



APO *news*

ISO9001 lead auditor course in Malaysia

Twenty-one participants from 15 member countries attended a training course on ISO9001:2000 for Auditors/Lead Auditors in Malaysia, 17–22 April 2006. The project was hosted by the National Productivity Corporation, Malaysia, and conducted by Independent European Certification Limited (IECL).

The course aimed to train participants in ISO9001 quality management system (QMS) auditing to build a pool of auditors and lead auditors in APO member countries. The course gave a better understanding of the requirements of the ISO9001 standard, its documentation process, and the knowledge and skills required for ISO auditing. Participants also learned how certification body auditors audit to the ISO9000 system to help enterprises maintain good QMS.


The intensive course was delivered using interactive accelerated learning, entailing presentations, discussions, structured learning exercises, case studies, syndicate work, live audit practice, and a formal examination on the final day. In the live audit, participants practiced at Sweetkiss Food Industries, a leading ISO9001:2000-certified confectioner. Unlike in most other projects, participants were required to complete assignments each evening, and many worked tirelessly into the small hours to prepare for the two-and-one-half-hour examination. Passing the examination is required for auditor registration with the International Register for Certificated Auditors, UK.



Aspiring auditors taking the exam

The International Organization for Standardization developed its 9000 series in 1987 as voluntary international standards for establishing and maintaining QMS for enterprises manufacturing products or providing services. These standards are accepted in more than 100 countries, have become an international reference for quality, and cover all facets of business activities from design, production, and inspection to after-sales service. They were last revised in December 2000 as ISO9001:2000.

The implementation of ISO9001:2000 is critical for export-oriented firms, as certification yields significant business advantages. Certification is desired by enterprises in APO member countries because it facilitates international trade and offers scope for continuous improvement and customer satisfaction. While several member countries provide training and consultancy in the ISO9001 QMS, not all have the pool of quality system auditors required for internal or second- and third-party audits, and auditor/lead auditor courses are either unavailable or expensive in many. Audits are a major part of a QMS, and, like financial audits, are undertaken periodically to ensure that the system operates effectively and to identify areas of noncompliance.

Over the past five years, the APO has trained about 100 quality system auditors through its multi-country programs and several hundred more through individual country programs. The course in Malaysia was facilitated by Jimmy Chua and B.S. Ong, accredited trainers from the IECL, Malaysia Office. 

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"Let us not look back in anger, nor forward in fear, but around in awareness."

James Thurber

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Immigration: What is America to do?

My college professor was fond of labeling socioeconomic problems as “intractable.” The word has since fascinated me as providing an avenue of escape from complex issues that are just too difficult to manage or solve. No doubt the immigration debate now taking place in the USA would sit high on the professor’s list of intractable problems. If a resolution to the immigration issue were not so essential to the economic, social, and political well-being of the USA, one could dismiss the problem as just too difficult and move on. No such luck.



jobs, signaling the dynamic economic spin-offs of an opportunistic immigrant population.

Undocumented immigrants number about 11.5 million. Legal and illegal immigrants constitute approximately 12% of the US population. That is less than in 1910, when immigration from Europe reached its peak, and the immigrant population comprised 15% of the American total. In the 1970s, the immigrant population was roughly 5%. Today’s immigrants are primarily from Latin America, including Mexico (78% of the total), Asia (13%), central Europe (6%), and Africa (3%). Migration figures also reveal that women are increasingly among the number of illegal immigrants. Approximately one-half of the illegal immigrants from Mexico are female and one-third of them are 18 years old or younger. That compares with 2% younger than 18 years of age in 1994.

A study by the Pew Hispanic Center underscored the dependency of the US economy on immigrant labor. That study estimated that undocumented workers comprised 24% of agricultural laborers, 14% of construction workers, 17% of food preparation staff, 26% of maintenance personnel, and 9% of manufacturing workers. Although the employment of illegal immigrants is obvious, the government response is at best half-hearted with only a handful of threatened legal actions taken against the employers of undocumented workers.

Another recent study estimated that of the roughly 11.5 million undocumented immigrants, 3.5 million are working and paying taxes. Another 3.5 million

are working in the “underground” economy, and 4.5 million are not working. Official government statistics, such as unemployment estimates, suffer from the lack of immigrant visibility in the formal economy. The growing use of “day laborers” by small businesses and homeowners has created a niche labor market that further complicates the immigration debate. Approximately one-half of immigrant day laborers are hired by homeowners who do not want to know the immigrant status of those they hire. They care only about minimizing costs and getting the job done quickly. For the most part, homeowners treat those workers respectfully, feed them, and pay them on the spot, which makes homeowners preferred employers. However, such employment is illegal and those homeowners are breaking the law. The government does not gain public support by criminalizing the activities of middle-class Americans.

“They [some economists] argue that the impact of illegal immigration has been positive for the economy.”

On 1 May over 1 million Americans (including illegal and legal immigrants) took to the streets to express their views on immigration, citizenship, and economic opportunity. While some marched, other Americans scratched their heads in frustration not knowing what to think or do. Their frustration had to do with the fact that there is little consensus among the experts on the economic impact, negative or positive, of illegal immigration to the USA. Can it at least be said that illegal immigrants take jobs away from American citizens and lower the wages for non- and semiskilled workers? No, claim some economists. They argue that the impact of illegal immigration has been positive for the economy. The flexibility, hard work, and purchasing power of the immigrant population have moved the US economy forward. That was the message of the 1 May “Day Without Immigrants” rallies throughout the country.

Supporters of liberal immigration policies point to statistics that highlight a drop in unemployment figures as rates of immigration increase. A Harvard Business School study underscored the fact that cities with larger immigrant populations gained jobs, while cities with smaller immigrant populations lost

“American high-tech companies, aware of the dearth of talent at home, are fearful of the future if legal immigration arteries remain clogged.”

Legal immigration is stifled by bureaucracy, government inefficiency, and long delays. American high-tech companies and universities are frustrated and embarrassed by the long delays that face invited students, scientists, and engineers. The immigration system as it now exists cannot readily discriminate between possible criminal/terrorist elements and those individuals who wish to contribute to the USA and its economy. Waiting time for visas for overseas family members of American citizens can run from five to 15 years. Workers who have an employer-sponsor wait an average of five years.

American high-tech companies, aware of the dearth of talent at home, are fearful of the future if legal immigration arteries remain clogged. They point to the insufficient numbers of engineers and scientists

being trained in the USA. Bangalore, India, reportedly is already home to more information technology workers than Silicon Valley, California. Young Chinese and Indian engineers are returning home as opportunities for profitable and satisfying careers expand along with the region's fast-growing economies.

Over the past 30 years, US universities have not done as well as universities in Asia in encouraging students to major in science and engineering. One-third of US tertiary degrees are currently in science and engineering fields, compared with 59% in China, 46% in the Republic of Korea, and 66% in Japan. To tap this overseas talent pool, US immigration policy must be reformulated to expedite rather than discourage scientific exchange. The US Department of Labor forecasts that computer programming-related jobs will increase by 40% over the next 10 years, but only 1% of US college freshman plan to major in computer science.

Americans have always valued hard work, determination, and opportunity. They are not comfortable denying the chance to succeed to anyone who shares these

values. Americans also realize that the USA is a country built by immigrants and take little pleasure in turning away people who simply seek a chance to improve their lives. The problem arises, however, if the economic pie is considered insufficient to support all who seek America's bounty. If it could be clearly demonstrated that all ships would rise with the tide and that national productivity could be increased by utilizing the vast immigrant talent pool available, immigration could easily be removed from the list of intractable problems. ☺

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

Spread the enthusiasm (Stop demotivating your employees)

After surveys of about 1.2 million employees in the USA, David Sirota, Louis A. Mischkind, and Michael Irwin concluded that: "Most companies have it all wrong. They don't have to motivate their employees. They have to stop demotivating them." In their report "Stop demotivating your employees!" in the January 2006 *Harvard Business Review Management Update*, the blame is laid on management, since most workers are enthusiastic when first hired. But unless the three goals of equity, achievement, and camaraderie on the job are met, morale soon declines. The authors identified eight practices to maintain employees' enthusiasm and keep productivity high.

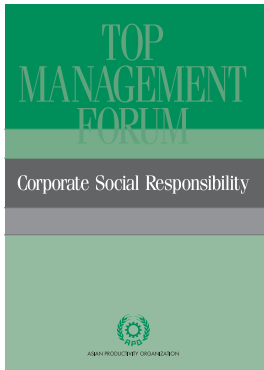
- 1) Instill an inspiring purpose. Managers should develop a clear purpose statement for their unit, communicate it, and follow it all the time.
- 2) Provide recognition. Surveyed employees repeatedly said how much compliments meant and how few there were. A note, word of thanks, or extra day of leave for a job well done are never amiss.
- 3) Be an expeditor for your employees. Ask what they need to get their jobs done and then liaise with other units or outside elements to help them get it.
- 4) Coach your employees for improvement. Give both positive and negative

feedback in factual, unemotional terms directly relevant to an individual's role.

- 5) Communicate fully. Schedule meetings for two-way communication and follow up to ensure that messages have been understood. Full and open communication is a strong sign of respect.
- 6) Face up to poor performance. A few people are simply "allergic to work." Disciplinary measures, including dismissal, may be the only way to manage them. However, the morale of others may increase if a barrier to their own productivity is gone.
- 7) Promote teamwork. Form teams with opportunities for cross-learning, set clear goals, and then let them manage themselves. People are motivated by working in teams, and group problem-solving efforts are usually superior to those of individuals working alone.
- 8) Listen and involve. Managers should solicit suggestions on how to get the job done from employees and recognize their innovativeness. Once the task has been defined, let them operate freely. That freedom to do the job as one thinks best is another strong motivator.



New APO publication



CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

APO 90 pp. May 2006
ISBN: 92-833-2363-7 (hard copy)
ISBN: 92-833-7049-X (e-edition)

Practicing corporate social responsibility (CSR) includes managing organizations in a transparent manner; giving consideration to the environment, human rights, and employment; and complying with all relevant rules and regulations. Fulfilling CSR can also lead to the sustainable development of corporations by encouraging and fostering good relationships with society. Although CSR has its origins in the surprisingly distant past, corporations today are increasingly realizing that they cannot afford to ignore their social responsibilities.

In view of the growing interest in CSR, the APO focused on the topic at its 21st Top Management Forum held in Tokyo from 28 February to 3 March 2005. This publication is a compilation of the presentations made at the forum by executives of leading Japanese corporations and distinguished management specialists. They all noted that fulfilling CSR is not a simple task. It requires support not only from shareholders and investors but also from customers, employees, and communities. While practicing CSR, corporations must respect the rights of employees, satisfy the needs of customers, guarantee dividends to shareholders, and convince the community of the merit of corporate activities. In this, corporations must try to strike an appropriate and delicate balance among these elements.

This publication provides readers with an opportunity to share experiences of corporations and executives and to study CSR so that their own corporations or enterprises can achieve higher productivity and competitiveness in the long run. The presentations included in this publication are:

“Corporate Social Responsibility: Current Context and Future Directions” by Iwao Taka, Professor, Reitaku University.

“Policies to Promote Corporate Social Responsibility” by Hideo Suzuki, Director, Corporate Affairs Division, Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.

“CSR Management and Corporate Value” by Hiroshi Hirano, President and Chief Executive Officer, Sompo Japan Insurance Inc.

“My Management Philosophy and Corporate Social Responsibility” by Morio Ikeda, President and Chief Executive Officer, Shiseido Company, Ltd.

“Building a ‘New Snow Brand Milk Products Co., Ltd. Goal: To Establish Compliance Management’” by Makoto Wakita, Managing Director, Snow Brand Milk Products Co., Ltd.

“Positive Aspects of the CSR Debate in Japan in Comparison with Europe and America” by Minoru Inaoka, Managing Director, Managing Executive Officer, Administration Division, Ito-Yokoda Co., Ltd.

“Socially Responsible Investment in Japan” by Mariko Kawaguchi, Senior Analyst, Managing Strategy Research Department, Daiwa Institute of Research Ltd.

This publication also includes a paper titled “Corporate Social Responsibility—Why It Matters, What It Means, and Where It Is Going” by Arif Zaman, Research Fellow, Henley Management College, UK, and adviser to the Commonwealth Business Council, who acted as a facilitator at the 2005 Top Management Forum.

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



“Impossible is a word that is to be found only in the dictionary of fools.”

Napoleon Bonaparte

“What reason, like the careful ant, draws laboriously together, the wind of accident sometimes collects in a moment.”

Frederick von Schiller

“Let us not look back in anger, nor forward in fear, but around in awareness.”

James Thurber

“It is only by introducing the young to great literature, drama, and music, and to the excitement of great science that we open to them the possibilities that lie within the human spirit—enable them to see visions and dream dreams.”

Eric Anderson

“Old times never come back, and I suppose it’s just as well. What comes back is a new morning every day in the year, and that’s better.”

George E. Woodberry

“You’ll never have a product or price advantage again. They can be easily duplicated, but a strong customer service culture can’t be copied.”

Jerry Fritz

“We live in a world where what you earn depends on what you can learn, where the average 18-year-old will change jobs eight times in a lifetime, and where none of us can promise any of you that what you do for a living is absolutely safe from now on.”

Bill Clinton

“The power of doing anything with quickness is always prized much by the possessor, and often without any attention to the imperfection of the performance.”

Jane Austen

“A society that has more justice is a society that needs less charity.”

Ralph Nader

Workshop on Biofuel

The demand for energy is escalating as never before, and unprecedented economic growth in the Asian region continues to push demand higher. It is known that fossil fuels like oil, gas, coal, etc. cannot last forever, and estimates indicate that in the next 200 to 300 years the world will exhaust all such sources if the present demand continues unabated. Then what? Alternative energy sources are the only answer. One attractive alternative is biofuel.

The APO organized a workshop on Biofuel to provide a platform for member countries to discuss and share mutual experiences in biofuel utilization and formulate a standardized policy on biofuel as a traditional energy alternative. The workshop was held in Nadi, Fiji, 24–28 April, in association with the Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji. Twenty-three delegates from 16 member countries attended.

During the workshop, the environmental, technological, social, and economic aspects of biofuel usage were discussed. It was agreed in no uncertain terms that biofuels are beneficial environmentally and socially and that the technology for their collection, storage, and utilization is well established. The technology only needs to be indigenized. However, economically, the expanded use of biofuel requires initial support from member governments and a clear-cut energy policy is necessary. It was noted that many member governments have taken steps in this regard.

The Republic of Korea has initiated intensive R&D on, for example, the use of palm oil-derived biodiesel as automotive fuel and producing biogas through high-efficiency anaerobic digestion processes. Thailand proposes to increase the proportion of nontraditional energy including biofuel from 0.5% to 8% of its total energy supply by 2011. Pakistan has identified potential source materials like beet-, molasses-, corn-, and fruit-processing waste for biofuel development. Bangladesh is placing emphasis on wood and plant waste and agriculture residues for harnessing energy. In spite of its vast oil and gas reserves, Iran has been making efforts to develop alternative energy sources like biomass. Under the Office of the Prime Minister, the Biofuel Development Unit and Department of Energy, Sugar and Coconut, the government of Fiji has demonstrated strong interest in biofuels. Fiji has abundant biomass on its coconut plantations and has good potential to develop alternative biofuels. Mongolia, on the other hand, is examining the use of biofuel for heating *ger* (traditional dwellings). The government of India's decision to mandate the blending of 5%



Workshop participants visiting the coconut oil (biofuel option) factory of M/s Punjas & Sons Ltd.

ethanol in petrol in a few states/provinces is a major initiative in this direction, which will be extended to the entire country shortly; the level of blending may rise to 10%.

As a part of the workshop, a field visit was made to the coconut oil factory of M/s Punjas & Sons Limited, located in Lautoka. M/s Punjas is undertaking feasibility studies on the development of biofuel from coconut oil.

The workshop clearly indicated that there is huge potential for developing biofuels as alternative indigenous energy sources that will contribute to energy security. However, the sources, techniques, and applications of biofuel vary depending upon local conditions. The delegates returned from the workshop with the message for their governments and policymakers that initial infrastructure and institutional support are essential to make biofuel a viable alternative and economically sustainable energy source. The development of biofuel also carries an economic incentive in terms of clean development mechanisms (CDM), as biofuels result in lower greenhouse gas emissions as compared with fossil fuels. Proposals from India and Thailand have already been submitted to the international CDM Executive Board under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. All other eligible countries need to follow suit to maximize the benefits of biofuel utilization for national economies and the Asia-Pacific region as a whole. ☺

First ISO14001-certified Indian municipality

Namakkal municipality, Tamil Nadu, India, received ISO14001:2004 certification on 23 March from TUV, the worldwide accreditation agency, for establishing and applying an environmental management system for the “Provision and Maintenance of Water Supply, Solid Waste/Sewage Management, Town Planning, Lighting, and Other Social Services.” The municipality has been working toward becoming a model eco-city through a Green Productivity project sponsored by the APO under the technical guidance and supervision of experts from the National Productivity Council, India.

Namakkal is the only town nationwide where waste is segregated when collected and then processed and sent for disposal. In addition to the solid waste management system, Namakkal municipality has introduced energy conservation measures like an automatic luminous cut-off system for street lights, employment generation for women through mushroom cultivation training, pond beautification at the foot of Tippu Sultan Fort, development of an eco-park and children's park utilizing waste material, and enhancing the productivity of municipal administration by integrating geographic information and management information systems.



Namakkal municipal employees with ISO14001:2004 certificate

This marked the first ISO14001 certification of an Indian municipality. It was achieved with the commitment of the municipal chairman, commissioner, and councilors and support from the general public. It is hoped that more cities in India and the Asia-Pacific region will follow the eco-city model of Namakkal.

Media and productivity

The quest for higher productivity should be the concern of everyone in society, from those in homes and schools to workers in factories and offices. It should become a fundamental part of the national development agenda and work culture of the people if its gains are to be maximized for the benefit of business, industry, labor, and society. Therefore, the productivity message should be communicated to every sector of the country. The mass media are potent vehicles for public education and awareness. Newspapers, journals, and magazines as well as radio, television, and cable networks reach almost every home. They can be a powerful force that should be made a partner in championing the cause of productivity among the people. For this to be possible, they must first be well acquainted with the subject and with the productivity improvement programs being undertaken by countries in the region.


The APO organized the multi-country study mission on The Media and Productivity, 25–28 April, in Sri Lanka, to provide an opportunity for the mass media in APO member countries to become acquainted with the concept of productivity; the relationship between productivity enhancement and socio-economic development; the policies, measures, and activities implemented in various countries to promote productivity by NPOs and other institutions for achieving sustainable socioeconomic development and global competitiveness; and the role to be played by the mass media in support of productivity promotion.

Twenty participants from 14 member countries representing electronic and print media in both the public and private sectors and NPOs attended the study mission. Two sessions were delivered from the Tokyo Development Learning Center through its videoconferencing facilities. Those attending gained com-



Discussing the media action plan

prehensive knowledge of the concept and importance of productivity; productivity promotion activities implemented in the region; the role of the media in productivity promotion; and the Sri Lankan experience in productivity promotion through presentations by resource persons, group discussions, and field visits to Independent Television Network Ltd. and the factory of Uni-Dil Packaging Ltd.

As an outcome of the group discussions, an action plan indicating activities, strategies, and time targets was prepared by participants for implementation upon returning to their home countries. The activities identified included producing TV programs, teledramas, documentaries, spot talk shows, and musical variety shows to publicize productivity concepts. It was also decided to establish an APO media alumni corner on the APOnet as an e-forum for follow-up activities and networking. 

Malaysian OSM on innovation to Japan

Under the APO Individual Country Observational Study Mission (OSM) Program, a total of 32 Malaysian delegates, 30 of whom were self-financed and two sponsored under the Bilateral Cooperation Between NPOs Program, visited Tokyo and Nagoya, 8–13 May, to examine innovation. The study mission was organized by the National Productivity Corporation (NPC), Malaysia, and hosted by the Japan Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Development and Central Japan Quality Control Association. The 32 participants were from the NPC, Malaysia; National University of Malaysia; major companies such as Perdua Automotive Centre, Intel Technology, Telekom Malaysia, and National; and various government offices such as the National Institute of Public Administration, Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, and Council of Trust for the Indigenous People.

In Tokyo, Panasonic's brand management team gave a presentation to the OSM participants on its strategy for global competitiveness and hosted a visit to the Panasonic Center to showcase the company's "ubiquitous" digital solutions. Participants also visited the Palace Hotel to observe innovative practices of Green Productivity, such as biological composting



Participants at APO Secretariat

equipment that converts restaurant kitchen waste into organic fertilizer. In Nagoya, they visited the Toyota Motor Co. Tsutsumi plant; Yamasei Kogyo, a producer of automotive parts and components; and NGK Spark Plug, a manufacturer of spark plugs and related products for internal combustion engines and new ceramics and applicable products.



p-Experts deputed by the APO

CAMBODIA

Mr. Saquib Mohyuddin, Chairman, Pakistan Enterprise Development Facility, was deputed as resource person for the preparatory meeting for the Roundtable Conference under the project on Strengthening NPO Services, 24–28 April 2006.

FIJI

Prof. Tor Hundloe, Director, Environmental Management Center, University of Queensland, Australia, **Mr. B. Bhatt**, Chief Executive Officer, Bisman Fintech Pvt. Ltd., India, and **Dr. Kenji Imo**, Associate Professor, University of Tokyo Graduate School of Agricultural and Life Sciences, Japan, were deputed as resource persons

for the workshop on Biofuel, 24–28 April 2006.

PAKISTAN

Mr. Manop Thongsaeng, Director, Mould and Die Technology Center, Thai-German Institute, Thailand, was deputed as expert for the seminar on Tools, Dies, and Molds Center in Karachi, 17–30 May 2006.

SRI LANKA

Mr. Richard Barton, Managing Director, Business Improvement Advisory Services Pty Ltd., Australia, was deputed as resource person for the multi-country study mission on The Media and Productivity, 25–28 April 2006.

APO/NPO update

Acting Environment Director in APO Secretariat

Mr. Mukesh Dev Bhattarai, Senior IT Program Officer, Information and Public Relations Department, was appointed Acting Director of the Environment Department, w.e.f. 1 June 2006.

New NPO and NPO Head for Islamic Republic of Iran

The name of the NPO for the Islamic Republic of Iran was changed to: National Productivity Center, and Dr. Ahmad Samimi was appointed the new NPO Head, w.e.f. 1 May 2006. Their mailing and e-mail addresses and telephone and fax numbers remain the same.

New APO Director and Alternate Director for Republic of Korea

Mr. Sung-Ki Bae, Chairman and CEO, Korea Productivity Center, was appointed the new APO

Director for the Republic of Korea, w.e.f. 12 May 2006, and Mr. Ho-Won Kim, Director General, Industrial Policy Bureau, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Energy, was appointed the new APO Alternate Director for the Republic of Korea, w.e.f. December 2005.

New NPO for Lao PDR

The name of the NPO for Lao PDR was changed to: Small and Medium Enterprise Promotion and Development Office (SMEPDO). The mailing address and telephone and fax numbers remain the same.

New e-Mail Address for APO Liaison Officer for Sri Lanka

The e-mail address for Mr. Upali Marasinghe, APO Liaison Officer for Sri Lanka, was changed to: npsl@nps.lk.

Program calendar

August

Republic of China

Workshop on Retail Store Management, 22–25 August 2006.

Fiji

Workshop on Productivity Training Certification: 1) Review Meeting on PETALS, 25–26 August 2006 and 2) Workshop on Dissemination of PETALS to NPOs, 28–31 August 2006.

India

Study Meeting on Implications of Trade Liberalization under the WTO-Doha Development Agenda for Small Farmers and Agricultural Trade, 22–28 August 2006.

Japan

APO Liaison Officers' Meeting, 1–3 August 2006.

Malaysia

Multi-country Study Mission on Best Practices in Rural Entrepreneurship Development, 7–11 August 2006.

Vietnam

Symposium on Management of Change, 7–10 August 2006.

September

India

Symposium on Intellectual Property Rights and Their Implications for Developing Countries, 26–29 September 2006.

Japan

Training Course on Strategic Management Consultancy for Productivity Improvement, 4–15 September 2006.

Mongolia

Seventh Workshop on the APO Best Practice Network, 5–8 September 2006.

Sri Lanka

Seminar on Organic Farming for Sustainable Development, 11–15 September 2006.

Survey 2006–2007

Participating Member Countries

Survey on the Status of Knowledge Management in Member Countries.

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.

SAVE WATER



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A UNV's perspective

As an SME management adviser and senior UN volunteer (UNV), Toshiyuki Yamana was deputed to Pakistan as part of the APO's Member Country Support Program for six months from April 2004 and thereafter to Lao PDR for the Development of Demonstration Companies project from July 2005. In cooperation with the NPOs, he assisted six model companies in Pakistan and four in Lao PDR in enhancing their productivity. Yamana shares his thoughts on the role of UNVs with APO News readers below.

Volunteer-minded individuals with professional experience can do a lot to help SMEs improve their productivity by offering consultancy services. The multiplier effects created in the country at large after the completion of a project are also a source of satisfaction to UNVs. The professional expertise is only the tip of the iceberg, however. Perhaps the most important qualifications for becoming a UNV expert deputed under APO programs are intangibles. They can be expressed in the three key phrases "taking things slowly but steadily," "capacity building," and "following up."

While giving advice to SMEs and imparting the practical know-how to cope with identified problems, UNV experts must ensure that the communication is not one-way. The experts should feel that they are working with SME owners and staff based on mutual understanding. Even though cross-cultural communication may present difficulties, UNV experts take the time to see the other parties' viewpoints. Those who are easily frustrated or discouraged or expect immediate results should not apply for the role of a UNV. Instead, successful UNVs expect joint efforts to go slowly and steadily, with sufficient time allotted for two-way communication.

The NPO counterparts assigned to work with UNVs are keys to the success of any project. The counterparts are the ones who will take initiatives in creating multiplier effects and continuing projects after the UNVs return home. Ideally, NPO counterparts should have excellent communication skills, be highly motivated and responsible, and be old enough to have good background experience. The UNV's task is to train the counterpart on the job until he or she has the ability to act as an independent, full-fledged consultant. UNVs should be generous with their time in building up the capacity of their NPO counterparts. As far as possible, UNVs should stay in the background and let their NPO counterpart trainees take the initiative in the field.

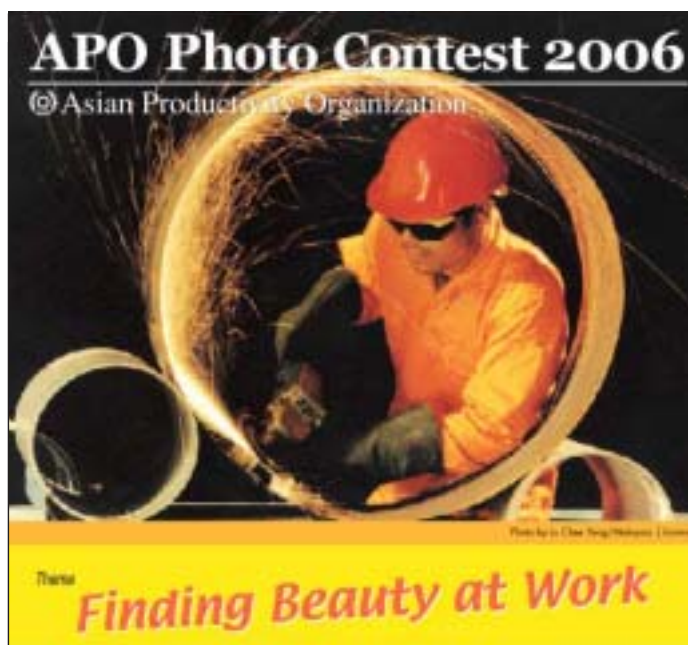
Eco-products International Fair 2006 launch event in Singapore

The official launch event of the Eco-products International Fair 2006 in Singapore was held on 10 April at Semakau Landfill off the main island of Singapore. This year's fair, the third in the series, will be jointly organized at the Suntec Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Centre, 31 October–2 November, by the APO, SPRING Singapore, and the Waste Management and Recycling Association of Singapore. At the launch event, Dr. Amy Khor, Singapore Parliament member and chairperson of the local Steering Committee for the fair, said that it will provide ample opportunities for environment-minded local companies to build up networks with counterparts from other countries.

The organizers of the Eco-products International Fair 2006 hope to attract 40,000 visitors to the 7,300 m² exhibition space over three days. Companies from Australia, Europe, Japan, the USA, and the host country are expected to demonstrate their eco-products and -services.

The procedure in offering consultancy services to SMEs is generally: 1) interviews with top managers; 2) onsite problem diagnosis; 3) presentation of findings and recommendations; 4) devising action plans to improve crucial issues; 5) monitoring implementation of action plans; and 6) frequent visits for follow-up to ensure tangible results. To function well, all enterprises should observe the rules of punctuality, commitment, and communication. However, this does not always occur in SMEs. In developing countries, circumstances beyond SMEs' control may intervene, or cultural barriers may exist, making it difficult to adhere to schedules, follow action plans, or stay in touch with other parties involved in a project. It is therefore vital for UNVs to visit their consulting SMEs frequently and follow up on productivity enhancement efforts constantly, making modifications to original plans if warranted.

Volunteering and putting one's knowledge and skills to use in helping others can be a great source of personal and professional satisfaction. Projects sponsored by the UN and APO offer a wide scope for volunteerism, and I would urge those with the time, energy, and ability to become involved. ☺



The 2006 APO Photo Contest, cosponsored by FujiFilm, has the theme "Finding Beauty at Work" and is open to all nationals of APO member countries wishing to bring the images in their lens to a regionwide audience. The deadline for receipt of entries is 15 September. The nine prizewinning photos will be used on the 2007 APO calendar and other promotional materials. A flyer with contest rules, the entry form, and prize details is enclosed; the information is also available on the APO Web site (www.apo-tokyo.org, click on "APO Photo Contest 2006") or from your NPO or the APO Information and Public Relations Department (1-2-10 Hirakawa-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-0093, Japan, www.ipr@apo-tokyo.org). Please share the beauty that you behold in everyday tasks and tools.