PAN Localization: A Regional Initiative to Develop Local Language Computing Capacity in Asia
- **Subproject in Tibet Autonomous Region of China**

Report of First Training Course of End Users

Collective Training Course of End User in TAAAS

TAAAS has being put forward efforts on developing various media to delivery knowledge, technology and information to rural, which including multimedia courseware, short movies, text and picture based website, and printed paper materials. But the contents available to present is very limited as there is barriers for resources sharing between different institutes or sectors, due to lack of awareness of well utilization of information or knowledge resources. There are some exploring from field application for technology, knowledge and information distribution to farmers and herders in order to overcome the lagging information infrastructure too, but the contents is fare from sufficient to fulfill the real needs.

Due to the highly dispersed population distribution, especially that of rural and pastoral areas, the information infrastructure and the education level are uneven throughout the Tibet Autonomous Region, just as other provinces of China but the gap is even wider between town/city and villages. While in cities, county capital towns, and few townships there are phone services, grid power and even computers available, and provided the potentiality for farmers or herders surrounding to gain information through internet, but in real remote villages those services is not available. Some farmers and herders families gain fortunes and become rich by took advantages of the west rural development policy, but not yet aware of the value of information. Just very few of those farmers or herders families are capable to benefit from information that distributed via internet directly, as they are nearby the available services, but most crucial point is that they or their children are well educated. Present, practically, the scientists, extension workers and officials who visit the villagers, normally also acting as a broker for information delivery.

Thus, the end users of the contents developed by the project are the scientists of agricultural and livestock research institutes in the prefecture and county level, the extension workers in prefecture, county and township level, and the related officers in various levels that in charge of agricultural and rural development, of who or that the internet access available.

To well utilize the contents developed in a localized context, that is not in local language but more importantly local needs based, TAAAS organized two training courses. Of which, one training course invited 8 participants from eight county based agricultural and livestock extension stations, and the second is sent out technicians to conduct in- field training to 6 county extension stations and 1 township extension office.

The first training course for end user is conducted during 8 to 10 June 2009, in the network center of

TAAAS. In total 8 participants from 8 county agricultural and livestock technology stations were invited to participate in the training, two for each station. Namely RiTu County of Ali prefecture, Naqu County and NieRong County of NaQu Prefecture, BaiLang County of RiKaZe Prefecture, LangKaZi County, GongGa County and JiaCha County of ShanNa Prefecture, and LingZhi County of LingZhi Prefecture. Some of them are the managers of the Tibetan Rural Distance Education and Information Service Station. All the participants are under 35 and received basic training on computer application, but all is about word processing. Just half of the participants use email for communication in some occasions, some are familiar with on-line games. All of them have experience about seek information through internet, but most of the participants never know there are on-line resources for Tibetan agricultural and livestock technology or information, especially there is information available in Tibetan.

Basic introduction of computer knowledge

Distribution of multimedia training materials

Group discussion during Training

Exercise and discussion

Training course in TAAAS for end users from county level

During discussion, all trainees agree the online resource can directly benefit very few farmers and herders as there is not available environment for them to access information via internet. The multimedia contents can reach farmers through local TV service or by distribution by VCD/DVD where power supply is available. The Tibetan voice contents can be delivered to target farmers or herders though local radio station, or by introduce other potable device, such as MP3 player. The Tibetan text based contents can be printed out and distributed to farmers or herders as necessary. But to develop useful contents to fulfill real needs, there is a urgent needs to strengthen the communication and resource sharing among stakeholders and various sectors related to agricultural and rural development.

Report of Second Training Course of End Users:

Field training in county and township level

The second training for end users was conducted in field, from 13 to 18 July 2009. The Network Center of TAAAS sent out 2 staffs visited to the demonstration sites, one site for each of the counties of which the participants come from for the first training course, except RiTu County of Ali prefecture as it is too far from Lhasa (1,780km by south route or 1,500km by north route to the west and take 2 to 3 days for a very smooth one way road travel with a good condition Land-Cruiser car).

The in-field training is 2 hours session combined with the web-based local resource introduction and discussion with trainees to get oral feedback. TAAAS trainers access to the website while internet connection is available, or use the website package to introduce the project and the localized contents available. The trainees including the manager of the agricultural and livestock bureau and the extension workers of the agricultural and livestock extension station which is part of the bureau.

According to the feedback of the trainees during the in-field training, there is a gap, and the gap is even being widden as time past, the information resources is not fit with and cannot fulfil the real needs due to there is not a effective or even no communication between the rural needs and the contents providers. One consequency is that the contents developer or provider do not know what is going on in the field and both side is wodking on its own, the contents availabel online is not assordance with the field nees. The second consequency is that some resource never being known by the target users, such as the technical resources of TAAAS. Thus, most likely the users is pushed to face-to-face communication by the visit from up-down. The ineffective communication between the rural users and the content developers/providers is mostly caused by traditional sector-wised administration mechanisem, but also due to weak publicity of the contents developers/providers.

One suggestion or expectation from the trainees is that, due to the fast changing pace of agricultural and rural development in Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) there are more and more merging needs come along with plicy driven projects and programs, and most of them are brand new areas and activities that requires new knowledge and technologies that never been practiced locally, thus the information service have to be proactive. Which means the content developers and providers have to be well-informed before hand of those development activities and organize and development content accordinly to fulfill the coming or merging needs. There are several cases newly impllemented projects or programs faild due to lack of available resources of knowledge, technology, and even details of policy guidance for practice.

At present, the agriculture and livestock production of TAR is still traditiona market targeted, and fermers and herders are very much attached to traditional production practice. The awareness of

information and the will to share information is very much backwarded. But under the progressive acceleration of the west development policy, the infrastratuter such as railway and road contruction, the public social service system has been developed a lot. Better transportation and accommodation provided the convenience to travellers and has boosted toursim development during the past 3 years. There is great potential for agriculture and livestock production as well as traditional farming culture brought about by the fast trourism development. But how to shape the agricultural and rural, as well as to tacle issues as food security and service quality remians great challenge for rural to take the ready advantage. This also created both opportunity and challenges to the public information service to rual and agriculutre to accelerate local development.

BaiLang County Aricultural and Livestock Bureau, the director(2nd left) s and his colleagues

GongGa County Agricultural and Livestock Bureau, the Vice Director (middle) and his colleagues

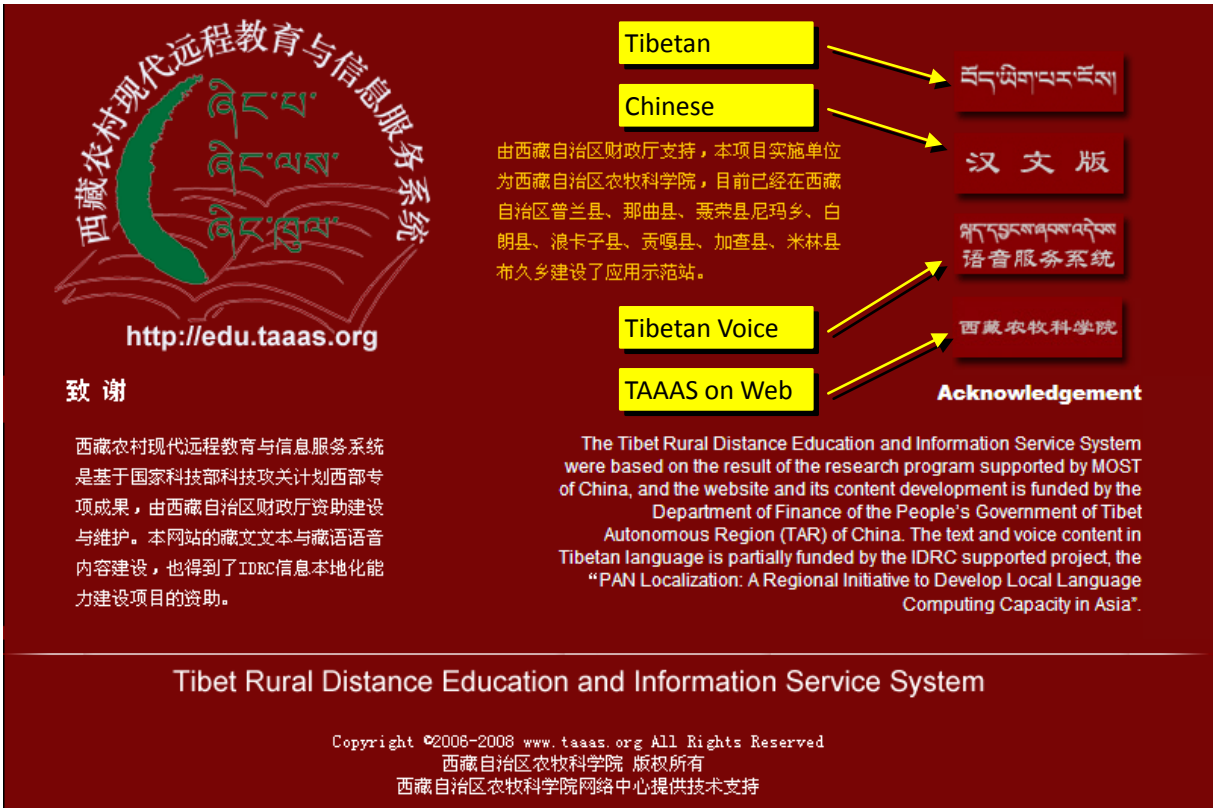
JiaCha County Agricultural and Livestock Bureau the Director (right) and TAAAS trainer

BuJiu Township, LingZhi County, LingZhi Prefectture, the Head (Left) and his colleague

In-field training in county and township level conducted by TAAAS

Introduction of the Contents developed under the Project

The portal of the content developed under the project is http://edu.taaas.org, the main page is shown on the picture below:



The web page of the portal of the local contents developed under the localization project as shown above, the URL http://edu.taaas.org

The local contents regarding agricultural and rural development of Tibet Autonomous Region of China in Tibetan is distributed in two sections, one is the Tibetan version of the "***Tibet Rural Distance Education and Information Service System***", the second one is the "***Tibetan Voice service System***" as shown on the portal page shown above. Both contents were developed mainly under the support from the PAN Localization project.

The contents covered 10 areas regarding Tibet agricultural and rural development, namely Agriculture, Livestcok, Greenhouse and Horticulture, agricultural machinary, production and marketing, policy and regulation, health and food, distance training, technology service, resource development and ecological protection.