



NEWSLETTER

Japan International Labour Foundation <http://www.jilaf.or.jp/English-jilaf>
 Office: Kinmei Building, 3-23-2, Kanda-Jimbocho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-0051, Japan
 Telephone: 81-3-3288-4188 Facsimile: 81-3-3288-4155 E-mail: info@jilaf.or.jp

Fifty New POSITIVE Trainers Trained in Bangladesh

Bangladesh, located to the east of India, has twice as much of the land area of Hokkaido and over 130 million people reside there. JILAF's POSITIVE (Participation-Oriented Safety Improvements by Trade Union Initiative) Program in Bangladesh began in 1997. Since then, JILAF has conducted the program jointly with ICFTU-BC (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, Bangladesh Council). This time, together with OHS specialist Naoki Toyama from the Tokyo Occupational Safety and Health Center, who has collaborated continuously since the introduction of POSITIVE program, we participated in National POSITIVE Seminars held in Dhaka and Chittagong in June 2003.



A five-union alliance — ICFTU-BC

Bangladesh is said to have 26 national centers. Five such national centers that are affiliated with the ICFTU form the council called ICFTU-BC. While varying widely in their political orientation, the ICFTU-BC members strongly believe that they are united in friendship. As such, they have cooperated successfully and

pursued the project. Through ICFTU-BC, a total of 3,000 workers have participated in POSITIVE training seminars for the period of 6 years.

Local leaders led seminars

Two National Seminars this 2003-2004 fiscal year were held over four days, one seminar in Dhaka and the other one in Chittagong, for a total of 50 union members chosen from each national center. For each technical area, such as Machine Safety and Material Handling, five trainers who serve as education staff at each national center made the presentations. Continuously maintaining a spirit of friendship, they enthusiastically and clearly explained how improvements could be made at low cost. The seminar participants were truly eager to absorb the knowledge, as they strived not to miss a single point from the trainers. That was the moment when I felt that: This is really a seminar led and run by local leaders themselves.

We visited a fluorescent light factory (Dhaka) and a soap factory (Chittagong), and while touring the production lines, conducted check-list exercises (checking



▲ Check-list exercise at fluorescent light factory (Dhaka)

the good points as well as the points that could be improved in the workplace). Later, based on the checklist, group discussions were held regarding the good points and the points to be improved, and findings were presented by participants. During the presentations, trainers repeatedly asked presenters to be Specific! Through the trainers advice and nearly ten group discussions, participants became able to make specific, low-cost proposals.



▲ Participants seriously conducting group activities (Chittagong)

Hopes for future development

You are all well-trained trainers by now, who can work to make improvements from tomorrow. At the seminar's closing ceremony, Member Secretary of ICFTU-BC and Mr. Toyama encouraged the participants. Their faces were full of smiles and confidence that had been unimaginable on the first day. In addition, new friendships and solidarity atmosphere were born through ICFTU-BC framework. How can the goodwill and energy of these participants be harnessed effectively? We wish that such activities could be developed even further in the future through ICFTU-BC initiatives.

Seminars Held in Two Provincial Cities in Vietnam

At the request of VGCL (Vietnam General Confederation of Labour), JILAF has held seminars in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh since fiscal 2001 on the theme of Trade Unions in a Market Economy. This fiscal year, seminars were held in two provincial cities: on June 11-12 in Hue in central Vietnam, and on June 17-18 in Rach Gia, Kien Giang Province, southern Vietnam. Hue is a beautiful old city comparable to Kyoto in Japan, but the seminar took place in sweltering temperature of 38°C. Rach Gia is located at the downstream extremity of the Mekong Delta, facing the Gulf of Thailand, in an area where canals are more developed than roads. The event was the first such kind of international seminar to be held in Rach Gia.

Each seminar was attended by 50 people, including the VGCL President of the province, VGCL headquarters Vice Presidents and officials, and the heads of the authorities responsible for economic and social policy, and health and safety.

In addition to the fundamental, general topics such as Japan's labor movement — experience and issues and employment

policy in Japan, presentations were given on three other individual themes: Improving productivity, Multinational companies, and



▲ Participant at Rach Gia seminar gives her impressions and expresses thanks on behalf of all the participants

Occupational health and safety. From the Vietnamese side, there were reports on Wage policy in Vietnam, which relates to productivity improvement, and Occupational health and safety in Vietnam. In such ways, mutual understanding of the individual themes, for which needs were high, was fully developed.

With regards to Improving labor productivity, there were questions about how to ensure Fair distribution of results, and what sort of systems can be used to reflect it in wages. Requests were made for further discussion in seminars from next year onward, including Labor-management relations, Labor-management agreements, and Wage systems, which are the basis for fair distribution of results.

Regarding Occupational health and safety, at meetings after the seminars, we confirmed that there would be an exchange of opinions and information with a view to setting up a JILAF POSITIVE Program in Vietnam.

From now on, we would like to work towards substantial enhancement and development of the VGCL/JILAF project.



▲ Participants asking questions at the seminar in Hue

International Cooperation Efforts by Trade Unions — No.1

Aiming to Make International Cooperation Visible RENGO FAN Project to Support the Disabled in Thailand

Kotaro Uchida

Director
International Cooperation Center
Japanese Trade Union Confederation
(JTUC-RENGO)

An international cooperation activity on which JTUC-RENGO is currently focusing efforts is "the RENGO FAN Project to Support the Disabled in Thailand." This project's aims are the normalization and participation of disabled people in Thai society. It is an international cooperation activity that RENGO began in 1996, and is now in its eighth year. RENGO's original stimulus for incorporating international cooperation as a labor movement policy came in 1990 with the Gulf War. As a result of pursuing activities that are not restricted to financial support but focus primarily on humane support, RENGO International Cooperation Center was established through a report petitioned by the RENGO International Cooperation Team (provisional name) in 1995. The Thai project was first conducted as a pilot project.

The features of the Thai project are that, through programs lasting about one week in Thailand, 1) members of RENGO affiliate unions who have virtually no contact with international cooperation in their everyday workplace can experience actual situations involving disability and poverty in a real world; 2) the project enables exchange of opinions with local NGO groups; 3) through sports festivals, members can work in cooperation with support groups for disabled people in Thai society; the Thai Government,

the Japanese Embassy in Thailand, the UN ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific), and disabled Thai children.

From many participants, we heard that I knew virtually nothing about international cooperation, but through actual experience, I came to understand its meaning for the first time. Former participants to the program, through autonomous exchange of information and interchange after returning to Japan, have set up the RENGO FAN Club, in the form of a network that extends across the boundaries of industry unions. A substantial number of members also continue their support through participation at their own expense. At the eighth festival in January 2003, the Thai Managing Committee took the lead, with cooperation from many local groups and volunteers, assistance from private sponsors, and support from the military in providing bus transportation for disabled children. In such ways, Thai public has increased their support. PR prior to the event also had a great effect, and the participants of 3,500 in total, was the highest ever.

One current issue is How long can support continue? Although it was RENGO that gave birth to this project, it's the people of Thailand who have nurtured it. We hope that the Thai Managing Committee will achieve a stable foundation, with the aim of



holding the event independently in the future.

In addition to the Thai project, JILAF and RENGO-affiliated unions engage in numerous social development activities in regard to international contribution and cooperation. From now on, in order to broaden each other's horizons and pursue activities, RENGO would like to engage in information networking. We also plan to exchange opinions and information with NGO groups that possess practical skills and experience in the field. In addition, regarding measures to combat with poverty and eliminate child labor, we would like to proceed with international activities in cooperation with multinational companies, corporate social responsibility initiatives, and efforts on the government side, such as early ratification and observance of ILO-core labor standards. (For details, please refer to the JILAF Web site: URL:<http://www.jilaf.or.jp/English-jilaf/newsflash/index2.html>)

Principles of International Cooperation

International cooperation, as viewed from the cooperating side, may be considered to have five aspects.

The first is, as the very first stage of cooperation, to enable the receiving side to gain a much better understanding of the cooperating side. This process creates like-minded allies and makes friends. In the process, while there may be things the receiving side can learn from the cooperating side, the cooperating side also learns much as a side effect. The Invitation Program run by JILAF is probably a good example here.

Secondly, there is humanitarian and collaborative cooperation with the side that directly confronts difficulties. For example, cooperation may take such forms as aid during a disaster or for refugees, food aid or assistance regarding health and hygiene, or enabling children to attend school. In the case of trade unions, cooperation may take such forms as financial and other aid during a strike by overseas unions with which friendly relations are maintained.

Thirdly, there is cooperation with the aid provided by various international organizations. This is so-called multi-party cooperation. Because it is implemented under the principles and policies of the international organizations concerned, the countries and affiliated organizations involved cooperate with those principles and approaches.

Fourthly, there is cooperation at the request or desire of the other party. This is based on specific requests for

PROFILE



Iwao Maeshima

Born in 1935
 Graduate of Faculty of Law, Chuo University
 Graduate of Faculty of Politics and Economics, Muenster University, Germany
 Professor, Division of International Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Culture, Tokai University
 Director, on the board, JILAF
 Board of Trustee, RENGO-RIALS
 Managing Director, The ILO Association of Japan, Inc.

aid by the other party, such as a desire to build roads, railways, and ports, or to purchase materials and facilities. It is widely known that most of Japan's ODA is implemented in response to such requests. Such cooperation is, to all intents and purposes, passive cooperation.

Finally, there is cooperation based on the principles of the cooperating side itself. This is probably the ultimate form of cooperation. At bottom, it involves the basic principle of asking ourselves: What sort of society are we aiming for? In fact, there is concern that the previous four types of cooperation, unless backed by such a resolute principle, will end up as empty gestures.

A Letter from a Trainee No.19

We have survived! Thank you for letting us participate in this course!

The time has come for the final presentations in the JILAF Training Program for Young Japanese Trade Union Leaders. We trainees are able to complete the course if we successfully give a total of five presentations, including an introduction of our own union as well as freely chosen topics. This year, the presentations, which incorporated the skills, logical speaking abilities, and knowledge and experience of the labor movement gained so far, were all truly splendid. At the beginning of the course, how could we have imagined

ourselves speaking with such enthusiasm in English?

During the course, members had encouraged each other to overcome challenging barriers, and during the presentations, tears of happiness were shed. I feel I learned here that, although English is important in the international labor movement, what is truly important is to believe in results, make an effort to the end, and collaborate with the friends who support you. Another great result of the course was that it enabled members to expand their

network of friends in the labor movement.

As well as pledging to put everything we have gained to good use in future activities, we would like to express our appreciation to all the course lecturers, and to everyone who made it possible for us to participate in the course. Thank you very much!

Keiko Yamanaka
 JILAF Trainee

Lecture Meeting Held to Publish the Findings of Surveys of Employment in Europe and China

Last fiscal year, JILAF conducted surveys on employment issues overseas, and published reports on two themes, Vocational Training Policies in Europe and China's Entry to the WTO and Labor Issues. This July, a lecture meeting was held to publish the findings of those surveys. An outline of the surveys is as follows.

First, in Europe, a trend of shifting from welfare to workfare, in order to solve the problem of unemployment, can be observed, and proactive labor market policies are being developed through labor-management cooperation. In Denmark, vocational training has been incorporated into basic education, and a sandwich approach has been adopted, with people receiving an education while attending both school and the workplace. In the U.K., the core of vocational training programs for young people is modern apprenticeship, where on-the-job training is incorporated into academic work and vocational training, and the acquisition of national vocational qualification is becoming an important aspect of such training. For vocational training in the EU, a common framework is scheduled to be created at the European level, and steps are being taken toward mutual recognition of vocational qualifications.

Second, regarding China, WTO membership has strengthened China's voice in the international economy, where globalization is progressing, and the country is endeavoring to shift from an oligarchy to a constitutional state. In terms of employment, agriculture, which receives high levels of pro-



tection, has been affected by WTO membership, and it is said that the redundant workers expelled from the agricultural sector exceed 100 million people. In order to alleviate the rapid movement of the labor force from farming villages to cities, the Chinese Government is striving to urbanize farming villages. However, the social safety net in such villages is inadequate, which raises the issue of what kind of social security arrangements should be made. Meanwhile, even in urban areas, redundant workers are being shed from state-run companies and industries with poor international competitiveness, shifting to promising industries. With the transition to a market economy, there has come a need for mechanisms within companies to reconcile conflicting interests, and in response to this need, trade unions are proceeding with organizational reforms.

JILAF Calendar (June — August 2003)

1. Invitation Programs

- South Asia / Oceania Team: May 29 (Thu) — June 11 (Wed)
- Central Africa Team: June 12 (Thu) — June 25 (Wed)
- Central America / Caribbean Team: July 3 (Thu) — July 16 (Wed)
- Asian Trade Union Training Team: July 27 (Sun) — Aug 2 (Sat)

2. Field Projects

- Vietnam VGCL Labor-Management Relations Seminar and Cambodia Study Mission: June 5 (Thu) — June 21 (Sat); Phnom Penh, Hanoi, and elsewhere
- Bangladesh ICFTU-BC/JILAF POSITIVE National Seminar: June 6 (Fri) — June 20 (Fri); Dhaka and Chittagong

3. Meetings, etc.

- Meeting on International Labor Issues, special session: July 2 (Wed); Tokyo

4. Others

- First Survey on Indonesian Employment Issues: August 3 (Sun) — August 9 (Sat); Jakarta
- 12th ICFTU-APRO/OTCILS/JILAF Advanced Leadership Course: August 13 (Wed) — September 9 (Tue); Singapore

Inside Out

It is the first time for me to participate in cooperation activities among trade unions, so I have a lot to learn. I will be happy if I can utilize my 35 years of experience as a diplomat, particularly those years working with developing countries, to help implement JILAF projects.



Kunio Shimizu
Former Ambassador to Nicaragua

People often ask me, "Have you gotten used to the work yet? Maybe I have, but I am not entirely confident yet. First of all, I aim to become a useful member of JILAF."



Akira Umeyama
Seconded from JOHO-ROREN

Until now, I have not been familiar with the labor movement and developing countries issues. So I would like to learn from the beginning. At the moment, I am nervous, but I will do my very best to become acknowledged as a full-fledged member of JILAF.



Kimihiko Yanagitani
Seconded from DENRYOKU-SOREN