

APO and TDLC/World Bank collaborate in distance-learning seminar in TQM

With advances in information and communication technology (ICT), distance e-learning has emerged as a powerful tool for knowledge dissemination, reaching a wide range of people very cost-effectively. The APO is maximizing its efforts to utilize all possible e-learning-based modalities and has established its own Internet-based e-Learning Portal. In 2004, six e-learning projects were conducted utilizing the portal. On the other hand, the APO is also collaborating with other organizations such as the Japan International Cooperation Agency, World Bank-initiated Global Development Learning Network (GDLN), etc. to offer e-learning activities using different platforms. From 13–16 December 2004, the APO in collaboration with the Tokyo Development Learning Center (TDLC), a partner in the GDLN, organized a seminar on Total Quality Management (TQM).

The seminar was the third such collaboration with the TDLC. The previous two endeavors were attempts to utilize a videoconference-based e-learning component in an ongoing face-to-face APO project. The seminar on TQM, however, was a project entirely based on videoconferencing methodology. Participants from the five member countries of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam attended the seminar. Three resource persons made their presentations to the seminar utilizing the TDLC.

The seminar was made possible by the network of GDLN videoconferencing centers in the capital cities of five APO member countries: Bangkok (Thailand), Hanoi (Vietnam), Jakarta (Indonesia), Manila (the Philippines), and Tokyo (Japan). Kuala Lumpur was connected using the videoconferencing center of the Association of Technical Scholarships, Japan. Altogether, 81 productivity practitioners attended the seminar: 21 from Indonesia, 11 from Malaysia, 20 from the Philippines, eight from Thailand, and 21 from Vietnam. They came from private-sector corporations, public-sector institutions, academia, and NPOs. In each center except for Indonesia, with two local coordinators, a local technical expert served as the coordinator. That a single transmission can reach 81 people located in five different countries simultaneously is one of the compelling reasons for using e-learning as a training and information dissemination tool, in addition to its cost-effectiveness and great potential multiplier effects.

The opening session of the seminar was officiated by APO Secretary-General Shigeo Takenaka and World Bank Vice-President and Special Representative to Japan Yukio Yoshimura. Takenaka, in his address, expressed the hope that the seminar would result in new professional breakthroughs as we face challenges while thriving in the 21st century. He also mentioned that the impact of ICT/Internet use in learning and experience sharing for the promotion of productivity and quality is enormous and the APO will continue its efforts to use ICT to the maximum possible extent. Yoshimura stated that the seminar would contribute to the establishment of a solid long-term partnership to deliver high-quality distance-learning programs to Asia-Pacific countries.

The four-day e-learning project included a half-day presentation on the concept of TQM by Prof. Kosaku Yoshida, Aoyama Gakuin University Graduate School of International Management, an authority on TQM who worked with the quality legend W. Edwards Deming. The second half of the first day was devoted to a case study of TQM activities in a Japanese company. The session



(L-R) S. Ferdousi, APO Secretariat, Ken Inoue, APO Secretariat, Takenaka, Yoshimura, and M. Bhattarai, APO Secretariat, at the opening session

was conducted by Keizo Ninomiya, General Manager, Consulting Department, Furukawa Techno-Research Company of Japan. The participants in each center were escorted on a company visit on the second day to observe firsthand the actual application of the concepts and techniques of TQM. On day three, a participant from each of the centers presented a report of that visit. The presentations were coordinated by Masakhiko Arkawa, Councilor of the Japan Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Development, who also reviewed the

(Continued on page 6)



APO and TDLC (Continued from page 8)

presentations. On the final day, Arakawa continued coverage of additional aspects of TQM and concluded the seminar.

Participant feedback indicated satisfaction with the experience because they were able to grasp the basic principles of TQM and broaden their knowledge of its implementation not only through the resource persons but also from other participating member countries. Based on the participants' evaluation it was felt that the seminar content provided a comprehensive explanation of TQM, which they found enlightening, inspiring, and refreshing. The exercises, story-telling approach, integration and management of learning at the end of the day, and particularly the Q&A sessions when participants were encouraged to ask questions directly were considered high points of the seminar. Lanlan, the coordinator in the Philippines, wrote: "...Nothing beats, of course, a face-to-face, classroom type of learning environment where discussions can be spontaneous and freewheeling. However, when it comes to numbers, the multiplier effects of a videoconference can be remarkable. Imagine reaching out to some 80 participants from five NPOs at one time instead of the usual 18 or 20. And, in terms of cost, there are substantial savings in airfare and per diem allowances." 