

KITA

NEWS

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Training in JICA Kyushu

Exchanges with former participants back home

The course leaders engaged in the technical training are actively deepening interchanges with the former participants in various ways even after they have completed their courses. "Follow-up of the former participants" is offered as very helpful means of technical assistance to the former participants to be conducted in their own countries.

Policy of Management for FY 2014



Hideki FURUNO, President

Since the latter half of last year we have been able to sense opportunities for the Japanese economy to improve as a result of Abenomics. The media tell us that the US remains in good shape while China has bottomed out, and the news tells us that even in Europe a faint light at the end of the tunnel is becoming visible. The latter half of last year also saw a gradual increase in grounds for optimism in the regions around Japan.

It was also the year in which KITA took a serious step towards overhauling our set-up from a medium and long term perspective.

I have continued to advocate the two points below ever since I was appointed in January 2011, and last year they were once again established as KITA's medium and long term policies.

KITA's Medium and Long Term Policies

1. Accumulation of KITA's assets
2. Investigation of "what is typical of KITA and "the advantages of being based in Kitakyushu

Last year we set five management guidelines based on these policies last year, and I think that we were able to step forward steadily in our first year working under those guidelines.

KITA is expected to play a part in Kitakyushu, as one of the world's eco-cities, acting as a leader in the 'green growth' of Asian cities, and it is also expected to play a part in spurring on Kitakyushu innovations via 'people power' (the power of the private sector). In order to fulfill this role whilst collaborating with JICA, we have carried out surveys exploring overseas needs and built overseas networks. We have completed development of our overseas human resources database which will form the nucleus of our construction of networks with former participants overseas and ensure their reliability.

We reinforced and improved our human resources as the basis of strengthening and improving our project capabilities. We secured new forces and made advances in diversifying our human resources. We have also started to establish work routines that will incorporate the fruits of our exploratory surveys of overseas needs and setting up of overseas networks into our project capabilities.

With regard to getting KITA's current account balance firmly into the black, we are steadily fine-tuning the plan and the resulting countermeasures to improve income and expenditure are taking clear shape.

Course leader training is going well for the installation of the centerpiece of our system infrastructure, a system to provide support for training program work, and we hope to launch full-scale use in 2014.

Our management as a public interest incorporated foundation is steadily becoming entrenched, and general etiquette is pretty well established.

We are thus making steady progress with our five 2013 management guidelines, and in the coming year we will pour our efforts into the following guidelines so that we can achieve fitting results for their final year.

1. Intensify surveying and finding out overseas needs and building overseas networks

The following three points will be promoted with the highest priority for the sake of accumulating assets for KITA.

- (1) Find out and share needs in collaboration with JICA and related administrative divisions of Kitakyushu municipal government
- (2) Find out and summarize overseas needs and create programs on a regular basis
- (3) Establish networks with former participants overseas (Use of an overseas human resources database)

2. Enhance and improve the project capabilities of training and technical cooperation

For the enhancement and improvement of the project capability, it is essential to consolidate partnership with the parties concerned and always to proceed with tasks in a planned way.

- (1) Closer cooperation between KITA divisions
- (2) Establishment of a system for cooperation with JICA and related administrative divisions of Kitakyushu municipal government
- (3) Formulation and implementation of the annual plan

3. Get KITA's current account balance firmly into the black

The following will be promoted for the improvement of KITA's financial strength, a prerequisite for KITA's further growth.

- (1) Improve the accuracy of KITA's income and expenditure plan and establish a medium and long term forecast
- (2) Secure profitability in each division of KITA

4. Promote a three-year plan for the maintenance of our IT infrastructure

KITA's IT infrastructure is being developed over the three fiscal years from FY2012 to FY2014.

- (1) Implement and make effective use of our three-year plan

5. Establish ourselves as a public interest incorporated foundation: secure transparency and disclose information

Two years have passed since we were recognized as a public interest incorporated foundation. Operation of the new system is about to go into full swing.

Finally, I intend to press forward with further strengthening and energizing KITA, and to contribute to boosting the status of Kitakyushu and Japan.

① Results of JICA training courses implemented in the first half of FY2013

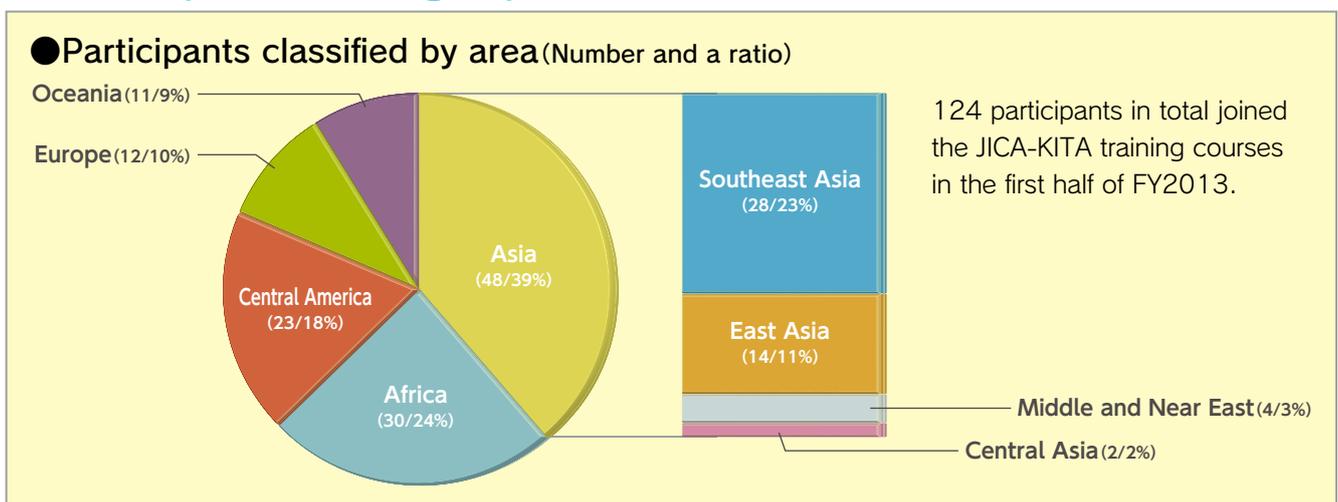
No.	classification	Title of training course	Number of Participants	Course Leader	FY2013				
					5	6	7	8	9
1	Environment management	Air Pollution Source Management	6	A.Kido	5/8	6/21			
2		Waste management Technique (A)	10	S.Hraguchi			7/7		9/7
3		Management of Composting Project (A)	9	T.Sashiwa			7/24	8/10	
4	Water resource	Industrial Wastewater Treatment Techniques(A)	8	J.Kawasaki		6/16			9/7
5		Water Environment Administration	10	T.Ueyama		6/23	7/13		
6	Production technology	Dissemination of Productivity Improvement Activity in the Latin-American Countries	7	K.Kawasaki		6/5	7/20		
7		Practical Corporate Management for Productivity Improvement through Practical KAIZEN and Quality Control Methods for Viet Nam	6	T.Miyamoto			7/21	8/3	
8		Promotion of Cleaner Production for Southeast European Countries	9	M.Kosugi	5/23		7/6		
9	Energy conservation	Energy Conservation Techniques for India (1)	16	S.Yamato		6/25	8/2		
10		Alternative Power Generation Technology for Low Carbon Society (A)	14	T.Fujii	5/8	6/13			
11	Job training and Healthcare	Small and Medium Enterprises/Local Industry Activation for Central and South American Countries	10	Y.Miki			7/10	8/10	
12		Practical Human Resource Development in Electrical and Electronic Engineering for Africa	9	N.Kyura			7/22		9/21
13		Capacity Development for Entrepreneurs and MSMEs Activation in African Countries (A)	10	Y.Miki	5/8	6/7			

13 training courses in total were implemented in FY2013.

All the courses were a well-balanced combination of lectures and site visits, and were concluded without any trouble, keeping safety first and foremost.

The participants were of many different nationalities and, to our joy, praised the JICA training courses as being very meaningful.

② Participants visiting Japan in the first half of FY2013



Highlights of KITA training courses

The Ever-Increasing Importance of Low-Carbonization Approaches 「 Environmental Technology for Low-Carbon Society 」

Shoji YAZU, Course Leader

As is widely known, the sharply increasing emission of carbon dioxide as well as the spread of environmental pollution in Asian regions that have a close relationship with Japan is becoming a threat to the global environment and there is an urgent need to take measures against it. In this context, the training course “Environmental Technology for Low-Carbon Society” was hosted by JICA Kyushu. This course was launched in September 2011 and held three times before coming to an end in October 2013.

32 participants in total from 11 countries in the Asian region visited Japan to join the course. This round of the course was successfully concluded, renewing the participant’s awareness of the importance of environmental improvement and energy saving, as well as resulting in the sharing of a good deal of information. The participants returned home after having confidently given a presentation of their action plan, which was a compilation of what they had learned in this course to help to resolve the problems of their own countries. The results of this course are expected to bear full fruit from now on.

Japan has overcome serious pollution issues through enormous efforts and now is working to establish a recycling-oriented society with the purpose of environmental protection and the effective use of resources. For healthy urbanization in the course of economic growth, and for the prosperity of their countries, I sincerely hope that the knowledge and technology learned in Japan may fully be put to practical use.



At Megasolar Omuta
Generating Station, Kyushu Electric
Power Co., Inc.

At Kitakyushu
Environment Museum



Making Garbage into Compost is like Hatching Eggs into Chicks 「 Management of Composting Project (A) 」

Tsutomu SASHIWA, Course Leader

Nine participants from seven countries joined the present course of “Management of Composting Project”. Considering the rather short training period of just over two weeks, the curriculum was designed to introduce as many occasions of hands-on observations as possible so that the participants could understand the technology and the management methodology from experience, with the hope that these will be used as models or references that will be of help under the conditions in their own countries. The participants consisted not only of administrative officers involved in waste management aiming at the reduction of waste, but also of personnel engaged in agricultural land reform. Therefore there were differences in their way of looking at composting, which furnished us with much information. The reason why composting accounts for an outstandingly great part of the recycling of waste in developing countries is considered to be that the facilities are easier to install due to the lower investment costs, and that the ratio of organic waste is comparatively high. However, to ensure the feasibility of composting as a business, many issues still need to be solved, and they have to be dealt with one by one. What comes to mind

in particular is that success will not easily be achieved without ceaseless efforts and careful consideration from the persons in charge. In other words, I wish it to be recognized that, although the composting business doesn’t seem to need much money or technology, these have to be augmented by something else.



At the Imari Hachigame Plan



Compost

Administrative Officers from Developing Countries Struggling against Pollution by Industrial Wastewater 「 Industrial Wastewater Treatment Techniques (A) 」

Junji KAWASAKI, Course Leader

The city of Kitakyushu where this course took place has a history of excellently overcoming the intense pollution issues that arose from its characteristics as one Japan's four largest industrial areas. This training course was held from June to September 2013 for the purpose of providing administrative officers from developing countries who are in charge of environmental protection with the information obtained from the bitter experiences of this country and the policies and technologies adopted to improve the situation. Eight participants joined the course from seven Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern countries. The curriculum included such subjects of interest as the management of water quality preservation, water treatment technologies accompanied by the demonstration tests and visits to a variety of enterprises adopting such technologies. The training was also carried out in the Kyoto and Tokyo areas, as well as in Kitakyushu, with a view to providing the participants with a deeper understanding of the present situation in Japan. Furthermore, opportunities were arranged during leisure time for social gatherings with

local people, coach trips, homestays and so on to make the participants acquainted with Japanese culture and traditions. I hope that what the participants learnt in the course may be of help in their jobs, and that the ties between the participating countries and Japan may become closer.



At Yamamoto Industries, Ltd.



At the Lake Biwa Museum

The Newly Programmed Course on Energy Conservation Techniques for the Power Industries in India Concluded with Favorable Comments 「 (India) Energy Conservation Techniques (1) 」

Dr. Takatsugu UEYAMA, Shunsuke YAMATO, Course Leader

The Country-Focused Training Course in Energy Conservation Techniques for India has been held every year and consists of two industry-oriented courses. Five years have elapsed since it was first established, during which time requests were made for more specific techniques as the professional backgrounds of the participants changed from being mainly administrative officers or consultants to mainly company employees. To deal with this and satisfy more specialized needs than before, the two industry-oriented courses were differentiated into one course for the power industries and the other for industries in general.

The course for the power industries was designed to include: 1. maintenance and improvement of the efficiency of power generators; 2. reduction of auxiliary power consumption; 3. energy conservation by the end users. The point is that the techniques necessary for the above-mentioned items 2 and 3 are the same and it was hoped that the power industries would not only pursue energy conservation of their own but, in the future, play a leading role in energy conservation activities nationwide in cooperation with the government. Item 1 was intended to raise awareness of the importance of maintenance,

taking it into consideration that, whereas power plants in Japan maintain the designed efficiency even after 30 years of operation, those in India undergo an efficiency reduction of 10% or more. The course held from June 25 to August 1, 2013 was attended by one person from the government, five auditors, six persons from the power companies and three persons from private power generation companies, which is a well-balanced composition conforming to our intent. The course produced a high degree of satisfaction in the participants and their action plans were completed excellently.



Visits to all types of thermal power plants



Plenty of practical work and drills introduced to deepen the participants' understanding

Highlights of KITA training courses

Assistance for Fledgling Small-and-Medium Enterprises in Manufacturing Industries in Vietnam 「(Vietnam) Practical Business Management for Productivity Improvement Activities (A)」

Tadashi MIYAMOTO, Course Leader

This year will be the fourth year of the course “(Vietnam) Practical Business Management for Productivity Improvement Activities”. In the first two years, there were between 10 and 12 participants on each course, at their own request; however, the large number of participants often proved distracting during the site visits, lectures and practical work. This time, at the request of the participants, the course was reorganized to consist of two separate courses open to groups from Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh respectively, each group consisting of six persons. An immediate effect was observed. The level of earnestness of all the persons involved in the course drastically changed. As the participants were at the executive level, the two weeks to attend the course was the longest that they could be absent from their companies. They are from companies that were founded around ten years ago, have around one hundred employees and annual sales of 150 to 200 million yen and are run by business operators in their 30s to 40s, working in friendly rivalry. State-run enterprises and private enterprises coexist and are aiming towards the same vision. They learn from experience that knowledge is made into wisdom

through practice. Back home, as close comrades they will put into practice what they have learned, providing mutual support and serving as a source of knowledge to share their wisdom with those around them. There is a constant stream of inquiries: “Defects in the metal-molded products cannot be removed.” “The load is beyond our capacity. The delivery time gets disordered when outsourced.” “We want to introduce a new and powerful machine.” “We want to move to a new factory.” “We want to study further even on a paid-for basis.” Assistance for this growing country and its people, and interaction with them, will encourage coexistence in an ever-expanding world.



Wrapping up an improvement proposal after a site observation

After the training at Mitsubishi Nagasaki Machinery MFG. Co., Ltd.
~Gathering around a thank-you painting~



The Course Joyfully Accomplished Thanks to the Good Teamwork of the Participants 「(Latin America) Dissemination of Productivity Improvement Activity」

Katsuhiko KAWASAKI, Course Leader

Seven participants from South American and Caribbean Coast regions joined the above-mentioned course this year. It was held with the purpose of boosting the capabilities and numbers of the staffers in charge of giving guidance to small-and-medium-sized enterprises on productivity improvement activities, including KAIZEN and 5S.

The course was focused on production control, quality control and production technology. Although the participants seemed in actuality to have a superficial understanding of various control methodologies, they were unsure of how they could put such methodologies into practice due to their scant experience of hands-on activities on site. Visits to small-and-medium-sized enterprises were incorporated into the curriculum to see how the methodologies were applied and operated in the actual activity. Things that impressed them included the active voluntary improvement activity centered on the 5S activity, disclosure and sharing of information in an open way, good communication between the top management and the workers, and the high quality level of workers. They seemed to have sensed the fundamentals of the productivity improvement activities in Japan. As all the participants were

serious and maintained good teamwork, the course proceeded pleasantly. Most of their efforts were put into the preparation of their own action plans, which will become an example of the improvement plan needed when giving guidance to small-and-medium-sized enterprises in their own countries. After repeated corrections, plans fitting in the QC story on the basis of the data were finally completed. This seemed to have given them the greatest feeling of accomplishment.

Due to the differences in labor customs and culture between the said regions and Japan, I am well aware that Japanese systems would not apply just as they are. However, I sincerely hope that the participants will pursue the productivity improvement activity in their own way by customizing what they have learned in Japan so as to fit in with their own countries or organizations.



After a meeting with the 5S leaders to exchange ideas

Developing Regions Are Exactly Where the Education of Advanced Technology Is Needed!

「 Human Resource Development of Practical Electrical/Electronic Engineers for the African Region 」

Dr. Nobuhiro KYUURA, Course Leader

The second round of this course was held for two months from July 2013. Nine participants joined the course from Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Namibia, Sudan and Uganda. The curriculum included inspection and maintenance techniques required in the field, lessons on the basics of the composition of electronic devices, and practical training on the actual composition of the electronic devices. The course consisted of lectures combined with practical training and experiments to substantiate what had been taught in the lectures. The participants had doubled in number from last year's four to nine and, due to that, the question and answer sessions tended to be more spirited than last year, often leading to an extension of the time spent on experiments or practical training. However, I believe that the course was accomplished satisfactorily for the participants. To my joy, the questionnaires collected at the end of the course have proven their satisfaction. One of the things that occurred to me during the course is that developing regions are exactly

where education in advanced technology is needed.

Huge technological strides do not always correspond to a strong need for a product. This training made me realize anew the importance of providing simple explanations of high technologies as well as transferring the knowledge to acquire the techniques to deliver a stable supply of the product.



Practical training in the maintenance and inspection of the electronic devices

Many Thanks for the Continued Cooperation

「 A Message of Gratitude for the Earnest Instruction by the Sun Sun School, a Driving School 」

Dr. Takatsugu UEYAMA, Course Leader

Environmental education is provided everywhere in Japan but energy-saving education is scarce. In this course, I will introduce a precious example of energy-saving education: the Sun Sun School where energy-saving education is provided for high school students under the name of "Eco-drive education". The school is a business establishment so concerned with energy saving that they have replaced all the conventional instruction cars with hybrid cars. Their admirable initiatives include assistance for high school students in getting a job by combining the Eco-drive training with Motor Vehicle Traffic Manager education, and by leveraging the qualification acquired via the latter course and the network established through the former course conducted at their places of business. In the wake of the decrease in the number of young people, trainees at driving schools are in a downward trend. However, the Sun Sun School is expanding its business through a diversity of initiatives.

The training consists of a lecture followed by practical Eco-drive training. After taking part in the training, business are said to have succeeded in cutting fuel consumption and

dramatically reducing the number of accidents. Earnest instruction was provided during the practical training, offering a good understanding of their company's initiatives. We are very grateful to President Rikitake and the staffers involved for all that they have done, and sincerely hope that they will offer us their cooperation in the courses from next year onwards.



Using the traffic regulation learning system on a personal computer



President Rikitake provides earnest instruction during the Eco-drive training in a hybrid car

Steelworks in the Desert

Kazuya KUDO, Vice President

I visited the steelworks in Abu Dhabi and in Saudi Arabia from the end of January.

Each of these countries has one steelworks respectively and is playing a leading role in the iron and steel industry in the Middle East.

Although countries in the Middle East have so far received benefits from the oil money, they are searching for a way to break their dependence on oil as soon as possible for fear of the depletion of oil reserves in the near future. As one of the solutions, they are aiming to establish a system capable of making enough iron and steel products in their own countries to satisfy the lively demand.

Hadeed Steel, a Saudi Arabian state-run steelworks, produces five million tons of reduced iron annually in its integrated steelworks which has five direct reduced iron (DRI) plants. It is amazing that five million tons of iron is produced annually without using a blast furnace.

The environmental measures are flawless, clearing the national standards for SOX, NOX, ozone and so on, and

sufficient greenbelts are maintained.

The cheap electricity price of about 2 to 3 yen per kWh is a threat to Japanese electric furnace manufacturers on the cost front.



Above: An Islamic mosque
Below: The city of Abu Dhabi constructed in the desert



Hadeed steelworks in the desert
The towering structures are the DRI plants

Activities toward Technological and Managerial Capacity Development for Manufacturing Industries in Haiphong

Dr. Ken-ichi FUJIMOTO, Executive Director of Technical Cooperation Division

The manufacturing industries in Haiphong, Vietnam are not capable of transacting with Japanese enterprises in Vietnam due to insufficient technological and managerial capacity. For economic development in the Haiphong region, raising the level of the technological and managerial capacity of the manufacturing industries is a pressing need. We have been engaged in assisting the manufacturing industries in Haiphong as part of JICA's grass-root project since FY2011. More specifically, such assistance included providing training in Kitakyushu for teachers at Hai Phong Industrial Vocational College (HPIVC) and giving guidance to the manufacturing industries in Haiphong about the introduction of 5S. As a consequence of such activities being highly evaluated, a renewed project with deeper content was adopted in September.

The new project aims to cultivate leading companies capable of playing a leading role in the economy of the Haiphong region and to expand transactions with companies in Kitakyushu. Specifics include: 1. Guidance on a long term basis to the companies until the resolution of problems has become firmly established; 2. Training

lecturers capable of lecturing on business management at HPIVC and nurturing business managers; 3. Training in Kitakyushu for the business managers of promising companies; 4. Installation of an exhibition site displaying technologies and products of manufacturing industries in Kitakyushu.



Example of an exhibition panel

Technical Exchanges with the Iron and Steel Industry of Thailand

Mitsuaki KAWASHIMA, Technical Advisor

Memories of the 2011 Thailand floods during the autumn monsoon are still fresh. The floods have caused extensive damage in the basin of the Chao Phraya River (the Mekong River) and the number of directly damaged Japanese-affiliated enterprises in and around Ayutthaya Province reached 460. In the aftermath of this disaster, preparations for our survey of the iron and steel industry of Thailand started in July. Having got the background knowledge on the structure of the iron and steel industry, where the leading role is played by the electric furnace industry using scraps as raw material, we left for Thailand at the end of September. Thanks to the national character that has always been pro-Japan, and as most of the steel manufacturers are under private management, we were received by the visited companies and the Iron and Steel Institute of Thailand in an open way. The answers to our preliminary inquiry had been perfectly prepared and we were lucky that we could accomplish the technical meetings and factory visits without any delay. As the factories are run with the electric furnaces operated on night shifts, we became quite accustomed to early morning visits to factories and daytime technical meetings. What surprised us most was the high level

of technical capabilities and the consistent aggressiveness and eagerness toward energy saving and productivity improvement that we could sense in every corner of the workplaces. Steel production, which is outstanding in terms of the ASEAN countries, shows signs of a further leap boosted by the burgeoning demand from the construction, automobile and home appliances industries. With the annual steel production of the iron and steel industry of Thailand likely to reach 20 million tons in the near future, we are considering offering effective assistance jointly with enterprises in Kitakyushu as the next step.



A visit to an electric furnace factory



The scene at a technical meeting

Business Interaction Being Energized with Hanoi and Haiphong Regions, Vietnam

Toshikatsu MIYATA, Michinobu SAITO, Technical Advisor

KITA has been engaged in assisting business interaction between the Hanoi and Haiphong regions in Vietnam and the Kitakyushu region in cooperation with the City of Kitakyushu and JETRO (Japan External Trade Organization).

In September 2013, a mission from the machinery and metal industries was dispatched in which seven companies in Kitakyushu participated.

The itinerary included a visit to the 5th Vietnam-Japan Exhibition on Supporting Industries in Hanoi co-hosted by Vietnam and Japan, which also offered opportunities for business talks, followed by visits to 10 factories in Hanoi and Haiphong the next day and on the third day, the holding of business talks in Haiphong, a city that has concluded a Friendship and Cooperation Agreement with Kitakyushu.

The business talks in the two cities were so well attended that people had to wait in long lines for the talks, and fervent discussions continued beyond the allotted time. A total of 121 sales negotiations were held, including those at the exhibition and the factory visits and the business talks that took place in the two cities, far exceeding the previous record. People from the participating companies were heard saying, "We wish to

entrust them with our manufacturing", "We will think about undertaking a joint business with them", or "We acquired a better understanding of the actuality of Vietnamese enterprises", comments that will boost future business interactions.

KITA is committed to promoting and supporting business interactions in a wider range of business fields and in a greater number of regions.



Business talks in Hanoi



Corporate presentation in Haiphong

An encounter with Vietnam, a country of dancing celestial nymphs (A report on the challenge of establishing a new business in Vietnam) ~ Introduction of a company cooperating in business expansion overseas ~

Kunihiro SHINTOMI, Manager of the Project Department, ATAKA Company Limited

It felt like an unprepared match with unforeseeable opponents. My encounter with Vietnam started in an unexpected way. About one year ago, I was in a situation where I could not help but accept the urgent request made by a certain person from KITA to give a presentation in Vietnam.

The plan I worked out to cope with this situation was to make a presentation on the "Biotoilet" that a company run by one of my friends manufactures.

The Biotoilet is a kind of toilet capable of treating excrement using microbes.

With skeptical optimism, I prepared documents and left for Vietnam in high spirits.

Contrary to my expectations, the response to the presentation was so great that I went hoarse explaining.

On that occasion, a Vietnamese man came over, wrote his e-mail address down on my business card and gave it to me.



According to the interpreter, he was one of the big shots administrating Ha Long Bay, a notable sightseeing spot.

Upon returning home, I struggled to write an e-mail in English, a dictionary in one hand, and my only clue being the scribble on my business card.

Afterwards, I got a reply saying that he/she would most certainly like to meet me.

It has been one year since then, during which time we were given guidance by the gentlemen from KITA into the minutest details of finding out local partners, giving technical assistance on site, preparation of presentation

materials for clients and so on.

Thanks to such help, we could have a demonstration facility installed and put into operation at Ha Long Bay, and the business has so developed that we eventually received inquiries for an actual facility.

As I mentioned at the start, the encounter with Vietnam came out of the blue. However, a dramatic turnaround is being seen, one that is way beyond our expectations, for which we would like to express our hearty thanks to the gentlemen at KITA.

Vietnam is an amazing country which gives us a sense of potential and new vistas.

I feel in my bones that the people in Vietnam are dependable and take great pride in themselves and their country.

Why not pay a visit to Vietnam as if you were a tourist?

Then try the Kitakyushu-brand Biotoilet at Ha Long Bay!

We have a big dream of expanding this business into other sightseeing spots, not only in Vietnam but also in other Southeast Asian countries and then countries the whole world over.



A Biotoilet installed at Ha Long Bay, a sightseeing spot



An International Goodwill Program ~ Walking Tours of Kitakyushu ~

Megumi TOYOTA, Director of Secretariat

"Walking Tours of Kitakyushu" is a new program launched in 2012 in the hope that people who have come to Japan from overseas to receive training in not Tokyo or Osaka but Kitakyushu will gain a better knowledge of our city and really enjoy their stay here. Walking tours were held four times in 2012 and the participants rated them so highly that five were held in 2013. The most popular one is the "Walking Tour of Kokura", which sets off from the Kyushu International Center where the participants live and heads towards Yahata Station while taking in the sculptures that symbolize "Yahata, town of sculptures". At the station participants are taught how to buy a ticket and go through the automatic turnstile, after which we get on the train and enjoy the view from the windows en route to Nishikokura Station. The basic route for our stroll is Nishikokura Station ⇒ Tokiwabashi Bridge ⇒ Riverwalk Kitakyushu ⇒ Kokura Castle Gardens ⇒ Kokura Castle ⇒ Taiyo-no-Hashi Bridge ⇒ Tangaichiba Market ⇒ Uomachi Shopping Street ⇒ Kokura Gion Drum Festival Statue ⇒ Kokura Station. The "Walking Tour of Kokura" held on Saturday November 9 was a joint project with The University of Kitakyushu's Faculty of Foreign Studies.

Student volunteers from the faculty helped out as tourist guides, making good use of their English and Spanish skills. The nine participants, who came from the Environmental Education course, showed great interest in the solar panels installed here and there in the town, as befits Kitakyushu as an advocate of environmental cities of the future, while at the same time marvelling at the elegance of the old castle town of Kokura and the beautiful appearance of Kokura castle in particular, the interesting items displayed in the history museum and inside the castle, and at the classic Japanese ingenuity revealed in the "mechanical door" and windowless transom in the daimyo's residence in the Kokura Castle Garden. They also delighted in information that not even many Kitakyushu citizens know when the sunlight passes through the unique sculpture installed on Taiyo-no-Hashi Bridge entitled "The Fairies of the Seven Luminaries", the sculpture casts a shadow in the shape of a sunflower, which is the flower chosen to symbolize Kitakyushu. The tour is a short program that only takes around five hours but we will continue to hold it so that it can give the participants a few more happy memories of Kitakyushu.



At the Kokura Castle Garden



Walking through Uomachi Shopping Street

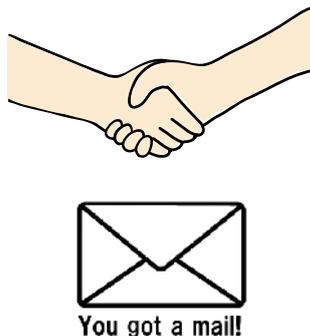
TOPICS

Mr. SUETA, a course leader of KITA, has been cultivating relations with former participants in many ways even after their training ended. We believe that follow-up activities for JICA/KITA participants are useful ways to provide technical support for those who have returned to their respective countries.

We would, therefore, like to introduce a part of his e-mail exchange with Mr. Mark LEKGJONAJ from Albania.

A Report from a former participant ~E-mail Exchange with a Former Participant~

Hajime SUETA, Course leader



In the course of "Operation and Maintenance of Sewerage and Waste Water Treatment Technique (B)," most of the participants were from countries where a sewerage project was about to start. Therefore, all the participants were eager to absorb various types of knowledge. Mr. LEKGJONAJ was one of them. He explained water environmental problems in his country with several pictures and also provided me with a lot of detailed information. I enjoyed having him on my course.

I exchange e-mails with him from time to time even after he went back to his country. I sent the following e-mail to him in September.

"There will be a training course on sewerage systems for Kosovo participants from the middle of October this year. I will be in charge of this course, but I am concerned because the training will be conducted in Albanian."

He replied, "Feel free to contact me if you need any help with Albanian. I want to help you as much as I can in return for you taking care of me in Japan."

I felt so relieved thanks to his message. I sincerely appreciate that I could establish this kind of relationship even though we don't communicate so often.

Nine participants from eight countries participated in this training. Judging from their earnest learning attitudes, every one of them, including Mr. LEKGJONAJ, must have had a strong desire to somehow improve the sewerage systems of their own countries.

I hope that Mr. LEKGJONAJ will play an important role in his country, using the knowledge he gained in the training in Japan.

KITA **NEWS**

No.16 April 2014

Kitakyushu
International
Techno-cooperative
Association (KITA; kaita)

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