

CWA Magazine



Community Work for Asia
= CWA World Network =

This is an online magazine to introduce our “Community Work” in the Asian region.



How to Create Valuable Community Work

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The Way of Community Work for Asia

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Community Saving by Villagers

In Cambodia there is a community saving system to support the development of the community. The people and the leader in the community are committed to this project and bring their hard earned money together and use the money for the community. Spending money for the community is the first step to achieving independence but the money cannot be collected unless the villagers want to join the savings fund. In Beong Kachang community, Koh Kong province for example, villagers (pictured below) have a monthly meeting, and they discuss problems that the community faces and try



to find a solution. The community savings fund is also lent to people who want to start and expand their businesses or receive a housing loan. Sometimes the money is spent to improve public goods such as road improvements and maintenance. Community saving loans charge 2% interest. The community receives this interest to cover administrative cost with the villagers' agreement. Although the community saving system is developing, there is a problem with the loans. The amount of money available for making loans is limited, and sometimes this amount is not enough for people to start their own businesses.

What Makes a Business Sustainable?

Professor Kataoka (pictured right), CWA's founder, is determined to support this community to be more independent. He sent CWA Cambodia and CWA Japan youth members to discuss with the community the possibility of starting a cooperative project. "How can the community achieve independence?" "Is it through enough resources and a stable economy?" "What is necessary for a stable economy?" "What are the community's resources?" If we have a certain amount of money, can we improve independence? We do not think that money is the only way to enhance independence.



We believe that people with a strong will to contribute to the community and to be independent are the most important factor for the community becoming independent. It is true that resources can bring benefits. But even if we have enough resources and a stable economy, this does not directly lead to community independence. The most necessary thing is human resource. Even if we do not have money, skills, and equipment, we can achieve success as long as we have good human resources who want to be helpful in the community.

We picked up members of CWA Koh Kong. Their educational backgrounds are only to primary school, and their reading and writing skills are not perfect. Some people say that people cannot do business unless they are skilled. But we believe that the most important point is the motivation to improve their skills and an awareness of problems. And we think that the real experience of solving problems will improve their skills. If we can gather human resources and skills, as the next step we need a sustainable business to build economic independence. We believe that business makes the sustainable environment. I will introduce the steps to do community work.

1: The Problem Solving Process

We discuss with locals the problems in their community (pictured right) and find what is necessary for them. For instance, one community lacks developed infrastructures such as running water and electricity. People do not have access to electricity and they have to go to charge batteries once every 2 or 3 days to use electricity. As for a water problem, since this community is surrounded by sea, they can get only salted water even though they dig a well. Before identifying solutions, the first step is to find such problems. From this step we need to make a clear vision about what we can provide and how we can create a business by solving problems.



2: Creating the Community System and Business Plans

Before starting a project, we consider what stakeholders there are and think about how they can contribute to our projects and the new community system. For instance, the community might want to have solar panels. In this case we will provide them with solar panels. In exchange, villages will give us sea products and shells (pictured below left). We then think about how we can make a business from what we receive and how we can create jobs. For people who are very poor and cannot provide us with any sea product and money, we created the idea of a working bank where we exchange electricity for labour. We want to send out a message of an exchange system that is not just based on money.



3: Practicing Sustainable Business

The business' profits will be paid for the benefit of the community and employees. They are supposed to not have the skills to start a business immediately and initially there is not a conducive environment. With our support, we are able to help the community to step up and produce good quality products (pictured below right). In addition, we need stability. Stable income is necessary sustainable community development. In order to achieve this environment, we need a market and stable customers.

4: Making Profit

We need to make a profit from selling community products and use the money for people in the community or public goods. People in the community can own our solar panels, paying us back with their earnings. They can improve the quality of their public services with the profits from the business. In this process, the point is how to create value from business.



5: Re-Investment

The profits will also be reinvested in new community businesses and public goods. The administration role will gradually be shifted from CWA Cambodia to the community's leadership through this re-investment.

6: Community Self-Sufficiency

The final step to achieving independence is for the community business leaders to acquire the knowhow to run the business. This includes cash handling and creating the right products. Our community trade system will help the people to make good for themselves. They can re-invest their earnings to get the skills they need.



Youth Involvement in Community Work

After a few surveys with the Beong Kachang community and discussion about their circumstances, we decided to build community work through cooperating with youth. Business through community work will be the first step to developing independence. We would like to make success stories one by one to expand community trade and enhance the independence of the community.

Create Jobs through Cooperation

Masaki Hasegawa

The Third World Shop Handy Craft Import Division



Our Dream to Create Jobs in Local Town

In 2012, The Third World Shop finished a ten year scholarship project in The Philippines contributing to education for children living in towns. Through this project, we have supported a lot of children helping them to graduate and find jobs. For our next collaboration, we want to create local jobs for the now educated youth so that they can live, with pride, in their hometowns. We started a new project. This helped not only these specific children and their families, but also their communities to develop sustainability.



There were simply no jobs in the local towns and the youth had to go to a big city to find work. A designer began by producing handmade paper lampshades, as an alternative to traditionally produced calendars and cards within the community. The lamps appeared in a JICA Christmas catalog last December. The plan was to create jobs by producing Christmas catalogues and introducing these to Japanese companies in the Philippines with the assistance of a Japanese NGO. The initiative produced three kinds of SHAPII hand-made paper pressed flower landscapes (pictured left) and one produced by a local hand-made paper designer, Mr DuDui, whose talent is widely respected in the community. The catalogue was handed out to Japanese companies in The Philippines, with SHAPII receiving orders and delivering the goods to clients.



It was the first time that SHAPII sold goods in their home country and sent them to clients directly. Because it is different from the usual way The Third World Shop operates, they initially found setting prices and handling orders confusing. However, we found Mr. Neal a leading salesman who worked with them and encouraged them to play an active role. What did Mr. Neal's report say about the catalogue?



Q. How Many of the Lampshades Were Sold?

A: Neal - In total, 75 lampshades were sold. I was genuinely worried about the reaction because lampshades are different from cards or calendars. But we immediately got orders from Japanese companies! We were relieved and the order quantities were much greater than we expected. While we were thankful, we did not have enough pressed flowers, lamp bases, and shade

wooden frames (pictured above) made by DuDui (pictured right) to fill the orders. The delivery date was soon after the order and we didn't have time to source the same pressed flowers or to order more lamp bases. So we could only fill orders with the supplies on hand. It was a shame as we had received more orders, but we could not fill them. We now knew we needed to make more products.



Q. What Were the Results of the Project?

A: Neal - We now knew we could sell the new products and we succeeded in getting access to Filipino internal markets and introducing our products to them. This was a great result. We made beautiful lamps so we are sure that we can get more orders if we can solve the problem of short order times and materials. We are now working to develop our products and sell more in internal markets. We are expecting to sell lamps as souvenirs and presents and are confident that this will create new jobs in the town.

Q How About the Staff Reaction?

A: Neal - Of course, they were very satisfied with the products. They were very thankful for both the income and for what they learned through the project. The lamps were developed with the designer The Third World Shop sent, Ms Tomoko Minagawa (pictured right, on the far right). They are chic but simple in design. They are looking forward to sell the lamps again in the upcoming year. We are thankful for the opportunity provided by The Third World Shop!



One Step Forward through Community Trade!

Until now, SHAPII has targeted foreign markets but now they are trying to access internal markets. The result was that we managed to create new jobs by developing a product and a market targeting internal markets and seeing it through from output to delivery. We hope for success in both internal and external markets. Actually, we introduced SHAPII to markets in Europe and the United States 20 years ago and they managed to increase the output and sales, however, now we are trying to shift to internal markets and go back to the community.

Moving to internal markets is only good if we are able to sell our goods. We succeeded by mediating between the markets and the sellers. The Third World Shop didn't make money from these sales. But we derived great satisfaction from the practice of "Community Trade" for producers and the hope generated by it. We couldn't be happier. The key is for that hope to be understood overseas in Japan. In Japan, people think, "Fair-trade is good." or "scholarship program is good." As a result, they embrace "Fair-Trade" but are blind to the fact that more and more young people are abandoning their towns for city jobs. We hope to communicate this to them and change their mind.

The next step is that we expand the project and create more jobs in towns in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way. We need to create worthwhile projects that meet SHAPII's mission of "creating sustainable jobs with pride and hope in town". We don't want to forget our mission. We need to act continuously with an awareness of social issues. We will contribute through SHAPII to widen selling in the Philippines and make new products.



At The Third World Shop we don't just want to exchange products, but pursue community trade that solves issues in small local towns and makes a better world through trade, knowledge and skills. This project is based on a model of high-level cooperation with producers, business partners and consumers. We hope that SHAPII's lamps that were sold in the Philippines will also be distributed in Japan.

It is our dream to continue to learn and create challenging projects together!

Wisdom of Female Entrepreneurs Creates Products – Caracan Bars

Kyoko Okutani
Head of World Women's Banking (WWB) Japan



We have been developing products using the ideas of female entrepreneurs who have graduated from WWB Japan School. One of these products, the “Caracan Bar” has already become a classic at the Third World Shop. Having been involved in the development process, many people know the back-story of this product; however as time elapses, fewer people will be able to tell the story. Thus, passing the story on is important for community trade progress.

One Day, We Discovered Caracan!

In 2004, about eight and a half years ago, Masaru Kataoka, the founder of the Third World Shop, handed us a mysterious powder and said, “In Sri Lanka, diabetics eat this cereal called Caracan. We’re probably going to see an increase in diabetes sufferers in Japan, so we should stock this!”

First of all, we were surprised to find how common diabetes is in Sri Lanka. We thought that diabetes was a rich world disease caused by luxurious diets high in sugar and fats. From visiting Indonesia, we now know that fried food is very popular. In grocery stores, we saw shelves filled with gallon-sized containers of cooking oils. We also had to ask for no sugar to be added when ordering fruit juice. Otherwise, the juice was far too sweet from added sugar. In this light, we understood why diabetes is so prevalent.

We had also never heard of ‘Caracan’ before. Therefore, we researched it in the online cereal encyclopedia; we found out that Caracan is called “Sikokubie” in Japanese, which is a rare species that is not used as food in Japan. We divided up the sample powder among the staff members and each cooked at our homes.

From that day on, lunchtime became a Caracan tasting meeting. At first, we tried to make everything on our own: for instance, 100% Caracan dough falls apart when boiled and the pure powder has too strong a spicy smell. On the other hand, we discovered that Caracan is very filling and that we did not need a snack in the evening. We also heard about a restaurant that makes noodles out of Caracan and serves it with curry. When we went to the restaurant to eat, we asked a Sri Lankan how they used Caracan. They gave us a tip to mix the Caracan with equal quantities of flour. Using these methods, we searched for the characteristics of Caracan.

Bringing Wisdom Together at Exchange Event

As we are amateurs we only have a limited number of ideas, so we sought inspiration by bringing together female entrepreneurs from the food industry and cooking and baking enthusiasts from across the nation. We supplied Caracan samples along with its description and our thoughts on the ideas we had already tried while asking those with a passion for baking and cooking to develop prototypes.



The female entrepreneurs had also never seen Caracan before; they made their own dishes through trial and error and brought some samples to our exchange event for tasting (pictured left). The food and beverage industry is very competitive and it is not unusual for new businesses to fail within three years; we were concerned that the entrepreneurs would think that sharing recipes would damage their business – however, the reality was quite the contrary. People openly shared their experiences like, “I was able to bake fragrantly this way” and “These materials were really compatible”. They seriously considered the best ideas for us.

It was exciting to see creative people with inquiring minds come together! At the same time, it reminded us of the genuine capacity of the female entrepreneurs.

We had various Caracan dishes and snacks at the event, such as thickened soup, pudding, Oyaki (dumplings), bread and Okonomiyaki (Japanese pancakes). After trying all the samples, everyone agreed that Misa Matsumoto’s ‘cereal cookie’ had potential. She runs a baking school for children called “Misaling Factory” in Yokohama. She attended the WWB School before starting her business and then decided to put her love for baking to use and participate in our exchange event. Knowing the background of Caracan, such as its filling nature and the fact that diabetics eat Caracan, she decided to make healthy cookies. She used maple syrup to sweeten the cookies instead of white sugar and dairy products such as butter.

Finding a Place for Manufacturing – Nagomi at Toyonaka

The next challenge was finding someone who would actually manufacture the cookies. Ms. Matsumoto, who came up with the recipe, aims at having a baking school for children; therefore we needed to find another location to manufacture the products. As we began our search, we were introduced to a welfare work station, “Nagomi” in Toyonaka, Osaka. They are a welfare facility located in a section of an elementary school with a declining number of students. While many welfare facilities produce cookies using special ingredients such as domestically made flour, we are the first in Japan to use Caracan in cookies. At the same time, Ms. Higuchi, who is in charge of the snack department, was looking for something that would make Nagomi unique; therefore our goals matched perfectly.

At long last, in 2005, the Iyokan flavoured Caracan Bar (pictured right) made its debut. Its simple taste and chewiness was especially popular with women, and it is still loved by customers around the country to this day.



Keeping a Stable Relationship

As well as thanking Ms. Matsumoto again for providing us with the recipe, we would like to help keep the workers at Nagomi smiling and to maintain our seven-year relationship with the facility; and then we hope to continue our relationship for another ten or twenty years or more. We hope one day that the Caracan Bar will become famous across the nation.

Caracan Bar continues to be a popular product and is available at the Third World Shop!

Working not for Money but for Solidarity with Others

Kyoko Okutani
Head of WWB Japan



In order to support the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami victims to regain their economic independence, a new idea is required. Purchase reservations enable businesses to be paid for their products in advance and this money can then be used for job creation. Here we introduce WWB Japan's efforts to help the post-earthquake reconstruction by developing solidarity between the manufacturers and consumers in that way.

Mobilising a Network of Female Entrepreneurs after 3.11

I was at an office in Tokyo when the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami struck. When I found out that the hypocenter of the earthquake was in Iwate, I immediately thought of Ms. Shizuko Niwa of Kunobe-county, Hirono (in Iwate prefecture, pictured right), who is a business friend of mine going back several years and owns a local seafood restaurant, which serves fresh sea urchins and ascidians. On the phone I heard that her boat, car, and restaurant had all been washed away by the tsunami; the scene was like an image of hell. My friends and I immediately donated supplies such as fuel to a direct relief truck.



Although Ms. Niwa was exhausted from removing the rubble, she did not feel self-pity. Instead, she was worried about the future of her employees; she said “it’s really difficult to spend each day without doing anything. If they had a place to work, they wouldn’t have to keep moving.” I immediately called for a “You Can Send it Anytime Order” (a purchase reservation for Ms. Niwa’s products) across the country. In just five days, we collected two million yen (50,000 yen per person) and she managed to rebuild her processing factory with this money. Over the course of the next few years, they would make products worth 50,000 yen and send them back to the donors. In this way, the future of the business is secured while job opportunities are created. Female entrepreneurs all around the country cooperated in this project as well as sending hearty cheers to it “We wanted to help in a way that we could see the faces of those we were supporting. We will wait for ever and a day until the products are ready.” These words encouraged Ms. Niwa more than money could.

Starting a Social “Knitting-work” Project!

In 1990 WWB Japan, the Japanese branch of Women’s World Banking was founded, to support women to gain economic independence. WWB Japan host entrepreneurship seminars to equip people to overcome the legal, financial and educational obstacles to starting a business. Since they began, WWB Japan has helped about a thousand entrepreneurs. We utilised this network to gather support for the disaster relief effort and made a resolute effort to make

activities which “could come in hand should it become necessary”.

Once the purchase reservation for Ms. Niwa’s products was set, we tried to think of ideas to take advantage of the talents of the women in evacuation centers and temporary housing. We decided that due to cost it was better to use these existing facilities instead of setting up a new facility. Then I remembered an image, of my grandmother knitting in my youth. She cherished her yarn as she unraveled her knitting several times to create something new. Knitting is the ultimate form of recycling; it can be done anytime anywhere if the materials are provided. In addition, we could gain the support of Ms. Asae Misono, a knitting designer who graduated from our seminar. We started the “Social Knitting-work Project” creating jobs and purpose in the lives of these women (pictured right).



In June 2011, just before the hot and humid season, we asked for donations of yarn balls and knitting tools. Once this was completed, WWB Japan gave the yarn to around 60 knitters in Aizuwakamatsu (in Fukushima prefecture), Miyako, Iwaizumi, Otsuchi (in Iwate prefecture), and Aomori (in Aomori prefecture). The yarn was collected for free, and there are more well-meaning people who are eager to donate yarn even now. Moreover, when we asked people to purchase the products; over 150 people offered to purchase 30,000 yen worth of the products. This led to the creation of jobs and knitting clubs in each district. People who used to be strangers became friends and could talk about anything with each other regardless of their age. Although people in temporary housing can be shy, here, they happily chatted with knitting tools in hand and it is always filled with laughter. Also, those that mastered knitting in Iwate would travel to Aomori to teach some techniques and improve each other’s skills; this developed genuine solidarity among the knitting community.

Creating Jobs that We Can Be Proud of

A year after the earthquake, the news coverage began to decline; we therefore had to consider how to continue our support as a business. We visited Miyako and suggested to the local women to make their own original products (pictured below) and to travel across the country and sell these products as they share their experiences during the disaster. While many others would have turned down such a proposal, the reaction from the women in Miyako



was different as they showed a positive attitude. They enthusiastically agreed saying, “They’ve already done so much for us and it is time for us to become independent!” With their strong sense of ambition, they have accepted requests from large corporations to produce their products for distribution to countries as far away as France. The women have begun to establish a cooperative business association, which will enable them to accept orders and distribute jobs among themselves.

Manual work is very satisfying and also provides a sense of joy and fulfillment when completed; the gratitude from the consumers encourages the workers. In such a positive cycle, the bonding with the consumers further motivates the workers to work. Using our brains and our hands is what working is all about. They have taught us that they work for happiness and in order to live with a positive attitude. Even though the economy is currently unstable, these workers are very strong, working with their own brains and hands rather than relying on organisations. We believe this employment model is a leading example for Japan; by supporting individuals affected by the earthquake to be economically independent, we have found a way to save Japan from dependency.