

## Improvement of vegetable cultivation course: AAI's effort to link abroad experience and training in Japan <Part 5>

### Marketing method

Since 2013, we introduced marketing methods as part of the vegetable cultivation course module. We have provided lectures and practices so that participants attain understanding of introductory overview and techniques for using the method. In this training course, participants visiting Japan learn about examples of market, distribution and sales in Japan, through lectures, visits and practices on marketing.

Marketing methods encompass a variety of elements. It starts with understanding market needs. This also includes understanding of distribution and sales systems. From the theoretical part to practical implementation, the scope of marketing learning is very wide.

One effective method when capacity development on marketing is required within a technical cooperation project is the on-the-job training (OJT) method. Based on the unique context and circumstances of target countries and regions, lecturers can work with participants on concrete work and can transfer knowledge and skills to participants while doing so.

In this case, there is no set procedure. By comprehensively reading and understanding the situation at a certain time, they would collectively explore solutions eagerly and creatively. For participants, by experiencing with lecturers the model and unique process on the ground, they are expected to be able to attain patterns of thinking on marketing.

Still, in the lectures and practices in this course, it is difficult to cover everything related to the marketing field. It is not possible to use the OJT methods in the training courses unlike in technical cooperation projects in the field. What we can do is to use our own experience from technical cooperation projects as examples. We offer opportunities for participants to “simulate” the experience to find out what they would do in particular situations.

This method is rather easy. Firstly, we introduced marketing examples from Palestine and Sudan using slides. Then I asked participants to work in groups, and classify various marketing activity elements according to the marketing mix of 4Ps, as well as 4Cs which correspond to 4Ps, as listed in the table below.

Table: 4C/4P Marketing mix

4P – Seller's viewpoint	4C – Client's viewpoint
Product	Customer value
Price	Cost
Place	Convenience
Promotion	Communication

Once each group classifies and sorts the various activity elements, they then review the whole elements and analyze and evaluate them. In addition, we ask participants to suggest their own ideas on what they would do in various situations. In this way, we are aiming to create the sense of independently working on a particular project in the participants' minds.



Classifying elements into 4P / 4C by using cards

After the practice, each group is requested to present a summary of their collective opinions. They are expected to discuss the basis for their decision on which activity elements correspond to 4P or 4C as well as their own opinions. We are hoping that they will gain the ability to scan the wide-ranging marketing activities in a holistic manner to enable them to implement marketing activities in a balanced way.



Group presentation and discussion by participants

Since we started these lectures and practices, we have accumulated experience with participants every year, having gone through trial and error. Marketing sense is difficult to grasp in its entirety with theoretical and fragmented knowledge. We are working on constantly improving the training so that it can trigger participants' mastering of practical sense for effective marketing.