

TREE of International Exchange

Weaving the Future Through Dialogue

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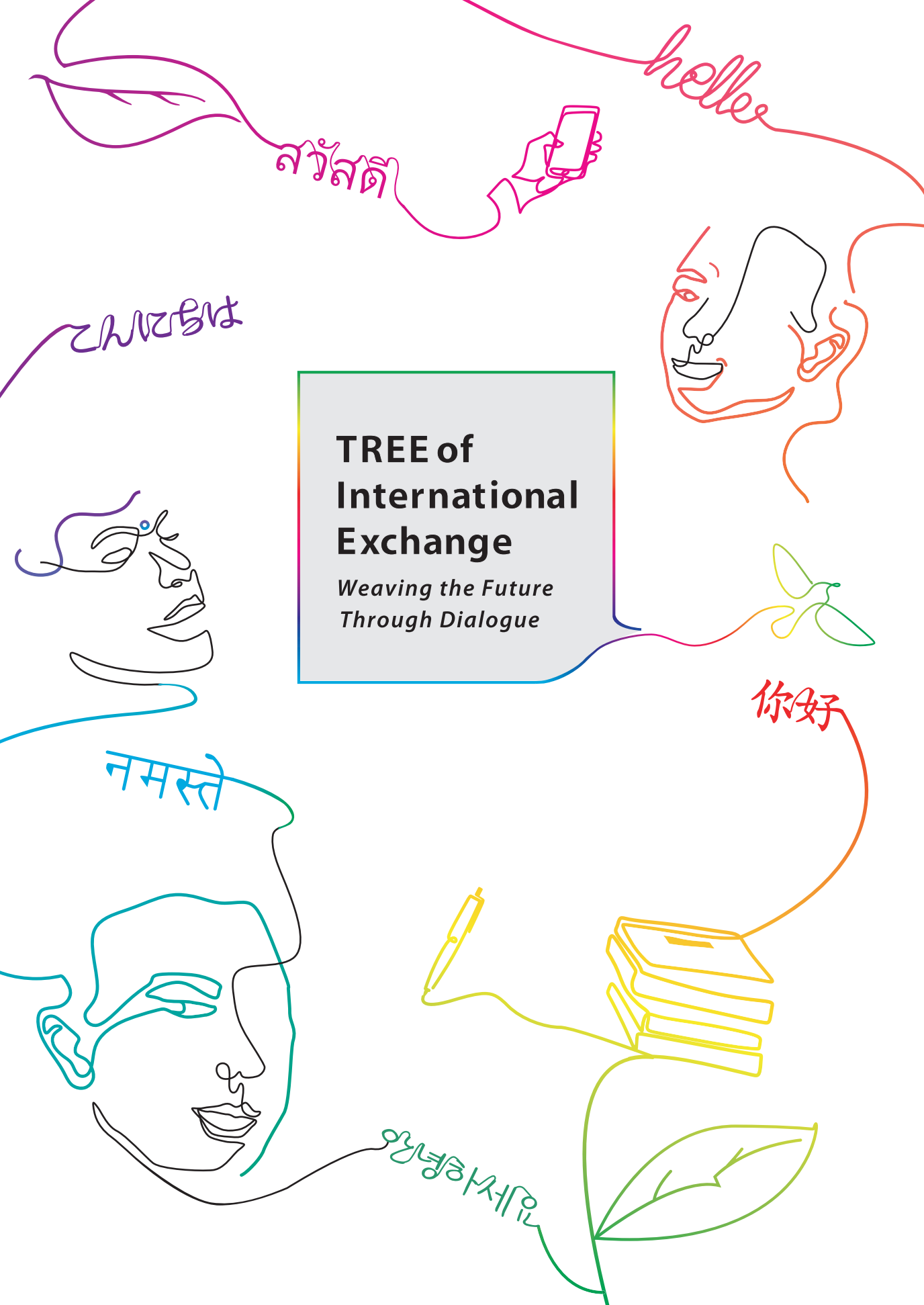
hello

こんにちは

你好

नमस्ते

안녕하세요



Introduction

The Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU) promotes regional cooperation and exchange activities in the fields of education and culture for the purpose of realising a peaceful and sustainable society where diverse culture is respected. As one of our activities, we have carried out bilateral International Exchange Programmes for School Teachers between Japan and Korea, China, Thailand and India since 2001. As of March 2023, the programmes were carried out as part of the “International Collaboration Programme for Education for the New Era” commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan (MEXT). This booklet, the ‘TREE of International Exchange: Weaving the Future Through Dialogue,’ which summarises 20 years of the achievements of ACCU’s International Exchange Programmes for School Teachers, along with voices of participants, has been produced in two languages, Japanese and English, to make it easily accessible for people in the field.

The ‘TREE’ in the title originates from Asia-Pacific Educators’ Platform: TREE, a website for programme participants. The International Exchange Programmes for School Teachers provides a place for Transformative learning, Respect for diversity, Exploration and Exchanges (TREE).

This booklet consists of an introduction to international exchange “opportunities” (Chapter 1), a “dialogue and contribution” section that listens to the voices of teachers (Chapter 2), and topics on international exchange for school teachers (Chapter 3). A production committee for this booklet was formed with three teachers who had participated in ACCU’s International Exchange Programmes for School Teachers, and they collaborated, through deep discussions with the ACCU, to produce it.

Dialogue between teachers is a core part of the Programme, especially in this time where there are increasing opportunities for online exchanges. Through the dialogues and contribution, this booklet conveys the dialogue that we think is important, in a way that we hope communicates the stories and brilliance of the teachers and children involved in this project to as many people as possible. We hope that those people who pick up this booklet will feel that, even in these uncertain times, they can move forward to a better future that transcends borders, and that it provides hints to help them to discover new possibilities.

Last but not least, many people have participated in the creation of this booklet. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you all.

Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU)
International Educational Exchange Department

3 Introduction

5 **Chapter 1 Learning space where teachers and children are inspired to change the future**

6 The main player of this programme is "Teacher" in ACCU's International Exchange Programme for School Teachers

8 Opportunities where teachers in Asia meet and learn from one another

9 Create connections and expand exchanges

10 TREE Photo Contest

11 **Chapter 2 Nurturing through dialogue**

12 TREE of International Exchange - Weaving the Future Through Dialogue -

14 **Dialogue** **Overcoming the COVID-19 Crisis - International Exchange Innovation -**
Mr. Shinichi Takahashi (Teacher, Koshigaya Kita High School, Saitama Prefecture)
Mr. Joen Honam (Teacher, Gangwon-do Office of Education, Gangwon International Education Association, International Education Department)

21 **Contribution** **Connect with people and spread kindness to turn an unpredictable future into a more peaceful future.**
Mr. Itaru Matsuno (Teacher, Nagoya University of Economics, Ichimura Senior High School)

28 **Dialogue** **Connecting, learning from each other, taking action**
It's the brilliance of a kaleidoscope
Mr. Akira Ogawa (Teacher, Kitakyushu Municipal Sugao Junior High School)
Ms. Punam Rajage
(Teacher, Kai. Sadashiv Urf Bapusaheb Darekar, Pune Municipal Corporation School no. 174-B Kondhawa bk. Pune, Maharashtra, India)

35 **Chapter 3 International teacher exchanges during the current COVID-19 crisis**

40 The Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU)

41 Conclusion

Learning space where teachers and children
are inspired to change the future



Local communities



Parents & Guardian



Children

Colleagues

The main player of this programme is

"Teacher"

in ACCU's International Exchange Programme for School Teachers

Opportunities for international exchanges through education are open not only to children, but also to adults.

Meeting and talking with a wide variety of teachers in terms of region, country, types of school, subjects, positions and age, helps both parties realise what they have in common and what is different...

By sharing various values, and expressing latent ideas and perspectives in words, this eventually helps lead to a deeper understanding of oneself both inside and out. Those types of opportunities are expanding right in front of teachers.

How about reaching out and grabbing them?

These programmes provide an opportunity for teachers to improve, and also encourage them to give their experiences back to their classrooms after the programmes finish.

※The actual programme is comprised of a combination of several of these activities

※Period - About one week for an in-person programme
- One-time, or a few times a month for an online programme



Dialogue

- Exchange meetings
- Exchange of opinions
- Question and answer sessions
- Opening and closing ceremonies

Cooperation

- Joint lessons
- Lesson study
- Creating action plans
- Future oriented retrospective work

Experiences

- Cultural experiences
- Experiments
- Music/movie appreciation
- Educational/cultural institutions/World Heritage sites visits
- School visits
- Lesson observation
- Photo contest

Collecting Information

- MEXT (Ministry of Education) lectures
- Orientation
- Lectures from experts
- Provision of information from handbooks

Promotion of international mutual understanding and understanding of diverse values in the educational setting

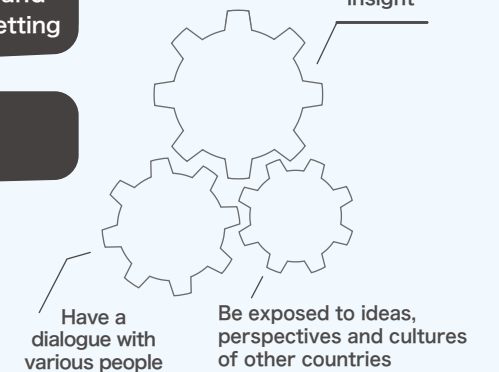
Respect for diverse cultures, for a peaceful and sustainable society

Sharing Information

- Debriefing sessions inside and outside the school
- Production of written reports

Online Platform: TREE

Gain international insight










Opportunities where teachers in Asia meet and learn from one another

Since 2000, the ACCU has been commissioned by UNESCO, United Nations University, and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan (MEXT), to carry out bilateral International Exchange Programmes for School Teachers with Korea, China, Thailand and India, which it has done for over 20 years.

A total of over 5,500 teachers have met through the programmes to mutually deepen their understanding and learning.

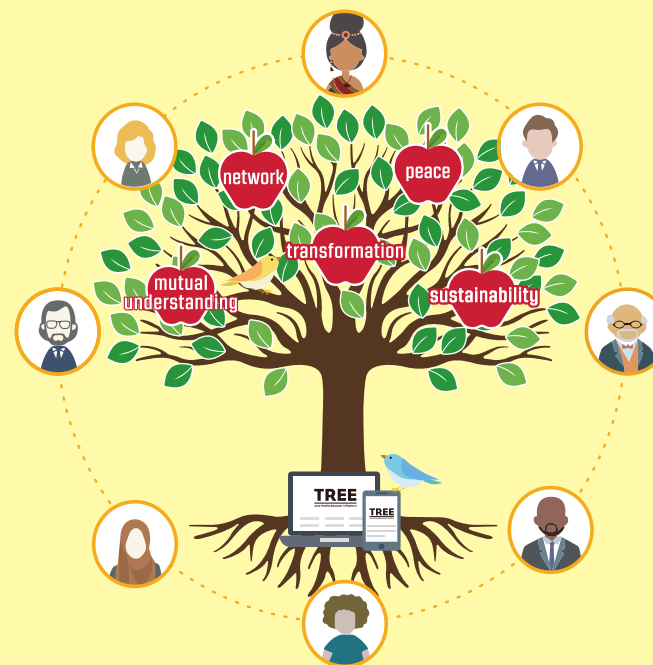
	Host Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan (MEXT) Planning, implementation and operation Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU)
A total of 1,203 school teachers have participated in dispatch programmes (as of March 2023, including online programmes). A total of 224 school teachers have participated in exchange meetings with foreign teachers (as of March 2023, including online programmes). A total of 939 Boards of Education, schools and institutions have received visits from foreign teachers (as of March 2023, including online programmes).	
	Partner organisations Korean National Commission for UNESCO (KNCU), Ministry of Education of the Republic of Korea (MOE) 2,336 school teachers participated between 2001 and March 2023 (including online programmes).
	Partner organisation Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (MOE) 1,782 school teachers participated between 2003 and March 2023 (including online programmes).
	Partner organisation Ministry of Education of the Kingdom of Thailand (MOE) 121 school teachers participated between 2015 and March 2023 (including online programmes).
	Partner organisations Ministry of Education of India (MOE), Centre for Environment Education of India (CEE) 101 school teachers participated between 2016 and March 2023 (including online programmes).

< Programme timeline >

2001	Start of exchange programme with Korea
2002	Start of exchange programme with China
2010	10th anniversary of the programme
2015	Start of exchange programme with Thailand
2016	Start of exchange programme with India
2020	20th anniversary of the programme, start of Asia-Pacific Educators' Platform: TREE

Create connections and expand exchanges

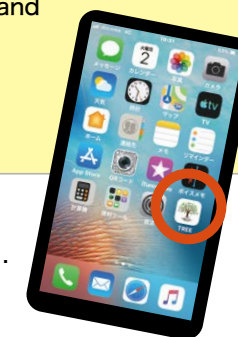
Meet other teachers across the regions on Asia-Pacific Educators' Platform: TREE, a social media service for programme participants!



What is TREE?

TREE is a membership-based social media service for Japanese and overseas teachers who have participated in or cooperated on International Exchange Programmes for School Teachers to facilitate exchanges among them and has been fully operated in Japanese and English since 2020.

TREE stands for
Transformative learning,
Respect for diversity,
Exploration and
Exchanges.



Join TREE

<- Scan the QR code to register your membership (on computer or smartphone).



- ① Application for membership registration
- ② Identification by administrator (within three business days)
- ③ Receipt of e-mail announcing registration completion

© If you add the page to your smartphone home screen, you can easily have access by tapping once like an app.

What you can do on TREE :

- Provision of materials and videos from the secretariat to participants of International Exchange Programmes for School Teachers
- Information exchange among programme participants
- Finding interaction and project participants
- Sharing your educational activities

After registration

- Set profile picture
- Search for friends and send friend requests
- Join a group of your interest and enter a group in the programme that you participate
- Read a post by another user and leave a comment
- Make a post



TREE Photo Contest

TREE holds photo contests on specific themes with the aim of stimulating interactions between its members.

Below are the winning entries for this year's contest.

Theme

What is "peace" to you?

We created an opportunity to think about "peace" together, by getting people to share photos that symbolised peace for them.



The tranquil sea of Mochimune fishing harbour (Shizuoka prefecture) at dusk. It took me quite a while thinking about what "peace" is to me, but I finally realised that to me it's that moment at the end of a good day when I look out at the sky and the sea. Let's hope it spreads a little peace throughout the world!



It's happy to be able to sing freely! After the civil war, children were able to enjoy art freely in Cambodia. Let's hope more and more children are able to experience art. Let's hope that they have a bright future.

Theme

What is the most rewarding part about being a teacher for you?

We created an opportunity to share photos that symbolised the rewarding aspects of being a teacher.



Meeting teachers from around the world, and students full of love. These numerous benefits make the noble profession of teaching worthwhile.



This is a photo of tree-planting. I feel it is rewarding to do things for the sake of the future of the planet, and for children who will be the leaders of the future generation.

Nurturing through dialogue

TREE of International Exchange

Weaving the Future Through Dialogue

When producing this book, we formed a production committee that was centred around three teachers who had participated in ACCU's International Exchange Programme for School Teachers. The ACCU and the teachers had deep discussions online to produce the booklet, and ended up with a face-to-face meeting, where they arrived at a subtitle that incorporates the passionate ideas contained in this booklet.

Weaving the future through dialogue

Here are some excerpts from the teachers' actual words that were said while they were arriving at the subtitle decision. Surely it will serve as encouragement to everyone who is thinking about knocking on the door of international exchanges for school teachers.

And continuing on the following pages, the teachers on the committee each show us from their dialogues with teachers abroad and contributions what they really want us to experience (personally) from the International Exchange Programme for School Teachers.

A candid brainstorming session was held,

where keywords about international exchanges for school teachers were jointly contributed.

Q : Please tell us what was your motive for and how you felt about international exchanges for school teachers.



Mr. Matsuno

I wanted to know what it would feel like if I went to one of the partner countries of the school teacher exchanges. At first I was all alone, but I realised that I got a lot of kindness and love from teachers who were initially indifferent, and before I knew it I dragged a school into the exchanges. But I think that it's important that it is not mandatory.

We all explored together the "right" subtitle until the very end!



Ito

Mr. Ogawa I think the first step is a little intimidating. That's why small steps are important. After that, it's about perceiving each problem as something that we all have in common.

Mr. Takahashi Even if there are lots of teachers who are interested in international exchanges, they don't know how to connect with foreign schools. I think this international exchange for school teachers has great potential as a first step.

Q : Is it quite difficult to get other teachers in the school involved?



Mr. Takahashi

Well, when you start at a new school, it's important to respect the place and the individual teachers there, so I think you need to give it some time and get to know people before pursuing that path.



Shindo

Mr. Matsuno The teachers themselves shouldn't be afraid of the programme failing, and want to give the children more experiences.

Mr. Ogawa If the teacher enjoys it, the children will enjoy it too! Even to management I confidently say "I'll do it!" Although it's natural that there are different levels of enthusiasm, so I want people to see me enjoying myself.

Q : What kind of future do teachers envision toward the international exchange?

By building up relationships with not only teachers but local people as well, you come to perceive things as not simply other people's problem but as a problem that concerns you. This leads to people feeling more sympathetic to the other people in the world. Even after 2030, I want to give children the ability to continue aiming for a sustainable society by themselves. If people are connected, they'll manage it somehow or another!



Mr. Ogawa

Mr. Matsuno Without taking forever to choose my words... if we're all living anyway, I want to connect children's future with "kindness!" I think I want to create that kind of society!

Mr. Takahashi Usually we tend to prioritise study as being the most important thing, but I think this can be a chance to help make children be more considerate.

First, face your partner as person to person = have a dialogue



Weaving the Future Through Dialogue



Imaizumi

Production Committee Members

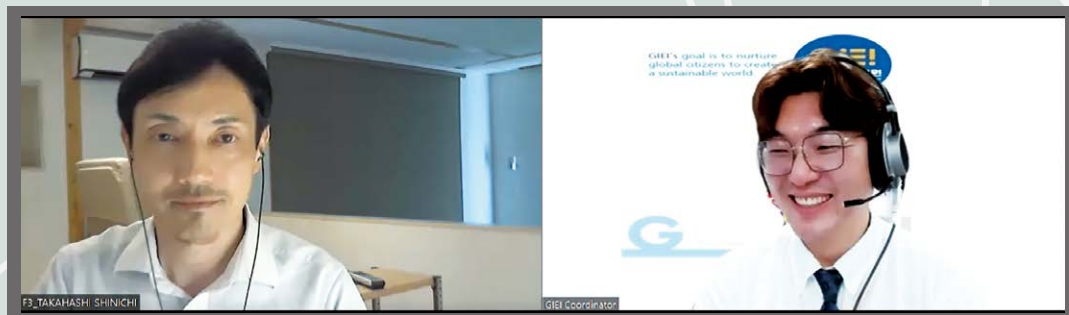
- Mr. Shinichi Takahashi** (Koshigaya Kita High School, Saitama Prefecture, Teacher: English, Inquiry-based learning)
- Mr. Ryo Ogawa** (Kitakyushu Municipal Sugao Junior High School, Teacher: Social studies, Special needs education)
- Mr. Itaru Matsuno** (Nagoya University of Economics, Ichimura Senior High School, Teacher: Social studies)
- Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU) International Educational Exchange Department**
- Yumi Shindo (Director) / Tae Ito (Programme specialist) / Mika Temma (Programme specialist)
- Design Moi Co., Ltd.** Akiko Imaizumi



Temma

Thank you for sharing Invaluable experiences.

Dialogue



Overcoming the COVID-19 Crisis - International Exchange Innovation -

Mr. Shinichi Takahashi



Mr. Joen Honam

Teacher, Koshigaya Kita High School,
Saitama Prefecture

Teacher, Gangwon-do Office of Education,
Gangwon International Education Association,
International Education Department

Background of the dialogue

Mr. Shinichi Takahashi, a teacher in charge of the English department, international exchange and inquiry-based learning in Koshigaya City in Saitama Prefecture, and Mr. Joen Honam, a teacher who promotes international exchange at the Gangwon International Education Association, which is attached to the Gangwon-do Office of Education in Korea, met (online) through the 2021 Invitation Programme for Teachers from Korea.

Mr. Takahashi was very impressed with the energetic activities of Mr. Joen who had networks in many countries. Even after the programme, the two of them continued to engage in exchanges involving students, and due to Mr. Takahashi's enthusiasm and him wanting to acquire hints on how to promote international exchanges, not only at the school teacher level but also at the organizational level, they held a dialogue.

Shinichi Takahashi (hereafter referred to as Takahashi): Thank you for today. The other day, I participated as an observer in the "Japan-Korea meeting on international exchange programs in 2022," a youth exchange programme, that was moderated by Mr. Joen, and was very impressed by what a wonderful programme it was.

My district's educational bureau also has an international exchange department but they don't have many exchange programmes with various countries, so I really wanted to introduce it to my district's board of education, and I wondered if that type of programme that I saw the other day has been mainstream in Korea for a long time?

Mr. Joen Honam (hereafter referred to as Joen): I'm going to talk about Gangwon-do more than Korea, but we have been doing these exchanges for a long time. However, in-person exchanges have become difficult due to COVID-19.

So, since last year, we have been carrying out online exchanges. Since we've gone online, many students and teachers have said that they want us to produce more types of various content, so now we're providing content like this forum. And we plan to continue like this in the future.

The exchange between Japan and Gangwon-do was held online for the first time last year. I have heard that many Japanese students want to interact with Korean students, so I hope that this flourishes even more in the future.

I got the impression from my interactions with Japanese students that they are very diligent in their preparations, and I was very impressed by all their hard work. Currently, you have provided us with an opportunity to carry out two international exchange programmes, including one at Kasukabe Girl's High School (Mr. Takahashi's previous school), and I'm also hoping to actively carry out more exchange programmes in the future that students can participate in.

Takahashi: There was a programme in my district that recruited outstanding students in the district to go to MIT and Harvard University in America, but that has ceased due to COVID-19 and is now online. From observing the programme the other day, I felt that it was very rich in content, and was even better than what you'd get from studying abroad. Is that because you've taken extra care due to it being online? Please tell me if you have any secret tips.

Joen: First of all, of course we're also carrying it out online in the same way. I think we can hold it stably online but, as expected, from the students' point of view there's a limited sense of actually being on site, and I feel that the concentration and participation levels decline over time. Therefore, we're also considering doing it face-to-face again from next year. However, at Gangwon-do, we're planning to do an online and offline hybrid mix.

As for secret tips, we are building international exchange networks overseas through the embassy. In the same way I met you through the Korean National Commission for UNESCO (KNCU) and the ACCU, we're coordinating with other countries through those sorts of organizations. I think we're able to have these deep exchanges because of this type of coordination founded on trust. Overseas organizations can help with adjusting for the time difference, sorting out subjects that the students are interested in, picking the target grade, and getting to grips with these sorts of issues in advance helps make the programme something meaningful. At Gangwon-do, we think it's important to collaborate with these organizations that you can trust. I think it's extremely important for the stable operation of the programme that schools that will actively participate are selected through such organizations, and after that operation and management policies are decided in advance.

Takahashi: Your current programme involves the four countries of New Zealand, Taiwan, Japan, and Korea, and, in the future, it might also possibly include Russia and Australia. No boards of education in Japan are involved in activities on that scale, but it really made me realise that there is a

lot of potential out there.

I also often contact embassies and get people from the embassy to visit the school, or take students to visit the embassy. Sometimes I can get in contact with someone right away, but sometimes I don't hear from anyone for ages... Did you have a special connection with someone to start with?

Joen: No, I don't have any special personal connections with anyone. I think we probably have very similar problems. I think that the response of the embassy probably depends a lot on the staff that are deployed from each country, and the will of the particular individual that you deal with. I think that the countries that we've had good exchanges with up to now, has largely been due to the very strong will of the person at the embassy who just happened to answer the phone. At Gangwon-do, we have contacted all sorts of countries, and the ones we've been able to successfully cooperate with so far are the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Thailand, and Vietnam. There are some situations where we haven't been able to successfully cooperate as well, but we have also thought about a backup plan. We're also applying for exchanges with countries like Italy, and think it might be good to apply for cooperation through the local government. Also, with countries where it is going well, I feel that it was a big help that we contacted them with a specialised programme.

I've also heard that there are some areas that don't feel that there is any particular need for international exchanges. But I believe that by gradually doing international exchanges with these other countries, even if it's just with small steps, that they'll come to understand the necessity. I think that's how we can build up our network. I also believe that it's better to contact international organizations rather than schools directly.

Takahashi: There are some areas that don't place much importance on international education.

Joen: I've heard that from several people but I don't know if it's right or not, but I've heard and felt that there are some situations like that. But I also hear that we should continue to keep knocking on the door and not give up, even in those situations.

In other words, at Gangwon-do we hope to carry on doing international exchanges like this one with you.

Takahashi: Certainly. Please come to Japan next year and come to my district. I'm looking forward to seeing you. Mr. Joen, what do you place most importance on when you're carrying out an international exchange programme?

Joen: I think that there are many things that are important. But, first of all I think meeting, communicating, and sharing ideas with people involved from overseas is important. From my experience so far, there are an extremely large number of things that are important in international exchanges, but I personally attach the most importance to relationships with the people involved, over aspects like the business side of things.

Related to what I was saying earlier, I think once you have done a programme, you can take the results from that and start thinking again about another programme. And you can continue to build

relationships while creating the next programme.

Takahashi: Students who weren't native English speakers also worked really hard, but despite Japanese students being well prepared in the programme, were there times when they couldn't express their opinions properly when they had an opportunity to do so?

Joen: Well, yes. They seemed really well prepared, and I think that they did an excellent job when it came to the presentation. So far, in the international exchange programmes that we have run at Gangwon-do with countries where English is not the first language, I've felt that in sections where they have to answer in off-the-cuff English, they often struggle to answer straight away. However, having said that, I want to praise all the students from Kasukabe Girl's High School for being able to answer and express themselves so well. In the future, in exchange programmes between Japan and Korea, we'll have exchange programmes in Japanese of course, and we also have plans to have debates in English. I think that increasing these types of opportunities will help students become able to cope, and improve their improvisational skills and personal abilities.

Takahashi: Up to now, in Japanese high schools' course of study, English has been evaluated in terms of the four skills of speaking, writing, listening and reading, but now speaking has been split into a further two categories of presentation and conversational exchange, and, as you say, they are good at presentation if they prepare, but I think that impromptu conversational exchange and being able to exchange opinions in a foreign language are very important issues for the future, and it is a major issue at my current school.

I'd like to hear about Korean students as well, but in Japan they tend to be extremely uncomfortable with making mistakes, and so try to speak in perfect English. And ultimately I really feel that this slows them down and hinders them from responding spontaneously. When you were mediating the programme the other day, you expressed your thoughts very rhythmically in English, and I thought that students would probably learn a lot from just listening to that.

Joen: Many of the students that participated in that Gangwon-do forum had lived abroad, so a lot of them were very confident in their English abilities. So, although you just praised me for my natural English, for me the reality was that I had to proceed smoothly in English like that. I think that Japanese students' greatest strength in English is their clear pronunciation. In regards to the four skills that you talked about earlier, I think that improvisational conversation exchanges is an issue in both Japan and Korea. As you'd expect, students who have experience of living abroad have good English, are confident speakers, and can talk about their ideas lucidly. Compared to them, students who haven't lived abroad are more limited. But even with those limitations, they have to demonstrate their abilities, and they have to prepare for presentations in advance. And so, I think that the Japanese students did a good job reading aloud writing that they had prepared, and properly pronouncing words so that they could be heard. That is an important ability.

Takahashi: While I think international exchange through English is important, you just mentioned exchanges in Japanese, and you can now take Korean as a second foreign language at Kasukabe Girls' High School. In Japan there are quite a few places where you can study a second foreign language besides English, such as Chinese, German, and French, although Korean is surprisingly rare. There should be a massive demand for it in Japan, but no systematic educational arrangements have been made for it yet. I'd love to do an international exchange programme using Korean with, for example, the first day being in English, the second day being in Japanese, and the third day in Korean. Listening to you talk made me think that some thing like that would be really good.

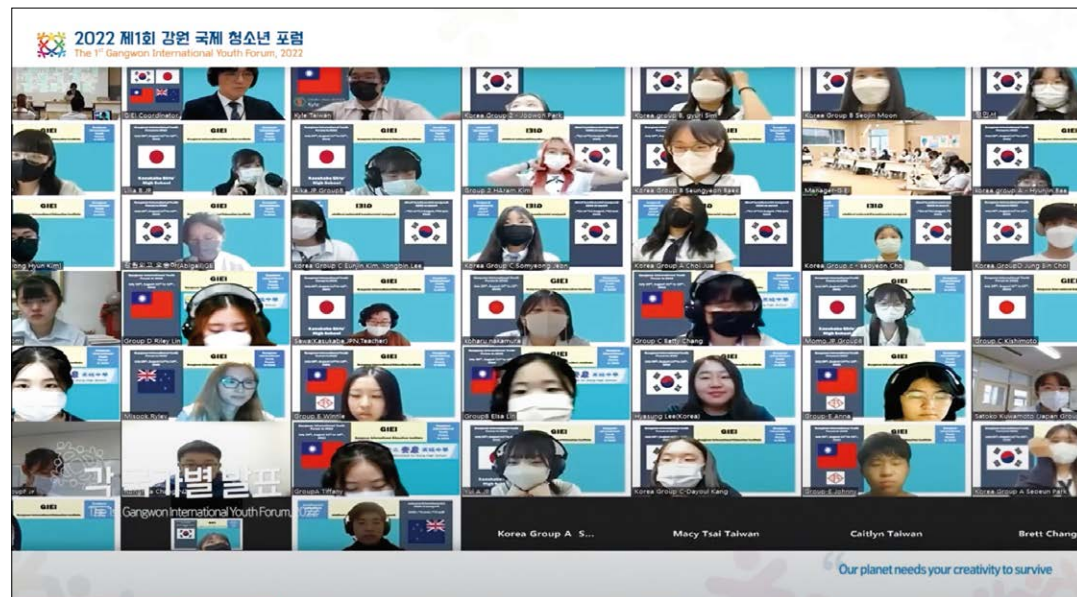


Photo provided by Gangwon-do International Education Association

Joen: That's a wonderful idea. In Gangwon-do, we've had an agreement with a Japanese high school since 1995, and do exchanges. We had an online exchange meeting last year. We interact with this school in Japanese. I felt with last year's online exchange that it was a real shame that despite the Korean students being so interested in Japan, we were only able to hold this exchange once a year. In the future, I would like to hold exchange events in Japanese with everyone from Kasukabe Girls' High School in Japan as well.

Takahashi: Although it's really hard to find a partner school.... Being able to meet you through an ACCU programme in one of those times has been a really great asset to me. There are very few high schools in Japan that are UNESCO Associated Schools, and there is not a single public high school in my district (Saitama Prefecture) that is one. So I hope that the UNESCO network will be able to expand even more. How widespread is the UNESCO Associated Schools Network in Korea?

Joen: I can only talk about Gangwon-do. I was put in charge of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network in Gangwon-do at the end of last year. There are currently

about 20 schools in Gangwon-do in the UNESCO Associate Schools Network, but not many of them are actively involved in exchanges. I'm hoping to actively promote international exchanges in these schools in the future. I feel that using the UNESCO Associate School Network for these types of exchanges will enable better exchanges, and will help expand them. I'm also planning to work hard on increasing the number of schools in the UNESCO network.

Takahashi: There are a lot of teachers who are interested in international exchanges and those types of activities, but are surprisingly unaware of UNESCO's activities. Next month, as part of the "Japan and Korea Teacher Dialogue Programme" (co-hosted by KNCU and ACCU) I'll be teaching a joint lesson together with teachers from two schools in Seoul, Korea, and, first of all, other teachers were surprised to hear about such a fantastic activity, and they would have been happy to do it. In the future I'm going to focus my efforts on spreading these kinds of programmes to young Japanese teachers, and I feel that it's crucial to create organizations to do this. I want to expand these wonderful types of programmes even further out into the world, and I think it's important to create a system for this.

Joen: I support your activities. Gangwon-do would also like to work together with you on this.

Takahashi: Now, the word diversity has spread around the world, and while it has been widely accepted, I personally slightly feel that if you look at the downside there is a tendency to not interfere in what people are doing. And big wars are taking place among all this, and I think that it's really important for the future of the Earth that high school students and students worldwide connect and talk together, even if only online. Mr. Joen, do you have any ideas for activities that you want to do in the future?

Joen: As you say, I think that it's extremely important to talk about international affairs, and to enable dialogue and communication about international problems like wars and climate change. Therefore, I'm thinking about running debate and dialogue programmes concerning those types of international affairs. I'd like to use this occasion to tell you about the direction that Gangwon-do is taking. I think it should change from the type of exchanges we have done with Japan up to now. So far they have simply been cultural exchanges. I think many have been one-way exchanges to learn Japanese. In the future I want to make them more two-way interactive exchanges. Our policy is to actively promote international exchanges that enable two-way exchanges with other countries, including Japan. Ones where international social problems, like the war in Ukraine or the climate change crisis, can be discussed among students and within the school. Now, we're planning and promoting an international exchange programme using those types of subjects. These debate programmes are scheduled to start from next year. The plan is to mainly let the students drive it forward. We're planning it so that everyone can get to know each other better and become friends. International exchange programmes are inevitably affected by international affairs. They are affected by the relations between countries. Nevertheless, we want to deal with these international social problems and try to build cooperative relationships.

Takahashi: Kamsahamnida (Thank you in Korean). In my life up to now, I feel that Korean culture has had the biggest impact on me. I often see Korean entertainment on my television or on the internet, but when I watch the news I hear that Japan's relationship with Korea is not very good... That seems really strange. My wife and daughter spend more time looking at the faces of K-pop artists than they do looking at mine (laughs). As you say, it would be great if we could gradually get rid of the idea that certain topics are regarded as taboo when we're talking about various things. In that sense, I feel that there is great potential in the activities that you are doing, and that I will endeavour to do from here on.

Joan: (In Japanese) Arigato (Thank you). I said earlier that frankly I feel that up to now our exchange relationship with Japan has been quite a one-way relationship, but I cannot help having a few doubts about whether we can have a relationship where we can talk about sensitive issues. I met and interacted with Japanese students three times last year, and I felt that they were extremely bright and that they had a deep interest in Korean culture. And I wondered if they couldn't have different and better dreams. I thought that it would be a good starting point if they could leave the sensitive topics behind for a while, and instead talk about international social problems that we have in common. As a member of the Gangwon-do International Education Committee, I'd like to say how supportive we are of your activities. I hope we can build a good cooperative relationship.

Takahashi: Kamsahamnida (Thank you in Korean). Our relationship started when I first met and talked with you last year when I was at my former school, but I never dreamed at that time that we'd be able to talk for over an hour like this. I hope that students will go on your programmes, then that the students will become friends on an individual level, and from that point be able to speak about sensitive topics for the first time, and things that are filled with meaning, and I think it would be great to build a future with that type of dream.

Joan: That's true. I agree with what you said and think we can share a good dream together.

Takahashi: Thank you very much. Do you have any final comments?

Joan: Well first I'd like to thank you for inviting me to have this meaningful discussion today. I'm not sure how much help I was, but I was happy to take part. You mentioned before that you were preparing to do a lesson with teachers from Seoul and I'm interested about the content of that, but I'll contact you later to talk about that. I think the plan you talked about earlier is a dream that can come true. And I'd like to help you with that dream personally, publicly and officially. If you have any suggestions in the future, please feel free to contact me at anytime. I think we'll also continue to have international exchanges in the future. I hope that the students will be able to interact with each other even more. (In Japanese) Arigato gozaimasu (Thank you very much).

(Discussion held on 22 August, 2022)

Contribution

**Connect with people and spread kindness
to turn an unpredictable future into a more peaceful future.**



Mr. Itaru Matsuno

Teacher, Nagoya University of Economics,
Ichimura Senior High School



It starts from the classroom

Connecting textbooks with the world you live in

Carrying out learning activities with high school students in the classroom was what motivated us to turn our attention to international exchanges. These learning activities can be divided into three stages of learning.

The first stage was "learning about domestic and international events together with the students." We did activities that helped us understand and connect the contents of the textbooks with events that were occurring currently. Connecting events in the world with what's in the textbooks is a citizenship educational activity. All sorts of events are occurring on the earth every day. We used newspapers and the news to learn that these events had a big effect on ourselves.

The second stage was "learning about each other's kind diverse perspectives" by getting everyone in the classroom to make their opinions clear. Each individual student has kind opinions inside them that reflects their personality, but the status quo has made it difficult to express their true opinions out loud. So, we used facilitation software and electronic blackboards to anonymously visualise each student's opinions. By using this visualisation of each student's "kind diverse perspectives," while protecting their privacy, we were able to share in the classroom kind opinions that reflected their personalities, and think more deeply about our own ideas.

The third stage was an activity that asked what kind of measures (Action) they could take considering their own perspectives, and taking the first two activities ("learning about domestic and international events together with the students" and "learning about each other's kind diverse perspectives") into account. I personally worked alongside the students, conscious of the need to help nurture problem solving skills as they set out to deal with the problems that are currently arising (in an unknown environment) with their own efforts.

As we worked through these three stages of learning, we confronted issues that could not be solved by school activities alone. In order to solve domestic and international problems, we realised that there was a need to hear from a variety of voices such as local people, people working for NPOs that are specifically working on solving that problem and other Japanese and international high school students. Without

external collaboration, we couldn't work towards a solution. By doing activities outside the classroom as well as in, and actually connecting with the world outside the classroom, as well as connecting with outside people, it helps create the prospect (Anticipation) of being able to solve the problem.

In this way, by (1) learning about events occurring domestically and internationally, (2) visualizing the diverse kindness each individual has and thinking deeply about their own ideas, and (3) doing collaborative activities with people outside the school, it naturally leads to Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDGs), and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) activities, and connects to international exchanges and global citizen activities.

ESD contributes to all of the SDGs, which are specific goals for building a more peaceful world. The components of the OECD Learning Compass 2030 are the "core foundations of learning, knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, transformative competencies to create a better future, and the AAR (Anticipation, Action and Reflection) Cycle." When actually carrying out these activities, school teachers utilise ACCU's International Exchange Programme for School Teachers to connect with teachers outside of their school, which is very useful for networking and building up connections with other people while you proceed with the activities. At our school, exchanges before the COVID-19 pandemic led to international support and collaborative activities during the COVID-19 crisis, which I'll talk about later.

I feel that international exchanges cultivate an important perspective of being a global citizen, for students who will be living in the future, so that they can live resiliently and deal with problems that transcend borders in an unpredictable future.



Volunteers making a thank you banner for Fairtrade products

Meeting with Noh Yumi

I met with Ms. Yumi in July 2019, on the "2019 Invitation Programme for Japanese Teachers by the Government of Korea" (hereafter referred to as the Dispatch Programme to Korea) when I visited the Suwon Foreign language High School. On the Dispatch Programme to Korea, we were able to have a great time and deepen mutual understanding by interacting with both teachers and students. I particularly felt the students' kindness and their perspectives as global citizens when the high school students gave their presentations in Japanese. During my participation in this exchange, I personally thought deeply about what I should work on for the sake of peace as a teacher when I returned to the classroom.

I continued to interact with the other teachers through email, Skype, etc., after the programme as well to build friendly relationships, which helped promote mutual understanding and the creation of a solid network. And due to this, as a result of continuing international exchange activities with Ms. Yumi and the other teachers at Suwon Foreign language High School, it led to us being able to hold student exchange meetings. * From "Under the TREE of International Exchange" (pp.36-37)



The first international exchange between the students of Suwon Foreign Language High School and our school was held online in November 2019. For this cultural exchange meeting, the students of both countries divided up into groups and gave presentations to each other on popular subjects like "An introduction to food, make-up and dramas," and "Advice on going to higher education." The results of the questionnaires that both schools carried out after the event showed that, like the Dispatch Programme to Korea, it was an enjoyable exchange meeting. We used Skype at that time, as it was before the pandemic and video meeting systems like Zoom were not widely in use. Thanks to gaining the cooperation of the teachers in both the Korean and Japanese schools, and working together by holding meetings, connection tests and so on beforehand, the event went very smoothly.

In ways like this, after the Dispatch Programme to Korea in July 2019, our school and Suwon Foreign Language High School, in addition to activities at the schools in both countries, have continued to share various types of information, such as about our school's international support activities of UNESCO activities (volunteers interested in SDGs).

Meanwhile, our SGDs volunteers continue to learn from UNHCR and JICA about the problems of refugees

fleeing from wars and conflicts, and have taken action with charity events (selling fair trade products) to financially support Syrian women refugees, fundraising for the UNHCR organization, and holding a UNHCR refugee film festival, while working together with outside parties. One question that came out of our studies was, "Do you get peace when wars and conflicts are over?" so we also learned about the current situation in post-war Cambodia. Our support activities for Cambodia arose from our online studies about the situation on



the ground there. In August 2019, we realised that there was no playground equipment on the grounds of public primary schools in deprived areas, so the community and the high school students collaborated together on a "Swing donation project," and then a "Well repair project."

In 2020, after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, we continued to interact and share information with Suwon Foreign Language High School, and there was a crossover with the support activities for Cambodia that our school was carrying out, as we decided to collaborate together on the "Homemade mask support project" that I'll introduce next.

Cambodia support project carried out with Suwon Foreign Language High School 2020 & 2021

This was a project to send homemade masks to public primary schools in the Puok District, Siem Reap Province of Cambodia, carried out collaboratively by students from our school and high school students from the Suwon Foreign Language High School. The project arose as the students continued to study and asked themselves, "Is there anything that we can do?" This is a region where people live on one to two dollars a day. Cambodia, like Japan, sealed their borders to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and took the measure of temporarily closing all of their schools to protect the health of their students. After the temporary school closures, it was compulsory to wear masks in the classroom but, as in Japan, there was a continuous shortage.



A thank-you letter from the Department of Education in Trapeang Thum Village, Siem Reap Province, Cambodia. Joint mask project involving three countries (Korea, Japan and Taiwan) (2020, 2021)
* The thank-you letter clearly specified the names of the schools in the three countries by writing it using the alphabet.



Children at a public primary school wearing the masks sent to Cambodia



2021年11月12日(金) 中日新聞 朝刊掲載

30,000 masks from Japan and the SDGs volunteer students (The Chunichi Shim-bun newspaper)



Participants from Suwon Foreign Language High School (2020)



Participants from Suwon Foreign Language High School (2021)

Both Japan and Korea were in the middle of dealing with the seemingly never-ending COVID-19 crisis, but we were able to continue our interactions and links between the schools, and collaborate together on an international support project for Cambodia.

We continued this activity for the 2020 and 2021 school years, and we received a thank-you letter from the Cambodian Ministry of Education.

**Take action by yourself
That's why you feel the hardships and the warm support**

There are also difficulties involved in interacting with outside schools. The first thing that needs to be coordinated is the dates and times that activities are



held. Each school has a different timetable and schedule for school events. And when you transcend borders, there are also big differences due to time differences, whether they have long vacations or not, the timing of entrance exams, and so on, so just coordinating dates and times was not easy at all.

In addition, further adjustments may become necessary if you are working with people from the world outside of school, such as researchers or people from the local community.

In the future, I think that as collaborative activities with the outside world advance, the teacher's skills as a facilitator will become even more important as they act as a coordinator between the school and the outside.

Also, unpredictable trouble may crop up while the project is being carried out. The 2021 mask support project had a problem with international transportation when the masks were detained at Phnom Penh. On that occasion, we had to get help from a lot of people.

A feeling of happiness from cooperation and solidarity with various people

If I had to say what was the motivation, point or pleasure of doing these projects, I'd probably say it's the feeling of happiness I get from doing collaborative activities with lots of friends. Even though we don't necessarily solve a particular international problem, I get a strong sense of solidarity, and experience feelings of kindness, from working collaboratively with lots of people.

When I'm working on collaborative activities together with other people out in the world, like researchers, school student leaders, teachers, students, people in the community, and teachers and students from other countries, it really feels just like we're spending time cultivating a big TREE.

I feel the activity connects not only to learning at school, but that working with people outside of school helps create the concept of "social well-being." I hope that students who experienced these activities and will live in an unpredictable future, will find solutions through collaboration when they are confronted with big problems after they graduate.

As we have continued to carry out these activities, we have received support from not only Mr. Matsuoka, our school's director, and Mr. Shibuya, our head teacher, but also from the teachers in the staff room, the parents and guardians, and the people in the local community. From 2022, a UNESCO Committee was founded in the school from among a group of students who wanted to learn about the ideology of UNESCO and take action by themselves. While it's only a small sprout, I want to continue to watch over and work alongside it in the hope that one day it will become a big TREE.

There are many different opinions in the world, but by cooperating jointly with a variety of people, for our support project for Puok District, Siem Reap Province, Cambodia, we received over 100 messages of support from all over Japan, including Hokkaido, as well as donations of 3,000 masks in 2020, and 30,000 masks in 2021. Furthermore, we also received support from businesses, and so we were able to install handwashing facilities in those places, as well as sending them masks. In addition, our fund-raising



30,000 masks from Japan and the SDGs volunteer students (The Chunichi Shimbun newspaper)

activities to support Ukrainian refugees fleeing from war and conflicts raised over 850,000 yen from citizens, which we donated to the UNHCR.

Teachers as global citizens

In my interactions with partner schools and while carrying out projects, there were two things I took great care over.

The first was to personally understand the perspective of Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and to pay the utmost respect to my partners. "GCED aims to contribute to learners taking the initiative in creating a peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, safe and sustainable world, by getting them to take on an active role in facing the various problems that exist in the world, and work on solving them at the local and international level." From the MEXT website. To create an environment where students can face various global problems, first I must personally have a deep understanding of the current situation in both countries (social conditions), and in order to work on collaborative activities at the local and international level, it's of the utmost importance that there is mutual respect.

The second thing was to involve stakeholders and include many people from wider society. Dealing with a variety of international problems is difficult if you can only rely on your own abilities and areas of activity. If teachers can act as facilitators and involve stakeholders, including people from wider society, it will lead to better solutions and, furthermore, by cooperating with others, teachers can escort students to research activities in areas outside of their own expertise to help solve problems, which leads to improving the quality of education.

Thoughts on the future, and those people who have continued to collaborate

From here on, I'd like to continue in the same way as before in working with my students on peace activities (UNESCO activities) that value "relationships with people."

Through cultural exchanges and international support activities with everyone at Suwon Foreign Language High School, we were able to carry out a project that was a bridge to peace for both countries, and will hopefully lead to a bright future.

Activities where I worked with people both inside and outside of Japan helped me perceive global problems as something that concerns me, and cultivated my ability to explore them.

In addition, Japanese and Korean high school students were able to work together on the Cambodia support project. From here on too, I'd like to continue to promote ESD with everyone, and work on initiatives that transcend national borders using the UNESCO Associated Schools Network.



Dialogue



Connecting, learning from each other, taking action It's the brilliance of a kaleidoscope

Mr. Akira Ogawa



Ms. Punam Rajage

Teacher, Kitakyushu Municipal Sugao
Junior High School

Teacher, Kai. Sadashiv Urf Bapusaheb Darekar,
Pune Municipal Corporation School no. 174-B
Kondhawa bk. Pune, Maharashtra, India

Background of the dialogue

Mr. Ryo Ogawa, a teacher in charge of social studies and special needs education at a school in Kitakyushu City, Fukuoka Prefecture, and Ms. Punam Rajage, a teacher in charge of Marathi, English, maths, science and social studies at a school in Pune District, Maharashtra State, India, met (online) through the 2021 Invitation Programme for Teachers from India. Mr. Ogawa said that after meeting Ms. Punam he discovered that the educational practices of Japan and India had a lot in common, and his image of India changed greatly. Both of these two people, who are developing powerful activities rooted in their local communities, were able to have a dialogue together.

Akira Ogawa (hereafter referred to as Ogawa): Ms. Punam, thank you for meeting with me today. Last year I participated in the Invitation Programme for Teachers from India (hereafter referred to as the India Invitation Programme), and I was deeply impressed by your activities at that time. Today, I'd like to hear more about what appeals to you, the motivation for your activities, and what you think about the initiatives that you are doing.

Punam Rajage (hereafter referred to as Punam): It's nice to see you. First, I'd like to express my thanks to you, and then I'll start off the talk. If I remember correctly, I started doing environmental activities at the school I was working at in around 2009. Before I started those activities, I thought about what type of things the students should learn about, what they wanted to

learn, and what they could do. And even after the activities started, I continued to think about how and what they could learn through them. The reason I officially started to do environmental activities at my school was due to the start of a policy to promote environmental activities at schools in Pune, which is where my school is located. At first, I started by teaching the children about the ecology of wild animals in Pune's wildlife parks, based on initiatives taken to protect wild animals. The first week of October is designated as "Wild life week" in India, which is a week for wild life protection activities, so during that I introduced learning activities about the wild animals' way of life in the park, and the need to protect them. In specific terms, I got the children to write a script for a play by themselves. And then, the children acted out the role of animals in the play. And thanks to various people watching that play, they also thought about wild life, along with the children, and adopted a positive perspective. The children wore animal masks in the play, and it was worked really well.

In addition to that, in India we have an art form called Rangoli, where coloured sand is used to make pictures with plant and animal motifs on floors or walls. We learned about the water and energy that is needed to make these Rangoli, and as the children wanted to learn about environmental issues, and waste disposal in particular, we made an online questionnaire and sent it to 70 organizations. At that time, we received replies from over 100 people. Also, one of the activities we did during the COVID-19 crisis was a rubbish bin contest. Students competed to see who could make the best rubbish bin using eco-friendly materials like old newspapers. We spent 10 days making rubbish bins, and then they were actually going to be installed in the local area. The theme was to make an eco-friendly rubbish bin that could be used in the same way as the regular plastic ones. The students thought by themselves about how they could make an eco-friendly rubbish bin. For



example, students came up with new eco-friendly product ideas like a rubbish bin that after it is filled with rubbish can be buried in soil, and then left to naturally biodegrade.

Ogawa: I started my activities from around 2016, which was quite a bit later than you. I was originally a social studies teacher, although now I'm a special needs teacher, but during my daily interactions with students I was struck by how many of them seemed to have low self-esteem and lacked self-confidence. So, I started the "Econnect Project" as something that I thought might help students solve or improve their problems. The term "Econnect" comes from combining the words



“eco” and “connect.” Children in special needs classes have more experience of making mistakes than those in regular classes, and so have a strong tendency to lack self-confidence. Moreover, the results of a 2014 Cabinet Office survey showed that Japanese children overall have low self-esteem compared to children from other countries. In response to this, I started this initiative in the hope that children could build self-confidence by contributing to society and connecting with the local community. Therefore, when we carry out a project we always tackle it by connecting with six relevant organizations, which are international organizations, local organizations, educational organizations, NPOs/NGOs, governments and businesses. So far, we have taken on 21 projects in the three sectors of disaster relief activities, social contribution activities, and international exchanges. I'd like to ask you a question here. Probably each of these projects has various meanings to each child, but they all have the theme of improving a problem, and I'd like to know what are the major themes in your work?

Punam: The consistent theme in my projects and activities is nature conservation and environmental protection. I'm hoping that I can put conservation and environmental protection in the hands of the young generation, or the students in other words.

Ogawa: In 2016, when I started my activities, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) had not yet spread to Japan, and it was quite hard to get understanding from people around us. Even in the school, it was like, “What are you doing?” Has environmental education been promoted in India for a long time?

Punam: Environmental education started in India around 1985. I was still a child then, but my teachers taught us about nature conservation at school, and we did environmental protection activities like planting trees on hills, so we also had opportunities to learn about environmental protection at school. So, since I became a teacher myself, I also regularly do these types of conservation and environmental protection activities. My fellow teachers are also doing similar environmental activities with the children, which encourages me.

Ogawa: My school didn't have anything like that, but when I started doing activities I had a strong desire to transform the children. At the time, there were no projects that connected the school with the outside world. Therefore, in order to start a new project, I visited companies and public institutions and asked them to work together with us.

Punam: That's a wonderful initiative.

Ogawa: Thank you very much. When I actually started my activities, I really saw that there were lots of people doing activities all over the country, like this India Invitation Programme. I was surprised to realise that it's not just children who are shy, but a lot of adults are too. But the amount of people who cooperated with us steadily increased as the activities built up.

When I participated in the India Invitation Programme last year, I hoped to get four things out of it personally. The first was personal growth and to gain knowledge. The second was new connections. The third was to utilise the connections and knowledge I gained for the children. And the fourth was to become a guidepost for my colleagues and junior teachers. Did you have any expectations for this exchange, Ms Punam?

Punam: Taking part in this exchange programme was a new initiative for me. And I hoped that participating in this programme would be a chance for teachers from other countries, and especially teachers from Japan this time, to get to know me and about the activities that I'm doing. As well as introducing my activities to Japanese teachers, I also hoped that I could learn from them. As I'd heard that Japanese teachers are very diligent, passionate and hard working.

Ogawa: I was able to get to know you by participating in the India Invitation Programme, and made many new discoveries. But many Japanese adults are shy. So, I think that there are some people who want to take part in international exchanges, but can't manage to do it. I wish that they had your energetic and active side... Do you have any advice or a motto about how to be active and ambitious in your activities, like you?

Punam: Well, yes. I think that all teachers have a hidden brilliance inside themselves. However, I think some people do not have enough confidence in themselves. Our job as teachers means that you have to speak in front of students. I believe that the students we teach see us as god-like figures in some ways. They don't say anything, but they are always watching the teacher. And when you are seen like that, I think that teachers need to be able to speak with confidence, and in order to do that, if they are teaching about the environment for example, they should learn enough about the subject so that they can speak confidently on it. I've also seen your SNS, where you're doing environmental activities and so on, and working with various people, and I think conveying this to the wider world in this way gives inspiration and stimulation to other people, and it would be great if they were able to do that type of thing, too.

Ogawa: Are there lots of energetic people like you in India?

Punam: Well, yes. As you'd expect, there are all sorts of people who are teachers in India, which I'm sure is the same in Japan. Especially in India each region has very strong characteristics, which also has a big influence. So, while some people may be super confident as a teacher when teaching a lesson, they may not be very positive in regards to media, and not be able to speak well in those types of places.

Ogawa: I want to eat lots of curry so I can become an energetic teacher like you (laughs).

Punam: I'd like to do that too, to bring us closer together (laughs).

Ogawa: Are there any things you struggle with or find difficult when carrying out a programme?

Punam: My activities are limited to the area of Pune, and while I personally haven't had any problems with human relations, some of my students have had to face some issues. For example, when we worked on the waste disposal project, we tried to get the students to interview old people in the community, but it was hard to get them to respond to our requests. On the contrary, some of the students were ridiculed. It's hard not to be disheartened when you get that type of response when you're doing a project. So, once more, I took the time to prepare thoroughly so that I could properly explain to them the purpose of our activities, and got them to give interviews.

After that, we had the problem of the COVID-19 crisis. When we were doing the waste disposal project, we were going to visit a biogas plant that was located 4-5 km away from the school. However, there was a curfew to stop the spread of COVID-19, and police were carrying out checks, so there was no way to go there. So, we explained the purpose of our activity and our infection prevention measures to the police and, with the cooperation of the students' parents, we managed to visit the biogas plant. In that way, we received support and understanding from the police and society. As a result, the children were able to interview people who carried out hygiene inspections, and get information about how waste is sorted, etc.

Ogawa: In Japan, it's relatively easy to carry out questionnaires and interviews, but due to the proliferation of nuclear families, there are fewer and fewer opportunities for middle school students and elderly people to interact. Therefore, children are not very good at interacting with adults, and sometimes it doesn't go well when adults and old people interact with children. However, as with your activities, you definitely won't succeed unless you interact with other people. I have an interesting story about that. There was actually no budget for the Econnect Project as there were only a small number of people involved. So, I wrote out a manuscript and sent out applications to various awards around the country to get award money. I didn't think it was very fair on the children to have to use their own pocket money to take a bus on their days off to the places we were doing the activity, and



to have to sort out their own meals too. Then one day we received a big award, and the students had to give a presentation at the award ceremony.

They practiced reading their script hundreds and thousands of times before the award ceremony, but on the actual day they were too nervous and couldn't read it. The students were panicking, and I was panicking too. It was a 15-minute presentation, but it took them 30-minutes to eventually get through it. The students looked really down and were nearly crying, saying things like, "I couldn't say it even though I practiced," and, "We failed." I didn't really support them properly at that time, just saying things like, "Just try your best next time." However, there were lots of people at that award ceremony, and they saw the students doing their very best to speak and make their presentation. They tried to speak but their voices didn't come out. People who saw that came to see the students after the ceremony and told them, "I was moved," and, "It was really great." What normally would have been an experience of failure, was transformed into an experience of success by the support of the adults around them. I had also got really nervous, and sometimes teachers make mistakes too. I still have a lot to learn, but I realised how important it was for the children to work together on projects with lots of people who are watching over them. And secondly, concerning the pandemic, there are a lot of restrictions due to the COVID-19 crisis. But I also think that the pandemic has given rise to certain opportunities. How do you perceive the current situation?

Punam: Of course the COVID-19 crisis has had a big effect on our lives. Especially for the children, including in their environmental activities, we've had to re-examine the basics of some of the activities that we had planned and were in the middle of carrying out, due to the impact of

COVID-19. In addition, children's behaviour patterns have also changed in part. In these circumstances, I thought it would be good to give them confidence by getting them to give a presentation about themselves. As you said, children get nervous when they have to talk in front of people, and this is very true in India as well, so with that in mind, I'm trying to give them opportunities to talk in class in front of everyone, of course, as well as give presentations in front of the local community if they're doing activities in society.

Ogawa: My vision for future projects includes continuing on with the Japan-India Exchange Project. And I'd like to involve people from all around the world in my activities. As for my vision as a teacher, whenever I'm struggling with activities I think about a kaleidoscope. The reason for that is if the person using a kaleidoscope doesn't turn it nothing changes, and you don't get to see a beautiful view. Moreover, all of the parts in it are essential, and things only materialise when all of the parts work together. So, I want to continue to grow and develop along with the children while doing all sorts of activities.

Ms. Punam, do you have a vision for future Japan-India projects, and do you have any personal goals?

Punam: My future vision is to carry out activities that raise environmental awareness, first for my students of course, but also to a wide range of different generations. As for my future vision for society, I'd like to continue doing the tree planting activities that I've done up to now. I've planted over 350 trees so far. I'd like to expand these activities in the future. My vision for international exchanges is to continue to actively interact with Japanese teachers like yourself, and to interact with teachers from other countries such as Thailand, so that teachers from all over the world can connect together, learn from each other, and work together on activities to protect the environment, with its beautiful seas and clean air.

I'm lucky that I have received support from my school's head teacher, my local mayor, and the Indian Ministry of Education, and to have had the chance to interact with teachers from Japan and other countries around the world. I'd like to continue to do these types of exchange activities in the future, make connections with the enthusiastic teachers who work on them, learn from each other, and share my activities with everyone else.

Ogawa: Please come to Japan so we can plant trees together! I'd also love to go to India someday.

Punam: Yes, if I can get some time off I'd definitely love to visit Japan. And, of course, you are always welcome to come to India.

Ogawa: Thank you very much for today. Let's continue to work together to create a better future for the children.

Punam: Yes, of course. Thank you very much as well.

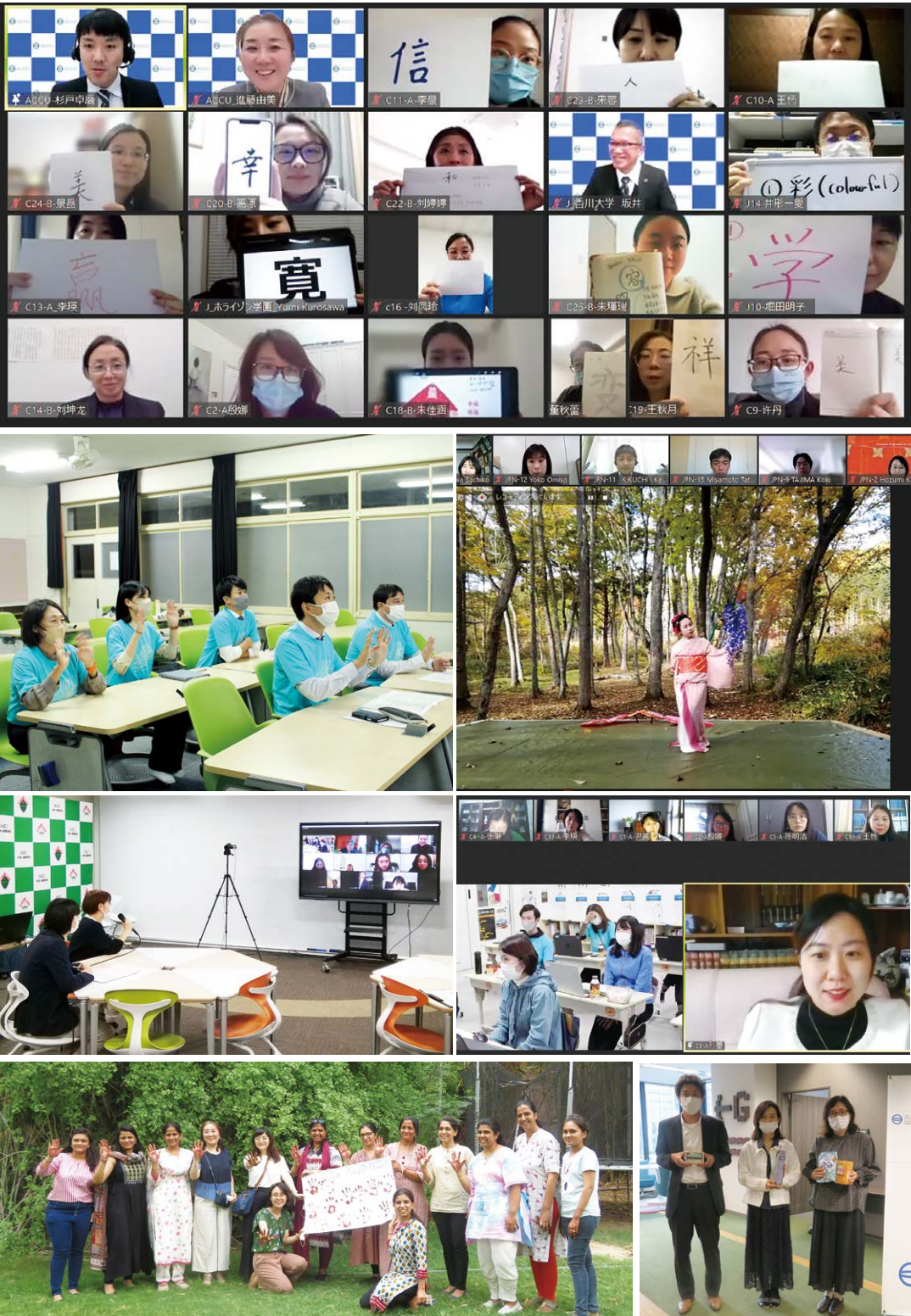
(Discussion held on 19 August, 2022)

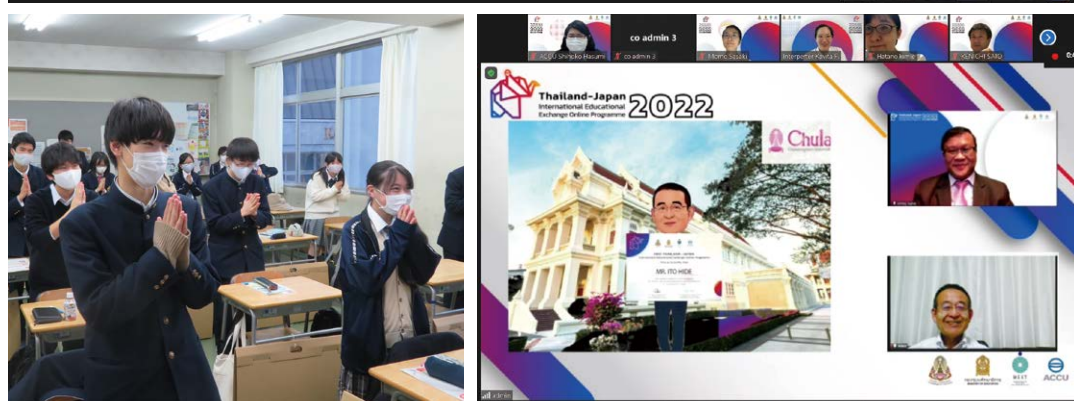
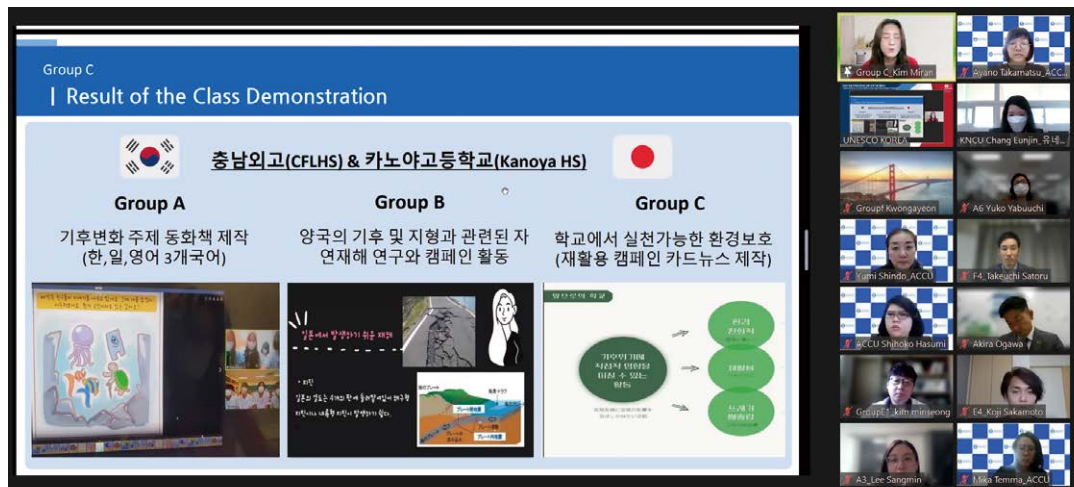
International teacher exchanges during the current COVID-19 crisis



TREE-admin (administrator) posted an update 1 day ago

The spread of COVID-19 has caused society to change in a number of ways. The environment for ACCU's project has also altered significantly since 2020, when the outbreak became fully fledged in Japan. However, even among all this, the ACCU has put a lot of effort into creating points of contact both inside and outside Japan, and has placed great value on generating opportunities to encounter different cultures, values and ways of thinking, through people facing each other and having conversations. Even in difficult circumstances we have continued to believe that it's important to provide the teachers, who are nurturing the children that will lead the next generation, with opportunities to develop their thinking based on their own experiences, rather than what someone has told them. This chapter will give a quick overview of what's been happening in ACCU's International Exchange Programme for School Teachers from 2020 to the present day.





5 315

Staff titbits

Face-to-face edition

- Thai teachers visited Tohoku at the end of November. They held a "Winter clothes fashion show" with clothes that they wouldn't usually get a chance to wear!
- Dancing in a circle around an Indian teacher, in a Japanese children's centre! The unique dance movements were lots of fun, and both children and adults had an exciting time.
- Japanese teachers performing a song at a school festival in China. There were over 1,000 students and parents on the lawn where the stage was. Just like an outdoor music festival!

Online edition

- Commemorative goods and a box full of sweets from Korea arrived in Japan! Even though we're far apart, we were all deeply moved by the thoughtful gift.
- Beloved pet dogs also took part in the online exchange meetings! Being connected by a love of pets is another thing made possible by online meetings.



TREE-admin (administrator) posted an update 6 hours ago
Here are the reactions and impressions of all the people who actually participated in the online international exchange programme!

I liked the concept of an international stage where teachers could discuss current major topics together. I think we need to talk together now for the future of earth's children.

I was able to visualised how active learning and ESD could be utilised in community-based educational activities through all the activities in the programme.

I learned a lot from interacting with Japanese teachers and students, and realisations that we're all in the same boat.

Amidst a lot of uncertainty in international affairs, we will be handing over control to young people, who will be responsible for the future of the world. Therefore, education is very important and, as teachers, I think we ourselves need to think about international interactions and world peace on a regular basis.

Although nationalities and cultures may be different, you can gain realisations and empathy by interacting with fellow people who are also engaged in education, and the teachers themselves can grow and develop through their experiences with different cultures, which will be reflected in their relationships with their school students, and in their lessons. I think it's very important that teachers themselves come into contact with all sorts of values and become rich in spirit.

I also benefited greatly from the online interactions between Chinese and Japanese teachers. Seeing what Japanese lessons were like enabled me to reflect deeply on my own lessons. What is the core of being student-centred? I think that I was able to see a part of the answer to that question from watching how Japanese teachers interacted with their students.

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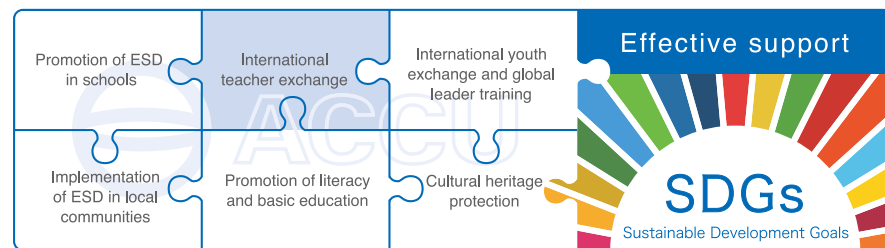


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An introduction to products related to the international exchange programmes. You can view the PDF from the QR code!

■ What is the ACCU?

The ACCU contributes toward the realisation of a peaceful and sustainable society where diverse culture is respected in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

From our two offices in Tokyo and Nara, we promote programmes in the fields of educational cooperation, international educational exchange, and education for protection of cultural heritage as a member state of UNESCO in the Asia-Pacific region. In April 2021, we marked our 50th anniversary.



■ ACCU and International Exchange Programmes for School Teachers

The ACCU has planned, implemented and operated International Exchange Programmes for School Teachers for about 20 years, since FY2000, on consignment from international organisations and government agencies. In FY2022, under the 'International Collaboration Programme for Education in New Era FY2022' entrusted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan (MEXT), we carried out exchange programmes for teachers between Japan and Korea, China, Thailand and India.



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Conclusion

Thank you for reading this booklet. This introduction to exchanges is not really a so-called guidebook with guidelines. As indicated by the subtitle of our third edition, "Weaving the Future Through Dialogue," following on from "Under the TREE of International Exchange" (2020 edition) and "Invitation to Teachers' International Exchange" (2021 edition), it depicts a variety of possible futures created from all of the meetings and dialogues that are generated through exchanges.

We at the ACCU agreed on several courses of actions when producing it. The first was to form a production committee and collaborate with teachers from the planning stage. That is to say, we wanted teachers who had actually participated in ACCU's exchange programmes to be involved, as members of the production committee, with the people in charge of the design, printing and binding of the booklet from the planning stage. The second decision was, rather than putting the main focus on simply conveying the teachers' experiences, we wanted to convey the joys and hardships of international exchanges, and discover how the teachers had grown and what they had learnt, through the interviews and discussions that they had with each other.

In the conversation between Mr. Takahashi and Mr. Joen Honam, a discussion developed about how a school should build a network for international exchanges. They suggested that what was important was taking small steps to connect without worrying about failing, and building a foundation of trust through an accumulation of steady adjustments, rather than relying on special personal connections. Mr. Ogawa and Ms. Punam both talked enthusiastically about their respective educational practices, which are rooted in their local communities. They mentioned how they had at first started activities on their own and, while they experienced some failures, they had naturally gained the cooperation of those around them by having fun. The meeting between Mr. Matsuno and Ms. Noh Yumi first helped them develop a mutual understanding as fellow teachers and build up a network, and then the continuing activities enabled an exchange between their students. We feel sure that there will be readers who are able to empathise with certain aspects of each of these dialogues and approaches.

The core value of the ACCU's international educational exchange programmes is the creation of learning opportunities through "encounters" and "dialogue" for teachers across national and regional boundaries. The leading role in these programmes is played by teachers. We will continue to create diverse opportunities while listening to the opinions of teachers. Finally, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to Mr. Ogawa, Mr. Takahashi and Mr. Matsuno, for their cooperation from the planning stages onwards, and to Ms. Imaizumi of Design Moi Co., Ltd., who was responsible for the visualisation of the teachers' passion.

Ms. SHINDO Yumi

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TREE of International Exchange

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