

RCE Booklet Format

RCE Okayama

Data entry: NAGAREO Masaaki

(1) Please place a check-mark next to the organizations involved in the promotion of ESD (divided into categories 1 through 3)

① Secretariat (Okayama ESD Promotion Commission / City of Okayama, UNESCO World Conference on ESD Promotion Bureau)

② Entities with which you currently have strong relationships

Schools (elementary and middle schools) High schools Universities / vocational schools

Citizens' groups Government Business Other

③ Entities with which you plan to strengthen your relationships

Schools (elementary and middle schools) High schools Universities / vocational schools

Citizens' groups Government Business Other

(2) Please enter the following information:

1. Regarding the main purposes and goals of the ESD project. How you interpret ESD.

The Okayama ESD project aims to strengthen partnership between institutions and organizations which are conducting a variety of work relating to ESD in the Okayama area. We promote effective ESD which reflects the distinctive characteristics of the Okayama area, and pursue activities that will make a broad-based contribution to “establishing a sustainable society” benefiting many districts in the area.

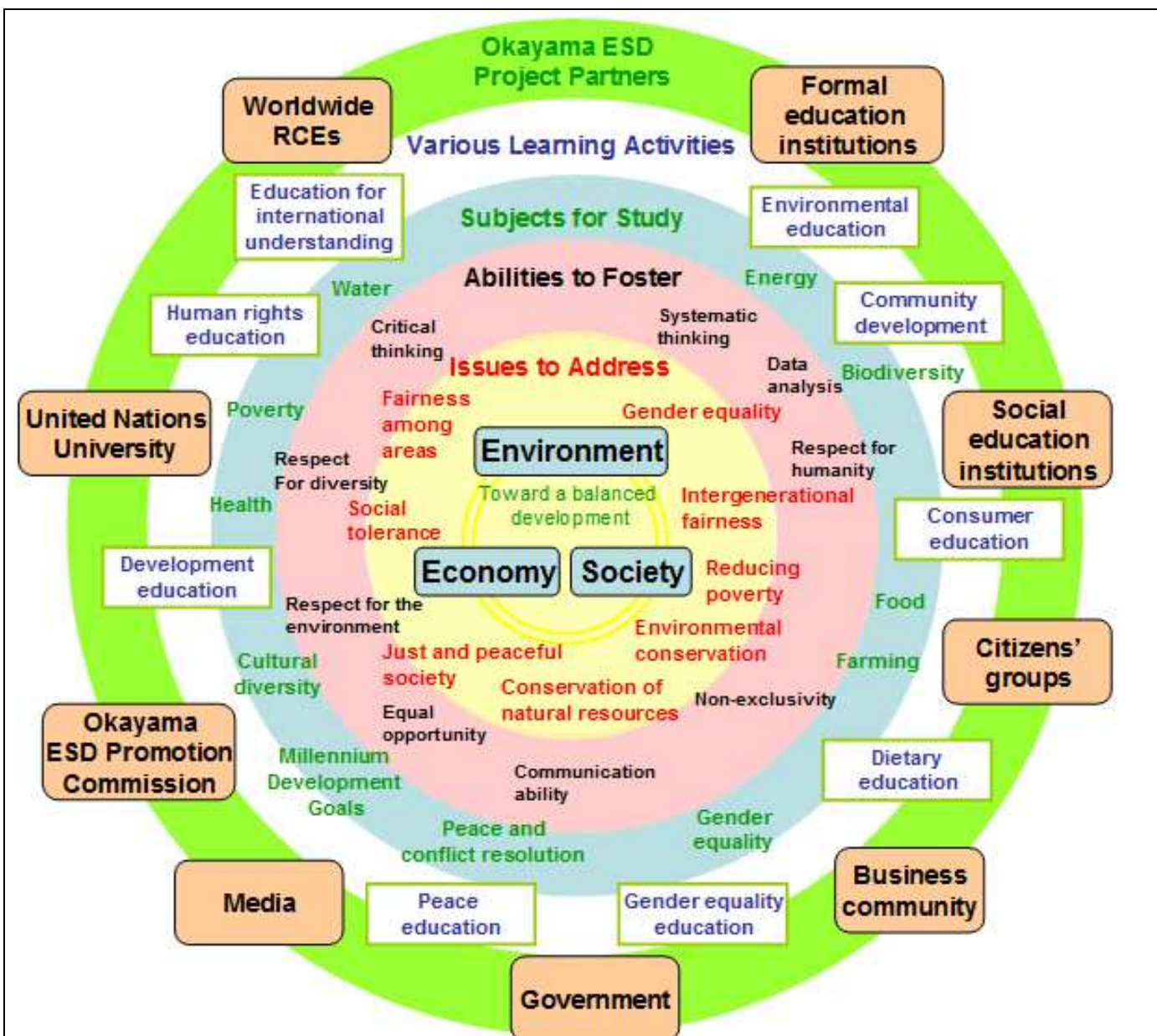
This program has as its goal “community development that brings people together, learning, thinking and acting in concert to realize a sustainable society.”

Our purposes and goals to realize the vision above are:

(1) Engaging in ESD based on international and national action plans in the light of the philosophy of an RCE the United Nations University developed. In addition, understanding the current state of activities of organizations and associations involved with ESD in the Okayama area, strengthening partnership among them and upgrading the quality of their activities, clarifying and working toward solutions to the challenges to ESD facing the Okayama region, thereby promoting ESD that reflects the distinctive quality of the Okayama region.

(2) Broadening networks of organizations and people who are working actively and voluntarily to establish a sustainable society. This will be achieved by deepening the understanding and knowledge of ESD among all the people living and working in the Okayama region.

(3) Working toward interaction and partnership with, and transmission of information to organizations involved in ESD outside the region, and making contributions to the promotion of UN DESD.



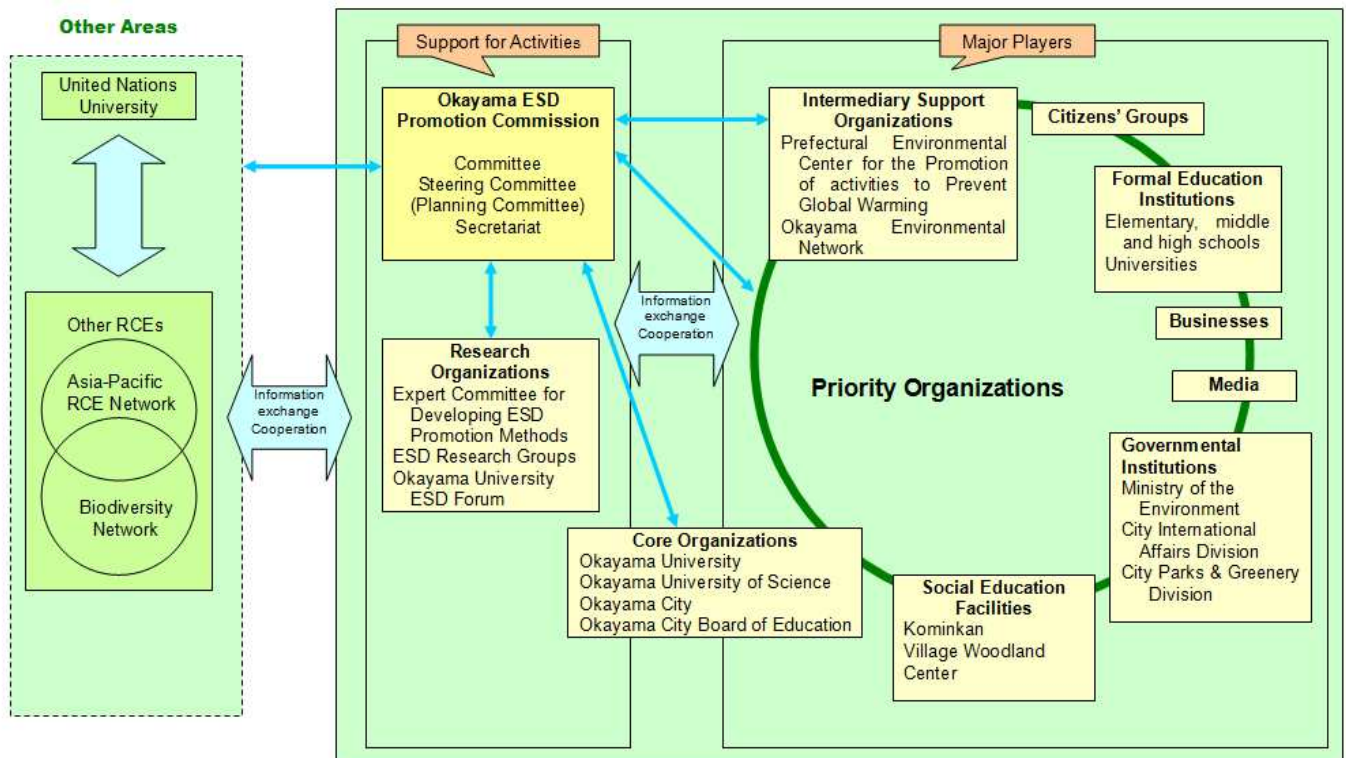
Furthermore, based on this, we have set the near-term numerical targets of the project as follows.

- (1) To hold an ESD-related event at least once each year at every elementary school district.
- (2) To have at least 150 organizations participating in the Okayama ESD project throughout the region.
- (3) To have at least four cooperative projects involving various organizations in middle school district.
- (4) To keep the number of people engaging voluntarily and actively in activities related to establishing a sustainable society at 10 per cent of the targeted region's population at minimum.

2. RCE management organization. Involvement of stakeholders. Roles sharing, etc

The Project's promotional organizations assume various roles, strengthen cooperation and effectively promote ESD leveraging the distinguished characteristics of the Okayama region.

As well as coordinating with organizations involved in the project for forming an alliance among them, we have the system below in place to promote effective ESD throughout the region.



<Okayama ESD Promotion Commission>

- Formulating the basic direction of the Okayama ESD Project
- Designating and supporting activities that are in line with the aims of the project and the organizations involved in these activities, and promoting the project through the collaborating with them
- Promoting cooperation and interaction among organizations involved in ESD, and conducting liaison and coordination.
- Raising knowledge and understanding of ESD throughout the area
- Promotion of information exchange and interaction with other areas and relevant institutions involved in ESD

To make progress in certain specific matters, we have established the following affiliated organizations.

A. Committee

Composed of members representing the organizations involved in ESD throughout the area, the Committee determines policy for the implementation of the project as well as the direction of the activities of the Okayama ESD Promotion Commission.

B. Steering Committee

Composed of members representing the organizations participating in the activities of the Commission, the Steering Committee conducts specific reviews of the Commission's initiatives in the light of the policy of the Committee, and reviews the designation of, support for and collaboration with member

organizations.

Furthermore, at the direction of the Chair of the Commission, the Steering Committee sets up a sub-committee as necessary, to review the policies for the implementation of the project, and reports the results of these reviews to the Committee.

C. Secretariat

Installed in the Okayama City ESD Final Year Conference Preparation Office, the Secretariat carries out the specific activities of the Commission relating to items (b) through (e) above, basing its action on the decisions of the Committee and the results of the reviews conducted by the Steering Committee. The Secretariat also organizes and facilitates the meetings of the Committee and the Steering Committee.

<Priority Organizations>

From among the organizations involved in ESD in the Okayama area, the Commission designates certain organizations which endorse its mission as Priority Organizations. These organizations carry out such activities as workshops, information exchange, and presentation of the deliverables of their initiatives.

As a rule, entire organizations involved in ESD may be so designated; however, in a case the organization is especially large, such organization may be designated by the unit of independent activities if needed.

The Commission may assist those organizations among the Priority Organizations which are on an extremely weak financial footing with a part of their operating expenses.

<Core Organizations

The Core Organizations are to support the Priority Organizations and the various other ESD activities. They have core capabilities of specific functions for promoting ESD such as leadership training, coordination for alliance and interaction between different organizations, and transmission of information relating to ESD activities in the area as a whole.

<Intermediary Support Organizations>

Intermediary Support Organizations are those organizations which function to support the Priority Organizations and the various other ESD activities in the region and which contribute to the promotion of the Project as a whole.

<Okayama ESD Network>

The Okayama ESD Network (hereinafter “the Network”) is formed from the above organizations promoting the Project, as well as organizations which endorse the mission of the project and take action of their own accord or support the project.

3. Regarding the activities and achievements of the Commission's promotional system.

The Okayama ESD Project's Priority Organizations have been expanding in terms of area while going deep in the content of their activities. Furthermore, we see more projects worked on by multiple organizations as they want to reach out to and cooperate with other organizations as well as worked on single handedly as detailed in the examples below..

(1) One of fundamental objectives of the project, "To have at least four cooperative projects involving various organizations in middle school district," resulted in eight vs. an original target of four.

(2) The scope of the activities has expanded to include new fields and genres, such as learning from international challenges and from our interaction with the areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake, and learning activities which relate to establishing a sustainable society through fostering communication and caring skills between parents raising families and their children.

(3) In terms of interaction and networking, we held occasions such as the ESD Café and the Dialogue Café for people engaged in ESD activities to talk to one another. In particular, for ESD Café we took up themes that are more relevant to young generations including university students, such as "connecting universities and society" and "learning from the experiences of student volunteers who traveled to help in the disaster areas." By selecting right audience for a given theme, the participation of the younger generations has increased.

(4) In support of the ASPnet: Associated School Project that started this year, we have observed that schools are reexamining their various existing activities from the standpoint of ESD; they cultivate relationships and work for the community building, as they connect with various people in their activities.

<ESD Café>



<ASPnet: Associated School Project ESD Activities—Third Fujita Elementary School>



Furthermore, we are promoting mutual interaction and information exchange with regions and organizations at the national and international levels through international conferences of RCEs and national RCE-related projects.

In August of 2011, we invited about 30 sixth-grade elementary school students from Sendai City in Miyagi Prefecture to Okayama City. They took part in exchange projects with elementary school students in Takebe-cho, Kita-ku, Okayama City, including creating the drawings for a "Picture Letter to the

Future” and catching fish together during the school’s “waterside class”.

<Sendai/Okayama children’s exchange ESD event>



<RCE working-level Meeting 2012>



Along with these activities, we made efforts for selling our concept aiming to win in a bid to hold the Final Year Conference of the UN DESD. These efforts were made together with local authorities and a wide range of organizations from Okayama Prefecture and from Kagawa Prefecture across the Seto Inland Sea, and made possible Okayama’s hosting of various stakeholders meetings at the Final Year Conference.

4. Regarding the main participating groups/organizations and their achievements.

① Name of participating organization or entity

[NPO Hearts of Gold]

<Description of activities · Achievements>

1. Activities

Hearts of Gold is an NGO that cooperates with the Government of Cambodia, JICA, and local NGOs to promote physical and health education throughout Cambodia and to establish and maintain Japanese language schools. Within Japan, Hearts of Gold receives exchange students and physical education teachers from Cambodia for training, and carries out education for international understanding in elementary, middle and high schools and in universities while they play a key role in these activities.

They organized aid to elementary schools in Higashi-Matsushima City and Ishinomaki City, which were affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake. They have also coordinated and supported exchange activities between elementary schools in Okayama.

2. Areas in which ESD has been incorporated

An ESD approach was adopted to foster a global viewpoint. We view that just giving aid to developing countries is not good enough. So we encourage participants to reexamine issues of resources, economics and the environment at a global level. We provide aid and recovery efforts after the Great East Japan Earthquake, consciously looking toward the establishment of a sustainable society.



3. Achievements

Through the activities of Hearts of Gold, participants communicated their thoughts and ideas to one another, connected with people who they thought were far apart, feeling closer together. They took part in cooperation and exchange activities, through which they came to know who they were dealing with.

They listened at first hand to Japanese who had experienced life overseas as well as the experiences of Cambodians. International cooperation felt more familiar to them.

They realized that there were things they could do in their capacity and they made up their minds to become useful members of society when they grow up. They were engaged in activities aiming to have cool brains that would enable them to think from other people's perspectives and fostering warm heart,

by trying to see the invisible, to hear silent voices and above all to take action first with hands and legs.

4. Challenges and vision for the future

With the reform in the nationally mandated curriculum, the time allotted to general study and free hours used at each school's discretion have decreased, and it is becoming difficult to take as much time as before for activities. However, Hearts of Gold seeks taking a long-term view to continue its support and implementation of activities, which children are eager to work on and to take the main role, such as support for earthquake-affected areas.

Hearts of Gold will continue to propose ideas for concrete practices leading to the establishment of a sustainable society.

② Name of participating organization or entity

[Thinking About Takeeda Society]

<Nature of activities · Achievements>

1. Nature of Activities

Takeeda Municipal Elementary School in Takebe-cho, Kita-ku, Okayama City is a small school with only about 30 students.

In order to counteract the decline in student numbers and raise people to love their hometown and to return one day to live there, the elementary school and volunteer residents formed the “Society for Thinking About Takeeda” in 2006. The Society holds joint events to highlight the beauty and charms of the town, and along with volunteer aid to the school has cleaned up the previously littered riverbed of the Asahi River and face-lifted the waterside as a place for children to play.

Once each month, the group hosts the “Takeeda Waterside Fun School”, with such activities as camping by the riverside, natural treasure hunts, catching sweet fish, watching fireflies, and exploring the nearby woods.

Also, the group conducts the “Asahi River Survey by Drainage” by damming the river and gathering the fish, the number of which lets them determine the river’s health. The survey is not only supported by people in community and from fishery cooperative but government and Okayama University of Science as well.

<Survey by drainage>



<Hometown Development Presentation Meeting>



2. Areas in which an ESD viewpoint has been incorporated

The “Thinking About Takeeda Society” works for the survival of the school and the area and for the creation of a sustainable hometown. The inhabitants of the area share a vision and a goal. They also believe that it is indispensable to reach out and involve as many people in the community as possible. The group works on the timely dissemination of information and the creation of occasions for engaged discussions. It periodically publishes the “Children of Takeeda Newsletter” circular, distributes flyers requesting cooperation with efforts to encourage immigration to the area, and hosts and publicizes workshops on hometown development.

3. Achievements

Events that were previously held only within the region have been opened to the public, resulting in an increase in participation and a broadening of the network of interactions. At the hometown development workshop, the group was able to organize its achievements and challenges for the current year and to determine the direction of its activities from now on. It also compiled a report "Vision for the future of Takeeda, the home for wild life", which discusses their activities and projects thus far.

The group has sustained relationships with individuals and groups from outside the region which have supported its activities, and the interaction with them brought about the subsequent projects.

Due to the increase in families desiring to immigrate and settle in Takeeda, some of who want to send their children to Takeeda Elementary School, in the fiscal year 2012 the number of elementary school students increased from 25 to 32 (an increase of 28%). The combined class in which first and second grade students had been taught has once again been divided into two, and a vision for the future has opened up.

4. Challenges and vision for the future

The "Thinking About Takeeda Society" will steadily continue to build on its achievements. It will communicate charms of Takeeda and by raising the value of the school and the area, it hopes to make Takeeda "the best place in the countryside to raise a child".

The group seeks to increase the ever-declining number of children in the Takeeda area, so that Takeeda Elementary School, the center of the community, can continue to exist.

The Society is continuing to provide a variety of accommodations and support for interaction so that the new families who have settled and immigrated to Takeeda can say "We are glad we've come here, and glad that our children attend Takeeda elementary school," and so that the original residents can say to them that "we are glad you've come."

② Name of participating organization or entity

[Kyoyama ESD Promotion Commission at Okayama Municipal Kominkan]

In the Kyoyama area of Okayama City, the Kyoyama Kominkan has been the base for ESD activities since 2003. The ESD activities in the Kyoyama area began with elementary and junior high school students gathering at the Kyoyama Kominkan to assess pollution of the river and air and to report on this to area residents. Currently, the variety of events shows how these activities have broadened in scope to include, among other activities, environmental education in schools and working together with the many foreign residents in the area. Long-forgotten festivals are even being revived through the production of a film that traces the region's history and development.

In June and October of 2011, "environmental checkup" was conducted, in which tests of air quality, vegetation research, and lectures by experts took place. More than 50 people including elementary and junior high school students, community residents, those from citizen's groups and governmental bodies participated in it.

In July and January, a bus tour, the "Springs Experience Eco-Tour," went to Shinjo Village near the source of the Asahi River. Participants experienced the riverside areas at the source of the Asahi by learning about the forest in the beech groves, observing insects and nature, and conducting air quality tests.

In January, to sum up the Kyoyama area's year of activities, the Kyoyama ESD Promotion Commission held its "ESD Summit." Those people who were not directly involved also sat in the summit and were brought on the same page when students in the science club at Kyoyama Junior High School presented the results of their "environmental checkup," and the initiatives of elementary schools were also presented. Then the participants discussed ideas for future activities.

2. Areas in which an ESD viewpoint has been incorporated

From an ESD viewpoint, the Commission believes that conducting "environmental checkups" on an on-going basis through the alliance between schools and the community involving people of all generations would help the community to come to realize challenges and changes to the area that could put a check on the sustainability. It wishes to develop the capacity in the community so that they feel motivated to take initiatives in working on improving sustainability and on conservation.

The Commission organizes excursions and camping trips out into nature, that provide participants with out-of-ordinary experiences. The organizer tries to employ broad viewpoints and promote interactions between people living in upstream and downstream communities along the same river basin by planning these trips. They place special importance on personal experiences and developing communication ability ("ability fostered by the good balance of mind, heart and body") with special attention attached to the connections between people.

In the Commission's activities, thanks to the cooperation of experts, people were able to delve further into the facts they gained through firsthand experience. This made it possible to visualize the logical explanations and how these underlying facts are interrelated. The Commission is emphasizing the importance of developing a right frame of mind and ability to act upon a decision with ownership, being conscious of the possibility of bringing further improvement/enhancement. For this purpose, it invites university professors and government specialists to its activities as guest lecturers, emphasizing logical

explanations and visualization of connections.

3. Achievements

These activities allowed many participants to visualize social connections and their own involvement, and helped area residents of various ages to learn together.

As people developed a feeling of affection for the area and felt themselves to be members of it, they grew conscious that they must work to understand the area's problems for themselves, and take action not by themselves, but all together.

One of participating children wrote in the follow up essay, "We did such things as having fun in waterfalls, playing in the river, mountain climbing, environmental investigations, things that we normally cannot do in our daily life." This kind of novel experience had a strong impact on the minds and the hearts of many participants, positively affecting their consciousness and behaviors.

The "Springs Experience Eco-Tours" in summer and winter focused not only on the environment, but also kept in mind aspects of culture which cross over into the economy and society. Participants learned about the wisdom accumulated by living in the unique traditional culture and environment specific to the area through enjoyable experiences like the ceremonial burning of New Year's decorations and making rice cakes. It was a chance for participants to gain an objective perspective on the connections that lifestyle has to society and to the environment, and in so doing to take a new look at the connections of their own lives to society and to the environment outside the sometimes narrow sphere of their daily activities.

4. Challenges and vision for the future

In order to establish a sustainable society, the whole society's condition (its customs) must become sustainable. When one considers that this must have its basis in changes in the consciousness and actions of each person, one can conclude that changes in the participants in the Commission's series of activities will be a driving force for a change to come for society as a whole.

The Kyoyama ESD Promotion Commission will continue steadily to broaden its efforts, working to promote ESD which allows all the residents of the area, from children to adults, to change their consciousness and actions and thereby make a whole society more sustainable.

The Commission's efforts thus far have proceeded from a perspective of practitioner, but it intends to review them from a pedagogical perspective to develop its efforts further from the perspective of education. The Commission also aims to bring more clarity to its evaluation criteria (its goals), which have been vague until now.

The Kyoyama ESD Promotion Commission will continue to work further on community and capacity building in the area with the aim of establishing a sustainable society through practice based on learning.

5. Strengths and distinctive features of the RCE. Regarding the main success factors.

- (1) It provides a space/opportunity in which a great variety of groups and people can get involved in ESD.
 - Connecting opportunities gave rise to dialogue, which made possible learning together
 - A flexible network, in which various groups can learn together freely
 - Expansion of the area as more groups and citizens become involved in ESD
- (2). Government takes ownership in promoting ESD on an on-going basis
 - As the government takes the leadership in promoting ESD, it takes advantage of its particular strengths. (stability, organizational power, preexisting networks, reliability)
 - With the involvement of the government, ESD has been recognized by the region's people as the public policy ("New Public") for the whole society of the region. This makes it easy for people to accept ESD.
- (3) The continuous support of the full-time ESD Coordinator lends a sense of security
 - The full-time Coordinator continuously supports building cooperative networks and trusting relationships between interested parties, which has allowed various groups to form ties
- (4) ESD is promoted locally through Kominkans.
 - The Kominkans provide a place for area residents to learn about ESD
 - Kominkan staff act as coordinators to bring together non-profit organizations, citizens' activities, and locally-based organizations.
 - The Kominkan has been recognized once again as a social educational institution
 - Activities that area residents had already been carrying out have been given new meaning from the perspective of ESD
- (5) The local community plays the central role, with universities using their expertise to lend support
 - Universities collaborate with ESD activities, helping with coordination and support.
 - Expert perspectives helped community to realize something new which was not possible on their own and led to re-discovery of charms of the community.

6. Regarding challenges to the RCE and to the promotion of ESD.

In order to continue to promote effective ESD in the region as a whole, more work on the following tasks is necessary.

- (1) Coordinating among the groups participating in the Okayama ESD Project to carry out more joint projects and to further promote various kinds of learning
- (2) Since the number and scope of activities of groups working on international issues is limited, broadening cooperation with various groups and learning together about working towards solutions to international challenges
- (3) Encouraging further participation in activities by young people, who are in the minority in the ESD project's activities
- (4) Creating structures and incentives for citizens, university students and others to participate with more sense of ownership
- (5) Further deepening cooperation with RCEs in Japan and elsewhere, with the UNESCO ASPnet, and with other relevant organizations; and strengthening publicity and education, raising interest in ESD, and encouraging participation in ESD activities in the Okayama region in preparation for the

Final Year Conference in 2014

- (6) Training key people who will act as nuclei for the community in order to work on local challenges
- (7) Deepening the knowledge of Kominkan staff of ESD and closing gaps in level of knowledge and skill among them
- (8) Establishing structures for cooperation and coordination between the full-time Coordinator (at the Secretariat of the Commission) and area coordinators (social education directors at Kominkans), and establishing structures for training coordinators
- (9) Broadening support and cooperation in a wide range of fields beyond the environment and education, such as the economy, welfare, and engineering, in order to address challenges in the community.

7. Regarding the outlook for 2014 and post-2014 development.

Work on the following items is necessary to prepare for 2014 and thereafter.

- (1) Increasing the number of active groups while maintaining our flexible network
- (2) Continuing to address issues as the local government manages the Secretariat
- (3) Analyzing the qualities and abilities necessary to an ESD coordinator, and formulating a system of training for coordinators
- (4) Taking advantage of Kominkans so that area residents themselves can work on local challenges, and link this work to global challenges
- (5) Coordinating participation in ESD by universities and other institutions of higher education in a greater number of fields, and strengthening their bond with the community
- (6) Setting metrics for assessing the achievements to see if ESD is helping capacity building for the “establishment of a sustainable future”, and establishing methods to verify and analyze these results

8. Regarding the collaborative project between the RCE and the UNESCO ASPnet.

The Okayama City Board of education is the main party responsible for promoting the UNESCO ASPnet, with the goal that 50 schools become members of the project by 2014.

The City of Okayama encourages the accession of schools to the UNESCO ASPnet which will promote ESD along with the Kominkans (social education institutions). As the RCE Okayama, Okayama City Office and the Okayama ESD Promotion Commission are in leading roles to support and drive the promotion of ESD in the Okayama City area.

In the fiscal year 2012, 14 middle and elementary schools were approved as members of UNESCO ASPnet.

Second Fujita Elementary School – visit to a local farm



Kogushi Elementary school – Experiencing pound-net fishing

