

Nurturing productivity practitioners in Africa

The Roundtable Conference for the Promotion of the Productivity Movement in Africa held in Sandton, South Africa, in August 2006 set the stage for the productivity partnership between the APO and the Pan African Productivity Association (PAPA). Since then, the APO, with financial support from the Japanese government, has supported productivity movement activities in Africa by sharing and transferring its knowledge and expertise through various means. One important program is the training course on Development of Productivity Practitioners: Basic and Advanced.

“The course’s main objective is to equip NPO consultants and trainers with productivity improvement techniques and tools to develop their competencies in the promotion and application of these techniques in organizations and industries,” explained Secretariat Industry Program Officer Md. Zainuri Juri. Zainuri recently conducted the basic training course in Johannesburg, South Africa, 7 September–2 October. “With the completion of this course, we have conducted four in total, three basic and one advanced, for around 130 participants. The second advanced course is scheduled for early next year,” he noted.

Acting Chief Executive Officer Bongani Coka of Productivity SA, the host organization, described it as “an initiative that brings Africa and the Asia-Pacific together.” Coka also mentioned that the successful strategic partnership had greatly contributed to capacity building and the successful revival of the productivity movement in Africa, something desperately needed for the socio-economic development of the continent.

The APO deputed five resource speakers from India, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore to impart fundamental productivity knowledge to the 28 participants from the six PAPA member countries Botswana, South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria, Zambia, and Mauritius. The four-week course was designed to teach numerous basic productivity tools and techniques as well as concepts



Participants displaying the results of a team-building exercise

and activities. The highlight of the course was a four-day in-plant diagnostic practice that included an onsite survey, observation, and problem analysis, with recommendations provided at the end of the course. Participants divided into two groups to conduct productivity diagnosis at two selected companies: Ogilvy’s Conference and Lodge; and Sheltered Employment Factories, a garment factory that employs people with disabilities. The managers of those companies were invited to the presentations of the analysis and appreciated the suggestions and recommendations made.

“The in-plant diagnostic exercise was a culmination of all that had been taught in the course. It was a very interesting part of the course in that I was also able to apply what I had learned in a real-life situation,” commented Senior Occupational Assessment Officer Katembu Nkanza Kaumba, National Productivity Development, Zambia. “I would like to play a major role in raising awareness on the basic concept of productivity starting with my department and ministry,” she added in describing her plans after the course. 🌀