Education for Sustainable Development and ASPnet in Japan: Toward the 2014 Conference

1. What is ESD?

1.1 Basic View and UNESCO Initiative

Sustainable development is defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs[1]. UNESCO, which says that we must find a way out of our current social and environmental problems and learn to live sustainably, explains education for sustainable development (ESD) as follows:

> Sustainable development is a vision of development that encompasses populations, animal and plant species, ecosystems, and natural resources and that integrates concerns such as the fight against poverty, gender equality, human rights, education for all, health, human security, intercultural dialogue, etc.

> Education for sustainable development aims to help people to develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge to make informed decisions for the benefit of themselves and others, now and in the future, and to act upon these decisions.

> The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), for which UNESCO is the lead agency, seeks to integrate the principles, values, and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning, in order to address the social, economic, cultural and environmental problems we face in the 21st century. (http://www.unesco.org/en/esd/)

1.2. Rio to Johannesburg; Bonn to Nagoya & Okayama

The UNCED (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development), Earth Summit, was held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992. The summit, known as the Rio Summit, convened to address urgent problems in environmental protection and socioeconomic development. The summit adopted Agenda 21 to achieve sustainable development in the 21st century. Economy, society, and environment were mentioned as components for sustainable development.

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[1] World Commission on Environment and Development A/42/427 *"Our Common Future"* http://www.un-documents.net/ ocf-02.htm

The Johannesburg Summit, held in September 2002, declared a collective responsibility to advance and strengthen the interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development, economic development, social development, and environmental protection at the local, national, regional, and global levels. The Japanese government spoke of the importance of human resources for sustainable development and proposed, along with several NGOs, a Decade of Education for Sustainable Development with financial support. In December 2002, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 57/254 to put in place a United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD 2005 to 2014) and designated UNESCO to lead the UNDESD, launched in 2005. As a follow-up to the UNESCO Global Action Plan on the UNDESD, the Japanese government held a liaison conference among ministries of foreign affairs, agriculture, economy, transportation, environment and education initiated by the Cabinet Office of the Prime Minister and drew up the Japanese Action Plan on the UNDESD in March 2006.

In Bonn in April 2009, UNESCO and the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, in cooperation with the German Commission for UNESCO, hosted the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, named "Moving into the Second Half of the UN Decade." The conference developed mechanisms for enhanced cooperation in the implementation of the UN Decade, especially focusing on the exchange between developing countries, countries in transition, and industrialized countries.

The Japanese Commission for UNESCO, together with United Nations University and Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO, held The International Forum on ESD Dialogue 2008 as the mid-point event of the UNDESD in December 2009 and released this statement:

> [T]he international community has discussed the needs, fundamental concepts and objectives of ESD, while recognizing key concerns for future generations. For the mid-point of the UN Decade, UNESCO and its Member States will have opportunities to discuss the achievements and challenges of implementing the DESD. The International Forum on ESD Dialogue 2008 will move beyond these efforts to define ESD, and seek to identify strategically conceptualized actions for the implementation and achievement of DESD objectives in line with the International Implementation Scheme (IIS)[2].

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[2] http://www.mext.go.jp/english/unesco/010/08101401.htm

"Learning for a Sustainable World: Review of Contexts and Structures for Education for Sustainable Development 2009" was published in December 2009 as a review of the ESD activities and studies at local, national, regional and international levels and of future directions and issues. The review also looks at the potential of the ESD practice and research development for the second half of the UN Decade. Japan will host the final UNDESD conference in 2014 to mark the end of the UN Decade. All the practitioners, researchers, and policymakers involved will participate in the conference.

1.3. Significant Meanings of ESD

There are many "adjectival" educations, such as environmental education, human rights education, peace education, gender education, global education, HIV education, multicultural education and so on. Environmental education (EE) is one of the long-lasting and most popular ones. EE depends on each country's background and influences contemporary ESD activities.

The general understanding of ESD in Japan is that ESD differs from traditional EE in that teachers and students change their own lifestyles, values, and behavior beyond knowledge transfer, simply for the protection of nature. Researchers are dealing with more social and cultural aspects of the human-made environment (in addition to the natural environment) in both formal and non-formal education settings. It could be said that Japan had laid the groundwork when ESD started, because the school curriculum had already included "Integrated Studies," or interdisciplinary/cross-curricular lessons, in 2000.

Rio+20 was the world conference, held in Rio again in 2012, to review the situation of sustainable development 20 years after the Rio Summit on Sustainable Development was held in 1992. Civil organizations claimed that the process of participation in the Rio+20 was limited within governmental bodies for ESD discussions, but education ministries of each government were convinced of the importance of ESD. Tbilisi+35 was held in Georgia in September 2012 as a succession of the Rio+20 discussions in the field of environment education and ESD. The conference referenced the Tbilisi+35 Declaration,[3] which claims ESD to be a holistic initiative and education toward a sustainable future. This declaration is based on the accumulation of 35 years of experiences such as large movements for environment conservation in the 1980s, followed by scientific studies on climate change thereafter. The interest in climate change by the present UNESCO Secretary General was also a trigger to promote it. The World Environment

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[3] Tbilisi Communiqué
http://www.tbilisiplus35.ge/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=148&lang=en

Education Congress in Marrakech explained the five primary action areas for future ESD: Policy support, Whole-institution approaches, Educators, Youth, and Local communities. These have also been mentioned in recent UNESCO documents (UNESCO 2013). In addition, a series of discussions to extend ESD as part of an integration with EFA consider possible Sustainable Development Goals after 2015.

2. ESD in Japan

2.1. Formal School Education: "Integrated Studies," "Sustainability" in Curriculum, and Increase of ASPnets

The 2012 UNESCO ESD Monitoring Report introduces the ESD practices in Japan. The activities in the UNESCO Associated School Networks were remarkably vital. At the same time, however, building networks was still beyond large development. In other words, practice across subjects was still rare but traditional school-centered educational activities were common. Japan's practices were not similar to those of other countries (e.g., collaborative ESD, use of ICT, and share of school resources), according to the report.

It should be noted, however, that "Integrated Studies" was already introduced in the Japanese school curriculum from primary to upper secondary school levels in 2000 before the resolution on the UNDESD was adopted in 2003. This is not an independent subject but comprises integrated lessons across subjects. It covers topics across traditional subjects and allows for the implementation of instruction and learning activities related to education for the sake of international understanding, information education, environmental education, health and welfare education, among others. The knowledge and skills are developed through integrated learning activities whose content is based on students' personal interests. Teaching hours are currently at 105 (Grade 3 & 4) and 110 (G5 & 6) in primary school[4]; 70-100 (G7), 70-105 (G8), and 70-130 (G9) in lower secondary; and 105-210 in three years (G10-12) at the upper secondary level. But they will decrease to 70, 50, and 35 for primary, lower secondary and upper secondary, respectively, after 2011.

This topic of Integrated Studies serves as a foundation for ESD. To advance ESD activities effectively, the programs in Integrated Studies should be promoted continuously and linked comprehensively to learning activities. To ensure this, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) supports 1) the formulation of the Basic Plan

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[4] http://www.mext. go.jp/b_menu/shingi/chukyo/chukyo0/toushin/03100701/021.htm

for the Promotion of Education, which identifies ESD as a critical component; 2) the revision of Courses of Study to allow for ESD topics to enter various subject areas; and 3) the expansion of the UNESCO Associated School Network (ASPnet) (UNESCO 2009).

Although the Integrated Studies hours have been reduced in the recent curriculum reform, ESD practice survives in various other subjects because the new Course of Study focuses on sustainability, which provides the foundation for ESD in school. The Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU) introduces good examples of the practices in *a Guide to Developing and Using ESD Materials* (http://www.unesco-school.jp/index.php?action=pages_view_main&page_id=510). It proposes 13 good ESD practices, explains a common approach to ESD, and justifies which competencies students and adults would obtain through the practice. The National Federation of UNESCO Association in Japan also assists the fund for school ESD programs (http://www.unesco.jp/contents/help/esd.html).

The Course of Study, the national curriculum standard, focuses on a "sustainable society" in some subjects such as social studies, science, and moral education. The Course of Study sets the content and goals of instruction so that schoolteachers can design their lessons based on the aforementioned "sustainable society." In addition, foreign language activity has been a compulsory lesson for primary schools since April 2011, and therefore, some teachers and scholars may find good opportunities to blend ESD practice with English lessons.

2.2. Organizations out of School

ESD concepts are so wide that its practices are not always limited to school campuses. UNESCO introduced strong initiatives for ESD practice taken by private and/or nongovernmental stakeholders. UNESCO's report revealed that there was little content in typical informal and non-formal education practices from the whole world survey (UNESCO. 2009. http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001849/184944e.pdf). Active collaboration and cooperation between schools and unofficial providers are sometimes very important for significant learning in ESD.

Although Japan has not yet accumulated enough experience, academic societies promote activities and research on ESD. For example, the Japan Association for International Education leads the interactions between researchers and social science teachers, and the Japanese Society of Environmental Education has a good relationship with science teachers. Both academic

societies actively publish articles on ESD in their journals.

There are more movements for research and development (R&D) in the private sector. Development Education is quite a common concept for both local actors and schoolteachers who deal with international education. The teachers, students, and civil organizations constantly hold joint projects and workshops for better practices. One of the most active organizations is the Development Education Association and Resource Center in Japan. For ESD-domain activities, ESD-J is one of the largest NGOs, and promotes initiatives for cooperation among civil organizations, officials such as the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Environment, and practitioners.

2.3. ASPnet (UNESCO School Network) toward 2014

Because the Japanese education system has been strong in the formal education sector for its current development, as well as throughout history, we should focus again on the roles of formal schools, even for ESD, which needs to be applied in both formal and non-formal education. ESD has become a central theme of their activities.

Within the formal school framework, leading schools are identified as the UNESCO Associated School Network (ASPnet) by MEXT in Japan. Their learning activities focus more on ESD than others, so MEXT is willing to enhance the network. The number of ASPnet schools has been rapidly growing (Fig.1), especially after 2008, because that was the year that MEXT set ASPnet schools to generate ESD (Japanese National Commission for UNESCO, 2009, *About UNESCO School and ESD*). The Education Committee in the Japanese Commission for UNESCO published "Suggestion to use UNESCO Associated School to Promote ESD" in February 2008[5]; ASPnet schools are expected to play a key role for ESD nationwide. MEXT will try to promote the achievement of ESD with the growth of ASPnets[6] in Japan.

The number of ASPnets jumped after the above suggestion in 2008 (Fig.1.). This growth was the result of promotion by MEXT, the Japanese NatCom, and local education boards with the goal of 500 registrations. They started to discuss the quality of ASPnets and ESD practice after the goal was achieved. A UNESCO ASPnet Working Group was set in the Education Committee in the Japanese NatCom, and in September 2012, it published the guidelines for ASPnet and

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[5] http://www.mext.go.jp/unesco/002/004/08043006/001.htm (2013/08/21)
[6] The goal 500 was calculated as the sum of all 47 prefectures' ASPnet registration. Each prefecture should have 10 ASPnets from kindergartens to universities and an additional 30 were extra.

explained the requirement of annual reports for all ASPnet schools.

The world's largest number of ASPnets is in Japan; other countries have only 200 to 300 at maximum, just a 1.5% share of the total schools in Japan. The Committee is now concerned about the misperception that the majority of schools take ESD only because of the ASPnet, as schoolteachers are generally busy in subject lessons. It also pointed out an issue with the succeeding mechanism of ESD practice in ASPnets due to the official rotation system of school principals because the practice might stop when an active principal is moved after his/her duty in five years or so. Moreover, geological balance is also an issue. There are no ASPnets in some areas in the northern parts and southern islands of Japan, while all schools are part of the ASPnet in other areas. The future challenge for the Japanese ASPnet is how its network can be developed for collaboration (ASPUnivNet Working Group, 2013).

Fig. 1. Number of ASPnet Schools in Japan
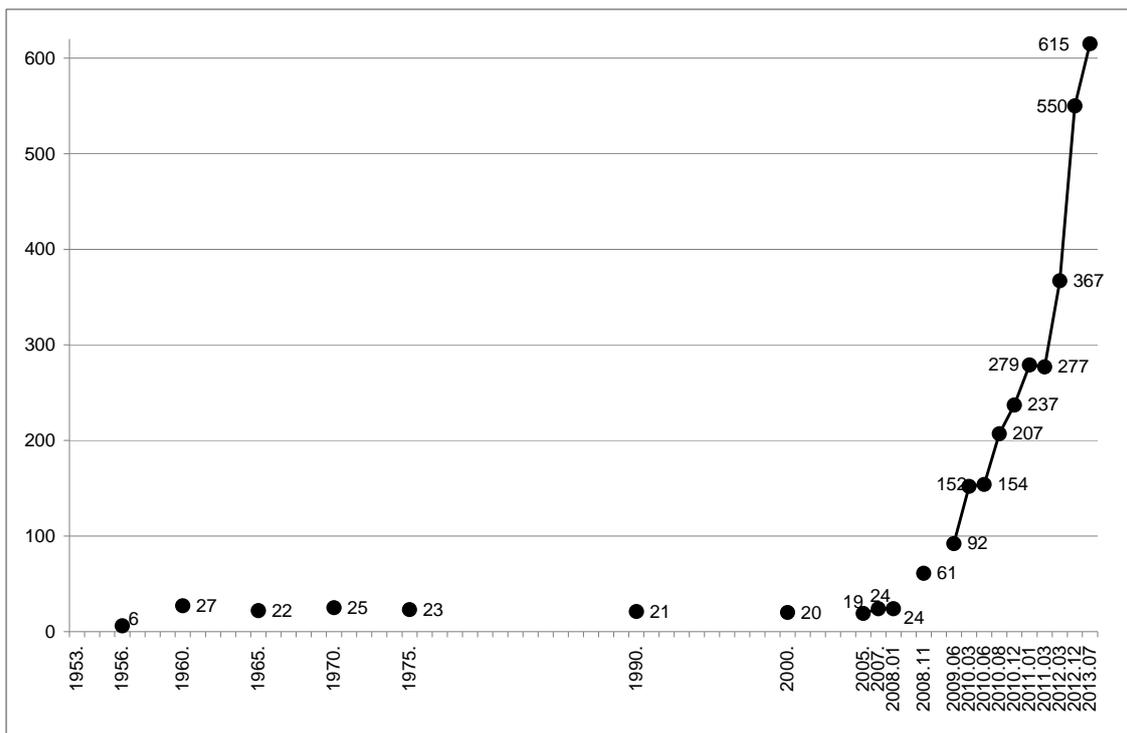
(Source: Japanese National Commission for UNESCO, 2008-2011 & UNESCO ASPnet Japan 2013)

Some remarkable practices have been observed in ASPnets. For example, a whole school approach was undertaken in a Tokyo school, and students' parents and the local community actively participated in school activities thanks to a strong initiative by the principal. In Osaka,

the ASPnet overcame historical difficulties to maintain long relationships with other networks such as the East Asian network and the Baltic Sea Project (www.b-s-p.org) for international communication. "World Heritage Education" is common for many schools in Nara Prefecture, in which many UNESCO World Heritage sites are located. Local cooperation among education boards and schools in the ASPnet framework around Sendai, northern Japan, and the schools in Hokkaido incorporate the native people, the Ainu, into their curriculum for cultural diversity.

3. Issues in Japan

3.1. Final UNDESD Conference in Nagoya and Okayama in November 2014

The Japanese government declared that it would host the final UNDESD Conference at the end of the UN Decade in 2014. All of the Japanese organizations will coordinate to hold the conference and welcome all other countries and regions that deal with ESD activities, formally and non-formally. The government has started to coordinate with MEXT, the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, etc. within the official organizations.

Nagoya, in central Japan, will hold a conference for ministers and prepare for the bridge to EFA conference to be held in Korea in 2015. Okayama in southwestern Japan will hold several meetings for civil organizations and the ASPnet.

There are bottom-up ASPnet activities that are in contrast with the top-down methods for the World Conference of UNDESD in 2014. ACCU plan to launch their flagship project, which will be similar to the Baltic Sea Project, under the theme of rice among East and Southeast Asian countries in December 2013. This will be supported by the Japan Trust in Fund.

One of the Okayama meetings will invite ASPnet schools from across the world to hold the international conference. Another program will be held as a "Student Forum" in which more than 1000 high school students and teachers from 30 countries will participate. Okayama and Osaka ASPnet are cooperating with other Japanese local ASPnet networks for the Forum.

3.2 Trials toward Evaluation

It is a common and difficult issue for all educators today to identify visible outcomes of students' learning activities. Measuring the outcomes of ESD is no different. There are no exact set of quizzes for students to go through for ESD activities. The Ministry promotes the concept

of *ikiru chikara*, or "competency (or zest) for living," as the ultimate goal of school education in Japan. ESD is defined as "education to make actors who can build a sustainable society (MEXT 2010)." The competency the Ministry wants students to obtain overlaps with the concept and outcomes of ESD activities. Therefore, the evaluation needs to encompass the overall view of the student. There are, however, limitations of evaluation even though many academics and teachers attempt it.

The National Institute for Educational Policy Research (NIER, 2012) published a manual containing a series of lists for ESD within subject lessons. When a school is registered as an ASPnet by the local education board, and not by teachers' initiatives, schools will have to promote and support ESD as directed by the board. In such cases, this manual is commonly referred to because ESD is still hard to grasp within traditional lessons. It should be ironically evaluated good for efficient promotion of ESD, although the competency ESD looks for is much wider than subject knowledge and skills.

For further information:

ACCU (Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO)
http://www.accu.or.jp/jp/en/theme/esd.html
A Guide to Developing and Using ESD Materials
http://www.unesco-school.jp/index.php?action=pages_view_main&page_id=510

The Baltic Sea Project
http://www.b-s-p.org

Development Education Association and Resource Center
http://www.dear.or.jp/eng/

ESD-J
http://www.esd-j.org/e/

Japan Association for International Education
http://www.kokusairikai.com/

Japan Environmental Education Forum (JEEF)

http://www.jeef.or.jp/english/

Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)

ASPnet: Associated School Project Network (Japanese)

http://www.mext.go.jp/unesco/004/005.htm

Integrated Studies: Sogoteki na Gakushuu no Jikan (Japanese)

http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/sougou/main14_a2.htm

Japan/UNESCO Partnership Project (Japanese)

http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/hyouka/kekka/08100105/004/108.htm

Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Johannesburg Summit 2002: The World Summit on Sustainable Development

http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/environment/wssd/

Japanese National Commission for UNESCO

http://www.mext.go.jp/english/unesco/

The International Forum on Education for Sustainable Development （ESD） Dialogue 2008
Mid point event of DESD

http://www.mext.go.jp/english/unesco/010/08101401.htm

ASPnet: Associated School Project Network

http://www.mext.go.jp/english/unesco/003/005.htm

About UNESCO School and ESD (Japanese)

http://www.unesco-school.jp/index.php?action=pages_view_main&active_action=multidatabas
e_view_main_detail&multidatabase_id=11&content_id=429&block_id=230#_230

Japanese Society of Environmental Education

http://wwwsoc.nii.ac.jp/jsoee/english/

National Federation of UNESCO Association in Japan

http://www.unesco.jp/en/

NIER International Symposium on Education Reform 2005

http://www.nier.go.jp/symposium/jouhou20050326/e.pdf

Sustainable Development and Education for the 21st Century: What We Can Do Now for the
Children of the Future - An Educational Paradigm Shift –

http://www.nier.go.jp/symposium/jouhou20050326/index-en.html

UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs Division for Sustainable Development
http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/

UN Documents: Gathering a body of global agreements: Sustainable Development
http://www.un-documents.net/k-001303.htm

UNESCO (2012) *Shaping the Education of Tomorrow: 2012 Report on the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, Abridged*. DESD Monitoring and Evaluation.

UNESCO ASPnet in Japan
http://www.unesco-school.jp/index.php?action=pages_view_main&page_id=500
http://www.unesco-school.jp/?action=common_download_main&upload_id=3896
http://www.mext.go.jp/unesco/002/004/08043006/001/001.htm
http://www.mext.go.jp/unesco/004/005.htm
http://www.mext.go.jp/unesco/004/005/001.htm

UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development (Bonn)
http://www.esd-world-conference-2009.org/en/home.html
UNESCO UN Decade of ESD
http://www.unesco.org/en/esd/decade-of-esd/
UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001416/141629e.pdf
Review of Contexts and Structures for Education for Sustainable Development 2009
http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001849/184944e.pdf
Proposal for a Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development as Follow-up to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) after 2014.
http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002223/222324e.pdf

UNESCO Bangkok Office
http://www.unescobkk.org/education/esd/un-decade-of-esd/international-implementation-scheme/
ESD International Implementation Scheme (IIS)
http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/esd/documents/ESD_IIS.pdf

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Rio Declaration on Environment and Development

http://www.unep.org/Documents.Multilingual/Default.asp?documentid=78&articleid=1163

United Nations University—-Institute of Advanced Studies

Regional Centres of Expertise (RCE)

http://www.ias.unu.edu/sub_page.aspx?catID=108&ddlID=183

As of November 2013.

<Hideki Maruyama>

わが国における ESD と ASPnet：2014 年会合に向けて

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・　　　ESD の 10 年ボン中間年会議から日本の最終年会議へ

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・　　　関係学会と教員の自主研修

2.3.ユネスコスクール・ネットワーク

・　　　ユネスコスクールの動向

・　　　テーマ別の実践事例

3.現在の課題

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