

# Being a good “interface” <Part 3>

## Linking different organizations

We frequently have overseas projects where we conduct missions with various different organizations and with project counterparts. In these cases, it becomes essential for a Japanese to function as an ‘interface’ and serve as a ‘linkage’ among people in different organizations or departments in order to implement the project. Call it glue, or cementing relationships, but this is an important role.

### Examples of project implementation with multiple related organizations

At the technical cooperation project on Development of Efficient Irrigation Technology and Extension in Syria, departments at the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform in charge of irrigation experiment and research, agricultural extension, and training of extension workers became project counterpart organizations in order to promote water-saving irrigation techniques to farmers, and the Directorate of Modern Irrigation Conversion, which was established later, also joined as another counterpart organization. The division of roles among related organizations is as follows:

Experiment and Research	Agricultural Extension	Training	Water saving irrigation
GCSAR	Extension Directorate	Training Directorate	Directorate of Modern Irrigation Conversion
Experimentation on irrigation in experimental fields	Execution of extension activities to farmers	Implementation of training for agriculture extension workers	Introduction of water-saving irrigation equipment to farmers' fields

Division of Roles among related organizations under the Project on Development of Efficient Irrigation Technology and Extension in Syria  
GCSAR: General Commission for Scientific Agricultural Research

Generally, in developing countries, we often see difficulties in collaboration among different organizations as a negative effect of bureaucratic ‘sectionalism’ and a structure that inhibits communication and collaboration. The Syrian case is no exception. If we were to request something from a different department, for instance, we would be always requested to prepare an ‘official letter’, but the counterpart would not usually actively respond to our request simply because he had just received such a letter.



A Japanese functions as ‘glue’

In this sort of case, a Japanese can be ‘glue’ to connect and shorten the distance between related organizations and officers. This can be done though regularly visiting the Extension Directorate or Training Directorate with a GCSAR counterpart, getting to know the other counterparts, or increasing opportunities to create involvement of everybody by jointly implementing extension workers training, extension activities to farmers, etc.

### The Groundwork example

With regard to collaboration among different organizations, the ‘Groundwork Mishima’, introduced in AAINews No.82, is a good example which successfully realized collaboration among citizens, public administration, and enterprises. In this case, NPO Groundwork Mishima supports various activities playing a useful role as ‘glue’.

Towards realizing environmental protection activities in a sustainable manner, with involvement of local communities, this joint work with a linking organization is effective. We have experience in a mangrove planting and protection project in Oman, and we believe that this approach could serve as a model and be used for awareness raising activities and environmental education well beyond the project’s borders.

### OD (Organizational Development) approach

When we deal with collaboration among different organizations, we should seek effective collaboration by considering purposes and roles (official duties) of each organization and by maximizing their contributions. In addition, Organizational Development is effective to enable each organization to fulfill its roles.

In general, various training activities are designed for ‘individual’ capacity development. While increasing capacity of individuals within an organization is obviously important, it is essential to develop organizational capacity and improve functions of an organization as a whole in order to achieve goals.



Investigation of training needs using the CUDBAS method

Discussions are necessary to clarify the purpose of an organization and how we should train the staff members individually or reinforce the organization based on its stated purpose, as well as to identify training needs. An approach such as CUDBAS is an effective means to investigate measures for strengthening an organization.