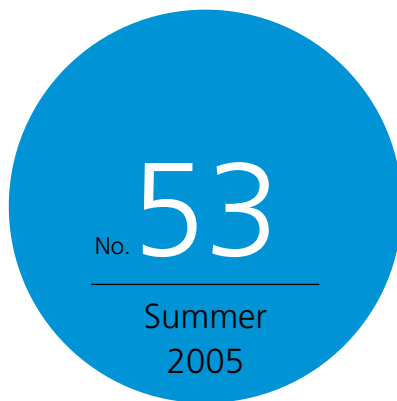




PREX NOW



Pacific Resource Exchange Center

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Message from PREX Alumni

Message from PREX Alumni

The 12th PREX Alumni started in Myanmar



The twelfth PREX Alumni organization started in Myanmar in April 2005. The President of this Alumni, Mr. U Htein Win who also assumes the position of the chairman of Myitmakha Group, kindly contributed an article commemorating the establishment of PREX alumni Myanmar.

Message from U Htein Win, Chairperson of PREX Alumni in Myanmar ~ Greetings from Golden Land of Myanmar ~



Mr. U Htein Win

Chairman, Myitmakha Group

Participants of "Japanese Market Seminar for Myanmar Firms" 2001

■ MIN-GA-LAR-BAR! KON-NI-CHI-WA

It gives me a great honor and privilege to send a message to PREX as a chairperson of PREX Alumni Association in Myanmar, which was established this April 2005 which coincides with PREX 15th anniversary in April 2005. Taking this opportunity, I and members of the alumni, would like to express our sincere appreciation and thanks to PREX for inviting Myanmar businessmen to attend series of seminars / activities and for the invaluable support and assistance rendered for the establishment of PREX Alumni in Myanmar. The total numbers of participants from Myanmar is 27 since 1996 and we expect more participants in the near future.

Japan and Myanmar has a long-lasting close friendship and relationship as political and economic partners. We are very much interested to expand and continue to contribute to the flourishing economic inter-exchange and friendship between Myanmar and Japan particularly in Kansai areas, the heart of Japan.

We will endeavor our best to take part in the following activities and maintain our role by supporting the alumni members in their businesses and social activities, while also contributing to the development of the country's economy.

- To maintain long lasting friendly relation with PREX
- To keep contact not only the alumni members but also future potential participants
- To provide opinions and suggestions developing ideas together to improve the PREX activities for further success and brighten future for the PREX Organization
- To make contact with other existing PREX Alumni Associations for exchange of information on economic and other activities of Alumni in each country, to strengthen relationship and develop the economy in the Asia and Pacific region.

In every country, the quality and quantity of the human resource dimension is the driving force for the national development. Today's work force will eventually be replaced by the younger generations, who have a great potential for the future. Under the PREX human resource development activities programme, sharing the latest in management thought and practice with the participation of many prospective young professional from Myanmar, we are convinced that we can further promote and strengthen the skilled work force for the national development of Myanmar.

We, members of alumni are dedicated to do our utmost for the success of the activities of alumni and would like to further broaden our cooperation and coordination with both PREX Organization and other Alumni Associations to achieve our ultimate goals.

Wish you all the best, great success, good health, peace and prosperity.



The TQM implementation in small company, is it possible?

ASEAN Seminar linking Osaka and three locations in Indonesia

Using video conference system, we held a seminar linking Osaka and three locations in Indonesia: Jakarta, Surabaya and Medan, in February 2005. It was the first remote conference to link 4 places at the same time.

We received a message, shown below, from the participant who gave a presentation on the managerial tasks and products of his handicraft company in Jakarta.



Mr. Mario Suhendro
*Managing Director,
PT. Servistika Selaras*

As I have experienced in TQM-TQC implementation when I was working at 2 Japanese companies before, PT. Toyota Astra Motor (joint venture between Toyota Motor Corp. - Japan with Astra Group - Indonesia) & PT. Santelindo Kencana (joint venture between Sankosha Corp. - Japan with Telindo Group - Indonesia), I thought it was easy to implement TQM directly in my own company, PT. Servistika Selaras (established on February 2, 2001). Later on, I found many difficulties of the implementation process, but many ideas came from this situation.

As a new small trading company in handicraft industry, we didn't have specific product at that time, so we start with so many kinds of products with its variations, totally more than 400 items. By spreading the variations of products, we thought that finally we could find the best products for our business. At that time, we only have 4 staffs at our office and 5 sales promotion girls at our shop, using outsourcing production facilities (handicraft suppliers).

I have tried to train our employees to the principles of TQM in very simple ways, because our business was not well structured yet. I trained them the "customer's satisfaction", "team work", "standardization", "5S", "Muri-Muda-Mura", "Plan-Do-Check-Action", and many other principles. Some can directly understand, but mostly could not easily catch the whole ideas. They came from different backgrounds & experiences, most of them never heard about the training before.

On the other side, those principles did not have enough sources and channels for the implementations.

For small company with very limited number of members, we have to deal with so many kinds of works and products, one person has several/multi task. This situation is much different from big companies I have jointed before. Their members have specific job for specific process to provide specific result. It was impossible for us at that time, to completely implement TQM-TQC method like Toyota, especially for the statistical analysis. We did not have enough time to do it even we have tried to take over-time. So, what we could do mostly was just the implementation of TQM-TQC in philosophical way only.

Up to year 2003, we had lots of problems regarding product qualities from suppliers/sub contractors. We also faced problems in managing so many variations of products. On middle of year 2003, we made several adjustments in our management to improve our efficiency by reducing variations of our products. We also started to produce several products, wooden frames and rattan baskets, by ourselves for better quality control to provide better products. This way gave us more channels to implement the TQM-TQC principles than before. Our staff could learn more about the process of providing good products as expected by our buyers. But we still could not use the statistical method as we planned to. There still not enough time to collect the data quantitatively and specifically, only qualitatively and generally.

On February 1 - 3, 2005, I attended a TQM seminar, held by PREX and AOTS, at The Indonesian Export Training Center (IETC), Jakarta - Indonesia.



Presentation on the seminar about his company, products, and our problem at The Indonesian Export Training Center (IETC)

From the lecturers, I got much good information regarding the TQM-TQC implementations. I gave my presentation on the seminar about our company, products, and our problems. They had also analyzed my business from the data I sent to them through PREX and gave me their useful opinion for how should I run my business. They suggested me to be more focus only on top sales products, proven by our sales data.

I also got ideas on how should I improve our statistical data collection by providing our members the better & easier way. Now, I am still working on it, improving our systems & procedures, set problems categories, making easy to use data forms, and encouraging our members to keep improving themselves. I also collect many samples, "OK" and "NG" samples, so our members can easily understand the customer specifications.

From that seminar, I become more confident to implement TQM-TQC more than before. There is no excuse for not to do it, it is only a matter of initiative, creativity and strong will. Of course, there are many differences of the implementation between big company and the small one, but basically are same.

By the end of March 2005, we will move to our new address. This will be a great momentum to start new system and new paradigm. I strongly hope by the end of first semester, our company becomes more competitive, more effective & efficient, by the implementation of TQM-TQC.



Promoting Cooperation in Environmental and Recycling Fields

Seminar on Promotion of Environment-Related Industries for Kyoto Prefecture, Maizuru City and Nahotka City

Under the commission from Japan Association of Trade with Russia and Central-Eastern Europe, PREX conducted the Seminar on Promotion of Environment-Related Industries for Kyoto Prefecture, Maizuru City and Nahotka City during the week of February 20 - 27.

Five senior administrators involved in a waste processing plant project came from the Russian Primorian city of Nahotka, including the city's deputy mayor, to attend the seminar. The program included lectures and site tours to study the Japanese waste processing system as well as courtesy visits to Kyoto Prefecture Office and Mayor Emori of Maizuru City, a sister-city of Nahotka.

Relationship between Nahotka and Maizuru and Nahotka's efforts for environment

Since the two cities forged a sister-city agreement in 1961, Maizuru and Nahotka have actively engaged in exchange activities that encompass mutual visits by youngsters, culture and sports over forty years. In the area of economy, we have been organizing seminars on such topics as fisheries, wood material processing, construction and restaurant and tourism industries since 2000. In view of the launch of the waste processing plant project in Nahotka, we decided to hold a seminar related to the environment. It turned out that on February 16th, just before the seminar, Russia signed the Kyoto Protocol, which come into effect that we all felt was symbolically very significant.

According to Nahotka's plan, the first stage, the plant for final disposal of general waste is to be completed next year. The second stage is under discussion and is likely to involve the recycling of paper and plastic.

The system of waste processing administration in Japan as well as its history was informed to the participants, so that they can consider their options. They also visited relevant venues such as a recycling center, incineration site and filtration facility that operate in Maizuru and the waste disposal system was explained to them. Toward the end of the seminar, a meeting with the staff of Hitachi Zosen (Shipbuilding) Corporation was set up to enable the participants to exchange views. The Nahotka participants explained the scope of final disposal project currently in progress while both parties exchanged information on incineration facilities and the methods to dispose of exhaust gas and waste water. In this session not only the need for improving waste processing but the importance of reducing waste itself was emphasized. The participants seemed impressed by the heightened awareness concerning environmental issues in Japan. We hope that Nahotka's project will further be improved, with the knowledge and experience they gained from this seminar.

We would be glad if we could help Russia tackle environmental problems and Maizuru and Nahotka develop a mutually beneficial economic relationship.

*Ai Wakana, Course Leader,
International Department*

Message from a participant

Appreciates "the high quality seminar"



Mr. Meyn Vyacheslav Anatolievich
Deputy Mayor of Nahotka

The content of the seminar was full of variety, from a lecture on legislation to the tour of a waste collection site. We were able to gain valuable information on wide-ranging topics concerning environment conservation in Japan. We were also impressed by the courtesy of our hosts. We were received very warm receptions in every lecture, every visit.

We learned the fact that until about 30 years ago there was no systematic environmental policy supported by the government in Japan, a situation which persists in Russia today. Russia is now acutely aware of the significance of environmental issues in the process of economic growth. As the deputy mayor responsible for such environmental issues, I intend to propose that we should immediately address them on my return, with the report on this seminar to the Mayor. In light of the limitations of our city's budget, we are also likely to ask the provincial and central governments for more help.

I have had my impressions reaffirmed that the Japanese are a disciplined, hard-working and responsible people. I have always been impressed by the high quality of Japanese electric appliances. Nevertheless Russia and Japan have yet to establish a close relationship, which I dearly wish to see developing. I would like to make a contribution by actively promoting grass-root exchange activities between Maizuru and Nahotka.



Visiting Hitachi Zosen to observe waste processing plant. Participants ask detailed questions about system and cost.



Observing rubbish collection in Maizuru. Impressed by residents' voluntary work!



Visiting Traditional Abacus Workshop: Seminar for the Business Course participants at the Kazakhstan and Kyrgyz Japan Centers

This seminar, held for two weeks from January 24th, was intended to give the staff and lecturers at Kazakhstan and Kyrgyz Japan Centers an opportunity to see for themselves various aspects of Japan, such as its society, economy and business practices, so that they can put this first-hand experience to good use in the management of the course. One participant from Kyrgyz and three from Kazakhstan attended the seminar. Three out of the four were women. Every one of them was keen and cheerful. In this article I will portray the event most memorable to me: the party's visit to an abacus workshop in Ono City, Hyogo Prefecture.

■ Responding to participants' request

This course was organized in accordance with the requests we had received in advance from the participants. There were a number of topics they asked us to cover, which included "wooden material processing". Thus we incorporated a tour to Ono City, Hyogo Prefecture, a place well known for its production of abacuses.

We heard that it is an important task in Kyrgyz and Kazakhstan to foster and protect craftsmen. The participants looked very excited to be able to see how the traditional craftsmen work in an abacus workshop.

At the workshop they observed the entire process of materials being shaped into the end product. Wood is ground down to small abacus beads and a frame, holes are made in the frame, vertical rods are fitted and the beads are put onto the rods to finish the product. They were also given the opportunity to try for themselves punching holes on the frame with a machine and making a mini-abacus.

When making mini-abacuses using colorful plastic beads rather than real wooden ones, they were given "free hands" to use any color schemes to their liking. Still they ended up with nearly identical products, which looked almost exactly like the "sample" - an informal moment when they all heartily laughed.

A demonstrator used a small wooden top made of an abacus bead and a rod to show that the rod did not wobble when the top was spun. When he explained that this demonstrates the precision of the work, as it means the hole is made at the dead center, the participants were very much impressed.

■ Pride of Japanese traditional craftsmen

We also saw those engaged in this traditional industry making every effort to publicize abacuses at a time when they are disappearing from schools. In Traditional Industry Hall of the city, we were shown various games utilizing the abacus as well as the world's smallest abacus on the Guinness Book.

While working on their own mini-abacuses and later having a cup of Japanese tea and sweets, the participants enjoyed conversations with the workmen on varied topics. They asked specific questions such as whether the state supports and protects the craftsmen and their industry, whether the new generation is willing to keep the workshop going, how the materials are procured and how the products are distributed, while talking generally about traditional craftsmanship and craftsmen's pride. They also talked about "Russian abacuses" that are still used in their countries as well as celebrities and media who have visited the workshop.

I felt that it is a common challenge, both for Japan and for their respective country, Kyrgyz and Kazakhstan, to determine how best to protect traditional industries so that the skills will be passed on to new generations. We need to search for a solution.

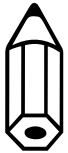
*Akiko Sakai, Deputy manager,
International Department*



Visit at the abacuses workshop in Ono City, Hyogo Prefecture.



Participants and the writer (right end of back row) at a traditional Ryokan (Japanese style hotel) in Kyoto.



Examples of IT applications in Malaysia

The Executive Management Seminar for Malaysia

As part of the Executive Management Seminar for Malaysia (IT and human resource development), PREX held an open forum entitled "The Current IT Deployment in Japan and Malaysia and Future Directions". We had an attendance of 20 people, mainly corporate employees interested in the field, some of whom gave us valuable comments. In the forum, the keynote speech was given by Mr. Sugawara, Chief Researcher of NTT Communication Science Laboratories on the current deployment of IT in Japan, while Mr. Vasu.N, Director of Osaka Office of Malaysian Industrial Development Authority, gave a talk on the Malaysian situation. Thereafter two of the Malaysian participants presented some specific examples where IT are usefully applied. A summary of one of the presentations given by Ms. Habibah is shown below. Reader might be surprised to find some of the daily applications in Malaysia more advanced than in Japan. There are also applications unique to Malaysia. Apart from questions directly related to the Malaysian IT situation, there was an interesting comment from the audience as well. A member of the audience said: "The increase of crime we have been seeing recently in Japan is a result of the loss of the human nature, and the advancement of IT is one contributing factor. In developing IT systems, this is perhaps something Malaysian people should bear in mind." It must indeed be borne in mind, that the use of IT should aim for safe and comfortable living.

Presentation of a participant



Ms. Habibah Ashari
Director, International
Education Centre,
Universiti Teknologi Mara

● Everyday life

- Smartcard (known as My Card): This is a form of an ID card. Every Malaysian national is to obtain one at the age of twelve. It is possible to input information such as driving license registration, passport and ATM numbers for banks.
- Passport: An IC chip is built into the Malaysian passport. The immigration procedure is completed by simply putting it close to a machine, without checks by officials.
- Smart tag: This is something known as a "touch & go card". It can be used for motorways, trains, buses, shopping center parking lots, etc.
- e-Market: Electronic food markets are gaining popularity in suburban Kuala Lumpur. This is a system of online shopping in which groceries ordered on the Internet are delivered immediately.
- Security: IT is used for surveillance of buildings and houses.
- Smart house: A new type of house which its residents can remotely access. Air-conditioning, lighting

and alarm systems are among the items that can be remotely controlled. (We heard, however, that the presenter herself does not live in one.)

- Referencing information over mobile devices: Cellular phones are becoming increasingly common in recent years in Malaysia. The users can access such information as their traffic violations, football results, etc., over the cellular network.

● Education

- Application forms for universities are provided online. Exam results can be looked up over the Internet.
- Some universities are actively introducing e-learning facilities such as distance learning, Flexible Learning (special distance learning system for working mature students), Blended Learning (mixture of conventional lectures and computer-based interactive lectures), etc.
- Computers and projectors are increasingly used in mathematics and science classes in elementary schools. Classes tend to be conducted in English, reflect-

ing the globalized environment.

● Islam

- Important information regarding Ramadan* is provided through mobile phones. The times at which Muslims may start eating in the evening are particularly crucial. (*Ramadan is a month of September of the Islamic lunar calendar during which no food, drink or tobacco may be taken between sunrise and sunset times. The beginning and ending times of fast vary depending on the date and location.)
- Prayer times (five times a day, also dependent on date and location) and orientations can also be looked up.

● Internet crimes, etc.

There is an increased incidence of Internet crime also in Malaysia. Children tend to spend more time on using computers than communicating with parents. 24-hour Internet cafes attract children. This reflects the moral state of the society.



In the show room of Yamaoka Industrial Corporation. Electronic air curtain blocks smoke.



In front of Osaka Municipal Hall



Current Economic Situation of Laos and Seminar

Achievements:

Seminar in Japan for the Business Course Participants (Laos Japan Center)

This seminar was run by PREX in March. Despite its relatively short duration of two weeks, it was a valuable opportunity for participants to extend their understanding by experiencing the reality of the Japanese corporate system. The program included a lecture given by an expert who has a long experience of training in the Lao-Japan Center and visits to companies of varying types and sizes.

Below are the messages from two participants, on behalf of the delegation which consisted of five Laotian teachers and corporate executives.

Mr. Siriphone INTHIRATH



Deputy Director,
Telecom & Communication
Training Institute

Current situation and problem of Laos business

Laos is one of ASEAN country members, with the area of 386,000 km², with the population of 5,780,000 people and with the average per capita of US\$326.2 in 2002. In the past decade half of income was from agriculture sector. However, Laos currently moves from agriculture to industrialize country. In the mean time, hydroelectric power, mining, garment and

wood processing industries fulfil important role in Lao economy. Expansion in hydroelectric power and mining has been invested by foreign investors. The manufacturing industry is now growing such as beer, cement and steel. The service sector is slightly increased.

Laos is a landlocked country which is surrounded by Vietnam, China, Myanmar, Thailand and Cambodia. However Lao government is trying to change the country from landlocked to land linked by constructing highways to Vietnam, China and Thailand.

With small population, most of foreign investors may not consider Laos as consumption market. However Laos has natural resources such as mountains and water suitable for hydroelectric power generation and it also has abundant, underground

resources such as gold, copper, iron ore and lime stones. In addition to that Laos has land unused of present and this land could be use for forestation, pasture and farming. Laos also has many interesting sites for tourist from north to south. This is the potential for tourist, hotels and restaurant business.

The problem of business in Laos is facing is finding more foreign markets for exporting the industrial products which is existing in industrial market. Laos should increase the amount of investment in the manufacturing industries by approaching foreign investors. At the same time, Laos needs to call upon Lao entrepreneurs for its industrialization. These will ensure more investment and increase income to the country.

Mr. Soubanh CHOUNRAXA



Deputy Director,
Gold Coin (DN) Lao.co.ltd

“What I learnt during the seminar, memory in Japan”

During the training course, I have gained a lot of important lessons such as human resource / business administration, production management, marketing, from the experiences of Japanese people as well as Japanese companies which will enable the lao business-people including myself to have new vision and reflect what we have done in our country to utilize these valuable lessons in the actual situation of our company.

1. Human resource / business administration
 - (1) In order to have large and growing businesses, staff recruitment needs to be strictly considered.
 - (2) Organizing frequent seminars and

trainings to the employees are the cornerstone so that employees understand the company expectations.

- (3) Building the strict internal regulations for the organization
- (4) Promoting the staff’s initiative so that they have good skill labor toward their work and to give incentives to the staff who can create new ideas and products.
- (5) In addition, attention needs to be paid to job-promotion, level of salary, and appropriate social welfare to their employees. At the time being, in the globalized world, the company does not necessarily monopolize the workforce.

2. Marketing

To make the successful company the following points should be considered

- (1) Clear and accurate strategies need to be identified
- (2) And put into place in order to maximize sale and generate high income as much as possible.
- (3) ‘customers are the god’,
- (4) In order to reach the objective set, the marketing needs to examine its own products whether who will buy it? Who

are the main customers? The detail information on those respective customers needs to be collected.

- (5) The marketing needs to consider brandnames, size, quantity, time, price, quality and etc...moreover, they need to identify the weaknesses of its competitors, and always develop its products in order that they will have better status.
- (6) As well as direct and indirect advertisements have to put in place to attract as many customers as possible.

During the trips to various places, I noticed that wherever I go, it is so clean, beautiful, high technology, industrialized and modernized. Another impressed moment during this study tour and will always be in my memory is that we have received warm, friendly and generous welcome from JICA, JICE, PREX, companies, and factories, etc. Despite of short training in length, this study tour has the precious value. Consequently, this kind of training if can be held annually or regularly will be of beneficial and worth doing for both participants.



How the Russian Far East Can Attract Japanese Tourists

Professor Masaru Suzuki

Faculty of Tourism,
Osaka Meijo University

.....
*Lecturer for Seminar Project (On-the-job training in tourism),
Technological Assistance For Russia*

For about twenty days in November and December 2004, a seminar entitled “Tourist Businesses in Japan and Marketing Strategies in Various Areas of Tourism” was held for managers of tourism-related companies in the Russian Far East. I participated in the event as a lecturer and coordinator (and precisely speaking, as an organizer of the curriculum as well). I was in charge of the lecture “Business Strategies in Japanese Tourism” and set the tasks for assignments and action plans for the seminar.

■ Key to success is the “human factor”

To establish a perspective on strategies for travel and tourism, which are said to be wide-ranging and varied, a number of practically-oriented instructors gave lectures in both Tokyo and Kansai areas. I still clearly remember the eagerness of the participants who, despite the demanding curriculum packed with lectures and on-the-job training sessions, tirelessly tackled their work. They still managed to save some time and energy to go to town! We always ran short of time in the Q & A sessions. This marked a clear contrast with my usual lectures at university, where hardly anybody asks questions. The quality and volume of the questions were particularly impressive, compared with the similar sessions I had taught previously. The fact that they were all very knowledgeable about Japan and many were very fluent in Japanese surprised me also. The overall theme was “How the Russian Far East can attract Japanese tourists.”

You may have heard that the number of Japanese tourists going overseas has reached 16 million. I suspect, nevertheless, most of you

have never encountered anyone considering the Russian Far East: only less than ten thousand actually go there. One scarcely sees any package tour pamphlets for this region in the shelves of a travel agent. Although you see countless travel guides in a bookshop, those on the Russian Far East are far and few between. I personally thought it would be a very distant future when tourism would be developed in this area. However, I am far more hopeful now after I was met with the participants’ positive attitude toward tourism promotion. I have even become convinced that the Russian Far East market will grow, because I know, from many past examples of tourism promotion I have seen overseas, the key factor to success is “human”.

■ Russian Far East revives humanity!

Behind the overseas travel craze of the Japanese is this slogan: “Cheap, Close and Short.” However, I hope that this will not apply to Russian Far East destinations, apart from, of course, “Close”. The region should be publicized as a place where you can spend a “relaxing time” for an “affordable” price. For example, they could provide eco-tourism, farm stays, fishing: pastimes people come to and enjoy in an unhurried way. In other words, the region should aim to be a place for “reviving your humanity”. To create such a tourist destination, careful planning and detailed discussions will be required between the hosting site and the prospective tourists’ origin, in this case the Russian Far East and Japan. I dare say that if these Russian participants were involved as the main members to promote tourism, the project would be bound to be successful. I would be more than happy to be of assistance, if need be.



W e l c o m e !



Mr. Shinzo Uenaka
*Deputy General Manager,
International Department
From NTT West (April 1,2005)*

I have always been involved in the work at the frontier of the information and communications fields, but joining PREX is an entirely new challenge to me. However, I find my new position very attractive, in the sense that I could think creatively regarding custom-made seminar courses that could contribute to international exchange and could also benefit personally from communicating meaningfully with people from many countries and listening to talks of distinguished lecturers and experienced entrepreneurs. This is an invaluable experience and I find everyday work rewarding. I hope my experience thus far could be of some help to the organization.



Mr. Hiroshi Sugawara
*Deputy General Manager,
International Department
from Daikin Industries, Ltd. (April 16,2005)*

Soon after my arrival at PREX's new post I attended a seminar for Chinese small businesses. When I saw the Chinese participants enjoy themselves in the farewell party, I felt like I had come to a different world from the business community I was used to. I also find it very stimulating. I am sure this work will bring me new experiences that I would never get elsewhere and am excited at the prospect of meeting many people from many different countries and learning new things. I would also like to take this opportunity to say to my new colleagues and partners that your continued support will be greatly appreciated.

O U R M E M B E R S

PREX is run by 20 members of staff in total, nine members from companies in the Kansai Region and eleven members of permanent staff. This is the place to introduce the profiles of PREX members and their work.

Answering participants requests: new events for seminars

Ms. Mayuko Takayama *Course Leader, International Department*

Before the Executive Management Seminar for Malaysia (Feb. 2005), PREX held an orientation session using a video conference for the first time. It took place a week before the start of the seminar. The participants gathered in the capital, Kuala Lumpur, where we linked with Osaka through a video conference connection. When we asked them whether there were any requests after the briefing of the seminar program, we heard that they very much wanted to visit and spend some time with ordinary Japanese families. Those who visit Japan for a seminar are usually very much interested in Japanese culture and customs, or what the daily lives of the Japanese are really like. We decided a home visit would give them a feel for the Japanese way of life and the opportunity to communicate with the people.

Hippo Family Club helped us organize the events on the day of the home visit. First, all the participants and host family members, men and women of all ages, mingled together and enjoyed games using three languages: Malay, Japanese and English. Around the time everybody became relaxed, the host families brought their respective group of two or three seminar participants to their homes. We heard afterwards that they had had a very memorable time. Some made dinner with the family, while some told us that, with some help from the host family, they got dressed in traditional Japanese clothes.

Hippo's motto of "accepting people as family members" was truly reflected in the event. They were able to have fun without undue formality. We hear that they have kept in touch with each other after the participants went back to Malaysia.



Cheerful Malaysian participants enjoy themselves.

PREX, established in April 1990, has been promoting international human exchange, to contribute to human resource development for developing countries and to deepen mutual understanding for closer affiliation.

The accumulative total of participants amounts to 2,645 for invitational seminars (in Japan) and 5,503 for overseas seminars.

- Accumulative total of seminars (since 1990): 264
 - Accumulative total of participants (since 1990): 8,148 from 105 countries
 - Total no. of instructors (2004): 148
 - Total no. of visited organizations (2004): 309
- (as of end May 2005)

Pacific Resource Exchange Center (PREX)

PREX is celebrating its fifteenth anniversary this April. PREX NOW welcomes messages from seminar participants. You can write anything you like, for example about what you gained from seminar, recent personal happenings, traditional events in your country or your memory of the stay in Japan. Send us your message along with photo to PREX: prex@prex-hrd.or.jp

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