

**HASNA TRAINING PROGRAM
PARTICIPATORY FOLLOW UP
AND SECOND INTERIM REPORT**

Date of the Field Visit: 1 – 3 December 2000

Field Work Conducted by: Nilay Çabuk, Sociologist

1 Rationale for the Field Visit:

- 1- An evaluation regarding the training received by the HASNA group in the US and observations on their progress,
- 2- Identification of the problems of group members,
- 3- Identification and monitoring of implementation work,
- 4- Soliciting their views

2 Work conducted: At this stage of the work, an evaluation meeting was held with the program participants following their training in the US. Also, personal interviews and family-workplace visits were conducted. The Governor of Şanlıurfa was visited together with Fethi Deniz, who is DSİ Regional Deputy Director and KKGV regional representative. The principal issue raised during this visit was the status of irrigation districts and work performed by trainees. Support of the Governorate was requested for the planned workshop.

There were also interviews with GAP authorities on the program and related practices.

3 Technique used: Participatory observations, in-depth interviews and group discussions. More specifically;

- a) Trainees were asked to make a general evaluation regarding the overall status of the program, training they received in the US and services provided. There was discussion on their achievements so far and problems they encountered. Their views were taken on how these achievements could be translated into practice. Each participant arranged an evaluation report.

- b) Irrigation districts where program participants worked were visited and authorities in these districts were re-informed about the program. The importance of the training received in the US was explained again in gatherings with the presence of participants. Efforts were made to depict the ideas and tendencies of district authorities in regard to their possible support and contribution to the trainees.
- c) Families of the trainees were visited to discuss their troubles and problems while their family members were abroad for training. They were asked how they saw these returnees now and whether they observed and positive or negative change.
- d) There were discussions and exchange of opinion on the workshop to be arranged in cooperation with the program participants. This was also the core topic in visits to the Governor, DSI and irrigation districts.

The facts we gather in this second interim evaluation help us in finding out about the impacts of the project in implementation and what must be done in order to translate achievements into practical gains and make them sustainable. Another advantage of such an evaluation is that we get the chance of identifying problems and discussing possible solutions together.

1 Paths to be followed during the further stages of the project

At the final stage of evaluation regarding the benefits of training in the US and ways of transmitting these benefits to others, there will be an impact analysis by observing changes taking place in units and their relationship with their environment. At this stage, there will be structured and in depth interviews with district heads, farmers, other district members not covered by the project, families of trainees to depict changes in the behavior, attitude and efficiency of trainees

Prior to this impact assessment, a workshop is envisioned with the participation of people from irrigation unions and representatives of other related organizations. This workshop activity will comprise information building, participatory problem identification and development of suggestions. Upon the proposal of trainees and district heads, the workshop will take place before the irrigation season. Preparatory work and necessary arrangements related to the workshop will be conducted by participants. Furthermore, building upon the outcomes and suggestions of this workshop, another evaluation meeting, with the participation of farmers, is considered at the end of the irrigation season.

5 Evaluations on the Field Visit

5a. Impressions from the interview with the Governor

Interview with the Governor took place on December 1, 2000. The main topics of this interview were the irrigation problems of the region, the present status of irrigation districts and their problems. The Governorship seemed to be more interested in the administrative and legislative aspects of the functioning of these districts. It was stated that many such districts were under examination. It was further stated that the Governorship had arranged an inter-organizational meeting where irrigation problems, training needs of farmers and water usage issues were discussed. The Governor stated that such meetings would continue. During our interview, the planned workshop with the irrigation districts was also discussed. The Governorship was asked for support and the importance of a coordinated responsibility sharing among various organizations and units was emphasized.

5b. Impressions from interviews with irrigation districts

1- Regarding the Training Program: The districts generally think that the training was beneficial for the participants. They believe that the trainees will in the course of time convey what they have learned to farmers and farmers will eventually learn how to use water for irrigation through with some time. The heads of irrigation districts ask trainees about the irrigation systems used in the US and seem to be curious to learn how the US farmers have solved this problem.

2- Opinion of Irrigation District Heads Concerning the Participants: In the light of our interviews with the district heads of the program participants we may safely assert that they are positive about the participants of this program carried out with the cooperation of the HASNA, KKGV and GAP. It is stressed by these people that the program participants were qualified enough to apply their knowledge and experience to practical work and that they were determined to tackle many problems.

3- Opinion of Heads Concerning Implementation and Training: The districts propose that training programs should be implemented. This proposal includes meetings at which the returnees are supposed to inform farmers about their training in the US. They therefore

approach positively to our workshop activity. They think that it would be more appropriate to have this workshop prior to the irrigation season. The district heads think that in solving problems the districts should first develop a solidarity and common behavior pattern among themselves. They believe that such a common understanding and approach will ease tensions between the districts and farmers.

5c Impressions from Interviews with the Families of the Participants

Wives and family members of single and bachelor trainees were visited to get an idea about what kind of problems they faced or worries they had while their husbands/sons were abroad for training. The purpose of these visits was explained to the other party by the author. It appears that while problems mostly concentrate among the spouses of married trainees, others did not have much problem except missing their sons or brothers. For example, the wife of one trainee stated that she had some problems with her son missing his father and that the son is still worried even after his father is back and thus asks whether he is again going away as the father steps out of the door.

Families were, at the outset, also worried if they could communicate with their going away members but then relaxed after first communications.

Furthermore, families state that they have observed some behavioral changes, though not much pronounced, in their husbands or sons in terms of being more tidy and regular.

All the people we have interviewed approved the program. They believe that it has been beneficial and some benefits will be reached in future as well.

5d Evaluation of Interviews with the Program Participants

Our interviews with the program participants focused on such themes as the program in the US and their life there; their impressions and achievements; what this training abroad changed in their lives; and what kind of troubles or difficulties they faced during their training.

1. Problems encountered

Most of the participants had language as their primary problem. This problem prevailed both in their training sessions and outside lives, even to the extent of making them funny. They still did their best to tackle this problem. They say that in the course of time they

started to understand better at least what was spoken and this eased them. They stress over and over that it is difficult to learn another language and it will take much time. One of the participants felt this language problem so heavily that he enrolled to a language course as soon as he came back. Some think that being able to understand and speak another language makes many things including training more efficient and contributes to a much wider scope of communication.

Another problem of the participants during their stay in the US was related to food. Many of them found it difficult to get used to another dish and tried to find foods most fitting to their taste. One of the participants had a barbecue, finding it more familiar to his local dish, but could not have anything else except water and tea for two days after learning what he had eaten was pork! Despite the difficulties of getting acquainted with a different culture and life style, the participants were still able to make fun out of their experiences knowing that such an acquaintance was a good thing above all.

Some of the participants maintained that they could better progress in language if their boarding facilities were better organized. The point is that being together all the time was a natural disincentive for forcing out another language. There were also problems in having two persons sharing the same room. Another criticism was related to the lack of and cultural, social or leisure activity within the program. Many stated that they felt themselves more at home in Arizona and appreciated the work of the person who was their chaperone in that state.

2. Evaluation of the Training Program

The most serious technical trouble in the training program is related to language. Those who are more advanced in their language state that the use of interpreter in training means a loss of time for them. Others say that the length of the language course they received was not enough for enabling them to comprehend their courses. In short, the participants do not think that the 1 month long language course in the US was not sufficient.

The most favored course of the participants was “Conflict Resolution”. “Management”, “team work” and “marketing” were among other courses found interesting and attractive by the participants. There are also comments on the need to give more emphasis to irrigation management and monitoring-information building in practical life since some found their training in Arizona “too theoretical.”

Sharing the same space in language training was advantageous in the sense that they could be together in an unfamiliar environment; yet, the very same fact was a disadvantage, as stressed before, in terms of making progress in English.

3 *Expectations, Achievements, Suggestions*

What follows is the evaluation of the participants on the training program in the US in terms of what they have gained.

Even if the expectations of the participants vary, that related to learning English or improving their level in that language is common to all. This expectation was particularly apparent among those from the Regional Directorate of GAP. Since these people participated the program at a later stage and were thus not much informed about the objectives as set by the HASNA and KKGV, they tended to think that their primary gain would be in language. Their expectations also varied since they are in a different position, working conditions and environment than other participants working in irrigation districts. Another point is that since the position of the participants may differ in terms of translating theoretical knowledge into practice, their criteria for evaluation may well vary accordingly. For example, while those working in irrigation districts have daily and close contacts with individual farmers, others are from a governmental organization with a more distanced and formalistic status. Furthermore, while those from irrigation districts are themselves or work with people of higher education, others mostly work with others of the same educational status as themselves. It should therefore be noted that all these differences will naturally influence the expectations, evaluations and the ways in which they convey their knowledge and experience to others. For example, one participant who had taken part in a GAP training program before naturally had some notion of comparison in evaluating his latest experience and consequently is able to put forward suggestions. On the other hand, the Fresh beginners have no such criteria relevant for any comparison or coming up with suggestions.

To sum up, we can list the expectations of the participants as follows:

- 1- To learn English or improve in it
- 2- To observe and learn technical developments in their specific fields
- 3- To contribute to the solution of some urgent problems in their region
- 4- To have some idea about the life, people and culture in the US as a developed country, and

5- To develop friendship and solidarity with other participants.

Below is a summary of what the participants think as their achievements from the training in the US:

First of all they think that they have strengthened their social relations, established a good dialogue and solidarity as a group and got to know each other better.

The most important achievement, according to the group, is that they had a chance to test their level of English language and feel how they improved by living with it. For example, one participants state that he improved a lot within the first month and he felt himself quite at home while speaking English in the last two weeks of the training. He was happy to communicate better with other people. Others grasped better the benefits of speaking another language and they are determined to go further in their English. At present, their primary expectation is to improve their English by ways of remote teaching through Internet.

They further state that they have learned much from the training on “Conflict Resolution.” Specific points they stress in this context is that being a good listener is the basis of grasping the root causes of problems and conflicts and that self-awareness is the first essential thing to understand others. As far as the author has observed, the participants first evaluate and criticize their own position and behavior in their community relations. They say they do not behave as they did before in certain fields and try to convey others in their close circles what they have learned in their training. . To give an example, they say that they do not speak all at the same time, do not interrupt each other and speak their ideas out after listening to others. They have a critical approach to their past behavior in the sense that they have made many mistakes by asserting themselves and their ideas without taking due consideration of the ideas and opinions of others. They have realized that conflicts in their field mostly arise from “I versus you” type of rather futile oppositions. Assessing their past performance in their work, they come up with the conclusion that so far they have not been very fit for collective or group work. In this context, they refer positively to the working environments in the US where people work collectively and support each other.

Following their training in the US, they have higher self-assurance and feel the respect of others in their close circles more. While some feel this respect through curious questions about their experience in the US and invitations to talk about this experience, others feel that their district heads assign them more importance after the training. All these encourage and motivate them to convey their experience and fresh knowledge to others. For example,

one participant is now preparing for a slide show where he will inform his colleagues composed of agricultural engineers about his experience in the US. One interesting example regarding some behavioral changes is that one of the participants stated that he was now an adherent of traffic rules and happy to be a responsible citizen and driver.

Suggestions of the participants:

- An extension of the core training they received in the US in their own region as adapted to local conditions
- Provision of Internet and computer endowments for this training. Many think that portable computers will allow for a more flexible and mobile training
- Non-stop continuation of training in English
- Organization of meetings, along training, for practical implementation work and informing farmers particularly through these meetings.