnel and organizations by considering these points.