

Multinational Interschool Cooperative Learning for Environmental Education, in Collaboration with NGOs

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Background

- April 1992 - July 1994: (Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer) at Pawa Junior High School, Makira, Solomon Islands. In charge of math, science and sports.
- April 2000 - March 2001: Helped create an international environment poster together with Gakkos (an NGO) and UN goodwill ambassador Christian R. Lassen.
- March - April 2001: Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Short-Term Specialist, Ghana, In-service teacher training support (Math).
- April 2001 - Present: Promoting environmental education and international education in collaboration with World School Network (an NGO).
- May 2006 - Present: Formation of Returning Teachers OV Group to exploit the experience of JICA volunteers to benefit children (Representative).



Summary (Main education efforts)

-Creation of an international environment poster

At our school, the students have been learning about nature and daily life in their home town. In particular, they have been learning about water pollution by looking at the aquatic insects and freshwater fish in the Yatagawa River which runs in front of the school. From June to July, they went out almost every day to the Yatagawa River during the noon recess. Their studies have deepened each year, and recently the children have learned in general study time about topics such as the cold water disease of ayu (a Japanese fish), problems with fishways, problems in treatment of the heavy metals on printed circuit boards, and problems with garbage and wild birds.

To interact with schools in other countries using the Internet we have collaborated with Gakkos (an NGO). An environmental protection poster was produced by the world's children and the American artist Christian R. Lassen, who is known for his paintings of dolphins. In addition to the contributions from our school, the poster includes 32 pictures by children from 5 countries including Malaysia and Sweden. Nine pictures by 8 students from our school were used in the poster, and the poster incorporated their messages about the Yatagawa River.

-Exchange with an American youth who is a special correspondent on the environment -- Walking across all of Japan, visiting the Muraoka/Isou Elementary school, teaching the importance of nature and deepening knowledge --

A young foreigner, who is walking across Japan in search of environmental education, visited the Isou Elementary School in Kawai, Muraoka-cho, and together with the children, he toured environmental protection facilities in the town, and deepened the children's knowledge about the living environment.

This young foreigner is an American from New York named Gregory Michael. He is a special correspondent on the environment for the "World School Network", an organization which connects via the Internet with schools and children's groups all over the world and promotes environmental education with a global perspective.

Gregory and 23 second graders from our school participated in the on-site tours on this day. After a field trip to the sewage treatment system at the Muraoka-cho Kushikada Purification Center, they visited the Tajima Plateau Botanical Gardens in Wachi, where subsoil water from about 1000 years ago is nourishing

large Japanese Judas trees. Everyone experienced the wonder of nature, and the importance of a beautiful environment.

Afterwards, at the Organic Center in Hagiyaama, Muraoka-cho, everyone held odorless cow excrement in their hands. They learned about the compost production process, the indispensability of microorganisms in building soil, and other facts which show how our lives are based on nature's recycling.