

Social productivity: Learning from examples of corporate social responsibility in Japan

A seminar on Practical Management for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) was organized in Tokyo, 26–30 June, in collaboration with the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and the Japan Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Development. Nineteen participants from 15 APO member countries and five self-sponsored observers attended the seminar to investigate how Japanese companies fulfill CSR.

On the first day, Senior Analyst Mariko Kawaguchi of Daiwa Institute of Research, Ltd. gave an overview of CSR to provide a common understanding to the participants and lay the groundwork for subsequent field visits. As a unique attempt in the area of CSR, Chief Executive Officer Eriko Yamaguchi, Motherhouse Company Ltd., introduced her business in Bangladesh producing and importing jute bags. Her fair-trade business contributes not only to local employment generation but also to improving the quality of jute products based on the skills of local people.

On the second day, General-Manager and Corporate Citizenship Office Manager, CSR Department, Hiroaki Yoshizawa explained how Fuji Xerox started operating an international integrated recycling system to collect its own products in the Asia-Pacific region and to disassemble and separate them all for recycling at the Fuji Xerox Eco-Manufacturing Co., Ltd. in Thailand. The aim is to achieve 100% recycling at its own overseas plants. In the afternoon, the participants visited a factory of Ajinomoto Co., Inc. in Kawasaki to observe its comprehensive wastewater treatment system. Associate General Manager, Environment & CSR Department, CSR Division, Nobuyuki Sugimoto and his team described various CSR-related activities of the Ajinomoto group from environmental concerns to communication with stakeholders. The third day of the seminar was spent visiting the AEON Eco-Store: Environmentally Conscious Shopping Center in Chiba prefecture. Innovations in the Eco-Store include solar power generation and comprehensive energy-saving system, and TOPVALU green purchasing.

Site visits on the fourth day focused on the CSR activities initiated by SMEs. At



Comprehensive wastewater treatment system demonstrated at a factory of Ajinomoto Co., Inc.

Beni San Dyeing Co. Ltd., 400 employees converted its old factory into a theater for art groups and the local community, in an example of *mecenat* (corporate support for arts and culture). U's Corporation, with 11 employees, offers an innovative business model by recycling edible cooking oil into vegetable diesel fuel as an alternative biofuel for light oil. The company contributes to society through its environmentally sustainable business based on years of experience in the oil and fat industry.

On the final day of the seminar, the participants summarized what they had learned from the Japanese examples and generated ideas on how they could initiate CSR activities under the conditions in their own countries. 🌀