

Coordination between Technical Cooperation and Training Activities

Part 2 – Follow-up Type Coordination Activities

Since 1999 for 5 years Tsukuba International Center (TBIC) organized the Tajikistan Vegetable Cultivation Course and trained a total of 60 participants. According to the follow-up survey conducted in 2003 and 2004, the participants were working hard to extend the technologies which they acquired in the training in their respective fields, applying the technologies at farms they are in charge of and with farmers they deal with. The 2004 survey triggered the formation of an alumni association of ex-participants, which has recently become a government accredited NGO. This enables us to establish a system to support our ex-participants who are working in various parts of Tajikistan. The first cooperation activity of the alumni association is to respond to the ex-participants request to support the introduction of green houses to expand cultivation seasons and allow year-round cultivation of vegetables. As there is a serious shortage of fresh vegetables in winter, this would greatly contribute to solving a problem Tajikistan faces. This also leads to support for the alumni's activities to transfer the technologies they acquired in Japan by applying them in a way that fits situations in Tajikistan. In addition, in the long run it is expected that by assisting in the production of a stable and year-round supply of fresh vegetables, our support will also contribute to export promotion of fresh vegetables and processed agricultural products. In fact, a pilot project is planned with the ownership of the alumni association. It is envisaged that with close monitoring of results of the pilot and making the most of lessons learned, the project will evolve into the next stage aiming to improve household economies and stabilize farming village life.

In the Southern African Vegetable and Upland Crops Cultivation Technique Course, a total of 15 participants were trained. Many of the participants have been working to apply the techniques they learned in Japan in their own countries. However, there has not yet been sufficient post-training follow-up support for the participants. As the quality of training courses increases, requests have reached JICA from ex-participants for their activities in their countries. It is highly important to respond to their requests as much as possible, in order for TBIC to ensure positive results of training courses and to ensure the visibility of its support activities. Therefore, it is very important to conduct a follow-up survey with the aim of understanding and evaluating the legitimacy of support requests from ex-participants. If a budget for training follow-up can be made available, it is an idea to support the development of a concrete action plan. Then, for viable proposals, we could introduce various possible funding sources such as the Japanese Embassy's Grassroots Grant Assistance and JICA's grass roots technical cooperation projects, and assist the ex-participants in submitting a funding application. AAI has so far introduced the Japan Fund for Global Environment and AEON Environmental Foundation grants to local NGOs that have been steadily doing a good job.

As indicated in the above examples, a thorough follow-up is necessary to develop new technology cooperation activities based on support for ex-participants work in their countries. Follow-up activities are an essential component of training programs, and a necessary budget should be provided for them within the training program budget. In recent training programs, the development of an action plan is a mandatory activity designed to make effective use of knowledge and skills obtained during training courses. Many participants take such an action plan formulation very seriously. Very promising action plans are also produced in the end, after a presentation session whereby invaluable suggestions could be obtained from participants. For promising action plans, it is necessary to provide further technical support or to support implementation of action plans by advising on formulation of a viable proposal and application. These supports are also an important part of follow-up activities. It is considered that good follow-up activities do not only ensure maximum impact of training programs, but also contribute significantly to formulating projects that respond directly to peoples' needs.



Farmers at a follow-up seminar conducted on the request of ex-participants in Tajikistan



Visiting an ex-participants in Botswana as part of a follow-up survey using the Muscat Fund