

Specialist Dispatch Project in Palitana, India

One of CLAIR Singapore's main roles is to promote constructive mutual exchange between local governments in Japan and the ASEAN region, including India. In this regard, exchange in terms of knowledge transfer has always been an emphasis in CLAIR Singapore's programs, and the Specialist Dispatch Project implemented by CLAIR Singapore embodies this vision of further promoting knowledge exchange between local governments in Japan and the ASEAN region, as well as India.

Under the Specialist Dispatch Project, Japanese local government officials (including retirees) who have knowledge or technical skills in various fields, are dispatched to local governments in the ASEAN region and India as specialists. These specialists will contribute to improving the quality of local administration, technical expertise and human resources in the overseas local governments. The specialists' fields of expertise include fire and disaster prevention, water supply and sewerage, social welfare, health and sanitation, local administration and many more.

In fiscal year 2010, CLAIR Singapore received a request from Palitana Municipal Corporation in Bhavnagar District (Gujarat State) to dispatch a specialist in the field of water supply and sewerage systems to the local area. The project aims at improving the quality of the local water supply system, and at the same time, upgrade the local sewerage management system. Mr. Masaya Kita, an employee from Japan's Tokushima Prefecture was dispatched as a specialist to Palitana Municipal Corporation from 12th February until 2nd March 2011 to implement the project.

During the first half of the project, explanations pertaining to the current conditions of water supply and sewerage management systems in the local area were conducted by Palitana Municipal Corporation. In addition, site visits to water sources, treatment plants and pumping stations were also conducted to enable the specialist to gain a clearer picture of the current water supply and sewerage management operations in Palitana.

In the latter half of the project, the specialist analyzed plan drawings of the water-related facilities, and conducted several rounds of discussions with persons responsible for the water supply and sewerage systems in Palitana Municipal Corporation. In addition, the specialist also exchanged opinions with the President of Palitana Municipal Corporation on issues relating to water supply and sewerage management in Palitana.

On the last day of the dispatch, a seminar participated by technical experts from not only Palitana Municipal Corporation, but also from other nearby municipalities was held. In the seminar, the specialist illustrated the differences in the systems of water supply and sewerage management between Japan and India. Specific solutions to the water-related issues faced by Palitana Municipal Corporation were also addressed during the seminar. The specialist commented that, "Good water supply and sewerage systems are the 2 keystones to ensure that the future generations in Palitana could continue to flourish. As a result, I hope that Palitana Municipal Corporation will strive its best in its endeavours to upgrade the local water supply and sewerage systems".



The specialist (third from left) conducting a site visit with staff from Palitana Municipal Corporation

2011 Specialist Dispatch Project in Brunei

CLAIR's Local Authorities and International Cooperation Specialist Dispatch Project is a program that dispatches Japanese local government employees (including retirees) with advanced skills and an extensive range of expertise to overseas local government bodies or agencies, based on the requests received from the host countries. Apart from contributing to an improvement in the administrative quality of the host country or institution, the dispatch project also aims to strengthen the friendly relations between Japan and the host country.

Based on a request by Brunei's Ministry of Home Affairs as part of its efforts to promote the Development of Local Specialty Product (One Village One Product) movement in Brunei, Mr. Shoichi Asaki, Senior Researcher from Oita Prefecture's Oita Industrial Research Institute, was once again dispatched to Brunei from 8th to 19th November 2011, following the success of a similar dispatch project that was also conducted by him in Brunei the previous year. Equipped with a good understanding of the local situation in Brunei based on the findings of the previous dispatch project, the specialist was able to even more adequately offer his guidance and insight to the local participants this time, and at the same time personally verify the effects and results that were being brought about after last year's project.

One of Brunei's aims in introducing the One Village One Product movement and promoting the development of local specialty products was to help nurture talents and develop new industries within the country. However, owing to a lack of knowledge in terms of production techniques and marketing tactics, Brunei found itself facing product-quality related issues such as preservation methods and packaging techniques. In line with this, during the dispatch period, the specialist not only shared and introduced some of the packaging techniques and marketing tactics that are being used in Japan for its local specialty products, but he also made visits to various production sites of these products in Brunei, as well as conducted opinion exchange sessions with local product developers and makers.

For the Brunei participants, one of the biggest challenges that they face while attempting to establish their local brands is how to create a distinctive characteristic for their products and differentiate themselves from their neighboring countries which possess largely similar cultural backgrounds. To this, the specialist underlined that it is important and necessary to put efforts in coming up with a unique identity for one's product that will set it apart from others, as well as examining effective methods to convey these characteristics to the consumers. In addition, the specialist stressed that while it is important for product makers to be able to operate independently, the task of developing and branding new products is a difficult one for a product maker to handle by itself. As such, the specialist advised that it is necessary to have support from related administrative agencies that would help in the development of the product, such as setting up of research institutes and selling spaces similar to Japan's "*michi-no-eki*" (stalls located at train stations); introducing branding strategies such as through the holding of related product contests and awarding winners with certificates; and taking note of possible talents with leadership capabilities.

CLAIR's Specialist Dispatch Program has been highly evaluated by Brunei's Ministry of Home Affairs, and CLAIR Singapore looks forward to expand the awareness and utilization of this project and to continue dispatching specialists not only to Brunei, but also to our other counterparts within the region.



The specialist, Mr. Asaki (right), on a site visit and offering advice to the local participants

Tokyo Fire Department's Specialists Conduct Training Program in Thailand

Under CLAIR's Specialist Dispatch Project, 3 specialists from the Tokyo Fire Department, namely Fire Captain Mr. Fujiwara, Fire Lieutenant Mr. Nakayama and Fire Sergeant Mr. Endo were dispatched to Bangkok Fire and Rescue Department for 3 weeks from 7th to 24th February 2011 in order to conduct a training program on fire-fighting and rescue techniques.

The objectives of this training program were to assist Bangkok in acquiring skills on the administration, inspection and maintenance of equipment and to master fire-fighting and rescue techniques in an urban setting of high-rise buildings and narrow spaces. A total of 74 trainees, consisting of 2 trainees from each of the 35 fire stations within the Bangkok Metropolitan area, participated in this program. In addition, 6 staff from Bangkok Fire and Rescue Department who had previously completed a training course on rescue techniques held at the Tokyo Fire Department in Japan in October 2010, had also joined in this program to assist the 3 specialists in the instruction of the other trainees.

The first half of the training program was conducted at a civilian training facility in Rayong province and included instruction on techniques such as rope handling, transportation of victims and emergency rescue using a 3-section extension ladder. The group then moved on to Petchaburi province for the latter half of the program where skills such as emergency medical relief and fire-fighting procedures were further honed.

On the last day of the program, a fire-fighting and rescue demonstration was held, in which the trainees were to put into practice what they have learnt in the past 3 weeks, in the presence of the Deputy Director-General of the Bangkok Fire and Rescue Department as well as the Director of CLAIR Singapore. The rigorous training was visibly beneficial as evidenced by the leadership and skilled coordination of the trainees in the demonstration.

"In Bangkok, there are far fewer fire occurrences than in Japan. Consequently, the fire-fighting and rescue techniques here are underdeveloped and there is a lack of attention to the safety of firemen. Moreover, the equipment in-use is outdated and most trainees are not familiar with their specifications and handling, which contributes to the difficulty of instruction at the beginning of the training program," recounted one of the specialists from the Tokyo Fire Department. He added that besides instruction on fire-fighting techniques, the importance of being proficient in the handling of the equipment and of ensuring the safety of firemen were also stressed in this training program. He believes that the trainees have made substantial improvements in their skills and hopes that "they will become good instructors and impart the skills learnt in this program to their fellow firemen when they return to their respective stations."

From fire-fighting and rescue techniques, to environmental or sanitary management, the Specialist Dispatch Project allows for the transfer of a wide range of expertise held by Japanese local governments to overseas local governments that are in need of them. CLAIR Singapore will continue to support international technical cooperation between local governments and promote regional exchange through the implementation of these projects. Applications for specialist dispatches are accepted every year and enquiries about the application procedure should be directed to CLAIR Singapore.



Training on rescue techniques using an extension ladder