

Reports on activities of ex-participants from Nepal <Part 4>

Building and strengthening the network between 4 parties

In this series, we have been reporting on the results of our visit to Nepalese ex-participants in December 2014 as part of the follow up activities for the “Vegetable cultivation technology and marketing method for small scale farmers” course.

Change in attitude towards their work

We received interesting feedback from ex-participants, one saying “Through the training in Japan, my attitude towards my work has changed.” Other comments included “I started having more positive attitudes towards my work”, “I learned how to learn what I don’t know.”, and “I come to think about how to deal with even facing to difficult situations.” We collected these comments through a questionnaire and confirmed them through interviews. They were feeling that they had acquired new enthusiasm, confidence and commitment which they didn’t have prior to the training courses in Japan. One ex-participant said, “In addition to technologies, knowledge and experience, the training course in Japan taught me the meaning of ‘work’. I think I could acquire this because of the time spent with Japanese instructors.” This type of feedback is very interesting for us and made us feel proud as Japanese.

Future tasks for the vegetable cultivation technology training course

We observed that ex-participants definitely grew as technicians, however, when it comes to providing appropriate advises on farming activities from a multilateral perspective, it was felt that there is still room for improvement. In order to provide advice on farming plans that sufficiently consider annual income estimates and price fluctuation risks, addition to have cultivation knowledge. Extension workers need to be able to provide advice which considers agricultural economics and farming styles of individual farmers. Therefore in future training curricula, it is necessary to strengthen extension officers’ capacity for farming advice, increasing lectures on farming plan and incorporating crop budget thinking in practice.

In addition, ex-participants expressed their request for opportunities to refresh knowledge and technology after the end of training sessions. Ex-participants are very interested in varied individual/common experiments that are carried out in the vegetable cultivation course, even though their social backgrounds, and the crops that are dealt with, may be different. Therefore, it would be worthwhile for willing ex-participants to provide newsletters with selected experiment results from annual results, which may be useful for ex-participants, or to establish a system to be able to download such information. At the same time, such a system would contribute to increasing the enthusiasm of current participants.

Conclusion

During this visit, we could confirm results of training in Japan to some extent. Firstly, it was confirmed that it is important to include in the scope of training courses “acquisition of

knowledge and technologies for the future” in addition to “technologies that is immediately adaptable in their countries.” Moreover, it was very useful to be able to confirm the more internal training impact on the minds of participants such as improved overall capacity as extension workers and a change in attitude towards work. In the training in Japan, witnessing the earnest attitude of Japanese towards work, the participants seem to have been able to grow internally as extension professionals. This was also nurtured through working hard on individual experiment. These training results are value added of training courses in Japan which are hard to obtain in training courses carried out in other countries.

During the visit, we couldn’t make an objective evaluation of training impact comparing participants’ work before and after the training in Japan through interviews with their seniors as the units which ex-participants belong to have changed in most cases. As a result, we had to produce a report summarizing subjective opinions and it is possible that the comments we received might have been biased favorably. However, we believe that we could obtain meaningful information which can be utilized for our future work to develop individual capacity. This is because we could confirm from concrete examples that many ex-participants were indeed feeling positive impacts of training.

These ex-participants who experienced training in Japan are considered precious human resources for JICA projects and Japanese companies in their countries. According to the results of the questionnaire, all the ex-participants responded saying that their interest in Japan had increased and they would like to actively collaborate with Japan-supported projects and activities of Japanese companies. However, in reality there are insufficient opportunities for them to be able to forge partnerships with JICA or Japanese companies, which is a pity. The largest benefits from training in Japan should be to be able course participants to utilize the human resources nurtured through training in Japan, in their own country.

For this, it is important to build and strengthen the network between JICA Tsukuba (and headquarters), JICA overseas offices, companies engaged in training and ex-participants themselves.

