

## Reports on activities of ex-participants from Nepal <Part 1>

### Introduction

In December 2014, I visited Nepal as part of the JICA Tsukuba training program and visited ex-participants to find out their post-training activities. In this series, based on the results of the visits, we would like to report and examine how ex-participants have been applying knowledge and technologies which they gained in training programs in Japan and what influence the trainings may have had on them, as well as future challenges they face. Part one of this series will explain the background and overview of the survey.

Our company has in the past conducted a number of our own follow up surveys to understand the activities of ex-participants; in Botswana in 2005, in Malawi and Zambia in 2010 and in El Salvador and Nicaragua in 2012. In each of the surveys, we could witness the ambitious activities of ex-participants, and we could confirm the impact which results of training courses in Japan have on participants after returning to their countries. At the same time, we could understand issues ex-participants face. We are making efforts to use the results of the surveys to improve training programs. We reported these results in AAINews No. 70-72 in the series “Close friends from far countries-AAI's training follow-up program”, and No. 81-84 “Reports on activities of ex-participants from Central America”.

Our visit this time was a little different from our own survey trips of the past as it was an integral part of the training course, “Vegetable cultivation technology and marketing method for small scale farmers”. We were to survey activities of ex-participants in their own countries and provide guidance on their activities. Then we were aiming to compile a set of recommendations for next year's training programs based on the site visits.

As a result, the fact that ex-participants in Nepal were applying what they learned in Japan confirmed that cultivation techniques used in Japan can be applicable in Nepal. It also indicated that training courses in Japan improved specialist knowledge and skills of the participants, leading to enhanced capacity as extension staff. What was very interesting in this survey was that in addition to specialist knowledge and skills, the training courses in Japan also had an impact on their inner selves. We will report more in detail on this aspect in the following parts of the series.

Targets for this visit were 10 Nepali ex-participants who participated in JICA Tsukuba vegetable cultivation technique related courses between 2002 and 2013. All of them were extension staff working for the District

Agriculture Development Office (DADO). The reasons for selecting Nepal for this visit was that they had the largest number of participants in the vegetable cultivation technique related training courses that were organized in JICA Tsukuba. We could anticipate to be able to obtain suggestions for further improving training courses in an effective manner, because all the ex-participants continue to work for DADO.

Prior to the visit, we sent them a pre-visit questionnaire and collected preliminary information on examples of application of knowledge and technologies learned in Japan in their own work and notable points and tips for application, as well as challenges they may face. Based on the questionnaire results, we conducted individual interviews and a group discussion at JICA Nepal office.

The group discussion session aimed at sharing examples of application of what they learned in Japan and at discussing trends in techniques that are used in the country and critical points for application. We received positive feedback from the participants saying the session acted as an incentive for future work by sharing experiences with other ex-participants whom they usually have little chance to meet. It felt as if individual ex-participants could form one team as a result of the session.

### Postscript

I had an additional thing to look forward to in my Nepal visit this time. It was of course reunions with my old friends. I have fond memories of each of the participants with whom I spent 9 months together in Japan. Also I had a good conversation about their time in Japan with ex-participants whom I met for the first time. It was 4.5 months after my visit when I was starting to write this series and I received the news about Nepal's devastating earthquake. I immediately confirmed the safety of the ex-participants and was relieved to learn that everybody was unharmed physically. However some of the ex-participants' houses were totally destroyed necessitating them to live in a temporary shelter. I pray for Nepal's full reconstruction as soon as possible

Ex-participants of JICA Tsukuba vegetable cultivation technique related courses (2002-2013)

	<b>Mr. Hari Prasad Gurung (VC2002)</b> No 2 of the High Value Agriculture Project. Wrote a master's thesis on onion seed production.		<b>Mr. Sandesh Dhital (VC2011)</b> Added vegetable cultivation topic in farmer training. Conducting mulching trial on root beats production.
	<b>Mr. Deepak Poudel (VC2005)</b> Head of the extension center. Extended various cultivation techniques such as rain shelter tomato cultivation.		<b>Mr. Kiran Sigdel (VC2012)</b> In charge of cardamom seedlings production. Conducting an application trial of black colored mulch on cardamom.
	<b>Mr. Shrestha Sudhir (VC2010)</b> He was the head of farms at a seed production center for 3 ½ years. Introduced hybrid tomato seed production technology.		<b>Mr. Ajaya Adhikari (VC2012)</b> Working as extension staff. Invited as a lecturer for vegetable cultivation by other DAD offices or R&D stations.
	<b>Mr. Arun Kafle (VC2010)</b> He was extension staff, and the head of a seed production farm. Contributed technical articles to agricultural magazines.		<b>Mr. Bala Krishna Adhikari (VC2013)</b> Director of the extension center. Making use of rational thinking which he gained in the training in Japan in his current job.
	<b>Mr. Padam Bahadur Subedi (VC2011)</b> Taught vegetable cultivation to farmers as an extension staff. Currently working on his master's degree at a university.		<b>Mr. Bishnu Bogati (VC2013)</b> Working as extension staff. Contributed branding potato and conducting fertilizer trial on onions.

Note: positions and activities in the table is as at December 2014