

Kominkan(Community Learning Centre of Japan) & ESD

Kominkans are essential providers of social education, promoting community-based ESD within the context of solving regional problems. Kominkans are managed by municipalities.

Case Study:Koki Kominkan

Multicultural integration through disaster prevention activities

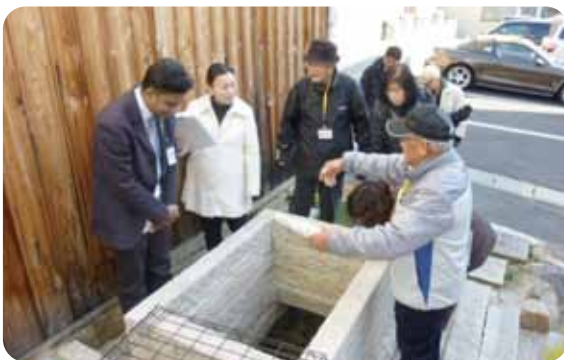
There are a lot of foreigners living in the Koki district. Therefore, Japanese residents and foreigners in the community need to cooperate and help each other whenever a disaster occurs.

For this reason, we hold a “multinational disaster prevention meeting” to structure community strengths that transcend nationality through disaster prevention activities focusing on survival skills. Through dialogue with local residents, we found out that many foreigners don't have experience with earthquakes and awareness levels about disasters is also low among Japanese residents. We are promoting these meetings to build a local network by learning together in experienced-based disaster prevention workshops.



Case Study:Seno Kominkan

Raising community exchanges by identifying local resources



Seno and Mishima districts are new residential areas; the percentage of residents who don't know about their local history is increasing. Therefore, initiative local residents make a “water wells map” so they may get to know the area by exploring historically important water sources. The members of the water wells map making project check water wells in the community in order to pass on knowledge about how local people in the past took good care of water throughout their lives, thus deepening their knowledge of local resources.

Case Study:Kita Kominkan

Passing on local, traditional culture to the next generation

We regularly write a “Kohoku ESD News” feature in the Kita Kominkan monthly report. We interview locals about what community values, events and activities they engage in, and what they want to pass on to the next generation and share with the whole community. We try to encourage local residents to foster interests in local culture, traditions, festivals, living environments and education for the next generation, and to share problems with the future community in mind.



Many people in the community gather to promote activities within Kominkans in Okayama City. We are engaged in promoting ESD through cooperating with various people such as senior community members, young local leaders of the future and foreign residents. We aim to think, learn, and practice ESD together for the future of the community.



Okayama Chuo Kominkan Shiori Shigemori

Case Study: Kozai Kominkan

Foster a sense of community and visualize a mutually supportive future of welfare

We promote activities for families that encourage the younger generation to connect positively and enhance love and engagement with the community. Such activities include firefly watching in the town and researching fish in irrigation canals. While the population ages and the birthrate drops, we are creating a structure to support every aspect of welfare in order to maintain peace within our city. We enhance the potential of activities through institutional structuring done predominantly by members of the “Community Connection Initiatives” group.



Case Study: Saidaiji Kominkan

Revitalization of the local community through Kominkan classes



We operate the volunteer training course “Udon School” to help residents make friends and find motivation in life after retirement. Participants focus on learning how to make udon noodles and soup. They hold an “Udon Cafe” providing homemade udon once a month and this helps to deepen communication in the community. We also conduct volunteer activities such as visiting community welfare facilities.

There is a once-popular shopping area that is slowly going out of business. We are hoping we can use these vacant stores to redevelop community businesses, which will lead to the revitalization of the local community.

Promotion of ESD activities at libraries The participation of Okayama municipal library



Libraries play an important role as information centres, helping each citizen to “know,” “think,” and “act” in a way that assists in the building of a sustainable society. We try our best not only to support ESD activities, but also to enhance understanding of ESD. We achieve this through maintaining an “ESD-related material section” in our libraries that showcases documents related to ESD and by creating a book list that introduces these documents.

In addition, we conduct events for children such as the “Green Plants Curtain Project”. This project utilizes the library space and gives children opportunities to experience and learn, deepening their understanding about nature and environment in an enjoyable way.

(Okayama Municipal Chuo Library)



ESD book list



ESD-related material section

ESD - relating with communities

There are many forms of learning in the community. Schools, communities, and administrations are cooperating and promoting ESD.

Fujita school district Development of humanity and the community through "agriculture"

Fujita Dai-ichi Municipal Elementary School

Building a sustainable society through the making a "Food Map" of Fujita's agricultural crops and conducting fieldwork.



Fujita Dai-ni Municipal Elementary School



Students participate in crop picking with the cooperation of the onion farmhouse in the school district. Students come to realise the rich harvest of Fujita and relate it to their understanding of the local community.

Fujita Dai-san Municipal Elementary School



Promotion of "Project 88" to help students think about the cultivation of rice in Fujita for the next 20 years and beyond through engaging with community members.



Okayama Prefectural Koyo High School

Adoption of agricultural methods utilizing ducks and family rice-planting activities to create eco-friendly rice cultivation. Additionally, students sometimes work as instructors at elementary and junior high schools in the Fujita district, bridging the gap between schools and communities.

Fujita Kominkan and Local Schools

In the Fujita district, we hold a presentation at the Kominkan about each school's ESD activities during the year, including elementary schools, junior and senior high schools representatives. Junior high school students are the acting chairmen. Although it is difficult for them to give clear presentations to locals, it is a valuable experience. These activities help ESD thinking take root in the community.



Fujita Municipal Junior High School

Students and teachers of Fujita Junior High School act as instructors at an event known as "The Amazing Family Science Workshop," which is sponsored by the local Kominkan. We nurture human relationships through the observation of nature and creatures, and make connections to promote ESD and local agriculture.



We have identified a set of common ideals for children within junior high school districts that promote ESD. We conduct fieldwork in cooperation with elementary, junior and senior high schools, Kominkans, universities and the local community. It is hard to coordinate suitable schedules, but we feel a sense of pride for Fujita when we hear success stories from local people. Children dream of building Fujita's future for the next 20 years while they engage in learning with all their hearts.

Teacher of Fujita Dai-ichi Municipal Elementary School:Kazuko Matsumoto



In the Kyoyama district, we have identified five community goals for promoting ESD together with schools, Kominkans and local communities under the slogan "Not one person making 100 steps; 100 people making one step together." These goals include principles such as "building a community where children and adults learn together and cooperate to tackle social problems".

President of ESD Promotion Commission in the Kyoyama district:Mitsuyuki Ikeda

Takashima school district Water, Creatures, and the Lives of People

Takashima Kominkan and Club of Takashima Kyokuryu Eco-Museum

Takashima Kominkan conducts research about rice field ecosystems and the breeding situation of “Ayumodoki” (Kissing Loach) in collaboration with the society for freshwater fish research. We conduct research in preserved rice fields and many students from local elementary schools participate in the research too. We hold lectures and workshops for both children and adults to learn and think about water, nature and our ways of life and agriculture in order to preserve the environment where this rare creature can thrive. We also hold observation workshops such as the “Firefly observation workshop” to enjoy learning about our local environment.



Takashima Municipal Elementary School



Through the artificial breeding of “Ayumodoki”, which is designated as a protected species, students learn the value of life and environmental problems. Kominkan staff give lectures to students and the whole community is working together on this issue.



Kyoyama school district Growing Diversity leads to Harmonious Coexistence

Kyoyama Kominkan / Kyoyama District ESD Promotion Commission

We have been promoting ESD in the Kyoyama Kominkan since 2003. Students from local elementary and junior high schools have researched river and air quality and reported their findings to the community. This movement became a trigger for ESD promotion. We hold a variety of events at schools under various themes such as environmental education and interact with foreign residents in the community. The “Green Roads and Waterways Design Concept,” which Kyoyama junior high school students suggested to the mayor, was embodied in 2011. (Start from 2014)



Kyoyama Municipal Junior High School



enhance “compassion, dreams, and motivation” in the whole school.

Individuals and groups set themes based on the environment, peace, internationalization, human rights, and work on research activities. By sending results and suggestions to the community at the “General Culture Presentation Society” and Kyoyama Kominkan, we promote ESD to



Tsushima Municipal Elementary School

Students were divided into three project groups, i.e. safety, the environment, and welfare. They gave presentations about their findings and problems encountered on their projects and gained feedback from local people. They were able to discuss what they can do for the planet as a community while thinking about the future.



Ishima Municipal Elementary School

Students learned the relationship between renewable energy and the environment at Kyoyama Solar Green Park. We developed local learning resources and promoted ESD activities by making use of them. The community is blessed with a lot of wonderful resources.

ASPnet as a promotional base for ESD

Promoting ESD at ASPnet promotion centres

As of 2013, 43 public elementary and junior high schools in Okayama City became members of ASPnet (including preparation and application pending). ASPnet aims to promote ESD initiatives related to the local issues in the communities surrounding each of the member schools. We are currently aiming to get 50 schools participating in the project by the end of 2014.



Take-eda Municipal Elementary School

Schools and communities cooperate together to promote the "Take-eda Hometown Revitalization Project" by growing rice and vegetables. We also conduct a "Festival" by using the crops we grow. The "Building Hometown Presentation Society" researches local history and current living conditions and gives presentations about creating a "Sustainable Hometown" to local residents. We nurture our children by developing unique activities in schools focused on environmental learning and food and agriculture based experiences. We hope they will contribute actively to "building a sustainable hometown".

Ashimori Municipal Junior High School

We engage in finding solutions to local problems, field operations, and talking with local residents. We enhance the potential of each student to inherit and protect tradition and develop the power to take the lead in the community and become future leaders in the Ashimori district. At the "Local Learning Presentation" in the 3rd grade, students deliver their recommendations to the community. There have been occasions when proposals have been adopted because of the persuasive presentations of the students. Based on comments and feedback from the working class, students continue to investigate the focal points of local problems deeply.



Kaisei Municipal Elementary School

Our goal is raising children who voluntarily participate in the community. We set up events such as the "Local Culture Learning Project," the "Local Nature and Environment Learning Project," and the "Project to Establish a Sustainable World" to promote this participation. Students learn about the safety of food, and a safe and healthy way of living through eco-friendly agriculture. For example, they are able to conduct eco-friendly agricultural methods utilizing ducks through the cooperation of local people. Students participate in the activities while communicating and appreciating the local residents.

Kogushi Municipal Elementary School

Various people, including the locals, cooperate to revitalize the eelgrass beds in the Kogushi sea. Kogushi elementary school has been engaged in this project to restore the wealth of natural resources of the local sea since 2007. Through this, we have realized a sustainable way to live with nature and have been promoting activities while thinking what we can do today. Through experiencing unique net fishing and laver seaweed scooping, children learn the traditional culture of the community.



Sankun Municipal Elementary School

In the integrated class periods at junior high schools and high schools, we continually conduct "Hometown Learning," which focuses on the community, and is based on the people, nature, and culture of our hometown. In the 6th grade, as the culmination of their learning, students perform Noh dance (a traditional Japanese masked dance-drama) and attend Noh performances at the Okayama Korakuen Garden. Students are able to experience overwhelmingly powerful, "real" performances and learn the sincere way of life of "flame keepers" of traditional culture.



Minan Municipal Elementary School

3rd grade students research the history of their school district through participating in activities based on ways of living in the old days and come to know the efforts of people in those times. In autumn, local volunteers take students to explore canals by boat.

We aim to bring up children who value the relationship between local people, history and culture and voluntarily participate in building a sustainable society as members of their community.

Fukuda Municipal Elementary School and Junior High School

We encourage elementary and junior high school students to be more motivated to engage with the community and preserve the community for the next generation through exploring historic spots and participating in cleanup activities. At the junior high school, students research what they need to do to realize world peace through holding presentations about global understanding and visiting Hiroshima and Okinawa. We introduce these activities at the Autumn Music Festival.



Fukuwatari Municipal Elementary School

We conduct activities to encourage students to get interested in the rich nature and history of Fukuwatari and to deepen their attachment to the community through rediscovering the wonderful aspects of local culture. Students are also engaged in citizen-based town planning as members of the community. Town planning helps them think about what kind of town Fukuwatari should be in the future. In the "Town Exploration" activity for the 3rd grade, students discuss the future of Fukuwatari and make and present "Future Maps" aimed at improving town planning. Some opinions such as setting free rental umbrellas at the Kominkan were adopted, which motivated the students to do more.



I hope everyone gets to know more about Fukuwatari, which has a rich natural environment, culture, and history. Children have already started realizing the pros and cons of Fukuwatari through support by local people. It will be our pleasure if children can become leaders of Fukuwatari, loving and preserving its culture and passing it on to the next generation.



Teacher of Fukuwatari Municipal Elementary School: Yoshiaki Nakayama