

Terminal Evaluation

Asia

1. Outline of the Project

Country:

Malaysia

Project title:

Training on Enhancing Women's Participation through Upgrading Micro Enterprises to Small-scale Enterprises

Issue/Sector:

Poverty, Gender

Cooperation scheme:

Third-country Training Program

Division in charge:

Southeast Asia Division, Regional Department I

Total cost:

Period of Cooperation Fiscal Year 2000 - 2002

Partner Country's Implementing Organization:

The University Putra Malaysia (UPM)
Ministry of Agriculture†Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Economic Planning Unit

Supporting Organization in Japan:**Related Cooperation:****1-1 Background of the Project**

The Government of Malaysia has made efforts for poverty alleviation and income generation in rural areas including the plan to foster entrepreneurs conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Farmer's Association and institutions of higher learning. The "training on Enhancing Women's Participation through Upgrading Micro Enterprises to Small-scale Enterprises (the Project)" was one of the above-mentioned efforts, has produced beneficial outputs and has contributed to poverty alleviation in Malaysia.

The Government of Japan and the Government of Malaysia had agreed to co-operate in organizing a training course focusing on enhancing women's economic participation, "Training on Enhancing Women's Participation through Sealing-up of Micro Enterprises to Small-scale Enterprises" 1997-1999, under JICA's Third Country Training Program to extend dissemination of the related knowledge and skills to surrounding countries. The course was highly evaluated by ex-participants at the time of terminal evaluation in 2000, and extended another three years.

1-2 Project Overview**(1) Overall Goal**

To enhance women's economic participation through upgrading micro enterprises to small-scale enterprises with the aim of expanding their production so that these enterprises would become more viable and sustainable. The activities would also improve the quality of life in rural areas, provide avenues for empowerment and, especially among the poor, minimally educated rural women.

(2) Project Purpose

To strengthen the capability of participants in understanding the various aspects of business enterprises to facilitate upgrading micro-enterprises to small-scale enterprises.

(3) Outputs

- 1) Participants become more aware of their capability, build confidence and understand the importance of self-reliance among rural women through economic participation.
- 2) Participants are able to understand business planning strategies and acquire the skills needed to achieve successful small-scale enterprises

3) Participants gain experience through exposure to actual cases of upgraded small-scale enterprises through field-trip observations.

4) Participants acquire the ability to disseminate the attained knowledge to own counterparts in their home countries.

(4) Inputs

Japanese side:

Short-term Expert 1 (Senior volunteer)

Local Cost 12.3 Million Yen

Foreign Lecturer 1 (Philipino)

Malaysian side:

Counterparts 39

Local Cost 136,800 RM (4.5 Million Yen)

Equipment The University Putra Malaysia

(5) Participant Countries

Cambodia, East Timor, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

2. Evaluation Team

Members of Evaluation Team JICA Malaysia office
(Consigned to the local consultant: IC Network Sdn. Bhd)

Period of Evaluation 3 December 2001 - 29 March 2002
Type of Evaluation: Terminal Evaluation By Overseas Offices

3. Results of Evaluation

3-1 Summary of Evaluation Results

(1) Relevance

All of the ex-participants regarded the contents of the training course either as "very effective" or "effective" according to the survey conducted at the end of course, even though they worked for different organizations, held different positions and came from different academic backgrounds. The observation tour for the Malaysian women entrepreneurs in rural areas was also favorable as it increased the incentive of the participants to implement similar activities. From these indicators, it was clear that the content of the Training was relevant to the purpose of the training.

(2) Effectiveness

According to the results of another questionnaire survey conducted to ex-participants, 78 percent of the respondents answered that they were very much satisfied with all of the content of the training course and with the wide range of contents which extended from business planning, management to psychological issues. The training was also useful in upgrading knowledge and skills, such as how to tackle the gender problem and how to manage small-scale enterprises. The English level of the ex-participants was also upgraded compared with that of three years earlier, partly because the JICA offices were more involved in the selection of participants which helped to upgrade the quality of participants.

(3) Efficiency

The project was efficient due to the large store of experience accumulated in the third-country training programs over the past three years, although some minor problems were seen due to a shift by the University Putra Malaysia (UPM) to a self-supporting

entity and accompanying complex accounting procedure Overall, all the topics were covered within the five-week training period and at the end of the Training, all trainees were able to develop an action plan for a project they would manage upon returning home.

(4) Impact

Although the response rate to the questionnaire was only 13 percent, all respondents said that they were involved in women empowerment or village development, operating activities based on the acquired knowledge and skills through the Training and were trying to disseminate the skills and knowledge However, the fact that only a few people had participated in similar training courses in their own countries made it difficult for respondents to share the knowledge and skills with others.

(5) Sustainability

The implementing organization, UPM, is an institution of higher learning and, therefore the contents of the training course retain sustainability However, the training of participants external to the University is not included in UPM's mandate, so sustainability depends on the policy of the Government of Malaysia and that of UPM.

It is difficult to judge the sustainability of the effects from the training course because of the low response rate However, all nine respondents answered that they had been trying to disseminate the acquired knowledge and skills, so in some countries, the achievements of the training course appear to be sustainable.

3-2 Factors that promoted realization of effects

(1) Factors concerning Planning

The levels of economic development and cultures of the participating countries were similar, and the contents of the training course were easy to understand and easy to apply in each country.

(2) Factors concerning the Implementation Process

- 1) Compared with the training course conducted from 1998-2000, the qualifications of participants were upgraded because of an improved method of selection, including early announcement of the Training.
- 2) The announcement of the third-country training program to participating countries was better than before because the JICA office, together with the Economic Planning Unit, had implemented the Training in 2001 and requested the Malaysian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to give earlier notice of the third-country training program.
- 3) The lecturers were sufficiently experienced and knowledgeable as result of the past training course, which contributed to efficient implementation of the Training.

3-3 Factors that impeded realization of effects

(1) Factors concerning Planning

N/A

(2) Factors concerning the Implementation Process

- 1) Several difficulties were observed in the logistics of organizing the training program The letter of invitation was delivered through the diplomatic channels of Malaysia or other participating countries This time-consuming procedure left little time for selecting appropriate participants and, as a result, some inappropriate participants were dispatched.
- 2) Participants did not always actively exchange opinions due to different educational backgrounds and experience.
- 3) Some participating countries changed participants at the last minute, which necessitated much additional and time-consuming paperwork.
- 4) The participants mentioned that the Project schedule was too tight and tiring.
- 5) The following tasks were not carried out smoothly: Issuing visas, air tickets, and returning the accommodation expenses of trainees who returned suddenly.

3-4 Conclusion

The Training was implemented successfully as a whole The effects of the training were improved especially from the year 2001 It is mainly because the implementing organizations as well as the JICA Malaysia office were committed to solving all training-related problems In addition, the quality of the participants was upgraded with the cooperation of the respective JICA offices Efficiency, effectiveness and relevance were high; however, impact and sustainability could not be evaluated because the necessary data were not obtained through the research.

3-5 Recommendations

- (1) For the smooth acceptance of participants, it is necessary to continuously ask for the cooperation of the Foreign Ministry of Malaysia and the immigration office with regard to the issue of visas.
- (2) It is necessary to continuously ask the financial affairs division of UPM to quickly deliver the training funds.
- (3) The feedback system was insufficient for improvement of the contents of the course and approach methods of the Training. The implementing organization mainly evaluated the logistics of the training course but not the substance. It is necessary for the implementing organization to correct these points and to upgrade the Training.
- (4) The levels of the trainees should not vary too much in terms of career, experience and English ability.

3-6 Lessons Learned

- (1) The government of Malaysia has been trying to eradicate poverty for the past 20 years and has attained remarkable results. Malaysia also has experience in women's empowerment through economical participation. Judging from these facts, implementation of similar third-country training would be appropriate.
- (2) The Project was implemented not only with the full cooperation of the Human Ecology Faculty of UPM but also with MARA Foundation (Majlis Amanah Rakyat), Ministry of Rural Development, and Department of Agriculture. For effective implementation of training courses like this, it is important to gain the support of related governmental organizations and NGOs whenever similar training course activities are underway in the implementing country.
- (3) For a meaningful terminal evaluation, the evaluation scheme including the third party's point of view to ensure objectivity during a training course should be taken into consideration.

3-7 Follow-up Situation

N/A