



APO *news*

Creating eco-business in the BIMP-EAGA region

The first regional workshop on Capacity Building for Creating an Eco-circulation Society through Biomass Utilization in the Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Philippines-East ASEAN Economic Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA) Region in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, 5–9 December 2005 was organized by the APO and the National Productivity Corporation (NPC) of Malaysia with financial support from the ASEAN Foundation. The objectives were to train in the use of local resources, focusing on biomass waste; to build capacity in employment and income generation using available local resources leading to poverty eradication; to facilitate waste-to-energy projects for rural areas to improve living standards; and to facilitate the transfer of appropriate technology.

The workshop was part of an overall project in a two-tiered program linking activities at the regional and national levels. Participants from the targeted countries in Kota Kinabalu developed proposals and implementation plans for both levels. This was conducted as a training of trainers session, and those trained in the workshop will act as facilitators for the second tier. The regional dialogue will take place after the successful adoption of the actions or technological options identified in national-tier activities.



Explaining composting methods at the EAC training farm

The workshop used the Green Productivity (GP) methodology, including hands-on training in biomass utilization and eco-circulation societies, as well as training materials based on the experience of APO member countries, but modified for the needs of the BIMP-EAGA region.

The resource persons, Dr. Kazunari Masuda and Tadashi Adachi, Japan, Prof. Tay Joo Hwa, Singapore, and Jenny Tan, Malaysia, moderated proposal development. Fifteen participants from Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines attended the workshop, with two from Indonesia as observers. The resource persons gave presentations on:

- 1) A policy perspective on becoming a recycling society, focusing on biomass utilization from the private-sector perspective, the potential of biomass, and overview of biomass conversion technologies;
- 2) The GP approach to biomass waste utilization, with key proposals for BIMP-EAGA;
- 3) Team formation and planning with identification of problems and causes through the GP process; and
- 4) Eco-business opportunities for biomass waste utilization.

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"I'm a come-what-may person. If something feels right, I'll go with it. It's not the outcome that matters, it's the creative process."

Amy Tan

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Broken promises

Although few would admit it, observers of the US economy are worried about the transfer of the Federal Reserve Board chairmanship from the retiring Alan Greenspan to Ben Bernanke. It is not that Bernanke is considered ill-prepared or professionally lacking for the post; the issue is one of faith built up over two decades by the incumbent Greenspan. Americans took great comfort from this fatherly financial guru who had a special ability to soothe a nation troubled by economic turmoil. Greenspan saw economics not only as a matter of complex formulas but also in psychological and philosophical terms. Perhaps that is why he spoke in rather obtuse language, hoping to dull the edges of unwelcome news. For example, his coining of the term “irrational exuberance” for a stock market out of control and use of “froth” for the skyrocketing value of the housing market made us smile at our economic transgressions. Greenspan himself admitted that, “If I made myself clear, I have mis-spoken.” Greenspan’s linguistic ambiguity complemented his kindly demeanor. And most importantly, Greenspan could be trusted. He would not break a promise.

An important contribution made by Greenspan during his tenure as Federal Reserve Board chairman was recognizing the power of productivity. He constantly reminded Americans that inflation (the most feared of economic indicators) could be kept in check by rising productivity. Information technology, Greenspan argued, had fundamentally changed the face of productivity, and effective deployment of technology would result in a higher standard of living for Americans. Enhanced productivity could support economic growth without the traditional worries of labor shortages, higher wages, and inflation. Accordingly, he kept interest rates low, the economy prospered, and unit labor costs rose only modestly.

As a result of Greenspan’s emphasis on the curative impact of productivity, analysts today are sure to include the latest productivity figures in any economic forecast. A consensus has evolved that productivity trends will govern the future prospects of the US economy. So far, so good—from 2002 through



2005 productivity growth averaged 3.4%. Recent productivity figures show a 4.7% annual rate of increase in the third quarter of 2005 (the highest in two years) and a concomitant 1% drop in unit labor costs.

“... inflation (the most feared of economic indicators) could be kept in check by rising productivity.”

Given Greenspan’s insightfulness, Americans would be wise to listen to his most recent pronouncements on the country’s economic health. Greenspan warns us that if the USA is not mindful of the dangers of soaring budget deficits, Americans will not only witness a decline in their standard of living but may also witness a disruption in the global economy. The dilemma arises, however, that the only way to stop the unprecedented budget shortfalls is to break promises made to American workers by employers and the government. Greenspan proposes that it would be better to break the promise now, thereby minimizing the negative impact of a necessary evil, i.e., significant cuts in government spending on entitlements.

It was once said, “What is good for General Motors is good for America.” This was not intended to imply,

however, that the government should follow in the footsteps of a troubled General Motors desirous of dismantling its obligations to its workers. But, in fact, there is a realization by both industry and government that current realities preclude remaining true to earlier promises of a social safety net.

But promises to millions of people cannot be broken, or can they? Delta Airlines pilots have agreed to cuts in pay of about 40% because they cannot work for a bankrupt company that will cease to exist. Private-sector pensions have been dumped on the government, and workers have had to settle for one-third of what they expected in retirement. General Motors and Ford Motor Company combined announced in 2005 the closing of 22 factories affecting 60,000 workers, with major cutbacks in healthcare provisions and pensions. General Motors has unfunded pension obligations of some US\$31 billion and projected unfunded healthcare obligations of about US\$70 billion. General Motors’ stock market capitalization is US\$15 billion. With the cost of employee health benefits surpassing the cost of steel used to manufacture an automobile, one has to admit that the past is no longer sustainable.

What then looms ahead for the economy and the American worker? Solid productivity growth has kept US companies (outside the old economy of cars, steel, and airlines) in the black with lots of cash on hand for investment and expansion. Workers will protest but will accept reductions in pensions and healthcare benefits. The national deficit is worrisome, but as Nobel Prizewinner in economics Milton Friedman explained, countries earning dollars from balance-of-trade surpluses have no better place to park their excess dollars than in the USA, thereby bankrolling America’s penchant for spending.

American workers will need to be independent, aggressive, and technologically savvy or face a poverty-level existence in the low-paying service sector. They will have less job security and will be primarily responsible for their own healthcare and retirement funding. The demand for competent labor beyond what can be trained in-country will be satis-

fied through outsourcing and immigration. An interesting employment scenario is portrayed in the book *The 2010 Meltdown* by Edwin Gordon. As the baby-boom generation retires in large numbers in 2010, Gordon predicts widespread unemployment while businesses go begging for qualified workers. He describes the American workforce as three tiered: 25% who are educated and have the necessary skills, 25% who lose their jobs to technology and cannot or will not retool, and 50% whom he calls “techno-peasants” who have little chance for success without targeted educational programs.

Greenspan is a strong advocate of free markets and competition. He points to the improvements in the world economy and in people’s lives around the globe since the widespread adoption of competitive free markets. He calculates that since the autumn of 2001, global gross domestic product per capita has grown more than 8%. Greenspan’s optimism coupled with his personal integrity and his belief that free markets are humanity’s best bet for a better life help take the sting out of the

disappointment and despair many Americans face today as free markets and global competition diminish the American dream. The bridge over troubled waters which Greenspan provided with his strength of vision is now the shared responsibility of the government, corporate America, and the new Federal Reserve Board Chairman Bernanke. ☺

Michael Manson had a long and close association with the APO when he was the Assistant Director of the East-West Center’s Institute of Economic Development and Politics in Honolulu. He helped to initiate a number of collaboration programs between the APO and the East-West Center. Manson also served in the Asian Development Bank, and was Director of Communications with the State of Hawaii’s Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism. He is presently an educator.



p-TIPS

A bit of both (Lucky or smart?)

An Internet multimillionaire at 26, Bo Peabody went on to co-found six companies in six different fields which are thriving today. When asked the question, “Were you lucky or were you smart?” Peabody replies that he was “smart enough to realize that he was getting lucky.” In *Lucky or Smart? Secrets to an Entrepreneurial Life* (Random House, 2005), he passes along some advice relevant to all entrepreneurs.

- 1) Entrepreneurs are B-students; managers are A-students. B-student entrepreneurs need A-student managers so that the entrepreneurs can concentrate on developing the concept and creating a market for their product or service.
- 2) Great is the enemy of good. Start-ups can always be improved on. As long as yours is fundamentally innovative, morally compelling, and philosophically positive, simple survival will ensure success and attract talented employees. Get your idea going now and let perfection follow.
- 3) Start-ups attract sociopaths. Normal people will join normal companies. Entrepreneurs need to hire passionate, driven specialists who are attracted by the moral compulsion and innovativeness of a new enterprise.

- 4) Practice blind faith. New businesses are fragile. When one experiences setbacks, the entrepreneur must believe and convince others that it is worth saving.
- 5) Learn to love the word “no.” People don’t like to hear, or say, no. Remember that the sayer is more vulnerable in that moment, though. Instead of accepting rejection, start selling your business concept anew.
- 6) Prepare to be powerless. You need investors and customers much more than they initially need you. An investor doesn’t return calls? Keep trying. A potential customer offers a strange excuse for canceling a meeting? Set up another one and get busy on something else in the meantime.
- 7) The best defense is a gracious offense. It’s a small world, and social graces matter. Never offend anyone personally no matter how tough negotiations get. Even if the outcome is unfavorable to you, leave the table knowing that the other side likes you.
- 8) Know what you don’t know. Then remedy that situation. Don’t be afraid to admit that you need help figuring something out, which is far better than misleading your investors, employees, or clients.



New APO publication



Creative Entrepreneurship in Asia

APO 143 pp. December 2005 ISBN 92-833-2359-9

The development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) constitutes one of the APO's thrust areas, and one key aspect of SME development is the fostering of entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs often create significant breakthroughs and bold innovations in all fields of business. Products or services created by entrepreneurs can generate business growth, productivity improvement, and job and wealth creation.

In today's globalized world, innovative entrepreneurship is one of the ways to seize opportunities and to create new wealth. This applies to recent start-ups and established enterprises alike. To respond to the needs of SMEs in the current economic and business environment, the APO co-organized the study meeting on Creative Entrepreneurship in Taipei, Republic of China, from 18 to 21 May 2004. The study meeting offered a valuable opportunity to examine not only creative entrepreneurship in SMEs but also in large corporations and how to foster creative entrepreneurs in the business sector. This volume includes a summary of the study meeting, four resource papers, and nine selected country papers by study meeting participants.

The four resource papers are:

- 1) "An Interface between Entrepreneurship, Creativity, and Innovation: The Malaysian Experience" by Dato' Mustafa bin Mansur (President, Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers, and Group Chairman, Manentech-Bele Sdn. Bhd.);
- 2) "Implementing Creative Entrepreneurship in Corporations" by Professor Tan Wee Liang (Singapore Management University);
- 3) "Product Innovation and Business Model: The Case of OKWAP Phone" by Jackson Chang (Chairman, Inventec Appliances Corp., Republic of China); and
- 4) "The Strategy to Create an Entrepreneurial Incubator—The National Taiwan University Case" by Prof. Kuang-Chao Fan (National Taiwan University), Helen Y.C. Hsiao (University of South Australia), and Lee H.S. Luong (University of South Australia).

The volume also contains nine country papers by participants from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam.

The contents of *Creative Entrepreneurship in Asia* should provide readers with information on policies, best practices, and current developments that will be of use to policymakers responsible for creating an environment conducive for innovation and entrepreneurship, entrepreneurs themselves, and enterprises attempting to foster creative entrepreneurship.

For order and inquiry on APO publications and videos, please contact the Information and Public Relations Department, Asian Productivity Organization, Hirakawa-cho Dai-ichi Seimei Bldg. 2F, 1-2-10 Hirakawa-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-0093, Japan. Phone number: (81-3) 5226-3927, Fax: (81-3) 5226-3957, e-Mail: ipr@apo-tokyo.org

COMMON SENSE TALK



In an advance commemoration of International Women's Day on March 8, Common Sense Talk in this issue is devoted to quotations by women from all walks of life.

"For me, my greatest achievement is that during difficult times like bird flu and SARS, no one from my team said: 'I don't want to work.' No one called in sick and they all worked hard."

Dr. Wilina Lim Wei-Ling

"Women do lead differently from men. I try to share a tremendous amount with my staffers. I feel everything: the tribulations of business, the responsibility to people who depend on me to feed their families. Those things are always in my decision-making process."

Vera Wang

"If your kids are important and your work is, too, you compromise on something else. I compromise on time for myself."

Lata Krishnan

"I think I'm a better leader because I'm a parent. I am more organized and have learned to set priorities because of my children."

Eileen Collins

"As African women, we've had to compete more than women in developed societies. But this has compelled us to be more aggressive in trying to reach the highest levels."

President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf

"You need to be supportive of your people, because leading is about serving. That's not a girly thing; it's what I believe a strong leader does."

Judith Shapiro

"I'm a come-what-may person. If something feels right, I'll go with it. It's not the outcome that matters, it's the creative process."

Amy Tan

"Don't spend time beating on a wall, hoping to transform it into a door."

Dr. Laura Schlessinger

"You just don't luck into things as much as you'd like to think you do. You build step by step, whether it's friendships or opportunities."

Barbara Bush

Study mission on agro-industry for the APE-LDC Program

Twenty-three participants from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Nepal completed their study mission on agro-industry in Japan under the Special Program for Agricultural Productivity Enhancement in Asian Least Developed Countries (APE-LDC). The study mission was conducted from 28 November to 9 December.

Among the objectives of the study mission was the refinement of the respective national action plans (NAPs) of the four target countries under the APE-LDC Program. The program, which was formally launched in early 2005, is primarily aimed at the capacity building of NPOs and other related agricultural agencies in those low-income developing countries to enable them to implement agricultural productivity enhancement projects more effectively. Due to the focus on agro-industry, the study mission included special presentations on the development and present status of agro-industries in Japan, as well as extensive visits to selected food manufacturing and distribution companies. The presentations and visits centered specifically on how the Japanese food industry applies various management tools to improve the quality and safety of its products. The experience and lessons learned by the participants from the presentations and visits served as useful inputs in the fine-tuning of their respective NAPs, which they undertook during the final two days of the mission.

Among the many lessons learned were: 1) Company operations pay special attention to maintaining food safety beginning with the procurement of raw materials up to the marketing and distribution of the products. 2) Conscious efforts are made to promote traditional indigenous foods that reflect local culture. 3) The use of locally grown/produced materials is promoted as a measure to ensure the quality and safety of food ingredients. 4) The quality management system should be customer focused. 5) Company incentives/awards are important to nurture creativity and independence among employees. 6) Easily available consumer access to information on production practices is one method to strengthen food safety and quality assurance. 7) Direct marketing channels are becoming more impor-



Examining quality grades at Pearl Rice Processing Center, Fukuroi, Japan

tant in the delivery of the freshest and safest products. 8) Contract farming is a powerful method for productivity and quality improvement.

In refining their NAPs, the country groups worked out a revised Gantt chart of projects scheduled for 2006, as well as the specific project proposals containing the details of implementation. The proposals included projects/activities in the areas of productivity promotion, productivity and quality management training, and demonstration projects. The latter mainly involve the dispatch of APO experts to the demonstration factories/companies identified by each of the four countries. These experts will essentially provide advice and training on the appropriate application of tools such as 5S, kaizen, total quality management, and total productive maintenance.

An immediate project that the target countries were asked to carry out after returning home was a follow-up seminar that will serve as a venue for reporting the findings of the just-concluded study mission to government officials, representatives from the private sector, and other concerned parties. The seminars were planned for January or early February in each of the countries. ☺

Creating eco-business..... (Continued from page 1)

A visit to Sabah's Environment Action Committee's (EAC) training organic farm in Bundu Tuhan, at the foothills of Mt. Kinabalu, demonstrated the benefits of organic vegetables and organic farming using locally available waste and resources. The farm has about 100 trainees, mainly from the surrounding village, and is supported by grants sourced by the EAC.

The country teams identified problems in current biomass waste management to seek possible opportunities. Options involving the utilization of municipal solid waste as biofertilizer and of oil palm empty fruit bunches and palm oil mill effluent (Malaysia), conversion of solid market waste and gambier liquid into biofertilizer for use on a pilot organic farm (Indonesia), and the use of waste from fruit, rice hull and husk, livestock, and wood chips as strategic biomass (the Philippines) were proposed. The options were preliminary and sufficient quantitative data were lacking and therefore they must be developed into background papers for the next phase of the project, i.e., the in-country workshops to be planned for early 2006. ☺

New officer at APO Secretariat

Hidemi Akita joined the APO Secretariat as an Administration and Finance Officer starting on January 4. After receiving an MA in economics from Duke University, USA, Akita has lived and worked in Indonesia, Singapore, and Thailand as well as in his native Japan. He is currently completing an MBA program at Mahidol University, Thailand. His special interests include cross-cultural management, management localization, technology transfer, and the social contributions of the private sector. In his free time, Akita enjoys traveling, fishing, and scuba diving. He is married with no children.



First APO mission to Sweden

Sixteen participants from 13 APO member countries attended the first APO study mission to Sweden, 5–9 December 2005. The mission topic was Quality and Innovation in Sweden, hosted by the Göteborg University School of Business, Economics and Law. During the five days, participants heard many presentations from quality practitioners and academics who explained how the Göteborg region, using entrepreneurship and innovation, was able to rise from the ashes after its leading shipbuilding industry as well as the textile and clothing industries collapsed in the 1980s and today has once again become a center of excellence and trading in a country where “service democracy” rules. Participants also visited world-class Swedish companies in the forefront of the quality and innovation movement not only in Sweden but also globally. Among companies visited were SKF, the inventor and leading global supplier of rolling bearings; SAAB Ericsson Space, a member of the Saab Group and an independent space equipment supplier that is a leader in digital and microwave technologies and mechanical systems; the Tuve plant of Volvo trucks; Volvo Logistics; and Semcon, a design and development company.

SKF, Volvo, and Ericsson have heavily influenced the business and quality and innovation culture not only in Göteborg but also in the rest of Sweden. SKF describes itself as a knowledge engineering company. Since product performance is critical to success, all the companies visited have continued to thrive because of their relentless drive for product and operational excellence. This was made possible by laying a solid foundation for quality improvement, cementing operations with quality management systems, and effective deployment of the Six Sigma strategy. To ensure that they maintain industry leadership, the companies have been working in partnership with leading universities, research institutions, and local government authorities through initiatives like the Lindholmen Science Park, where a rich overlapping between different skills and ideas has led to the creation of new products and innovations. The science park fuels growth in the Göteborg region and the whole of Sweden. A point often mentioned was the existence of a “forgiving culture” that allows employees to take risks and thus encourages creativity. The concepts of quality and innovation are at the heart of business systems and processes. To Claes Berlin, Quality Director, Saab Ericsson Space, “quality in the moment of truth” means practicing quality all the time, particularly at SAAB Ericsson where key processes are complex/critical and therefore allow no margin for error.



Participants visiting SKF

One of the key players in advancing the quality movement in Sweden has been the Swedish Quality Institute (SIQ), which for the past two decades has promoted total quality management (TQM). That has contributed to the creation of a competitive industrial sector and a public sector that is efficient and transparent. In private-sector enterprises, TQM application has resulted in operational efficiency. For employees, TQM permits greater involvement and responsibility in improving working conditions. The general public, on the other hand, has benefited from the national TQM movement because it results in the supply of better and more reasonably priced goods and services from both the private and public sector. Quality initiatives have thus affected everyone in the society and are now an integral part of daily life. To ensure that TQM became both widespread and widely understood, the SIQ founded the Swedish Quality Award in 1991.

Professor Claes Alvstam, Vice Dean of Göteborg University, stated that he was delighted to collaborate with the APO on the mission to Sweden and held the conviction that the mission would help further understanding between Sweden and Asia. 🌐

Second distance-learning seminar on TQM

A distance-learning seminar on total quality management (TQM) was held for the second time, 19–22 December, and was attended by 63 participants from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. The course aimed to share experiences in implementing and sustaining TQM and developing an understanding of how to strengthen good quality management practices in organizations. During the four days, participants heard presentations on: “Case Studies of TQM Implementation in Japanese SMEs,” by Mr. Yoshiro Takahashi of Philips Electronics Japan Ltd.; “Indian Experiences in TQM,” by Mr. S.A. Khader, Consultant, who spoke from New Delhi; and “The Step-by-Step Approach for Implementing and Sustaining TQM,” by Mr. Masahiko Arakawa, Management Consultant from Japan. As part of the program, participants also undertook an extensive field exercise to assess the level of TQM implementation through site visits and interviews and later made presentations to share their learning experiences.

They also made recommendations for further improving quality in the respective organizations.

The site visits and other exercises performed virtually helped add variety to the program and ensured involvement and interaction among participants. The seminar was delivered utilizing the Global Development Learning Network of the World Bank and coordinated locally by Kunjung Masehat in Indonesia, Omar Bin Othman in Malaysia, Elena Cruz in the Philippines, and Nguyen Thi Le Hoa in Vietnam and moderated by Kamlesh Prakash, Industry Department, APO Secretariat, from the Tokyo Development Learning Center (TDLC). Ryu Fukui, Partnership and Programs Manager, TDLC, in his closing remarks, stated that the center was delighted to enter into the new collaboration with the APO to offer programs in innovative ways for the benefit of all NPOs in member countries. The Secretariat has planned several distance-learning projects for 2006. 🌐



p-Experts deputed by the APO

CAMBODIA

Dr. Chang Soo Choe, Associate Professor, Korea University, and **Prof. Kosaku Yoshida**, Aoyama Gakuin University Graduate School of International Management, Japan, were deputed as experts for the seminar on TQM for Public Administration, 19–23 December 2005.

NEPAL

Mr. Lovneesh Chanana, Group Head (IT), National Productivity Council, India, and **Mr. Tengku Azmi Tengku Majid**, Manager, National Productivity

Corporation, Malaysia, were deputed as resource persons for the workshop on Strengthening IT Capabilities of NPOs, 29 November–2 December 2005.

THAILAND

Mr. Kunio Igusa, Professor and Dean, College of Asia Pacific Management, Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Japan, was deputed as resource person for the working party meeting on the Integrated Community Development Program of the Mekong Region: “One Village, One Product” Movement in CLMV Countries, 19–24 December 2005.

APO/NPO update

New Administration & Finance Officer at the APO Secretariat

Mr. Hidemi Akita joined the APO Secretariat as Administration & Finance Officer, w.e.f. 4 January 2006.

New NPO Head for India

Dr. Kamal Taori, IAS, Director General of the National Productivity Council, was appointed the new NPO Head for India, w.e.f. 2 January 2006.

New NPO and appointments in Indonesia, w.e.f. 6 December 2005

The name of the NPO for Indonesia was changed to:

Directorate of Productivity
Directorate General of Training and Productivity Development
Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration
Jl. Jenderal Gatot Subroto Kav. 51 Floor III-B,
Jakarta 12950
Phone: +62-21-52963356
(62-21-5255733 Ext. 237/348)
Fax: +62-21-52963356
e-Mail: protek@centrin.net.id

Mr. Besar Setyoko, Director General, Training and Productivity Development, Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration, was appointed the new APO Director for Indonesia.

Mr. Harry Heriawan Saleh, Secretary General,

Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration, was appointed the new APO Alternate Director for Indonesia.

Mr. Afdaluddin, Director of Productivity, Directorate General of Training and Productivity Development, Ministry of Manpower and Transmigration, was appointed the new APO Liaison Officer/NPO Head for Indonesia.

New APO Liaison Officer for Republic of Korea

Mr. Su Hwan Kang, Director, International Cooperation Department, Korea Productivity Center, was appointed the new APO Liaison Officer for Republic of Korea, w.e.f. 2 January 2006.

New APO Alternate Director for Nepal

Mr. Shambhu Nath Pant, Officiating General Manager, National Productivity and Economic Development Centre, was appointed the new APO Alternate Director for Nepal, w.e.f. 24 October 2005.

New APO Director for Pakistan

Mr. Kamran Rasool, Secretary, Ministry of Industries, Production and Special Initiatives, was appointed the new APO Director for Pakistan, w.e.f. 12 December 2005.

Program calendar

March 2006

Cambodia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, and Vietnam

Distance-learning Seminar on the Toyota Production System, 6–8 March 2006 (Phase 1).

Japan

Top Management Forum: Corporate Brand Management, 6–9 March 2006.

Republic of China

Training Course on the Balanced Scorecard, 27–31 March 2006.

India

Workshop on Green Productivity and Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction, 6–10 March 2006.

Republic of Korea

Multi-country Study Mission on In-company Training Programs, 14–17 March 2006.

Malaysia

Practicum Workshop on Green Productivity, 6–31 March 2006.

April 2006

Japan

Individual Country Observational Study Mission to Japan on Knowledge Management Benchmarking, 17–21 April 2006.

Malaysia

Training Course on the ISO9001:2000 Series for Auditors/Lead Auditors, 17–22 April 2006.

Sri Lanka

Multi-country Study Mission on Media and Productivity, Role of Media in Productivity Promotion, 25–28 April 2006.

May 2006

Republic of China

Workshop on Green Productivity and Occupational, Environmental Health and Safety with a Focus on Risk Analysis and Management, 22–26 May 2006.

Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand

Distance-learning Seminar on the Toyota Production System, 8–10 May 2006 (Phase 2).

Kindly contact your NPO for details of the above activities, including eligibility for participation. If you need the address of your NPO, it is available from the APO Web site at www.apo-tokyo.org.

Forum on Development of NPOs

The theme of the 2005 Forum on Development of NPOs (DON), held in Singapore, 28–30 November, was “Renewal and Growth of NPOs,” which was appropriate as APO member countries face daunting tasks in coping with dynamic transformations in the socioeconomic environment. The forum was attended by 17 participants from 16 APO member countries. The genesis of this forum was the 1998 Roundtable Follow-up Conference held in Fiji. A key recommendation at the Fiji conference was the need for member countries to evaluate and improve their productivity movements to meet the challenges of the more competitive environment and increasing societal expectations. It was suggested that an NPO forum be organized on a regular basis to discuss critical issues arising from such changes and to consider their impacts on NPOs. Notable achievements through the series of fora subsequently organized included:

First and foremost, the forum has been instrumental in fostering a strong network among NPOs and forging a sense of camaraderie among NPO top managers. This forum series enables NPO heads, especially the newly appointed ones, to become acquainted with their counterparts in a more informal setting before the annual Workshop Meeting of Heads of NPOs. Several new faces were seen at the Singapore forum: Umesh Panjiar, Director-General of the National Productivity Council (NPC), India; Dr. Phanit Laosirirat, Executive Director of the Thailand Productivity Institute (FTPI); and Mr. Nguyen Ahn Tanh, Managing Director of the Vietnam Productivity Centre (VPC).

Second, in addition to providing an avenue for networking, collaboration has been developed in the area of expertise sharing and capacity building among NPOs, especially in emerging productivity fields. Some of the specific outcomes that have benefited the NPOs are:

1) The DON Forum in Bangkok imparted concepts such as the learning organization and knowledge management (KM). This spurred the VPC to develop training packages on KM and KM applications for Vietnamese industries with assistance from the National Productivity Corporation (NPC), Malaysia, and SPRING Singapore.

2) Following the forum in Tehran, where the balanced scorecard (BSC) concept was introduced, BSC training was initiated for companies in Pakistan by the National Productivity Organization (NPO) of that country. The Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) and FTPI also introduced their own NPO scorecards.

3) At the Fiji forum held in 2004, the e-benchmarking online database initiative presented by the NPC, Malaysia, and the national quality and innovation program shared by SPRING Singapore resulted in a number of visits from NPOs under the APO Bilateral Cooperation Between NPOs Program to both Malaysia and Singapore so that other member countries could adapt and develop similar approaches. The China Productivity Center of the ROC developed its own online benchmarking database known as the “i-bench” to benefit Taiwanese enterprises. The NPO Pakistan also launched a national quality award modeled after the Singapore Quality Award.

The above exchanges and collaborations were possible because NPOs were able to gain a better appreciation of each other’s core competencies and strengths through the regular DON Forum.

Third, the strategic planning exercise in 2000 and reviews in 2001, 2003, and 2004



Senior NPO representatives at the Singapore forum

encouraged NPOs to engage in their own strategic reviews. This is now a regular exercise for most NPOs. Key performance indicators and performance measurement have also been integrated in NPO operations so that they can be more accountable to their stakeholders.

The Singapore DON Forum generated enthusiasm for each NPO to embark upon a renewal and growth strategy to strengthen its role as the apex body of the productivity movement in their country. The meeting emphasized the need for NPOs to engage the private sector as a major stakeholder in the productivity movement and in APO activities so that they can stay relevant now and in the future.

Greater private-sector participation in APO activities was an area of critical concern discussed during the 47th Session of the APO Governing Body and was further emphasized at the Singapore forum. Secretary-General Takenaka in his remarks at the forum urged all NPOs to widen their search for qualified APO project participants, especially from the private sector, and make a deliberate effort to nominate them for all projects. The APO will meanwhile start with a limited number of projects to be targeted exclusively at private-sector participants. He stressed that greater efforts must be made by NPOs to devise an effective outreach program to the public through the circulation of APO and NPO newsletters and APO project notifications directly to industry associations and chambers of commerce in member countries. Only then can the APO truly achieve multiplier effects of its activities to benefit member countries through the dissemination of productivity know-how to the widest possible audience, especially the private sector. ☺

