

25 Years of AAI's Work

December 14th 2009 marked twenty five years since Appropriate Agriculture International (AAI) was born. As introduced in AAI News Vol. 61, there have been quite a few changes in the technical cooperation activities of Japan to developing countries over the last 25 years, and our company's activities have also changed significantly. Initially, our activity was mainly to conduct in the fields of afforestation and resource management in drylands, and agriculture and rural development. Our activity expanded into the fields of overseas training/extension activities, and development studies and management of training courses in Japan, as well as rice cultivation support in Africa.

This seasonal newsletter has also evolved from an internal newsletter for information exchange among our colleagues, to a more external PR newsletter to introduce our achievements and technical expertise to a wider audience. Moreover, we have had a number of series in the newsletter based on themes our company colleagues were discussing among themselves. These included themes such as "Coexistence between Nature and People", "Partnerships between ODAs and NGOs", "Grassroots Collaboration", "Re-examination of Development Study", "Coordination between Technical Cooperation and Training Activities" and "Japan's Agriculture and AAI".

At the beginning, AAI had only one staff member. The number has grown over the years and now we have 11 staff including clerical staff. Initially company employees were a group of people who had affection for deserts having spent some years in drylands. However, our company now has a staff complement that can respond to a wider range of specialized fields such as farming practices, training, agricultural society, horticulture and irrigation water use. The new members are coming to play a central role in advancing the company's work.

It has been 25 years of change and development. We have always borne in mind our principles and questions. *"Activities that can truly assist local people."* *"Development and extension of appropriate technologies."* *"What is the appropriate scale of development?"* With these principles and questions in mind, we have always valued the establishment of human and trusting relationships with those who are working on the ground, and we would like to continue to live up to our principles.

Incidentally, in commemorating our 25th anniversary, we decided to create a company logo. The two triangles signify the "A" in "Appropriate" and "Agriculture". The rectangular shape signifies "I" as in "International". The three colors representing "soil", "water" and "greenery" symbolize bringing water to drylands and nurturing plants. They also symbolize the three pillars of AAI's work – "human resource", "water" and "agriculture."



At this occasion, we also decided to redesign the newsletter. Considering requests from readers and ease of reading, we decided to be more flexible and actively print news and stories introducing our achievements and expertise. I hope that you will continue to be AAI partners.

The photograph below was taken at the Tsukuba International Center, when we enjoyed a barbeque under fully blooming cherry blossoms with trainees on the vegetable cultivation course last spring. (By Onuma)

