

“Arid Land Agriculture and Irrigation” – following a lecture completed at Tsukuba International Centre

As reported in AAI News Vol. 37, AAI organises a training project titled “Special Course on Vegetable Cultivation in Tajikistan” at the JICA Tsukuba International Centre. Apart from this, recently AAI took part in different training courses as an external lecturer on arid land agriculture and irrigation. Our lectures were targeted for two courses: “Vegetable and Upland Cultivation Techniques for Southern Africa” (attended by seven trainees) and “Vegetable Cultivation Techniques” (attended by 11 trainees). The latter course has no particular regional focus, and there were participants from Asia, Africa, and Central and South America. During the lectures AAI tried to draw upon practical experiences from various cases we have dealt with in the field of development assistance rather than referring to textbook materials. We tried to give as directly useful, practical and relevant information as possible for the trainees’ work back home. Moreover, We tried to make the lecture as interactive as possible with a lot of discussions. As course aid materials. We made a PowerPoint presentation and a booklet called “Irrigation for Field Crops & Vegetables”.

Our lecture consisted of the following four sections, conducted in the morning and afternoon. Prior to the lecture We circulated a questionnaire with ten simple questions in order to understand the conditions and problems the trainees face at home. We made efforts to have the result of the questionnaire reflected in our lecture to meet the trainees’ needs.

- 1) Water resources in arid land: characteristics of arid land, development schemes based on such characteristics, and the importance of water resources in arid land.
- 2) Water use in arid land: effects of irrigation, irrigation methods, irrigation efficiency, and water-saving irrigation.
- 3) Sustainable development in arid land: various problems related to irrigation, the concept of, and methodology for, sustainable development in arid land.
- 4) Irrigation development and the role of extension workers: the role of such workers and problems facing extension in irrigation development and agricultural rural development.

The trainees at our lecture showed especially strong interest in topics on appropriate technologies such as water-saving irrigation systems built with locally available materials. Many of the trainees were engaged in development promotion activities at home. While we drew upon some case studies from the Middle East / Syria to discuss the current situation and problems of extension activities, similar problems seemed to be observed in different parts of the world. That was evident from the prior questionnaire, and various opinions and experiences were also expressed during discussion sessions. We hope to improve the teaching materials used this time by incorporating the trainees’ opinions and needs as well as the result of the internal evaluation, so that we can conduct even better training courses in the future.

Apart from the above lectures in Tsukuba, we conducted a seminar on the same topics for students at Shizuoka University. We hope to continue these training courses and collaborative activities with universities in the future.



Lecture at Tsukuba International Centre



Seminar at Shizuoka University