

ERECON Extension Programs in 2025 (Extension Center)

The following extension programs were implemented in the program year of 2025 from 1 April 2025 to the end of March 2026.

1. Program on Environmental Rehabilitation and Conservation in Asian Countries

1-1 Project on Greening Initiative Aimed at Sustainable Forest Management in Siem Reap Province, Cambodia (Phases 1 and 2)

In Siem Reap Province, rapid economic development, urbanization, and population growth have increased environmental pressures, including deforestation, biodiversity loss, and disruptions to natural water cycles. In response to these challenges, this project has promoted afforestation activities to encourage local communities to actively engage in forest conservation and management. During Phase 2, afforestation activities were expanded to community-shared land adjacent to the secondary school where tree planting had been carried out in Phase 1. As a result, a total of 5,600 trees were planted. In addition, workshops on the importance of forests and biodiversity were organized for local residents, while training on forest management was provided to a newly established community forest management group. These activities further enhanced local awareness of forest conservation and biodiversity protection and represented a significant step toward establishing a community-based mechanism for the long-term conservation and sustainable management of the site. Phase 1 laid the foundation for these efforts through tree-planting activities at the secondary school. Subsequent supplementary planting conducted in June 2025 increased the total number of seedlings planted during Phase 1 to 5,750. Questionnaire survey results also indicated strong community interest in continued participation in forest conservation activities. Supplementary planting for Phase 2 is scheduled for June 2026, and preparations for Phase 3 are currently underway.



Photo. 1 Tree planting activity in Siem Reap Province, Cambodia (Project 1-1)

1-2 Project on the Restoration of Satoyama Landscapes in Tboung Khmum Province, Cambodia (Phases 1 and 2)

In Tboung Khmum Province, where deforestation and forest degradation have intensified due to the expansion of plantation agriculture since the 1990s, the project has promoted afforestation activities aimed at Satoyama restoration and enhancing local participation in sustainable forest management. During Phase 2, a new afforestation site was established at a pagoda in Memot District, where a total of 5,600 seedlings were planted. The activity involved not only the head monk but also local residents, including children, demonstrating strong community engagement. Although the site included sloping terrain and the planting work was physically demanding, participants actively took part in the activity. The pagoda proved to be a particularly suitable location, as it was easily accessible to local residents and provided favorable conditions for the continued care and monitoring of planted trees. The involvement of children also created a valuable opportunity to foster awareness of forest restoration across generations within the community. Monitoring conducted in December confirmed a seedling survival rate of approximately 80%, despite partial damage caused by monkeys. Phase 1 provided important lessons for site management through planting activities at a primary school and a temple, where a

total of 5,600 seedlings, including supplementary planting, were established. Monitoring at the primary school revealed a relatively low survival rate due to drought conditions. However, survival rates improved following the installation of a water storage tank and more frequent watering, underscoring the importance of continuous maintenance and water management during dry periods. Supplementary planting for Phase 2 is scheduled for June 2026, and regular monitoring and maintenance activities will continue. Preparations for the next phase of the project are also underway.



Photo. 2 Watering planted trees at the pagoda in Tboung Khmum Province, Cambodia (Project 1-2)



Photo. 3 Post-planting monitoring and maintenance activities in Tboung Khmum Province, Cambodia (Project 1-3)

1-3 Project on Post-Planting Monitoring and Maintenance Activities to Promote Afforestation and Forest Restoration in Cambodia (Phase 1)

The project has continued post-planting monitoring and management activities at reforestation sites established through planting activities conducted in 2023 and 2024 across three provinces in Cambodia: Kampong Cham, Tboung Khmum, and Siem Reap. These activities focused on the second- and third-year follow-up of reforestation initiatives implemented for school greening, forest restoration, and community awareness raising. In Kampong Cham Province, tree planting was carried out in 2023 across all ten districts with the aim of rehabilitating degraded lands. At each site, forest management groups formed by local residents have continued to take responsibility for planting site management and maintenance. In Tboung Khmum Province, school greening and environmental education activities were implemented in 2023 at 16 primary schools. In 2024, additional greening activities were undertaken to conserve a lake ecosystem whose biodiversity has been threatened by rapid forest loss resulting from agricultural expansion and bushfires. Teachers from the target schools, together with farmers and fishers living around the lake, have played a central role in site management

and monitoring activities. In Siem Reap Province, agroforestry systems combining native tree species with cash crops were introduced in 2024 on degraded lands that had lost forest resources due to rapid agricultural development. Local forest patrol group has continued to manage the 15-hectare planting site, cultivate cash crops, and replant nursery-raised seedlings to maintain and expand forest cover. Through regular monitoring, close collaboration with local communities, and continued capacity-building efforts, the project will further strengthen post-planting management and enhance the long-term sustainability of these reforestation initiatives.

2. Program on Sustainable Use of Natural Resources in Asian Countries

2-1 Project on Community Development through School Construction and Renovation in Tboung Khmum Province, Cambodia (Phase 3)

This project aims to foster community ownership and promote sustainable school environments and local development through school construction and renovation in rural Cambodia. Specifically, a system has been introduced in which a portion of the construction costs is covered through community contributions, while local residents also provide labor and locally available materials. This approach is intended to strengthen their sense of ownership and responsibility toward both the school and the broader community. In addition, the community's financial contribution is returned in the form of a "Development Fund," which is used to support school maintenance and community development activities. In Phase 3, four primary schools and their surrounding communities in Tboung Khmum Province were selected as project sites. All school buildings were successfully completed, and inauguration ceremonies were held at each site. In each school community, community development training sessions were organized to facilitate discussions on potential business opportunities and to clarify future directions for launching community-based enterprises. As a result, committee members developed preliminary business plans. Based on these plans, the communities are expected to utilize the Development Fund and initiate school-centered community development activities. The process of discussing the future of the school and community, and collectively determining how local funds should be utilized, is itself expected to contribute to the development of local ownership and initiative.



Photo. 4 Inauguration ceremony of a school in Tboung Khmum Province, Cambodia (Project 2-1)

Meanwhile, among the six school communities supported during Phases 1 and 2, all but one have continued operating community businesses steadily. Profits generated through these businesses are expected to contribute both to improvements in the school environment and to the livelihoods of local residents. Even in rural Cambodia, where the practice of collective action for public benefit is not yet firmly established, gradual progress has become evident. For example, at Damril Primary School, profits from the community business have been allocated to the installation of a waste incinerator on the school grounds. Such examples suggest the emergence of a sustainable cycle in which benefits are reinvested first in the school and subsequently in the wider community. The project therefore seeks not only to improve individual livelihoods, but also to

transform perceptions of schools as shared community assets and to establish a foundation for sustainable community development. Support will continue to enable local residents to play an active role in promoting sustainable school environments and rural development.

2-2 Project on Promoting Environmental Education through the Development of a Sustainable System for the Conservation, Rehabilitation, and Utilization of Forest Resources in Svay Leu District, Siem Reap Province, Cambodia (Phase 1)

Siem Reap Province has experienced severe deforestation driven by post-conflict economic and population growth, tourism development, and the expansion of cash-crop agriculture. Svay Leu District, one of the most severely affected areas by deforestation in the province, has lost approximately 83% of its primary forest over the past two decades. In response, the project has promoted an integrated approach to forest conservation, restoration, and sustainable resource utilization through environmental education, with the aim of fostering a society in harmony with nature. To reduce pressure on forest resources, the project has sought to promote bio-briquettes produced from cassava stem waste as an alternative household fuel source. In collaboration with the Royal University of Agriculture (RUA) and the private company Khmer Green Charcoal (KGC), research and development activities on bio-briquette production have been carried out. Meanwhile, in Khna Krao Village, local residents continued their trial-and-error efforts to carbonize cassava stems using traditional kilns constructed from locally available materials. In March 2026, a bio-briquette production workshop was organized at Khna Krao Primary School as part of the environmental education program. During the workshop, students from RUA demonstrated briquette-making techniques based on their research findings and shared this knowledge with school children, teachers, and community members. The briquettes produced during the workshop were taken home and used as cooking fuel. The project also continued its reforestation efforts through tree planting, maintenance of planted sites, and the propagation of native tree seedlings in the school nursery. In addition, practical knowledge related to the traditional use of Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) was promoted, particularly through the involvement of local women. In March 2026, a workshop on producing body soap from locally available NTFPs was conducted. Through this activity, children learned about coconut oil extraction, honey collection, and the process of producing body soap using locally sourced forest products. Through these activities, the project has continued to strengthen environmental awareness, promote the effective utilization of organic waste resources, and enhance local capacity for sustainable community development.



Photo. 5 Workshop on bio-briquette production at a school in Siem Reap Province, Cambodia (Project 2-2)

3. Program on Environmental Education in Asian Countries

3-1 JICA Nikkei Training

From May to August 2025, ERECON implemented the training course entitled "Training on Forest and Soil Management in ESD (Education for Sustainable Development)" under the JICA Nikkei Training, commissioned by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The JICA Nikkei Training aims to contribute to the

sustainable development of Latin American countries by providing technical training opportunities for people of Japanese descent. Under this program, two trainees from Brazil participated in the course. The training aimed to develop human resources capable of promoting and applying knowledge and skills related not only to forest and soil management, but also to biodiversity conservation and participatory approaches. Through a combination of lectures, practical exercises, fieldwork, and cultural exchange activities, the trainees acquired comprehensive knowledge and technical skills from both theoretical and practical perspectives. The trainees delivered their final presentations at JICA Yokohama on 6 August 2025 and subsequently returned to Brazil. It is expected that they contribute to the development of Nikkei communities in Brazil by applying and sharing the knowledge and skills acquired through the training.



Photo. 6 Charcoal making as a part of training at ERECON Headquarters in Machida, Tokyo (Project 3-1)



Photo. 7 Planting seedlings at a school in Siem Reap Province, Cambodia (Project 3-2)

3-2 Overseas Training in Cambodia for Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine, Japan

As a partner organization in Cambodia, we supported the planning, coordination, and implementation of a six-day overseas training program organized by the International Course of Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine from September 4 to 9, 2025. Eight participants, including students and faculty members, took part in the training, which provided them with opportunities to gain broad insights into agriculture, livestock production, environmental conservation, as well as the culture and history of Cambodia. The participants first visited the nursery center and primary school at our project site in Siem Reap Province, where they deepened their understanding of local development challenges and the role of NGO activities in addressing these issues. They also visited the Angkor Centre for Conservation of Biodiversity and surrounding protected areas within the Angkor heritage landscape, where they learned about the multiple functions and ecological importance of forest ecosystems. In addition, a local agricultural cooperative arranged study visits to a poultry farm, a Cambodia

GAP-certified farm, and an edible insect farm, enabling participants to gain a better understanding of agricultural practices and rural livelihoods in Siem Reap Province. In Phnom Penh, the group visited the Royal University of Agriculture (RUA), where they observed various research and development activities and exchanged views with university staff and students. On the final day, a presentation session was held during which the Japanese students shared their analyses and proposed solutions based on their training experiences under four themes: agriculture and festivals, fermented foods, forests, and edible insects. During the final discussion, common themes that emerged across the presentations included “tradition,” “food security,” and “community.” These discussions encouraged participants to reflect more deeply on the relationships between these concepts and the broader goals of sustainability and development.

3-3 Overseas Volunteer Training with the Nippon Foundation Volunteer Center, Japan

The Nippon Foundation Volunteer Center organizes and manages domestic and international volunteer programs for young people. Under a program commissioned by the Center, ERECON's project sites in Cambodia were selected as training venues for Japanese university students interested in international cooperation, education, environmental issues, and volunteer activities. The training was conducted in November 2025 and March 2026. At the target primary school, the trainees participated in exchange activities with children, supported classroom learning, and organized a sports day as the culminating event of the training. In rural primary schools, where opportunities for socio-emotional learning are often limited, the sports day provided children with a valuable opportunity to engage in cooperative activities and experience the enjoyment of working together toward a common goal. For the Japanese university students, the training also served as a meaningful opportunity to deepen their understanding of volunteerism and international cooperation. Despite language barriers, they were required to build relationships proactively and collaborate with peers from different universities and regions of Japan. Through these experiences, they developed practical communication skills, adaptability, and a greater appreciation of cross-cultural understanding. The trainees' attitudes and actions also appeared to provide local residents and community committee members with an opportunity to reflect on the value of voluntary cooperation for the common good. In this sense, the training program held significance not only as an exchange activity but also as a complementary initiative that reinforced ERECON's school-centered approach to community development.



Photo. 8 Organized sports day in the training at a school in Tboung Khmum Province, Cambodia (Project 3-3)

The program is scheduled to continue in 2026, providing further opportunities for mutual learning and collaboration between Japanese youth and local communities in Cambodia.



Photo. 9 Food habit mapping survey at school in Tboung Khmum Province, Cambodia (Project 3-4)

3-4 Overseas Training in Community Oral Health Field for Kyushu University of Nursing and Social Welfare

Under a commissioned overseas training program, ERECON hosted two students and two faculty members from Kyushu University of Nursing and Social Welfare in November 2025. The university places emphasis on training dental hygienists who understand not only patients' oral health conditions, but also their broader living environments, social backgrounds, and values. The training was therefore designed to provide participants with an opportunity to broaden their perspectives through direct exposure to different cultural and social contexts. At the primary school in the project site, the trainees conducted cultural exchange activities, including a Japanese dance performance and a "Kumamon" dance, which helped foster interaction with the children. In the classroom, they carried out a food habit mapping survey and conducted health education activities. They also facilitated exercises exploring cultural differences and commonalities, which deepened their understanding of the daily lives and value systems of children living in rural Cambodia. In addition, the trainees participated in a homestay program in the village, enabling them to gain first-hand experience of rural life and learn directly from local residents. These experiences provided valuable opportunities to reflect on the social and cultural factors that influence health and well-being. The resumption of overseas field training in Cambodia, following a period of interruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and other factors, also created a new opportunity for collaboration for ERECON. Given the close interconnections among food, agriculture, environment, and health in community development, this collaboration with Kyushu

University of Nursing and Social Welfare was considered particularly meaningful. It demonstrated the potential for developing community-based approaches that utilize food and health as entry points for sustainable community development.

3-5 International Green Volunteer Training in Cambodia

The International Green Volunteer Training was conducted in Cambodia from 12 to 19 February 2025. The training was jointly organized by the National Land Afforestation Promotion Organization (NALAPO) and ERECON under NALAPO's Green Fund Program. The training aimed to enhance participants' understanding of the importance of forests and environmental conservation through reforestation activities and environmental education. Ten trainees from Japan participated in a variety of lectures on forest management and conservation in Cambodia, visited several reforestation project sites, and engaged in tree-planting activities together with local residents. The trainees were divided into three groups according to their respective areas of interest, and conducted interviews and questionnaire surveys with local residents to collect primary data for their field studies. Through these activities, the trainees gained a deeper understanding of the current status of deforestation in Cambodia, its underlying causes, and the importance of achieving a harmonious relationship between people and nature, particularly forests, for sustainable development. The findings from the field studies were shared with students at the Royal University of Agriculture (RUA) and further discussed during the final presentation session held in Phnom Penh. The training provided participants with valuable opportunities to integrate classroom learning with field-based experiences and to reflect on the role of forests in sustainable development.



Photo. 10 Group photo after final presentation of the training in Phnom Penh, Cambodia (Project 3-5)

(Extension and Administrative Centers)