

Take my hand

the
newsletter of
Asian Rural Institute

Winter
2013



More than 50 graduates assembled
for ARI's 40th anniversary.

in this issue

page 2

Report of the 40th Anniversary
Celebration and Symposium

page 7

Men's Dorm & Pig Pens completed

page 8

2013 Training Report

page 10

Voice: Yanti from Indonesia,
Mitsu from Japan,
Andy from Ecuador

page 13

Graduates at Work:
Serving Naga Society for 30 Years

page 14

Short News

page 15

AFARI tries to work like ARI

page 16

Foodlife Notes:
One Year of Foodlife Work
as a Volunteer Couple

Giving Thanks for 40 Years Since ARI's Founding

This year, on September 16 (ARI Foundation Anniversary), Asian Rural Institute celebrated 40 full years since its founding in 1973. I give thanks for the prayerful support given by so many individuals and organizations over the years, which enabled us to walk forward for 40 years. As suggested by ARI's formal name, *Asian Rural Institute Rural Leaders Training Center*, ARI began with a vision to train Asian rural leaders. Today we count 1,241 graduates across 55 countries, not only in Asia, but in Africa, Pacific islands, South America and the Caribbean. The training of leaders who will engage in grassroots rural development has remained our foremost aim throughout these 40 years.

Many of our graduates and supporters across the globe lovingly refer to Asian Rural Institute by the shortened names, "A.R.I." and "ari." I continue to be struck by how many people, especially graduates, speak with pride about

what they learned at ARI. The fact that so many graduates participated in the 40th Anniversary Celebration and Symposium is a demonstration of this, I think.

Throughout our long walk it has been our constant prayer that every graduate stand with people in the rural areas of Asian and Africa, produce safe, life-giving food through the practice of sustainable agriculture, and help to build a society in which each person shares with "others." As I express gratitude once more to God our guide, and to every one of you, I recall again the words that have been ARI's motto since its founding; "That we may live together." With renewed commitment to this vision, we seek with humility to take our next steps forward.

Kenichi Otsu
Chairman of the Board and Director
Asian Rural Institute

Asian Rural Institute
Rural Leaders Training Center





Day 1
Sept. 16

40周年
YRS.

Asian Rural Institute
40th Anniversary
Celebration and Symposium

Transformation at the Grassroots

40 Years of Walking
with Rural Leaders

On the occasion of Asian Rural Institute's 40th anniversary, ARI graduates, supporters, volunteers and staff gathered for a Celebration Ceremony and Symposium over two days, September 16 & 17, 2013.

Aiming to develop a vision to realize a peaceful, equitable and sustainable future, graduates shared stories and insights gathered from their many years of engagement in rural development.

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION CEREMONY

On the morning of September 16th, despite the approach of a strong typhoon, over 200 guests gathered from across Japan and abroad to join staff, graduates, participants and volunteers in Koinonia (dining and multi-purpose) Hall to attend the 40th Anniversary Celebration Ceremony. Among those attending were 57 graduates, who would also serve as resource persons in the following Symposium.

Four honored guests offered words of con-

gratulations during the Celebration Ceremony: Representing graduates, Mr. Jerome Sardar of Bangladesh, member of the 1st Graduating Class; On behalf of overseas supporters, Ms. Melissa Crutchfield of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR); Speaking for domestic supporters was Mr. Toshio Itabashi, Chairman of Rotary Yoneyama Memorial Foundation and Representative of Tochigi Association of Corporate Executives; and the Hon. Tomikazu Fukuda, Governor of Tochigi Prefecture. Each speaker spoke kindly of ARI's accomplishments over the years and expressed joy with the fruits of

their support and cooperation. The Ceremony also featured the presentation of citations of gratitude to the following 8 organizations, which have given support to ARI for 25 or more consecutive years:

Asian Rural Welfare Association, United Church of Christ in Japan (UCCJ) Nishinasuno Church, UCCJ National Federation of Congregational Women's Associations, Anglican Episcopal Church in Japan Women's Association, Rotary Yoneyama Memorial Foundation, Tokyo Union Church, ARI Supporters Association (ARISA), American Friends of ARI (AFARI)



(1) A participant during the rice harvest in 1983.
(2) Ms. Melissa Crutchfield delivering a speech at the Anniversary Celebration Ceremony. (3) Local supporters join the ARI community members choir "Minngos" for a joyful performance.





SYMPOSIUM PART 1

Keynote Presentations and Panel Discussion

The 40th Anniversary Symposium, ***Transformation at the Grassroots – 40 Years of Walking with Rural Leaders***, opened after lunch with keynote presentations from two graduates, who addressed the theme “The transformation we have brought about, and vision for the future.”

The first presenter was Mr. Thomas Mathew from India, representative of SEEDS India, who is active internationally as a peace advocate. Thomas told how, through his training at ARI, his own community in South India was transformed, and proposed that future training of rural development promoters and leaders strengthen its focus on peace and environmental issues—especially the problems of nuclear weapons, nuclear power and the global arms trade—active resolution methods such as inter-faith dialogue, effective use of social media, alternative energy, sustainable development and human rights education.

The second presenter was Ms. Judith Daka, a graduate from Zambia. Judith shared how she was herself changed into a “humble servant leader” after graduation, and introduced the training center where she (and husband John, another ARI graduate, who established the center) works to help society’s most disadvantaged, especially women with AIDS and orphans, to acquire “life skills” centered on food production. Her recommendations toward the future included establishment of a backup system in Japan to assist ARI graduates to achieve true independence and sustainability in their activities at home, a further strengthening of ARI’s curriculum, and the award of certifications after completion of training.

These two presentations were followed by a panel discussion, in which four graduates shared their experience-based ideas on the theme, “Transformation at the grassroots and vision for the future.” Each of the four panelists explained how training at ARI nurtured qualities in them that were necessary to work as “servant leaders” in their own region, and how they “translated” the knowledge and skills gained at ARI to meet local community needs and implement development projects. As they recounted the difficulties they faced and the efforts it took to change the minds of farmers to perform safe agriculture, the graduates explained how they adapted their ARI learnings toward successful implementation.



- (4) Panorama of the ceremony attendees.
- (5) Director Otsu hands a citation of gratitude to AFARI representative Pam Hasegawa.
- (6) Keynote speakers Thomas Mathew and Judith Daka.
- (7) The Governor of Tochigi prefecture.
- (8) The four graduates who served as panelists (from left); Ms. Christina Fonge (Cameroon), Mr. Donald Paul (Myanmar), Mr. Kim Jun-Kwon (Korea) and Ms. Tan Siew Luang (Malaysia).



9



10



11

**Day 2
Sept. 17**

SYMPOSIUM PART 2

Group Discussions (Morning)

Day 2 of the Symposium began with a Group Discussion Session, in which symposium attendees were divided into seven topical groups, each with about 20 people including graduates, supporters, current ARI community members and others. The seven discussion topics were;

- 1) *Organic farming and the environment*
- 2) *Women`s issues and gender equity*
- 3) *Children and youth*
- 4) *Peace building*
- 5) *The influence of religion in community*
- 6) *Community-centered change*
- 7) *Strengths-based community development*

Each group`s discussion was facilitated by a graduate, who began with a brief reflection based on her/his own experience,

then invited other grads and group members to shared their stories and insights. Conversation was guided by the common question, “What are the processes and issues in rural community transformation?”

Plenary Report Session (Afternoon)

In the afternoon of Day 2, the seven groups reported their key points of discussion back to the plenary. Record was kept of the points presented, and a document containing the results of group discussions was given to ARI Director Rev. Ken-ichi Otsu, with the prayers of all that these might help to formulate ARI`s vision in the future.



12



13



14



15

Transformation at the Grassroots



(9) Rev. Dr. Toshihiro Takami listens during the plenary report session. (10) Group discussion about “children and youth,” with graduates, staff members and guests. (11) Graduate of 1978 Bernadine Yatawara (Sri Lanka) presents the results of the group discussion. (12) Supporters listen to graduates’ stories at a preliminary sharing event. (13) Representatives of AFARI extend greetings to the community. From left to right: J.B. Hoover, Pam Hasegawa, Joyce and Bob Ray who were volunteering during the summer, and Ellen Marsey. (14) For almost two weeks, many members, including graduates, helped with the challenging task of cooking for a hundred people every day! (15) ARI Education Director Osamu Arakawa (left) gives the graduates a tour of our farm. After the symposium, there were many other programs for the graduates to join, such as observation trips and presentations. This unprecedented chance to get to know each other made us aware of how widely spread the ARI family is around the globe.



40周年
YRS.



SUMMARY

Two days of discussion with graduates and supporters about “Transformation at the Grassroots,” brought into view many issues that will be important for the discernment of ARI’s future.

What is the “transformation at the grassroots” brought about by ARI graduates?

ARI graduates now number 1,272 in 56 countries. Most of these graduates have remained in rural areas of their home countries after completing their ARI training, and have stood with people in positions of weakness, who are shunned or overlooked by public services or economic aid. They have worked with their neighbors to overcome challenges through creative utilization of limited resources. In recent years they have also worked, passionately and faithfully, to meet the challenges posed by increasingly complex problems, like internal conflicts, or environmental troubles. Their good work is by no means conspicuous, and often goes unrecognized. But they take pride in this, and they have worked steadily with their people with a simple aim, to build a tomorrow that is better than today.

And what, exactly, is the “transformation” that is brought about by these graduates? It is not the kind of transformation that moves nations, or the world. Rather, it is a constant series of small transformations,

of various shapes and at many levels, that build a tomorrow which is better than today. At the same time these are transformations that honor the sanctity of every person’s life and point toward salvation. In some respects, certainly in many lives, we might even say that this transformation is more powerful than great events that move nations and the world.

We also believe this is a transformation that gives hope to young people standing at the precipice of despair, who will be the next generation of leaders. It points toward the promise that, if one person can lead with love and a desire to serve people, if just one can show leadership that is not motivated by selfishness or material gain, even the most hopeless community can be transformed. The importance of rural communities is increasing today, as the source of food, as the place where water and other precious environmental resources are found and protected, and as the place where customs and culture is passed down. Yet, everywhere around the world, young people are leaving the rural village behind for the city. Amid this trend, graduates of ARI are causing people to recognize anew the value of the rural village, and to see that true hope for the

future is to be found in rural community. Indeed, this might be the precious “transformation” that they have brought about.

Recommendations toward the coming years

The challenges faced by rural communities around the world continue to mount. As the frequency of inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts within state boundaries increases, and as environmental problems and climate change impact human beings, the heaviest brunt is invariably borne by society’s most vulnerable people, often in rural areas. If we leave unattended the problems which concentrate in rural areas, it is clear that stability and peace of nations will recede further from our reach.



(16) Participants and graduates joined hands in harvesting rice this year! (17) John Nyondo (left), Zambian graduate of 1983, as Training Assistant in 1993. He came back to ARI for the 40th anniversary celebration and stayed for about a month, together with his wife Judith Daka.



In light of these realities we believe that the importance of rural leader training, which we have continued for 40 years, is still increasing. Even though the world's city-dwelling population surpassed 50% in 2008, the remaining half of humanity lives in rural areas. ARI's mission is to contribute to the improvement of living standards and the achievement and recovery of human rights for people who live in rural areas. Rural communities around the world are longing for "transformation" in these areas: (1) *Religious and cultural co-existence*, (2) *Peace building*, (3) *Food security in the face of environmental and climate problems*, (4) *Education of youth*, (5) *Gender equity in all of the areas above*.

To chart a path toward these transformations, and to lead their communities forward, rural leaders will need to be equipped with the following:

- Commitment to, and understanding (knowledge) of, multi-religious and multi-cultural co-existence, as well as skills for its facilitation
- Commitment to, and skills for, "Community peace building" which begins in the home
- Understanding of environmental prob-

lems and complex climate change, and knowledge and skills for countermeasures

- Passion and skills to provide wholesome guidance to youth (especially girls)
- Deep insight about gender issues, as well as passion and skills to achieve equity
- Effective techniques for rural development: In particular, personal resources and practical skills to offer good examples of principles emphasized at ARI, like "Dignity of labor," "Embracing and learning from diversity," "Reconciliation," "Equality," "Prayer" and "Learning by doing."

Gleaned from the many lively discussions that took place among "ARI family" who attended the Symposium (graduates, staffs past and present, 2013 trainees, volunteers and supporters from across Japan and abroad), these and other recommendations will guide the vision of our training program in the coming years. ARI's staff will continue the conversations begun at the 40th Anniversary Celebration/Symposium, and we hope to develop a renewed vision in early 2014.

(18) There was no dormitory in 1973. Participants shared a very small living space in the main building. (19) Group picture on the farm in 1978. The mountain range of Nasu region can be seen in the background. (20) 1984: US Missionary Gretchen DeVries, who served ARI for many years from its very beginning. She was the director from 1990 to 1992 and passed away in 2005, after her retirement and return to the US. (21) 1993: Participants and volunteers in the dining hall of the former Koinonia House.



text: Tomoko Arakawa
 translation: David McIntosh
 photos by Gu SangAh, Peter McNicoll,
 Kazushi Tsukamoto, ARI Public Relations



New Men's Dormitory and Pig Pens completed

With energy-conscious buildings, funded by overseas churches, we have taken another big step in our disaster recovery.

Two big construction projects started at ARI earlier this year: A new men's dormitory and new pig pens. The buildings that had served us for many years were both damaged by the 2011 earthquake, and have been replaced by new structures this summer.

Men's Dormitory



After having spent the first couple of months of the 2013 training in a temporary accommodation nearby (the Nishinasuno Kindergarden "Activity House"), all male residents moved to their new home on July 28. The former dormitory was a rather crude two-storey ferroconcrete construction, built in the 1970s. The new dormitory has two separate buildings mainly made from wood. The rooms receive good sunshine and ventilation and floor heating is provided by solar panels. There is also a small kitchen as well as a community room for meetings and fellowship. The bigger dorm houses participants and volunteers, with two persons sharing one room. Staff members, couples and guests stay in the smaller dorm. Some of the new residents have praised this new dormitory as "paradise." Those who suffered through winter in the old dorm are green with envy!



Inside one of the participants' rooms



Party in the community room

At this time, we are especially thankful for the church organizations who

supplied generous funding for the dorm, namely the United Methodist Committee on Relief, the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe (Germany).

Pig Pens



The new pig pens consist of two buildings, one of which is using a fermentation floor. The pigs in this shed live on a thick layer of sawdust which is cool in summer and warm in winter.



Some construction is continuing in the other building, designed in a so-called Denmark style, to install a biogas system before the rest of the pigs can move in. This pair of structures was funded by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

New Chapel ahead...

ARI's disaster reconstruction is far from over. With the demolition of the old Koinonia House, we lost the chapel, which has been central to our daily "Morning Gathering" time. For now, we hold these gatherings in the classroom, but the Chapel reconstruction project has finally started moving. The new chapel will reuse a type of traditional Japanese rural house, called *kominka*. We look forward to its completion in the summer of 2014. New staff houses and a butchering facility are also in the planning.



The wooden frame structure of the kominka during its dismantling in August

“We Learned How to Cross the River”



ARI curriculum coordinator Yukiko Oyanagi gave a report of the 2013 training at the commencement service this December.



Nine Months of Rural Leaders Training in Pictures



APRIL

Getting to know each other at community-building events



MAY

Transplanting rice seedlings



JUNE

Artificial insemination of sows

First of all, I am deeply thankful for God's abundant blessings and guidance throughout our 2013 Rural Leaders Training Program at the Asian Rural Institute. I am also grateful that, thanks to the support and cooperation of many friends and supporters, we were able to complete this year's training program and send out 31 new graduates of sixteen nationalities.

A new learning environment

Two years and nine months have passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake. By your great support, we have recovered from the damage from the disaster. This is the first year in which we have been able to use the new Koinonia and Classroom building from the start of training. And at the middle of the training period, the new men's dorm and pig pens were completed. The training environment improved a lot.

When I talk with this year's Participants, I realize that this new environment is the image that they have of ARI. People who have known ARI for longer will surely be struck by the big changes, but for 2013 Participants this is just "natural." We staff still feel the loss and pain from the memory of the disaster, but at the same time we are grateful and proud that we

can offer the best possible learning environment for the participants.

In 2013, ARI celebrated its 40th anniversary. This was a great and unique learning opportunity for the participants, because over fifty graduates came to ARI. Participants shared, discussed and thought together with graduates how they might apply their learning of ARI to their community. They learned from the successes and failures of the graduates, and moreover enjoyed spending time with them. Among all 1241 graduates, this year's 31 participants are the only ones to enjoy such a privilege.

We are always blessed with participants who are serious about learning, but this year we found some participants who were serious about "everything," not only training and farming, but even about music and dance performances. Without the great cooperation of this year's Participants, it would have been impossible to make our 40th anniversary such a success. They managed many activities in collaboration with supporters, they facilitated discussions and they entertained the people. Each graduate had a "caretaker" participant, who took care of them from the time of their arrival, and oriented and guided them throughout their stay at ARI. And this gave to

participants a precious learning opportunity from the graduates. For a whole week, not only in the class and at the symposium, but in every activity they shared and discussed many topics.

Soon after that came the Harvest Thanksgiving Cerebration. This, too, succeeded by the leadership of Participants. Especially the Coordinator and Chairperson of each organizing committee experienced "big learnings" as a leader. We staff were able to rely on their leadership, too.

Self-sufficiency in practice

For nine months, 2061 curriculum hours, participants learned over sixty topics, from which they were challenged to find what they can do for their community. In 2011, we could not achieve self-sufficiency, by this year we grew seventy kinds of vegetables and harvested over 4300 kg of field produce. Participants grew vegetables in their group fields, took care of livestock, and cooked their products for our daily meals. At the same time, they learned about leadership in Foodlife Work. They came to understand that the farm and the kitchen are places where they can practice leadership, which they study in the class.

One participant, during her Morning Gathering, shared about her learning at ARI in this way: "There is a river in front of us. The river is poverty, lack of education, laziness and selfishness. NGOs come to help us. They carry us across the river. But they do not teach us how to cross on our own. So after they go back, we cannot cross the river again. But ARI is different. What we learned at ARI is how to cross the river." Another participant sang a song in her final oral presentation: "You gave me power! ARI gave me power!"

Surely they learned a lot. Servant leadership, knowledge and practice of organic farming, the dangers of chemicals, participatory

learning and action, livestock, natural farming, agroforestry, 3-D farming, permaculture, pollution issues, development issues, localization, biogas and so on. But what we most wanted them to learn is the principle of local resources; that they can go forward by their own power, which is already present in their own communities. Rural leaders can find what they need in their community, and should encourage people and work/live together with them. Participants learn this philosophy, and how to serve each other, through class, farm work, cooking and every aspect of daily life.

Dreams and Responsibilities

Now nine months have passed, and the participants are sitting in front of you as new graduates. They look a little nervous, not only because they are in front of you, but also because hundreds of people are waiting for them in their community. Each one of them feels a big responsibility toward those people. Each one of them learned for their people. Their dream is much bigger than the number of hours spent in class (2061 hours), or kilometers traveled on the study tour (5000km) or weight gathered in our harvest (4300kg).

Many people helped their training; Organic farmers, organizations, special lecturers, churches, schools, kindergartens, host families and so on. On behalf of the participants, I wish to express the deep appreciation we all feel toward the people who supported and helped us to make this training possible. Thanks to you, today's graduating class has learned a lot. They are going to bring back to their communities the learning that was given by you. And someday it will bear fruits in the future. I hope and I pray for a bright future, for the people in each of their communities.

Yukiko Oyanagi
ARI Curriculum Coordinator



Midterm presentations:
What's my biggest learning so far?



Making a map during the Participatory Rural Appraisal lecture



Harvesting rice



Making sausages from ARI pork during a lecture on meat processing



Observation of shelters for homeless people in Osaka



Forest Management Work



INDONESIA
YANTI DIANA
TIGE JACOB
 Stimulant Institute Sumba

VOICE

this year's
 training
 participants

Yanti talks about her organization's work during the May presentations.

“All people have a right to watch the administration and know how the budget is being executed.”

Throughout its 40 years of rural leadership training, ARI has already accepted 76 participants from Indonesia. Yanti, however, is the first one from Sumba Island, which is located in the Eastern part of the country.

Yanti has been working as a volunteer for an NGO called Stimulant Institute Sumba. In her work, she not only visits resource centers in local villages to identify problems and solve them in partnership with local administrators, but she also supports villagers seeking proper access to appropriate and effective services from the government and private companies.

“In the past, even though we asked service providers for various services, such as electricity and water, we often only received promises without seeing any improvements. But all people have the right to watch the

administration and know how the budget is being executed, and to receive the equal services. Through our efforts, instead of opposing the administration, villagers are now little by little working together with government workers to find joint solutions.”

Additionally, farming methods which use agricultural chemicals are common practice in Yanti's village. Feeling uneasy with this, she started making 'bokashi' (a sort of traditional Japanese organic compost) based on information she learned from the internet and other sources. At ARI, her knowledge about bokashi has deepened further, as it is a popular material used by training participants almost daily during the Institute's planting season.

“I thought of organic agriculture as an expensive farming method that only uses organic fertilizer, but my

understanding took a turn here. I did not have any notion of integrated farming.”

“Although we have sufficient land and assets in the village, when the time for planting comes we are always short on food. This is because nobody makes a plan. Our rainy season is very short, so we plant all our seeds at that time. When the later rain falls come, we are out of seed stock. But at ARI, the people working in the kitchen know and control the amount of harvested crops! I think it is a marvelous thing that, because of good cooperation between kitchen and farm members, you can balance demand and supply and maintain self-sufficiency through circulating the planting in a planned way.”

mini profile

Ethnic Identity: Indonesian
 Native Language: Sabli
 Religion: Protestant Christian
 Work Position: Volunteer
 Future Dream: Through organic and integrated farming, using local seed varieties, there will be no hunger and malnutrition in Sumba.

JAPAN

MITSUMASA ARAI

Each year, the Asian Rural Institute accepts a small number of Japanese participants for its training program. Mr. Mitsumasa Arai - called 'Mitsu' by the ARI community members - is one of them this year.

During his college days Mitsu belonged to an 'adventure club,' with which he went on journeys to different countries around the world. He especially harbored a strong interest in Russia and even decided to study there to master the Russian language. "When I traveled to farming villages in Russia, the people that I met were all sturdy and affable, and despite their difficult lives everybody was kind and ready to help complete strangers. That's why I wondered how I could assist them somehow from my side, too."

"It is often said that religion is at the root of conflicts, but I realized that as long as we cannot find fundamental solutions to poverty and food problems peace is impossible to achieve. This is the reason I wanted to learn about agriculture and food-making skills."



With no previous farming experience, didn't he have any worries about plunging into studies at ARI?

"I wasn't afraid, since the staff members told me that many of the Japanese participants get in touch with



During the "Field Management Activity": Mitsu (right) explains his observations in the tomato greenhouse to other farm group members.

“As long as we cannot find fundamental solutions to poverty and food problems, peace is impossible to achieve.”

agriculture here for the first time. Now, life at ARI has completely become my daily routine. I'm happy to have come here."

At ARI, Mitsu also experienced the butchering of chickens for the first time.

"For the first time in my life, I felt directly that humans cannot live without food and that my life depends on receiving others' lives. As I'm now able to see the labour and sweat of the people who grow food, I have come to sense the preciousness of the vegetables and meat that I used to eat without any care or thought."

For his Individual Summer Project week, Mitsu studied well-digging

techniques to obtain water at the home of one of ARI's senior volunteers, in the countryside.

"Water is also important for growing food. There are many regions that are good for growing vegetables, but it is impossible because they lack of water."

"I'm still unclear about my own future. But I think this training is a start. After graduating from ARI, I want to contribute to overseas countries through agriculture."

mini profile

Ethnic Identity: Japanese
Native Language: Japanese
Religion: Buddhist
Future Dream: To have my own self-sufficient farm in Japan!

“A farmer is an individual who is conscious about the social realities and thinks about how to help others to solve problems as a leader.”

ECUADOR

ANDREA MARISOL COYAGUILLO VISCAINO

Fundación Solidaridad
Japonesa Ecuatoriana para
la Educación

“Every day, I learn something from the ARI members, not only concerning different cultures, but also about family, lifestyle and farming.”

Andrea is the first participant from Ecuador to take part in the ARI training. She comes from a town called Cayambe in the northern part of the country, where many native people live. In ARI, she is called Andy.

As an assistant of an NGO called SOJAE (Japanese-Ecuadorian Solidarity Foundation for Education), Andy teaches young students in her country about conservation of nature, human rights and leadership. SOJAE provides scholarships to students who have financial difficulties. Even

mini profile

Ethnic Identity: Ecuatorian
Native Language: Spanish
Religion: Roman Catholic
Work Position: Teacher
Future Dream: All members of the community can produce their own food by themselves using local resources.



Andy (right) during a class.
On the left is Kalpana, a participant from Nepal.

though Andy used to be a shy person, her experience through SOJAE has given her confidence to enjoy working and learning with other scholarship recipients as she continued her own studies. To date, Andy has worked with SOJAE for nearly ten years since her graduation. With the knowledge she gained at ARI, she plans to expand SOJAE’s agricultural education program with new emphasis on self-sufficiency.

Andy is passionate about addressing problems in her area, such as the shortage of farmland and ground dilapidation caused by intensive agrochemical use in the rapidly developing flower production businesses.

“I think it is preferable to make healthy food by our own hands for our own consumption. The biggest learning that I gained so far at ARI has been the use of local resources. I had not realized that there were so

many different resources right around us. I immediately suggested this to SOJAE.”

Other studies that impressed Andy were core ARI concepts, such as “dignity of labor,” direct relationship between farmers and consumers, and the image of a farmer as a self-educator and a social actor.

“In general the image that the society has of a farmer (in Ecuador) is a man who is poor, without knowledge, science or philosophy. That is the reason why I am very impressed to meet farmers in Japan who had studied at university, read a lot of books, or has done original research. A farmer is not only a person who works in the field but it is also an individual who is conscious about social realities and the problems that people face, and thinks about how to help others to solve problems as a leader.”



Ellen is from Nagaland in North East India. Even though she works and lives in a remote place she made her way to ARI's 40th Anniversary Celebration. This is the report that she sent to us.

When I returned to my home after the ARI training, I became a Child Development Program Officer (CDPO) in the social welfare department. We met with people in the Mon District (120 villages) sharing with them information on health and nutrition, pensions for older and handicapped persons.

I have been fortunate to receive special training in financial management, thematic training for those working in participatory practices, International Institute of Rural Reconstruction's "Building upon Traditional Agriculture in Nagaland," and a UNICEF-sponsored course on Appreciative Inquiry.

Integrating these learnings, much of my work has empowered women since 1986, when Konyak Citizen Women Organization in Mon District was founded.

In 2005, at age 60, I retired but have continued my commitment to public service through collaborating on the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (Mon District), serving as the first member of Nagaland State Commission for Women founded in 2007, and helping young people, especially those who have lived with addictions, to become leaders among their peers for the sake of the future of all Naga youth.

Graduates at Work

In more than 50 countries, ARI Graduates act in diverse roles as changemakers in their communities. Here is one of their stories.



S.P. ELLEN KONYAK
ARI Class of 1984

SERVING NAGA SOCIETY FOR 30 YEARS

As a theologian, I served churches; as a government social worker, I served the people of Nagaland; as a woman, I served Naga women with every capacity I have been given. My life continues to be filled with meaning as I work with others committed to uplifting those in our society who struggle to survive, lead healthy lives and grow healthy families. The thirty-one varieties of fruit-bearing plants growing in my garden are symbols of the variety of people with whom I have worked since my ARI training, and I am thankful for all of them.

TAKE MY HAND / SHORT NEWS

Serving since April 2013

NEW STAFF!



**Mayu
Kamimura**

**Crops &
Vegetables Staff**

Mayu joins ARI from Western Japan, where she studied pineapple raising. Prior to seeking her masters degree, she taught for ten years in an agriculture high school and worked in Fiji as a Japan Overseas Corporation Volunteer.



**Zacivolu
Rhakho**

**Meal Service
Coordinator**

Acivo is an Indian graduate of 2000 and has been training assistant and on staff before. She returned once again to ARI after having worked with students and other ARI graduates and in Cambodia for a couple of years.



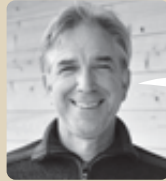
2013 GRADUATION!

Photo of the 41st Commencement Service last December, when 31 participants graduates from the Rural Leaders Training Program!

This year's special speakers were: Rev. Kokai Chang (Missionary of the United Methodist Church and Administrative & Program Director of the Wesley Foundation), Rev. Akiyama (Moderator of the Kyoudan Kantou Parish) and Mr. Akutsu (Mayor of Nasushiobara City).

David comes to ARI following 16 months with the National Christian Council in Japan Ecumenical Disaster Response Office (NCC-JEDRO), through which survivors of the 2011 Tohoku triple disaster received relief project funding from ecumenical donors overseas. Raised in Japan as an "MK" (missionary kid), David brings a familiarity with ecumenical spirit,

**David
McIntosh**



**Ecumenical
Relations
Coordinator**

English-Japanese bilingual skills and passion for social and ecological sustainability to the position vacated last spring by Steven Cutting.

Note from David:

Hello, everyone. It has been humbling and inspiring to be welcomed so heartily into the ARI community this year. And what a privilege to arrive at such a significant time, with prayers and donations from around the world taking shape as new training and living facilities, with 57 graduates gathering from the 4 corners to attend the 40th Anniversary Celebration, with WCC's septennial General Assembly happening for the first time in Asia! I can think of very few places where the words "we are one," or "the global church" ring so palpably true. To those I've met and to those I haven't; I look forward to walking together.

Meeting with JICA's Dr. Sadako Ogata

ARI's assistant director Mrs. Tomoko Arakawa and ARI board member Mr. Noriaki Sato had a chance to visit Dr. Sadako Ogata in Tokyo last September. As a diplomat and academic, Dr. Ogata held important positions as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees as well as chairperson of the UNICEF Executive Board, among other things. She is currently working for the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) as special advisor.

Mr. Sato was working on a newspaper article about ARI. During the meeting, he asked Dr. Ogata to comment on the situations of refugees in the world. The topic then moved to human development and education in Japan. It is often said that the sense of internationality in Japan is low and people do not appreciate diversity in society. Both JICA and ARI focus on the challenge of training personnel with a broad worldview and who are also willing to work in rural areas. In a written message to ARI for its 40th Anniversary, Dr.

Ogata wrote: "ARI has been responding to diverse human resource development for rural development.

'Internationalization' has been a

priority in Japan for some decades. In order to achieve real internationalization, it is necessary to promote education transcending national borders and cultural differences. What ARI has been doing for 40 years is very valuable and well respected in this sense." She asked us to continue the cooperation between ARI and JICA's "Japan Overseas Cooperative Volunteers" (JOCV), the Japanese equivalent to the American Peace Corps.

ACTIVITY REPORT



AFARI Tries to Work Like ARI

How sharing locally deepens our connections

There are few, if any, organizations that “walk the talk” as fully as ARI. Its commitment to growing and raising over 90% of its own food (including feed for livestock), is unheard of among other training organizations. That food production, preservation, processing and preparation is all done by every member of the community, is that much more remarkable. Nothing is wasted at ARI. Every bit of organic material that comes into ARI finds its way back into the food cycle. When the community hits the road for study trips, they share the driving and usually lodge with homestays along the way. On these trips food is brought and cooked and shared. Host communities join and contribute their dishes to the traveling Pot Luck.

Make the most use out of what's already there

Inspired by this example, AFARI tries, in our limited way, to do the same. AFARI held its 2013 Annual Board Meeting in Seattle, Washington. Like ARI, board members, who came from all over the country, stayed with local homestays. All meals were prepared by local volunteers and the board ate delicious leftovers in between the cooked meals. But we tried to go a step farther. Prior to the meeting, the AFARI Executive Director and our intern could be seen harvesting lettuce,



David McIntosh (center), new ecumenical relations staff at ARI joined the AFARI meeting in Seattle.



Members of AFARI at meal preparation for the annual meeting

peas, and other greens, donated from a local church garden, for the meals that were served. All food scraps from meal preparation went into compost. No leftover food was thrown out but eventually eaten. We carpoled religiously. The venue of our meeting was offered pro bono by one of our partners, the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia. Because of this level of intentionality, the total cost (aside from air fare) for a three day weekend of meetings, food and lodging for 10 board members, two spouses, and other volunteers came to less than \$500.

Every year AFARI’s Executive Director goes on a speaking tour, and similar care is taken with resources. The 2013 tour, in April, was a loop beginning in Chicago, proceeding to Nebraska, moving south to Kansas then east to St. Louis and on to Louisville, KY. From there he traveled north to Indianapolis and then back to Chicago. All lodging and most meals were provided by AFARI supporters. Caring supporters even bought gas and provided snacks for the long drives. One especially strong supporter donated the use of their car for the entire trip! The entire cost of gas and tolls for the 1860 mile drive was \$340 and the total cost for meals for the 16 day trip was \$41.60. Not a bad value for a tour where the Executive Director was able to meet with over 30 different individual and organizational supporters, give 10 talks about

ARI and meet dozens of potential future supporters.

AFARI’s doing things “ARI Style” is more than just being frugal. Rather it is an approach that also deepens our connections with and between our global community of supporters.

J.B. Hoover
AFARI Executive Director

Former US ARI volunteer publishes fantasy novel for young readers

This is a message that reached us from Dianne Astle, a former volunteer from the US:

“I was a volunteer at the ARI for four months the summer of 1997. It was a wonderful experience and I was close to the Japanese volunteers. I have recently published a novel. If you have a newsletter that goes put to previous volunteers I would appreciate it if you could let other pat volunteers know about BEN THE DRAGONBORN. Peace be with you,

Dianne Astle”
Minister at Carman United Church



How to donate to ARI

USA

US citizens may make tax deductible gifts to ARI through AFARI. Make out your check to the American Friends of ARI and send it to:

American Friends of ARI (AFARI)
c/o J.B. Hoover, Executive Director
1121 N 94th St.
Seattle, WA 98103-3305

or donate online through AFARI at
<http://friends-ari.org/>

Canada

Canadian citizens can make a tax deductible donation to the United Church of Canada to support ARI. Cheques payable to the UCC should be sent to:

United Church of Canada
Partners in Mission Unit
3250 Bloor St. W.
Etobicoke, ON M8X 2Y4
Attn: Pat Elson (Please designate "ARI" on the cheque)

American Friends of the
Asian Rural Institute
Rural Leaders Training Center - Japan

c/o J. B. Hoover
1121A N94th St.
Seattle, WA 98103

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Foodlife notes

ONE YEAR OF FOODLIFE WORK AS A YOUNG VOLUNTEER COUPLE



by Doug & Jenny Knight
(2012-2013 volunteers)

~DOUG~



The Episcopal Church sent my wife and I to ARI in August 2012 to serve as young adult missionaries. Since we arrived we have shared in a labor that we think is changing the world for the better. The life here helps people to see and teach the connection between community, food, spirituality, and life.

The way I see the world has also changed. During this year, I spent most of my days helping the farm section to care for the land where our food grows. I spent the year weeding rice paddies, sorting wheat, and eating the onions that we harvested. My labor simply helped to provide food and life for our community.

I also came to see that my labor would have been terribly insufficient without the work of our entire community. When we spent a day harvesting a potato field, I could easily see that alone, it would have taken me twenty days. The potatoes would have rotted by then.

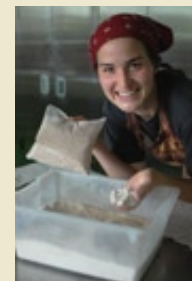


~JENNY~

And while Doug was out working in the fields, I was in the kitchen preparing meals and processing food. While the cooking itself was not so different from my past experience, the planning was definitely so. Instead of asking "what do I want to cook and eat?" and buying the ingredients I need, I have to look at our seasonal harvest and ask "what can I cook with these?"

This kind of mentality—using what is available rather than those things that are farther away, more costly, less sustainable—has really impressed my time here at ARI. I am happy to cook and eat our layer chickens (rather than buy tasty chicken from the supermarket), despite their tough meat, because we shared our life together. I feed and take care of them and eventually they do the same for me.

We want to continue to live and learn in this way. When we return to the USA, we will be working with our church to start a community supported farm. We hope to share all that we have learned about life and food with our friends and families back home.



The Knights are now starting a farm at "Camp Mitchell" of the Diocese of Arkansas. Find out more at <http://thatwemayservetogether.blogspot.jp>



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