

1. What is an extension skill?

It is needless to say that extension activities for rural life improvement Program (RLIP) are those to support farmers in their efforts to improve their ability to solve problems by themselves. Therefore, although how much interest the farmers have in the matters and how much the farmers have knowledge to solve them are important. But more important is the practical technique for improvement of living condition and extension skills that a livelihood extension worker has.

As it can be understood from the case studies, extension workers who are in the profession for almost the same period of time do not always conduct the same activities even if they are dealing with the similar problem. As described earlier, it is not only because their target groups differ but also because extension workers use different approaches in conducting activities.

Extension skills are effective if these are suitable for the subject and the goal of the activities. To solve the problems, the farmers have to recognize that there are the problems, raise their interest in solving them and desires and become willing to act to solve them. Adequate extension skills have to be used in order to promote the change of attitude.

If the farmers are willing to improve their lives, extension workers only need to provide information. However, if it is needed to raise awareness of the people who has no interest, make them interested in improvement and then to eliminate strong resistance for change, there required a number of stages of activities and many skills and techniques are used at each stage.

We call these various skills as extension skills.

① Draw attention

For example, in the case of "shortage of green vegetables," most farm families have never recognized that they are not eating enough green vegetables. In such a case, in order to increase their intake of green vegetables for their health, the first thing the livelihood extension worker to do is to draw their attention to the matter.

To draw their attention to green vegetable, following talks may be useful:

- Urban people eat a large quantity of raw vegetables.
- People in rural areas do not eat as much vegetables as urban people.
- Let's eat more green vegetables for the health and beauty too.

In order to send these message, cable broadcasting of the main points or putting up posters on the walls or other places that tell the theme clearly will be effective.

② Raise interest

The next thing the livelihood extension worker to do is to raise their interest. If you can draw their attention, it often means that you have raised their interest. Informing the people of problems that can be caused by lack of green vegetable consumption leads to raise their basic desire for better living and it motivate the people. In order to reach this point, providing nutritional knowledge through cable broadcasting and dissemination those knowledge at meetings, will be useful.

③ Expand interest

At the third stage, it is necessary to have them maintain their interest and get them to have a desire to ask for necessary detailed information for increasing green vegetable consumption.

It is necessary to instill a desire to eat more vegetables in farm families. In order to instill such a desire strong enough preparing the leaflets such as "Vegetables and your Beauty" or an introducing example of people who produce green vegetables throughout the year and eat a lot of green vegetables may be effective.

④ Recognize necessity

The fourth stage is to have the people recognize the actual need to eat green vegetable. A demonstrating and practical cooking class using green vegetables will let the people understand that they can enjoy eating a large quantity of green vegetables. A lecture by an extension worker will help them learn the logical relationship between "vegetables and health." This will convince them of the necessity of actually eating green vegetables.

⑤ Take action

The next stage is to let the people take action. If each family try to cook more vegetable at home, variety of seasonings may be needed. At the same time if they try to grow vegetable at home, seeds may be needed. To secure regular supply of seasonings and seeds at a reasonable price joint purchase and other means are useful. For this purpose, it is important to hold farmers' meetings.

One problem is solved through several stages, as described above. However, the step to be taken first differs according to the characteristics of the problems and target groups. Extension workers wonder which approach to take, whether to provide explanation, use cable broadcasting, put up posters, provide demonstrations, or take a chance of practicing or conduct a survey to find a suitable approach.

Extension skills play a significant role as a means of communication between extension workers and farmers.

A language is usually the main means of communication. A language is a medium in the thinking process of learning. However, it is difficult to acquire knowledge only through verbal or written language explanations.

Farmers frequently do not understand about nutrition when we explain about the basics theory of nutrition to them using language as a tool. Therefore it is necessary to employ additional tools of explanations to complement the language explanation such as pictures, slides or other visual objects. Also in many cases, extension workers need to use learning by doing type extension skills that allow farmers to gain first-hand experience in order to help them acquire knowledge and technique which is difficult to acquire through spoken explanations.

Many people think that if extension workers have a concrete set of knowledge and technique on home living improvement, skills for living would be transferred without specific extension skills. However, many examples have proven that even if extension workers with high levels of skills for living or knowledge may fail to raise farmers' willingness to act by just providing lectures which are similar to those given at Universities.

Extension skills applied in the Rural life improvement extension projects (RLIP) aims at motivating farmers to acquire skills and continue their life improvement practices spontaneously and try to develop their skills for living with their own inventions.

[Reference: Relationship between the situation of farmers, problem solving and extension skills]

Farmers' situation	Attitude of extension worker	How to solve a problem	Thinking process	Main extension skills
End up in a single meeting	Piggyback type	Imitation	Raise awareness of the problem	Newspaper, broadcasting, display, lecture (explanation), poster, movie, sample, slide, demonstration (Type I)
Gather to a theme they want to pursue		Solving a problem partially		
Have an improvement plan	Two-people, three-legs type	Solve single small problem	Clarify the problem	Actual goods, explanation, tables and charts for display, leaflets, slides, photos of actual practice, visit for observation, KJ method, discussion, demonstration, role-playing, presentation, introduction of a newspaper article, competition, presentation of reports, survey, inspection of an actual site, record, visit for interview, comprehensive practice in daily living
Annual plan related to a home life improvement		Hand-in-hand type	Solve more than two problems that are related to each other	
	Solving a problem by putting all elements of life together spontaneously		Solve the problem scientifically	

Extension skills used by extension workers later become tools for research and learning when farmers solve problems by themselves. It is desirable that when they reach this point, farmers themselves acquire skills to talk effectively, conduct surveys, obtain statistical data and report to their fellow farmers.

For example, there is a case in which the presentation of their own achievements is used as an extension skill for problem solving. In this case, farmers examine problem, write it on the poster and present their experience by themselves. This can be considered as a new aspect of the thinking farmers. When the extension skills are utilized by farmers independently, it becomes tools of learning.

When extension skills are applied as such, we may call it is very ideal. When it reaches this level, it could be recognized we succeed in making self-reliant farmers. And extension skill becomes no longer to give instruction but rather support their activities.

2. Varieties of extension skills

How many kinds of extension skills are there? Although there are many, the following are the 22 skills that livelihood extension workers can use relatively frequently.

1) Extension skills using audiovisual materials

- Leaflet, pamphlet
- Actual goods (specimen, model)
- Writing on the board, blackboard, flannel board, notice board
- Newspaper, gazette
- Poster, tables and charts for display
- Display, exhibition
- Photo, slide, personal computer, movie, OHP, video
- Broadcasting, TV

2) Verbal extension skills

- Lecture (explanation, telephone)
- Group-oriented thinking, card arrangement method
- Discussion (question and answer)
- Advice (counseling)

3) Extension skills by action

- Practice
- Role-playing
- Interview and visit
- Workshop, forum, teach-in
- Presentation, presentation of reports, competition, exchange of opinions
- Comprehensive life experience, learning through experience
- Demonstration
- Visit a model site, inspection of an actual site
- Survey and record
- Game

Which skills should be chosen for each extension activities? Extension workers know the kinds of extension skills listed above and their usage and effect sufficiently and choose skills appropriate for the purpose. (Of course, in actual extension activities, we also consider the limitations of "time," "place" and "expenses.")

As the relationship between farmers and extension workers advances, the extension skills adopted by extension workers should draw potential capability of farmers. In choosing proper extension skills, extension workers should first consider "for what kind of people," they use "what kind of extension skill," "why," "how," "where," and "when." When they choose extension skills, it is important to set the lowest readiness of the target group as a standard, and to choose more concrete skills than abstract ones.

3. Use of extension skills: Techniques and examples

(1) How to conduct rural life improvement (RLI) extension work

As described earlier, extension workers need to use many skills to conduct their work. In order to achieve the goal, it is important to choose proper skills which are suitable for various instruction activities. They have to consider the following points.

* Purpose of the extension worker's activity

What are you trying to do? What kind of change are the people in the community hoping for?

- Main point of the activity: What are you trying to teach?
- Who are the target group: To whom are you trying to give advice?
- Effective materials: What type of media can be used? Is there any expert who will give ideas?

* Best method for the job

Which extension method is most effective? A lot of research shows that the more extension methods as people experience, their reaction become more dynamic. For example, if the extension worker increase the number of skills she uses from one to nine, the number of types of action farmers take also increases by 35 to 98 percent.

If methods of contact increase to five or six, the number of people who answer questions increases quickly.

It is clear that it is necessary to provide farmers intellectual instruction using several different methods. In other words, different methods are necessary to make contact with a group of people of various characteristics or with specific interests.

When an extension worker has makes contact with an individual or a group, or people in the whole community, various skills are necessary to make people change. The types of change an extension worker is trying to make can be classified as follows.

- Change in thinking
- Change in senses
- Change in action

"Change in thinking" includes changes in knowledge. People know what they didn't know, and they understand, then they apply new knowledge. To learn a new idea can be called a change in thinking.

"Change in senses" is very important when a person tries to change a custom or a conventional way he or she does a certain thing. What is included here is to raise interest or develop a different attitude and have accurate recognition of what is being instructed by extension worker. This type of change because people not only "think" but also "sense in their life."

"Change in action" usually happens after a "change in thinking" and "change in senses." Housewives need to know how to make a menu to nourish their family members. At the same time, they also need to have a strong feeling that the knowledge is important and desirable for them. When they begin to think that way, they can change themselves to make a menu that contains important nutrients in the food.

In order to create a new habit or lifestyle, it is necessary to emphasize on the advantages of it. It usually cannot be realized unless they become interested in a change and hope for a change. Therefore, we emphasize that learning something new that benefits us and changing an old custom is not simply a "matter of knowledge transfer methods." Just knowing how to change ones ways does not necessarily mean that one will actually change them. You will be able to understand this easily if you are in good health, by drinking a bottle of milk, eating an egg, and having enough sleep every day. What extension workers should do is to show people the difference between "knowing" and "doing."

Do the messages by which extension workers try to convey their intention vary? Are they used to raise interest of the people in the pattern of actions, increase knowledge about it or change actions? There are many ways and opportunities to convey one's idea. How many methods have been used that have many attractive points, such that they bring about a change or the expected final effects?

* Utilizing the advantages of each method

- Personal contact: visit farms or homes, visit farms, municipal office or extension offices, ask questions on the phone, letter, display of achievement
- Group contact: Meetings including demonstration, seminars for instructors, lectures, discussions, exhibitions and other gatherings, visits for observation, seminars, consultations, and various gatherings
- Contact through media: Notice, pamphlet, news, circular notice, radio, TV, display, poster

All of these have indirect influence. For extension work, "indirect improvement" is important. People's stories such as "My neighbor has become an important figure in society" or "Because we have made improvements in our lives, we can use time more efficiently and save money," are effective extension activities. It has been proven that in a

community that is conducting research, matters indirectly conveyed from one neighbor to another have more effect than any other influence of extension instructions.

The job of the extension worker is not simply to teach something special, but to get farmers to solve their own problems by themselves.

(2) Case Studies:

Now I will discuss how I would like to promote rural life improvement (RLI) activities with some characteristic examples.

Case 1: Task "To provide children with proper education" - dealing with a group that has difficulties holding meetings (Experience in Takai community in Matsuyama)

"Attendance at meetings for rural life improvement has been decreasing recently. Although there are many reasons for that, one main reason is that housewives are becoming busier due to rapid changes in the situation of farming communities.

"For example, because they want to have the same lifestyle as those who are engaged in other industries or because they want to increase their income due to an intense consumption offensive, those who have the main responsibility for farming have switched from husband and sons to housewife. Housewives have also begun to experience new living conditions. They spend a little free time working by the day or having extra jobs. Housewives are busy every day under such conditions and they are reluctant to think about their family during their leisure or have meetings with other housewives. As they think that an increase in income will automatically improve their lives, they may think it is not necessary to attend meetings to study by taking time in such a busy schedule."

Such was the situation in 1958 with a home living improvement group in Takai community in Matsuyama, Ehime Prefecture. As housewives became busier and busier or as they had more income from other sources, they engage less in work as homemakers and as a result, it began to have an adverse effect on the health of their families, human relations, and their children's education.

Extension workers began to think about how they would be able to raise awareness of specific problems they regarded as vague problems in such a daily life.

At first,

① They asked simple questions about their daily lives (Refer to questionnaire example 1)

- Distribution of leaflet (Questions: A. What is your biggest concern or most serious problem? For example, family life, agriculture, or community? B. What do you want to improve?)
- Cable broadcasting (Request for the questionnaire. Although it is a one-way communication, the request to answer the questionnaire is repeated.)

- Survey on the outline of the community, related organizations (/ regional inspection, / Interview directors of women's organizations (trends of housewives of farming households, etc.) interview at elementary schools, requested 1st and 2nd graders to write an essay on the topic of "My mother," etc.)
- ② By drawing up what they were interested in and at what level from the response in 1/, it was found that there were various matters that they were concerned about. They wrote: "I want to take better care of my children," "I want to save labor doing household duties and farming work," "I would like to learn how to apply new fertilizers" and "I would like to visit families who are doing well." (Refer to Questionnaire 2.)
- ③ How could they solve the problems and feel satisfaction? Which theme to choose became important. Of course we needed to choose one common to all of the problems. At the same time, we needed to choose the most serious problem in order to motivate them.

The biggest concerns for housewives were: "I cannot take good care of my children," "My children may become delinquent or cannot go on to high school or university," or "My children have a poor physique." We decided to deal mainly with children's issues and consider together about which problem to solve first. Looking at the situation, we found that fewer children in the community went on to high schools or universities than children in the neighboring "X" community, or that children in the community had a poorer physique than did children in "X" community. We conducted a survey to find out what children ate for meals and snacks. We gathered women to provide them with an opportunity to look back their daily lives.

- ④ Choose a theme they are interested in

We decided to use tables and charts and slides suitable for the theme. We decided on a goal of holding one meeting at a time at times when people would easily be able to attend. We decided on a theme that would satisfy participants in a short period of time. We made a plan for the meeting in which the subjects would complete something they would be able to use at home, even though this type of meeting might seem inefficient. We attached importance on the goal that participants would achieve something in one meeting. For example,

- Ironing of a dress shirt: They brought a washed business shirt and ironed it well enough so that it looked as clean as a shirt cleaned by a laundry.
- A good recipe for cooking potatoes: They learned this technique so that they could use it in the potato harvest season. They cooked enough for their family to taste it at home.

By actually practicing at each meeting, participants recognized that they had acquired some skills. When they worked on one thing continuously even though each for a short time and actually achieved something, they became more interested in such meetings. After a child wrote in his essay that his parents quarreled just because they did not know where the clothes

had been put away after they were washed, some women formed a group to set up a project to "become good at putting things in order in the house."

At their first meeting, they discussed how they should study ways to put the closet in order. "What should be kept in the closet?" "How should things be sorted?" They clarified what they needed to do for the next meeting before adjourning the meeting.

In their second meeting, they presented what they had thought at home. They learned how to sort things in the closet. They decided to find time to put things in the closet in order before the following meeting.

In their third meeting, they discussed their sorting experience. They observed a well-sorted closet. They were able to elaborate on what they did and use that as subject matter for their discussions.

"People work earnestly on what they have participated in." The example of the Takai group is an example of a satisfying meeting that makes busy housewives think that they would be losing something if they did not attend rural life improvement meetings even if they had invitations to various other meetings.

After the meetings, the women in Takai community gathered together. They gathered beside a spring to manufacture lactic acid beverages in summer and to hold Christmas parties and to bake cakes together at the end of the year. The community was designated as a model community within the school district for the activity of "Reading 20 minutes a day" by parents and their children. A reading room was built at a community hall, which improved the environment in the community.

Lessons learned from the case

* Lesson 1: Raising awareness of problems step by step^{*1}

In introducing the example, the focus is on the repeated step-by-step approach to a group. As clearly seen, the important thing here is that the subject women became aware of their problems by themselves and they started to think that "they should start doing something." Although various activities were included in rural life improvement services, the first activity was to meet women's individual everyday needs, such as cooking classes and improvements of their houses. A very important lesson can be learned from rural life improvement for "independence" of the people.

^{*1} Descriptions of "Lessons learned from the case" that appear at the end of each case on this page are compiled from the viewpoint of "what can be learned as people who are involved in support for developing countries" based on interviews and discussions with Ms. Takaoka. Oguni is responsible for the descriptions.

* Lesson 2: Attractiveness of "newness" that advances daily life

One thing that should be learned from the case is that the activities in which participants were engaged were not only closely related to their daily lives but also well thought out so that they could "discover something new." We can see that extension workers worked hard considering the situation that what was done at the meetings had been fixed and there was little incentive for attending them. They paid careful attention to planning activities so the participants could derive pleasure by producing something they would not have had without "buying something new" or "extra expenses." For example, they learned how to "transform" food they cooked regularly into something they had never expected, or they acquired a skill to iron shirts as well as professional cleaners by making a little extra effort. This was possible thanks to various efforts made by extension workers who worked hard to understand the real situation of women in the community in detail so they could choose a topic closely related to their lives and their expertise skills that supported the "newness."²

* Lesson 3: Planning meetings elaborately in accordance with the situations of housewives

In order to adjust to the situation of extremely busy women, meeting plans, place, time, size and contents, were changed frequently. For example, a topic that could be completely covered at one meeting was chosen, and meetings in small groups and contents that could be dealt with at a lunch break were planned. Meetings included such projects as those where participants could work to find an elaborate way of doing things at home, such as "how to put a closet in order." Such meetings are interesting in the sense that extension workers planned them flexibly as they considered the needs of women who were able to find little time to attend such public meetings as well as their status in a rural community.

² It can be added that, assuming a context of support for developing countries, the significance of the vertical and horizontal support from the administrations ranging from the central to prefectural levels, which includes the provision of opportunities of continued training for extension workers allowing them to obtain various skills and information exchange among themselves or a system of expert engineers who teach advanced skills should not be taken lightly.

Case 2: Improvement of cooking stoves that served as a starting point of Rural Life Improvement Movement (From an experience of Okanaru community, Ehime)

1) Uniqueness of the community: Five young leaders

Okanaru community in Nomura-town, surrounded by steep mountains, is located on a small hill. It has long suffered in securing drinking water. In the community at the top of a small hill, there were very few wells. There were five spring water wells in remote valleys and people had to carry drinking water for 200 to 500 meters from the well to their houses, going up and down slopes of the valley every day. Because of this, people spent about 8,000 hours annually getting water to their houses and women were mainly responsible for the work. In addition, their kitchen, which was dark and smelled like a ditch, was full of mosquitoes in summer, making their lives even more miserable.

In 1947, when the nation was gradually returning to normal after the post-war confusion, five young returned soldiers became aware of problems in the community together with their young wives, they started discussion with "we cannot leave Okanaru community as it is now. We have to improve agriculture and life in order to promise enjoyable life for everyone." They encouraged the community and played a central role in forming a cultural promotion group, which was joined by all 42 households in the community. They set up an elaborate 30-year community reform plan.

The plan had a goal of extending the average life expectancy of the people in the community to 80 within 30 years and leading healthy, proper, and enjoyable lives. People worked together to come up with the following five specific goals.

1. To be a good citizen
2. To raise fund for agricultural management improvement
3. Not to force themselves to work beyond their physical capability
4. To create good environment
5. To improve their diet

They decided on activities for achieving each point and they were full of spirit to achieve the goal.

They first worked to solve the water problem and began making an experimental small-scale water-supply system with bamboo pipes. However, it was in 1956, 10 years after the formation of the cultural promotion group, when water finally became available abundantly throughout the whole community.

During those years, they studied together and conducted research and study tours of specific themes by self-reliant manner, which improved their lives gradually, followed by a series of various activities. According to a record, one of the young people who played a leading

role in the group attended meetings and similar activities 80 times in one year. Both agricultural and livelihood extension workers supported their activities by teaching skills required for research and meetings and provided moral support. The improvement plan in Okanaru community was a comprehensive set of activities for improving life in the community.

2) "Improved Cooking Stove (ICS)" as a starting point

It was pointed out that most of the food Okanaru people took contained high-Carbohydrate, therefore they defecate plenty. To reduce the volume of stool to one-third, the group members began promoting variety of foods such as wheat, oil and goat milk. Firstly they jointly purchased goats from Nagano Prefecture. It was only 10 households kept goats in 1947, but rapidly it was introduced to all households in the community by 1949. At the same time people also began growing rapeseed, which increased the amount of annual oil consumption per person from 846 to 2,340 milliliters within three years.

To make good use of locally available goat milk and wheat, the 5 core members of the group got an idea of baking bread. They consulted with a Livelihood Extension Worker, who told them about the Improved Cooking Stove (ICS). They secretly built an experimental stove at a corner of a hut, which successfully baked tasty bread. Their wives heard about it and rushed to the hut to learn how to bake bread. The stove was too simple for the wives to believe that it could produce such bread. However, when they tried again, the stove worked wonderfully without any smoke or soot, which ordinary stoves belched a lot.

People were surprised to know that Mr. Masa, who later immigrated to Paraguay, constructed the stove by himself, with assistance of his friends, and by only studying the drawing that provided by a Subject-Matter Specialist. Women were so excited saying, "We should ask him to build more stoves for our kitchens too."

When they went home and told their husbands that they should install a smoke-free stove in their kitchen, their husbands were reluctant, saying, "That's a good idea, but the stove in the annex building looks good and we do not need to destroy it so soon." It was women who were in charge of cooking and therefore the cooking stove was not as serious an issue (to the men) as the water problem. In those days, the cooking stove was not in the main house but under the eaves where was only a dark louver door without any window.

Once women got inspired by the marvelous work of the ICS, they consulted with a Livelihood Extension Worker, who explained them the differences to the conventional ones including better ventilation and decreased firewood consumption.

She also showed the result of a survey that scientifically told women the amount of their time and efforts could be saved by ICS for collecting firewood and cooking.

In the following community meeting, women proposed that improving a cooking stove to a more efficient one was the first step for their "rational life." To show how efficiently

women could work if the ICS is installed in the main house, the women presented the result of their own 'Time and Motion Survey'.

It showed how much efforts was wasted just wondering between a stove in annex and kitchen in a main house, as well as the reduced amount of firewood required for ICS (Reference material 6: Flow diagram). They concluded that, if ICS would be introduced, the time and efforts that wasted for an ordinary stove could be transferred to more productive work. This finally convinced their husbands and parents.

The cost for the materials for ICS with a costol, rosutoru, a chimney and a cover at the opening of the stove was 3000 yen, which was only half price of which private dealers set. When a member could not afford the new type of stove, they arranged a local credit scheme to help each other to ensure that every household could have one.

In search for better ICS, observation and experiments were repeated under Mr. Masa's leadership. Owe to this effort, the Okanaru version of ICS, which was inexpensive, durable and easy to use, was invented.

By 1950, this ICS was installed by 12 households in their annex and 22 in their main house according to the individual situation. Many other inconvenient places in the kitchen were improved additionally such as putting windows, cement sink and cooking table as well as installing electricity. About 90 percent of households changed their cooking stoves to the new model. This project made the people in the community to believe that they were able to do something if they tried. This raised their spirits.

With the confident from this success, the group members moved from solving individual problems to community ones. They established three days a month for off farm activities including relaxation, recreation and learning. They also came up with a plan to build a community hall for culture center and food processing facility for bread baking in order to improve their diet. They raised the funds for these constructions by giving up an annual community festival. These facilities were appreciated as these could also be used as common kitchen in the busy farming seasons and as places for processing preserves and making tofu.

Moreover, agricultural management was also improved significantly. They developed 7.2-hectares of uncultivated land into rice paddies and built a path to allow a trolley to go between fields. Meanwhile, they introduced cash crops, such as dairy farming and tobacco instead of wheat or sweet potatoes, and intensive farming.

In Okanaru community, they had reliable leaders who played a leading role in the creation of a group that later backed up their activities. As such, Okanaru had a prerequisite for their community development to be successful. In addition, what triggered its development is the remarkable effect of the ICS that was rightly employed as "the starting point." "Construction of ICS in a main house" was more than just a physical change. It changed the traditional concept of rural houses as a place to host guests rather than for family members' domestic use. This placed more importance on family life. Especially women,

who were placed in a dark kitchen, came out to a brighter place, which in planted a symbolic meaning of change on women's status and role in the community.

3) Lessons learned from the case

* Lesson 1: Persuasive scientific knowledge

Scientific data and survey are useful tools for Extension Workers to inspire people to be aware of daily problems, which often unnoticed. These have significant impacts on convincing people especially those who have less keen motivation, in this case men who had little interest to change their kitchens.

* Lesson 2: Flexible approach

Extension Workers are required to be flexible when choosing an approach adequate for each case.

Okanaru community had prominent leaders, for example "Mr. Masa" who were able to think from various angles and was very active. Therefore, in this case, Extension Workers would be expected to provide technical support and encourage other community members to support their leaders. However, it is not the same as a case that could happen in any other community. As situations differ case by case, it is thus necessary to choose proper approach in accordance with the characteristics of communities and individuals.

* Lesson 3: Ascertaining the "Starting point"

In the example of Okanaru community, or in cases of other farming villages in postwar Japan, introduction of ICS was the "starting point" (Refer to "Number of households and main items of improvement" in August, 1958, on the reference chart). As described earlier, this was because the "cooking stove" and "kitchen" had a significant meaning in the relationship and gender role in farming villages in those days. Women were so busy pursuing farming work and domestic duties that they had long buried their wishes to have more "time" and "rest." Therefore, "rationalization and efficient work" backed by scientific knowledge had a big effect. It is critical for Extension Workers to accurately grasp what can effectively trigger development in each community.

Chapter 6 Study on Organization of Home Living Improvement Practice Group

- Deepening Awareness of Rural Women in the Formative Period of Home Living Improvement Practice Group -

IKENO, Masafumi

1. Background and Objective

In the field of community development in developing countries, donors generally request local people to organize groups as receiving organizations for enhancing the development efficiency. Community development has a trend to place emphasis on rural women in both quality and in quantity of women's diverse roles in daily living. Rural women are, however, pressed for time in their daily lives and not always able to accept development assistance. Rural women accept it only during spare moments of daily lives. Some community developments are held up because the organization has moved on without deepening their awareness.

Home living improvement practice groups started being organized through self-reliance activities of rural women with the support of the livelihood extension worker (also called "home advisor") under Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries as a part of the rural life improvement movement in around 1950 in postwar rural Japan. In those days, rural women had limited capacity to analyze living conditions multilaterally as well as scientifically and it was up to themselves to seek enlightenment. Encouragement of the group was one of the important measures to promote the rural life improvement movement through the women's self-reliance activities. This paper views how the livelihood extension worker as a donor made the approach to deepen the awareness of rural women as recipients in the formative period of the group in around 1950 in rural Japan.

2. Social Environment Surrounding the Group Activities

Rural women had various difficulties in promoting the activities of the home living improvement practice group in their society. Since rural women were chained to two strong obstacles, i.e. restraints of the household and those of rural society, it was not easy for them to participate in the group activities.

2.1 Rural Women and Household

Rural women, especially daughters-in-law, sacrificed everything in favor of household issues and believed that "the household comes first" and "prosperity of the household is indispensable." Daughters-in-law had no control over anything in their household. They could not even open a rice chest and measure the volume of rice by themselves without permission. Their husbands and mothers-in-law had no objection if daughters-in-law went to a community comprehensive meeting out of a sense of duty. If a daughter-in-law went out for her own independent objective, even it was something for their household, there would be serious complaints. The group activities had difficulty due not only to trial activities, but also to the lack of family's understanding and attitudes such as "What can mere women do?" "Don't talk nonsense outside the home when you are simply a daughter-in-law" "The trouble is that my daughter-in-law does nothing but go out while we are very

busy” “Young people are always so eager to seek pleasure. They are never satisfied”¹. Most daughters-in-law needed to get permission from their husband and/or mother-in-law to participate in the activities.

Time restraints prevented rural women from participating in the activities. Rural women were pressed for time to do agricultural work as well as housework every day although they wanted to improve their daily living jointly. Rural women cut back on noon breaks and worked as much as possible during the day to get a time for participating in the activities at night.

Furthermore, even minor activities often involved some costs in order to implement. Rural women who were not allowed to use household funds got cash income for the activities from temporary jobs such as gathering wood for fuel and day laborer.

2.2 Rural Women and Community Society

Rural communities had individual and traditional discipline that is deep-rooted in communal based, land, and blood relationships. In particular, the communal restrictions were very strong in rural area where agricultural production was low and farmers had to mutually depend on others to manage daily living. *Hardly any household was allowed to manage daily living independently in connection with water rights, common rights, or customs such as communal farming celebrations.* Rural people had a difficulty in being free in their daily living because their individual activities were closely watched. As a natural result, rural people could not help leading conservative and uncommunicative daily lives while being nervous about keeping up appearances.

The group was voluntary and a group of friends, but not a comprehensive organization that covered all of the households in a community. In the formative period of the group, community people who *did not understand the meaning of “life improvement” complained about the activity.* For example, “The existing community women’s association is sufficient for such an activity” and “The group disturbs the peace in the community since not all of community people are members.”² The groups were under pressure and became the target of criticism from the existing community organizations such as the community women’s association and/or shops that opposed joint purchase. As a result, some of the groups were suppressed under the pressure of deep-rooted traditional customs in the community: for example the group may not have been allowed to use a community assembly hall.³

3. Activities for Deepening Awareness of Rural Women

In general, the livelihood extension worker individually encouraged rural women and gave them technical guidance before organizing the group. They visited rural households individually and had interviews with rural women for finding out their real intentions to start with. The livelihood extension worker gave priority to getting good results from the introduction of living techniques that could be seen and experienced so that the merits would be understood, with such things as improved cooking stoves. They grasped the existing conditions of the social environment and rural women *through individual guidance, tried to find group leader candidates, and coordinated the organizing of groups among fellow members.* At the same time, enlightenment activities for deepening the awareness of rural women in matters of life improvement was the first step and essential in order for the livelihood extension worker to carry out extension activities. Through the individual guidance

implemented by the livelihood extension worker, the awareness of rural women began to deepen, and it led to the organization of the groups.

3.1 Deepening Awareness through Enlightenment Activities

The livelihood extension workers felt that they had won rural women's trust when the women started consulting the workers about private issues⁴. In the initial stages of the enlightenment activities, the livelihood extension worker did not understand rural women's motivation in participating in the activities. A limited number of rural women had a clear objective from the initial stage of the rural life improvement movement. Some of the rural women were asked by others or participated in the activities out of a sense of social duty. The livelihood extension worker generally met rural women in individual visits or the periodical group meeting, and was sometimes invited to the meetings of other organizations. Though the livelihood extension worker had limited opportunity to meet rural women, the enlightenment activities were quite effective in deepening women's awareness to life improvement.

The livelihood extension worker aroused women's interest further by including activities that made them eager to participate in that particular activity. The livelihood extension worker adopted living techniques that helped rural women understand the concept of the life improvement activities and daily living on the whole. In reality, though the livelihood extension worker had to think over concrete life improvement measures in consideration of individual conditions of the rural women. The following six factors were adopted as general conditions for activities that aroused interest in life improvement.

(1) Motivation factors:

- to arouse the interest of rural women and their families and delight them
- able to be carried out by any family, including the poor
- to be closer to daily living in rural area
- a place of liberation from rural restrictions; cheerful and relaxing for rural women, especially daughters-in-law
- a place where group members were able to confide about anything, including their anxieties

(2) Technical factors:

- easily explained and easy for participants to carry out
- simple, yet new
- an independent and individual technique
- a place where individual capacity and techniques are improved

(3) Financial factors:

- cost little money; can be done with what rural women have
- necessary materials can be procured from nearby

(4) Time factors:

- able to see the results in a short period of time
- able to do in the agricultural off-season

(5) Family relationship factors:

- able to bring back to her family a present made during the activity (to establish a good relationship with the family, especially mother-in-law and husband)
- able to carry out with limited cooperation of family members, and yet arouse the interest of her family
- recognized as good by local people as well as her family

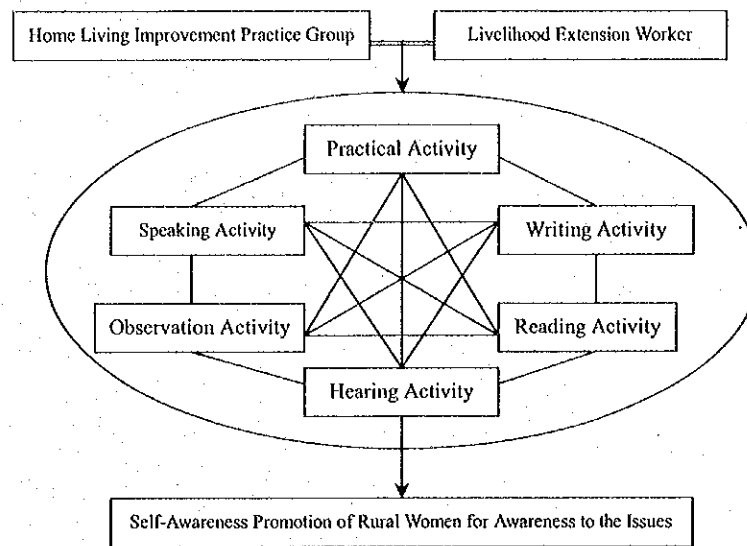
(6) Beneficial factors:

- related to and having an effect on improvement of agricultural production as well as daily living
- cash income or save household money, even if only a small amount

3.2 Activities for Promotion of Self-Awareness and Awareness of the Issues

The livelihood extension worker was able to promote self-awareness and awareness of the issues on life improvement for rural women through individual guidance, but group activities were adopted as an extension method in the rural life improvement extension service around 1950. Group activities were categorized into six types as shown in the figure below: practical activity, speaking activity, observation activity, hearing activity, reading activity, and writing activity. (Detailed techniques of these activities were transferred to livelihood extension workers as "Extension techniques – 22 technique for motivation" prepared by the Agricultural Extension Division under the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.) As for the practical activity, the livelihood extension worker tried to deepen awareness of rural women on life improvement matters using one activity or a number of activities in consideration of the social environment.

Figure 1 Type of Group Activities in the Rural Life Improvement Extension Service



3.3 Measures by Livelihood Extension Workers for Promotion of Life Improvement Awareness

Though the livelihood extension workers prepared activities to make rural women interested in life improvement and tried to deepen their awareness, not all rural women in the community participated in the group activities. The table below shows that there were various degrees of awareness of the activities and not all of the members possessed ideal awareness.

Table 1 Degree of Awareness of Rural Women to Activities

- Case of Hatano-village in Kanagawa prefecture, surveyed by a livelihood extension worker -

Ideal type (Action without words)	Ideal type (Action with words)	Fashionable type (Action for appearance' sake or curiosity)	Unsteady type (Action for appearance' sake or curiosity)	Insincere type (Non-action with words)	Indifferent type (Non-action without words)	Resigned type (Non-action without words)
22%	5%	22%	26%	10%	10%	5%

* Table prepared by the writer on the basis of a case study in the 'Activity History of Livelihood Extension Worker'.

Degree of awareness of rural women on life improvement was broadly categorized into six degrees in view of the awareness of requirements and the awareness of actions as shown in the table below. These types were as follows: (1) ideal type with deepened awareness, (2) resigned type, lacked awareness, (3) fashionable type with indefinite improvement objective, (4) indifferent type, (5) insincere type without awareness toward improvement and (6) unsteady type with unstable awareness. The livelihood extension worker grasped the awareness degree of rural women through individual or group activities. The livelihood extension worker made efforts to deepen the awareness of those rural women with the limited awareness to bring them close to the ideal type by using several approaches according to their original types.

Table 2 Awareness of Rural Women on Life Improvement Activities and Approach by Livelihood Extension Worker

Degree of Awareness	Awareness of Requirement	Awareness of Action	Awareness of Rural Women toward Life Improvement	Approach by Livelihood Extension Worker
Ideal type (Action with/without words)	+	+	Women had the awareness both required and implemented. They recognized the work of livelihood extension worker and her technical capacity and cooperated with her. They were positive toward life improvement.	Livelihood extension worker had women understand the work of livelihood extension worker and cooperate with them to realize their idea.
Resigned type (Non-action without words)	+	-	Women recognized the awareness toward and the necessity of the improvements. The reason they could not have the awareness toward improvement was socio-economic conflict such as economical factor, limited composure of mode, out of regard for husband and mother-in-law.	Livelihood extension worker investigated the conflict factor, proposed life improvements without deepening the conflict, built confidence through the activities and enhanced the awareness toward implementation using neighbors' understandings.
Fashionable type (Action for appearance' sake or curiosity)	-	+	Women had awareness toward improvement and capacity for action, but did not clearly recognize the objective. They were interested in lectures on life improvement by livelihood extension workers and tried to improve for appearance' sake or curiosity stimulated by the neighbors' improvement. They were sure to consider the improvement when they were with the livelihood extension worker, but forgot about it as time passed or stopped improving on the way. This that means not all of the women who were interested in improvement at the meetings were the ideal type.	Since women had awareness of improvements and the capacity of implementation, the livelihood extension worker should not put a damper on their upsurge of emotion. The livelihood extension worker occasionally should refer women on practical living problems in the implementation stage. However, there was a tendency that women implemented the improvement fast and they were restless. To attain awareness of the objective, livelihood extension worker should take women to task in time to member's tempo.
Indifferent type (Non-action without words)	-	-	Women had no awareness toward improvement or implementation. They had limited conversation with livelihood extension worker. However, some of them were interested in agricultural management, but indifferent to daily living. Some of them had no awareness of either agriculture or living.	Livelihood extension worker should start to help women grasp the objective of the improvement. Though livelihood extension worker had trouble approaching them, she should consider what the awareness for women is based on in daily living to arouse recognition and awareness.

Degree of Awareness	Awareness of Requirement	Awareness of Action	Awareness of Rural Women toward Life Improvement	Approach by Livelihood Extension Worker
Insincere type (Non-action without word)	-	-	At the meetings, these women appeared serious about implementing improvements, but in fact, they had no understanding about implementation, just like the indifferent type. They did not have any expectations about their daily lives, but would talk about improvements made by neighbors. The spoke as though they understood the lecture of the livelihood extension worker, but found fault with the worker's methods and rivaled the advice of the livelihood extension worker's knowledge.	Livelihood extension worker let women see and hear about the pleasures of daily lives of participants in the improvement in practice or informed their families to enlighten them to settle for living in cooperation with their family.
Unsteady type (Action for appearance' sake or curiosity)	+	-	Women had awareness toward improvements, but had limited capacity to consider it by themselves. They were unstable and felt like doing everything when others proposed it. Though they did not trouble livelihood extension worker, worker was not able to feel at ease due to their non-committal nature.	Save as the indifferent type

* Table prepared by the writer on the basis of case studies in the "Activity History of Livelihood extension workers".

Conclusion

Organizing the groups started off as a self-reliance movement of rural women throughout the country around 1950 in postwar rural Japan. Deepening awareness of rural women on life improvements was the basis of organizing the groups. The livelihood extension workers deepened awareness of rural women through the following processes:

- (1) Livelihood extension worker grasped understanding of social environment such as conditions of rural women as well as rural society through individual visits.
- (2) Livelihood extension worker obtained good results by introducing useful techniques that helped rural women appreciate the advantages of life improvement through individual guidance between a rural woman and the livelihood extension worker.
- (3) Livelihood extension worker carried out enlightenment activities for deepening awareness of rural women on life improvement through individual visits and guidance.

Rural women whose awareness began to deepen regarding the improvements through the above-mentioned process started organizing small and informal groups (about seven to fifteen members).

The livelihood extension worker made efforts to improve their immature awareness to become aware of life improvement issues in the early formative period of the groups.

Deepening life improvement awareness of rural women was a process of the formative period in organizing the group. Major issues that should be studied further are to consider organizing the group from the point of multilateral social relations, for example, scouting and encouraging the group leader, relationship of the rural society such as households and community, and cooperation with other institutions such as health centers and schools.

For developing countries, in the field of community development, in many cases emphasis is not placed on the process of deepening awareness of local people due to financial and time constrictions. In such cases, an instant group is organized using a participatory approach such as workshops for local people. Not only is the awareness of local people not deepened, but also community development proceeds before local people understand the intention. As a result, more than just a few participants withdraw from the group and/or the group sometimes ends up in disbandment. Should donors take notice of the process on deepening the awareness of local people when the group is organized? The experience of deepening the awareness of rural women implemented by the livelihood extension workers in postwar rural Japan can be applied and be one of the effective methods in the field of community development for developing countries.

Source:

- (1) White paper of Farmer's Life, 1962, Life Improvement Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Japan
- (2) Ditto
- (3) Essays in Celebration of the 20th Anniversary of Announcement Meeting for Life Improvement, 1973, Study Team on Home Living Improvement Practice Group in Iwate Prefecture, Japan
- (4) Together with Farm Household - Essays in Celebration of the 20th Anniversary of Agricultural Extension Services, 1968, Iwate Prefectural Government and Association of Agricultural Extension in Iwate Prefecture, Japan

References:

- (1) Study on Rural Life Improvement Campaign in Postwar Japan and its Lessons for Community Development in Developing Countries (1), 2001, edition. Hiroshi Sato · Kazuo Ando
- (2) Improvement of Rural Women's Role (unpublished), Masako Kodama (former livelihood extension worker in Kagoshima prefecture, Japan)
- (3) Activity History of Livelihood Extension Workers (activity case volume 2), 1955, Home-Life Improvement Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Japan

Chapter 7 Village Infrastructure and Thinking Farmers
- A Case Study of Village Development Center Program -

- From an Example of a Village Development Center Program

NISHIGATA, Noriko

After going through the era of rapid economic growth that started in the 1960s, demands for a village development center improvement program, one of the independent programs subsidized by the prefecture, were made in succession by the villages in Niigata Prefecture. Village development center refers to facilities that are newly built or extensions or reconstruction of old community halls that was carried out as an aspect of village and regional environmental consideration. However, for the rural life improvement extension program the meaning of village development center improvement program was different from a mere construction-oriented as it was positioned as a place for approaching to build up better village where the residents pondered on their future and formulated their future image, i.e. the base for environmental improvement activities of villages and regions.

The involvement of the rural life improvement extension program with the village development center construction program and the history of its implementation, as well as the role the rural life improvement extension program played in the changes that occurred among the people through this program will be introduced in the following based on the author's experience in the village development center construction program as a livelihood extension worker for Niigata Prefecture.

1. Foundation building for rural life improvement (solving common problems)

The rural life improvement extension program did not start working on the village development center construction program from the outset. Rather, the rural life improvement extension program (LIP) implemented up to that time created the foundation for the village development center construction program. Let us begin by describing how the rural life improvement extension program linked with the village development center construction program based on the author's experience.

The author became a livelihood extension worker in 1961. Rural villages in Niigata Prefecture still had strong vestiges of old rural communities such as family lineage (e.g. landowner, peasant) and a patriarchal family system. For this reason, women in farm households, particularly the wives of family sons, were placed in a vulnerable position with few hopes for solving problems on their own. It was a time in which women had to tolerate their situation with the hope that their life of perseverance and sacrifice would improve someday. Many of the women wanted to participate in rural life improvement movements and village classes to obtain new information about democracy but could not do so as farm work, household chores and child rearing left them with no free time.

Livelihood extension workers worked with these women in farm households as the main target. After studying the relationships the wives of family sons have with their parents-in-law and brothers-and sisters-in-law, as well as their allowances and how they spend their time, they offered practical guidance in nutritional improvement including recipes for miso with fortified vitamin A, vitamin B

and calcium, ideas for creating comfortable homes, kitchen improvement including the use of sinks that are not hard on people's backs, and practices of rural life improvement for building a pleasant community. However, the true aim of livelihood extension workers was to foster "thinking farmers," i.e. fostering human resources in rural villages and village building.

It started by organizing women into groups. Women formed groups and identified the problems and tasks in their lives through discussion with group members. They collectively dwelled on their problems, sorted out countermeasures, made up action plans and solved the problems through joint efforts. These series of processes were referred to as "group thinking." It expanded its range of activity by repeating the process of solving one problem and moving on to another and accumulating their results, which, in turn, sowed the seed of the rural life improvement movement in the hearts of each and every women and yielded positive results. Creating this forum of group thinking and assisting the advancement of women through rural life improvement activities was an important job for livelihood extension workers.

The challenges identified by these women and examples of their solutions included rationalization of household expenses, open family relationships, nutrition, labor and health measures against diseases such as farmer's syndrome, and collective cooking during busy farming seasons. The members of home living improvement practice (H-LIP) groups took turns cooking in some cases and in other cases groups of women from non-farm households took on the cooking duty as volunteers in exchange for receiving guidance on nutrition from the extension workers. The advantages of collective cooking included being able to offer more nutritionally balanced food using the same ingredients but prepared differently, keeping the food expenses low, learning new recipes, and having extra time as a result of reduced cooking time. Women were able to have some rest and spend more time with their children that they tended to neglect during busy farming seasons.

After having solved many problems through "group thinking" and going through the era of rapid economic development, women started to express their desires for "a place where they could meet and talk freely." Some of the meeting places at the time (called "clubs") were from the Meiji and early Taisho Era and were stained with soot from firewood that was used for fuel. Some of them were too small for assembling the entire village, did not have any space for groups to meet for cooking and food processing or lacked women's restrooms. For this reason, some young wives chose to use places where they could meet casually, such as the space under an orchard trellis and village shrines instead of using the meeting places that involved the bother of obtaining permission from district chiefs. These offered a comfortable space where they could use breaks from their field work and did not have to worry about their mothers-in-law.

As men started to work away from home for wage earning after entering the rapid economic growth period, people became busier but gained access to cash income. As new construction and expansion of private homes in the neighborhood increased, the antiquity and dirtiness of the meeting places became more conspicuous.

This desire among these women for a place where they could meet casually gradually became the voice that moved the village. Improvement of community halls was eventually incorporated into projects subsidized exclusively by prefectural governments as part of the village development center

maintenance program and became the subject of guidance activities by livelihood extension workers. Combined with the advantages of projects subsidized by the prefecture, opinions of the women finally started being respected in the village.

2. Selection of Model Villages that Practice Building Better Village

The selection of model villages for the program was started after it became clear that a subsidy system could be used in rural life improvement extension programs in the independent programs subsidized by the prefecture. Information was collected for the selection of the model village through the following two methods.

The first method was the diagnosis of the village by livelihood extension workers. Preparation of evaluation charts for diagnosing and evaluating the vitality of villages had been recommended to the extension workers. An evaluation index could be set up by each extension worker, and the existence of public facilities such as schools, healthcare facilities and meeting places was included as one of the indices. Extension workers were required to bring the evaluation charts they had prepared to training sessions at the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (conducted at the Home Living Improvement Training Institute in Roppongi, Tokyo) where participants from respective prefectures reviewed each other's charts. Points that were regarded as superior in evaluation charts devised by other extension workers were used as reference in preparing an evaluation chart suited to the locality and utilized in the activities.

The second method was the collection of information at municipality government offices and agricultural cooperatives. They visited the institutions concerned and local leaders, and asked questions such as "In which village will the project be able to play a role in democratization and vitalization of the village?" and "In which village will the project be able to promote model activities?" in an effort to identify villages where activities were likely produce good results and aim for a repercussion effect. Village diagnosis items were reviewed with particular emphasis on villages that had good leaders or women's group activities and by examining the direction for seeking greater efficiency of the activities in advance.

3. Process Leading up to Construction of Meeting Places

When the model village was selected on according to the information collected through the aforementioned methods, questionnaire and hearing surveys about what they wished to do with subsidized programs were conducted on a group basis with householders of farm households (male), housewives and youth in the village. Many people were interested in the introduction of village development centers construction program and at villages that expressed such interest, from the future image of the village town to the actual funding plans were discussed. A construction plan chart was prepared for each fiscal year and efforts were made to quick response for villages that wanted to start the construction early.

First, neighborhood chiefs were asked to appoint members of the village construction committee. While many villages approached the matter in a conventional manner by appointing the top-ranking figures of the village (e.g. neighborhood chief, deputy neighborhood chief and accountant), a request was made to include the representatives of all village organizations such as elderly groups, farmer

associations, farm management study groups, young wife groups, home living improvement practice groups and youth groups while asking for the participation of related guidance organizations including agricultural cooperative and local administration.

Once the members of the village construction committee had been chosen, support was offered as soon as possible in planning a study tour of villages that were programing in making better village. Through these study tours of progressive villages, construction committee members started to become aware that they were carrying out the construction plan based on a time span of several generations. Moreover, they started to show the attitude of actively tackling the new construction and extension of village development centers by confirming the intentions of organizations and groups as the representative of the organizations and groups with which they were affiliated.

Then an opportunity was provided to hear the opinions of all village members on what kind of village development center they wanted to build. Attention was given to hear the opinions of all groups and organizations in the village so that the opinions of certain people were not given more attention than the opinions of others. Various facilities that were requested included large halls, cooking facilities, stages and baths. As livelihood extension workers had received training on how to draw a floor plan, they drew a draft plan for the new community hall (village development center) incorporating these individual opinions on a blackboard, and made corrections and adjustments according to the opinions of the residents that participated in the meeting. The floor plan was therefore checked by the residents throughout the preparation process.

This floor plan reflecting the opinions of all residents was later converted into a design drawing by a professional architect while the residents entered the phase of examining the actual funding plan for raising their village's share of the expenses (the portion not covered by subsidy). Extension workers sought to organize the management and operation mechanism after completion and offered directions for creating the core of village activities based on the village center.

Extension workers found that the facilities that were created through resident participation were thoroughly maintained and used cleanly by these residents. There was an obvious difference between the state of these facilities and the ones built through discussion among village leaders only.

4. Creation of Village Development Centers and RLIP (Rural Life Improvement Program)

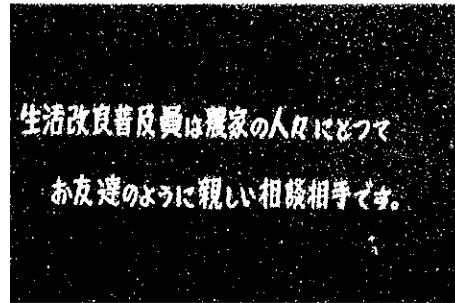
As mentioned earlier, village development centers were created by the people of the village. Construction committee members were the central figures representing their organizations and the opinions of the village and the design of the new center was decided according to the opinions of the village people in a participatory way. Dwelling on what kind of community hall (village development center) was needed and should be built in their village meant thinking about the present and future of the village. In other words, village development center construction projects offered an opportunity to village residents to become aware of the present situation of the village and think about its future. Seeing the floor plan incorporating their opinions for the village development center gave the village residents a sense of it being their own center (a sense of ownership). This ownership not only became a driving force behind the maintenance and operation of the center but also led to the motivation towards future activities for making better village.

From the viewpoint of the rural life improvement extension program, it represents proof of the advancement of women. Women had the experience of identifying and solving their problems through "group thinking" while expanding their outlook. The village development center construction program also expanded the outlook of women to think about the welfare of the entire village while enabling them to reflect their opinions on the decisions made by the village. In this manner, self-reliance and sociality of women were cultivated and enabled them to address the problems for the entire village. In addition, their involvement in this village development center project became a new foundation for their promotion of joint activities in agriculture and livelihood.

One such activity was their engagement in crop rotation issues in which they started new group activities by planting vegetables and fruits in fields converted from rice paddies and drew attention to joint collaborative activities, cooperative marketing and cooperative processing. Activities we see today such as direct sales groups and women's entrepreneurial groups are offering enormous contributions to improving the position of women who are participating in management and activating today's rural community and agriculture. Such assertiveness and practicing capacity were fostered in "group thinking."

II. Filmslides

**A set of 60-frame filmslides,
“A Day in the Life
of Livelihood Extension Worker”**



1. A Day in the Life of a Livelihood Extension Worker (Home Adviser)

Planned by Agricultural Administration Bureau,
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Produced by
Rural Culture Association

2. For farmers and their families, the livelihood extension workers of the rural life improvement program are advisers and friends.

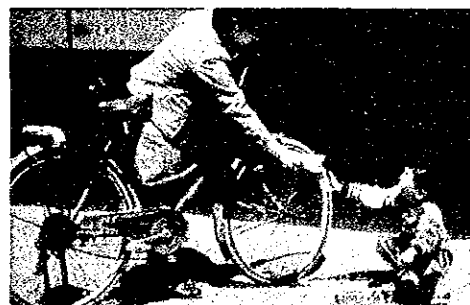


3. "Making life better" is something everyone hopes for; however, making even a small change in a conventional lifestyle isn't easy.

The livelihood extension workers, also called home advisers, build strong relations with farming households and help and encourage people to improve their lives with determined hopes and dreams.

4. In the morning, the livelihood extension worker goes to the extension office, checks her schedule for the day, and goes out to visit the area for which she is responsible.

A farming woman happens to call her to stop and shows her the working clothes she designed. The livelihood extension worker tells her how to improve the design.



5. Another farming woman noticed the green bicycle of the extension worker, stops her work and asks the livelihood extension worker: "I want to make my kitchen more convenient. Would you drop in when you have time?"

A small incident like this is one of the important parts of the livelihood extension worker's job as home adviser.

6. The livelihood extension worker visits a farm household.

If there are no adults around, she writes a message and hands it to the child.

After visiting this house several times, she has become friendly with the child.



7. The livelihood extension worker often sits on the verandah and serves as an adviser to the family on minor issues. Some mothers complain: "Now I can spare time for children, but in the busy farming season, I cannot take care of them." Then, the livelihood extension worker tries to find a way to get through the busy farming season more efficiently, discussing the matter with the farming woman.



8. When farming women were mending their working clothes, the livelihood extension worker stops to explain mending techniques in detail.



9. After the livelihood extension worker has visited a household often, women start to ask for advice: "We want to make the sink more convenient..." Then, the livelihood extension worker helps them from their standpoint: "If you build a shelf here, then you can put the dishes you have just washed on it. It would be very convenient."



10. In this way, the farmers and the livelihood extension workers gradually become friendly and build trust. Besides waiting for the livelihood extension worker's visits, the women also start to visit the extension office, asking for advice.



11. In newly assigned areas, livelihood extension workers participate in village meetings. There, livelihood extension workers and villagers come to know each other well, and the livelihood extension workers make efforts to learn about the villagers' lives.



12. In newly assigned areas, livelihood extension workers first hold exhibitions to gather many people and to encourage women to have more interest in their own lives. At each exhibition, easy-to-understand pictures, photographs, and graphs are used to identify typical lifestyles and problems of the area.



13. At an exhibition, the livelihood extension worker explains the graphs and pictures in detail to deepen the women's understanding.



14. The livelihood extension workers also show exhibits to women. Thanks to these exhibits, women can learn that their diet is unbalanced and lacks the important nutrients required for the busy farming season.



15. Many men also visit exhibitions during the off-season. As men make the decisions on home management in Japanese rural households, it is necessary to attract their attention too.



16. Each livelihood extension worker also attends informal village meetings and makes presentations. They explain problems regarding the conditions of farmers' lives, using easy-to-understand tables and illustrations, and then hold a discussion with the villagers.



17. During the meetings, the livelihood extension worker uses slides and a flannel chart to interest them in familiar issues, and leads a discussion.



18. The livelihood extension workers not only hold exhibitions and attend meetings, but also go to seminars to provide instruction. For cooking seminars, women get together in a farm house backyard with their portable cooking stoves, or borrow a school kitchen to learn how to make foods that can be preserved or snacks that can be made from readily available cooking materials.



19. Livelihood extension workers or home advisers also hold washing seminars. They demonstrate, for example, how to wash clothes without damaging them. Women can get knowledge and master new techniques.



20. The livelihood extension workers try to take advantage of opportunities in the farmers' daily lives and to make them pay attention to their lifestyles. A lunch break is a good opportunity to have each farming woman try out improved working clothes and express their opinions about the improvements. By accumulating knowledge that is directly applicable in their daily lives, the farming women gradually become positive about improving their lives.



21. When the livelihood extension worker is familiar with the villagers and has acquired good knowledge about village life in the area, a life improvement practice group is formed to solve common problems. The livelihood extension worker is a friendly adviser to the group of village women. The members of the group build trust and respect, and are honest and friendly with each other through joint activities to improve their lives.



22. The livelihood extension workers are always with the group members. This livelihood extension worker offers an opportunity to show and comment on the working clothes they individually improved and to exchange opinions. The livelihood extension worker also helps the group members to develop their own ideas and deepen understanding about their lives, and to grow as thinking farmers through these activities.



23. If there are hopes to improve kitchens among the group members' families, the livelihood extension worker instructs them in their own kitchen. For example, when they have to determine the heights of sinks, the livelihood extension worker prepares a scale that everyone can use and teaches how to decide the heights that are suitable for individual users. In this way, more involvement in the farmers' lives by the livelihood extension workers means that all of the farming families learn how to improve their lives and get more interest in improvements.



24. To solve the issue that labor during the busy farming season is too hard, the group members individually take their weights and summarize the values on a graph. The result clearly shows that the busier they become, the more weight they lose. How can they ride out the busy farming season without getting thinner? The livelihood extension worker serves as a consultant and gives them advice.



25. As learning activities in the group advance, the members might start to request opportunities to learn how to cook chicken in order to get nutrients. If this is the case, the livelihood extension worker as a home adviser butchers a chicken by herself and demonstrates how to efficiently cook it.



26. Studying in the group, women gradually get confidence in improving their own lives. And they would confront the issue of how to raise funds for improvement. To raise necessary funds, livelihood extension workers recommend farmers to grow shiitake mushrooms during quiet times. Instructions on affordable methods are given in consideration of the general state of agriculture.



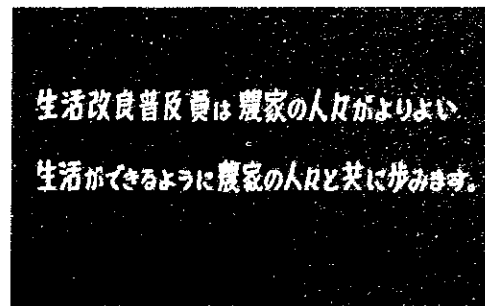
27. The livelihood extension workers try to help group members engage in various activities on their own. This group is now fully independent. But, to reach its current position, livelihood extension workers helped them first, then the members helped each other to overcome difficulties step by step.



28. We, livelihood extension workers serve as teachers to young 4H club members, teaching practical ways to build a better rural life.



29. Sometimes, group meetings are purely for entertainment. For village women who are usually too busy to have time to sing, the group meetings also serve as opportunities to relax. The livelihood extension workers are good friends to the women, cheer them up, encourage them, and give them hopes and dreams.



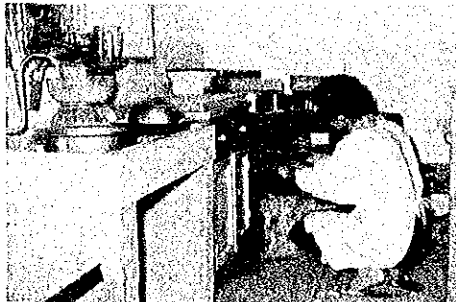
30. The livelihood extension workers of the rural life improvement program work closely with farmers to improve their lives.



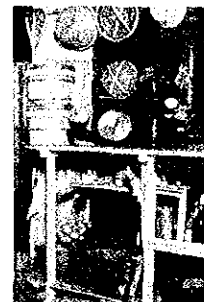
31. The farmers' lives are different depending on the locality and individual households, so targets of improvements also vary. The livelihood extension workers help farmers so that they can achieve improvements that are suitable for their individual living conditions. For example, if farmers want to improve their kitchens, the livelihood extension workers give appropriate advice from the viewpoint of the farmers.



32. This traditional Japanese kitchen has no true window, and the smoky cooking stove has been used for hundreds of years. The sink, the cooking table, and other facilities are poor, and there is no appropriate storage. The setting only fatigues housewives. However, such gloomy and inconvenient farmhouse kitchens have gradually been improved since the livelihood extension workers started to give advice.



33. A bright kitchen. A kitchen with glass windows is beyond the imagination of our ancestors. An improved cooking stove is equipped with a chimney. A sink and a cooking table are devised to make cooking easier. Such kitchen improvement activities promoted by the livelihood extension workers all over Japan have truly made rural life better and more convenient.



34. Kitchen improvements that can be carried out with a small amount of money have been implemented step by step. As shown, building a hand-made cooking table from materials available or hammering nails into the wall to organize the positions of utensils to make them handy for cooking is also an important way to improve kitchens.



35. Water is indispensable for human life, but going to the well for water is tiresome. At a place where they have to go to a well that is far away from home, women have to spend the majority of their time and labor doing this chore.



36. Even if there is a well in the backyard, it might be far away from the main building; the well might not have a lid; they might have to draw water from a well with a bucket. Improvements start with placing a lid over the well or equipping the well with a pump.



37. Another way to reduce the burden of drawing water is, as shown here, to draw water into a tank and then feed it to a kitchen sink and other locations through steel pipes.



38. Another idea for an improvement is to install a water tank on a sun-lit roof or in the garden to warm up the water using natural solar heat. The warmed water is then sent to a bath through steel pipes, so fuel and labor to heat the bath can be saved.



39. In the rural life, things to be improved are not limited to the kitchen or the water supply. Traditional working clothes are tight at the chest and require bands so it makes farm work heavier. In addition, they tend to ravel at the seams and easily get dirty, and mending and cleaning takes extra time.



40. The livelihood extension workers help farmers to improve their working clothes using their own ideas. The farming women who devise working clothes that are more suitable for farm work exchange opinions during a break in their work, and put efforts into making further improvements.



41. The diet of the farmers tends to depend on seasonal produce, and the nutrients are not balanced. The livelihood extension workers hold seminars and lectures on how to cook tasty, well-balanced meals that can be made from materials available during the farmers' off-season, so that they can have a more nutritional diet. As they learn more and more about diet, they start to notice that they should organize and plan the yearly cultivation of vegetables.



42. A farmer's diet tends to lack animal protein, which is important for health. The livelihood extension workers recommend farmers to keep chickens and consume them domestically based on a yearly plan so that the farmers intake sufficient animal protein.



43. In the busy farming season, farmers work so hard that the nutrients they intake tend to become insufficient. The livelihood extension workers also teach them how to make foods that can be stored for the busy season to save cooking time.



44. We, the livelihood extension workers try to encourage farmers to cooperate with each other to improve their lives. In the busy farming season, the livelihood extension workers recommend that farmers to manage joint efforts to ease the burdens on farmers' wives, and to let them intake sufficient nutrients.



45. The livelihood extension workers also help farmers build a baking oven and instruct them how to bake bread using flour. One meal with bread a day will help farmers' wives to save time and effort in busy farmhouses.



46. In parallel with recommendations to adopt meals with bread, livelihood extension workers also recommend them to keep goats. Goats don't need much fodder or care, and can be good sources of animal protein.



47. Vegetables and fruits are abundant in the harvest seasons, but once out of season, getting them becomes difficult. To preserve these foods, livelihood extension workers give technical instructions on how to process and bottle them. As you can see here, if they can cooperatively own machines and equipment as a group, bottling, which is generally considered difficult, becomes easy.



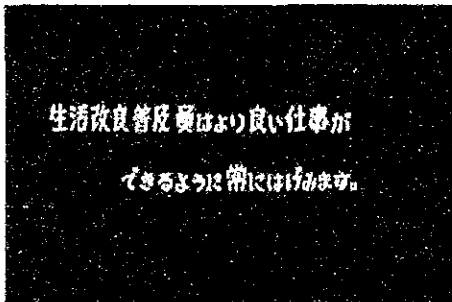
48. In extremely busy farming and harvesting seasons, small children are left alone without parental care. To solve this problem, the livelihood extension workers also assist with various work in nurseries established temporarily.



49. These temporary nurseries are usually set up at temples, shrines, or in the corners of public halls. However small these facilities are, the livelihood extension workers treat them as important joint efforts to improve lives and give necessary instructions so that the facilities truly help the farmers and protect their children in as good an environment as possible.



50. Through joint group activities, the livelihood extension workers give instructions to encourage and assist farmers to become thinking farmers who think about their lives on their own, and are active in improving their lives. Through the process of group activities, the livelihood extension workers guide farmers to build families where members can frankly exchange opinions and cooperate with each other to achieve their own targets.



51. The livelihood extension workers of the rural life improvement program are always trying to do a better job.



52. To learn about the actual situation in the areas they are in charge of and to effectively implement extensions with groups and villages, we, the livelihood extension workers, prepare monthly plans for activities to be implemented at the local extension offices. And, we tackle problems one at a time, review the results, and then deal with the next problem.



53. We give instructions not just by talking to the women but also by taking advantage of actual materials and products. In the case of improvements to working clothes, we prepare samples that the women can actually try on. The samples are also useful for demonstrations and lectures.



54. If a livelihood extension worker encounters any problem beyond her capabilities through local extension activities, she consults a subject-matter specialist. For example, specialists in extension methods handle such issues as how to get along with farmers or how to hold meetings.



55. The livelihood extension workers learn from subject-matter specialists who are available at the exhibition laboratory about technical issues such as how long foods can be preserved or how many percents of the heat from a cooking stove can be used for cooking. The subject-matter specialists inform the livelihood extension workers of the results of their experiments. If the result of an experiment is judged final, then the information is disclosed to the public. The livelihood extension workers bring the group members to see the result.



56. We, livelihood extension workers who share the same problems get together at the laboratory, learn the necessary techniques from the subject-matter specialists, and practice until we have mastered the techniques.



57. We hold seminars in each area or region, always try to get new knowledge, exchange information from our experience and review our work. Here, we formed groups of five or six persons to discuss approaches to extending assistance to the groups.



58. In the seminars, we also exchange opinions and try on samples to find what style is best or what waterproofing is required. We also practice baking bread and prepare side dishes.



59. The number of livelihood extension workers of the rural life improvement program is currently about 1,500 (as of 1957). As we try to help the people to improve their lives, what gives us most satisfaction?
It is when we witness the farmers they helped carrying out each improvement and actually take advantage of it in their daily lives. We, The livelihood extension workers also feel rewarded when we see how farmers have developed; for example, when women who couldn't say anything in front of others expresses their own opinions to others.



60. Fin.

