

"Human Resource Development"- Our Challenges in Training Activities

Epilogue: Challenges of Training Activities and Future Directions

In this, the last report of this series, we would like to sum up lessons we have learned through our past training activities, as well as offer our suggestions for future activities. In this series we have discussed some cases of training that we have been involved in. The expected outcomes and challenges of these cases can be summarized as below.

| Training type | Expected outcomes/benefits | Main challenges |
|---|---|--|
| In-country training (cases at the Tsukuba International Centre) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved knowledge and skills through lectures, practical work and field visits - Acceptance of many trainees - Promotion of Japanese techniques and cultural understanding - Active interaction among trainees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Matching the training contents with trainees' expertise and capability - Further consideration of actual situations in trainees' home countries - Gaps in pre-acquired knowledge and language skills among trainees - Limitations due to climate and seasonal changes (e.g. for vegetable cultivation training) |
| C/P training (cases of C/P training as part of development study and expert dispatch) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Possibility of judging the training needs properly through information and requests from experts - Improvement of techniques as a result of technology transfer and complementary training - Positive contribution to on-going projects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Short training periods - Consequently, training schedule tends to be tight and intensive |
| Third country training / technology exchange projects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Better possibility of making full use of the lessons from the training in similar environments - Possible to obtain most updated information from the field - When the "third country" is a neighbouring state where the languages are shared, communication tends to be easier | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sometimes difficult negotiation with host countries prior to training - Training themes may be limited |
| Common to all the above training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spreading of activities by trainees back home - Personal interaction between trainers and trainees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective follow-up of training projects - Local support for trainees back home - Collaboration between training and other schemes |

Selection of trainees, i.e. the very 'entrance' to the training process, is one of the most important things in considering improvement of training activities. In order to realize effective training, mismatching of trainees with training contents should be avoided. For this purpose, we (organizers of training) need to be actively involved in the process of trainee selection. It would be ideal if trainers themselves can travel to interview applicants / candidates, but in reality that is rather difficult. Instead, if somebody who is in the country and knows both the training contents and (the competency and expertise of) candidates could be involved in the selection process. This would help select appropriate trainees from there. Conducting benchmark tests to determine the candidates' competency, purposes and needs for training, or job report (or country report) drafting tests might be effective in selecting trainees. It is also necessary for the host country / organization to screen the candidates who are selected by their home countries rather than accept them without questioning.

Regarding the training contents, so far Japanese techniques and case studies have been the main materials for training. This cannot be helped if training is conducted in Japan. Needless to say, the organizers and trainers know that it is important to teach techniques which the trainees can make most of in their respective countries, and they (we) have been making such efforts. Still, there are cases where what was learned in Japan could not be applied in trainees' home countries due to the large gap between Japan and their countries in various respects, or due to the socio-economic conditions in their countries. To alleviate this problem, it is necessary for trainees to be able to determine whether the techniques they are learning are really applicable back in their own countries. Also, trainees should be able to build up specific follow-up activities which would be needed to apply and extend the lessons from training in the field. For this purpose, it might be useful to have a sort of excursion to give trainees a chance to observe how ex-trainees are making use of techniques learned from the training back in their countries, or to conduct some complementary training in a third country with similar environmental and social conditions. Also, it might be possible to invite ex-trainees as lecturers during the training to share their post-training experience with the trainees.

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