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Doctoral thesis: The Role of Community Education in Achieving Education for
Sustainable Development (ESD) in Japan.

The thesis aims to figure out the appreciable role of the Community Education, as a central body of Social education, in support to achieve the goals of Education for Sustainable Development in Japan. Since the late 1960s, when the Japanese economy reached its peak, and the number of people accessing formal education skyrocketed, the role of community education has slowly declined. However, in some recent decades, the ageing and depopulated among Japanese society have become more exacerbated and led to a risk of shrinkage and vanish of many communities in the rural areas of Japan. Moreover, the close or merge of the schools due to the diminution of the pupils have emerged as an inevitable perspective which presses the local residents and community educational facilities to get involved deeply into the educational matters. In addition, Japan endorsed the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) project by UNESCO since 2005 and now is on the way to fulfill the goals of ESD, including the goal of sustaining the communities in the rural and the urban areas. For those main reasons, community education has been revitalized and recognized as a positive factor, which can help the Japanese government to achieve the goals of ESD.

In order to make the thesis accomplish, several fieldworks were conducted in totally two years (2016 - 2017). Data was gathered from the interviews, including formal and informal interviews, collective and individual interviews, in the Kominkans, Lifelong learning centers, Regional Centers, private houses, community's facilities, and Temporary Houses. The data are classified, calculated, analyzed, aggregated, compared, to figure out the most appropriate results that can apparently illustrate the different circumstances.

The thesis was presented with a conjoint methodology among education, anthropology and culture methodology.

The dissertation is structured in six main chapters excluded the preamble and epilogue. The preamble will give a brief introduction to (ESD) project; Research problems and the purposes of the research, the scope of the research, subject matters, the research questions as well as research methodology, literature review, fieldwork in detail, and data collection; The first chapter will clarify the Conceptual issues around ESD and Community Education, as well as the related concepts. Additionally, theoretical considerations for the thesis are also encompassed. Chapter II will identify the position of community education in the context of ESD' implementation in Japan since 2005. Chapter III, IV and V will present the case studies in details, meanwhile, Chapter VI will make a comparison of the case studies. Finally, the epilogue will draw some conclusion based on the multi data in the research process. Moreover, this part also points out the limitation of the research and the suggestion for the other research in the coming time.

In detail, the thesis attempts to clarify the following key issues: What is ESD? What is Community Education? What are the differences and similarities between the two Education? Why do the Communities need ESD? What is the relationship between these two Education systems? How can Community Education help ESD achieve its millennium goals?

To answer the above questions, firstly, two basic concepts are clarified. According to that, the concept of Community Education came first, and from the beginning it embraced the concept of Education for Sustainable Development in its content. Meanwhile, ESD is a newly emerging concept since 2000, and it is recommended to be implementation in the community level, by UNESCO.

In addition, both of these education systems share a common viewpoint that is directed toward moral education and human attitudes. According to it, ESD targets to change the attitudes of people, to match the capacity of nature, meanwhile, Community Education aims to develop "community spirit" and "community sense", to enhance the accountability of the individuals for the community's sustainability.

The basic contents of Community Education, as well as ESD, reflects the remarkable changes in many aspects of the world in recent decades, such as the unpredictability of the climate change, the globalization, the

rapid development of new technologies and the increase of migration flows. These factors also caused a significant impact on the structures as well as the identities of the communities. In addition, they also caused some new problems on the environment and social security for the communities. All of these reasons led to the birth of the ESD project, which encourages the countries, depending on their conditions, to provide an appropriate education for their people, in order to adapt to the new context of the world.

ESD and community education have an apparent reciprocal relationship. In social education, ESD needs to be implemented at the community level, in turn, an effective Community Education will construct a good community, through it, supports strongly for the ESD project to achieve its goals.

To illustrate the close relationship between these two education systems in Japan, I introduced the Community educations in three different communities of Japan: The Okayama city (Okayama Prefecture), the Minamisoma city (Fukushima prefecture), and Kodani village, Higashi Hiroshima city, Hiroshima Prefecture. These three communities differ in geography, demography, resources, economics, and even community education. However, to a certain extent, these three communities may represent the basic types of communities throughout Japan including Favorable urban community (Okayama city), Vulnerable and Shrinkage community (Minamisoma city), and Transforming community (Kodani village). Each community has its own way of maintaining the existence and developing its communities that are addressed through the Community Education.

In the three communities studied, ESD has been implemented officially in the community of Okayama city, through the Kominkan system, through the instructions from the Municipal Government, whereas, though ESD has not yet been officially popularized and deployed, the residents of two communities have created their own ways to help the community overcome the hardship times, recover and develop.

Also in these three case studies, the key actors in ESD practice vary. In the Okayama city community, it is quite explicit that Kominkan system has played an important role in supporting the ESD project to achieve its goals, while in Minamisoma city, where the community experienced of formidable disasters, not-for-profit organizations (NPOs), volunteer groups, and prominent individuals in the community have made significant contributions to the restoration of the community.

In the last case, the community of Kodani village, it is recognized that the community leaders, especially the unofficial leaders (un-appointed by the government), also known as the servant leaders, has played the pivotal role in shaping a new community education for both original residents and the new residents, who were not born and grown up in the village, but the number of this group is becoming bigger than the number of the original group.

All three of these communities have achieved a number of outstanding success in local community education. This success is reflected in the increasing number in local people who understand about ESD, as well as the number of local people attending the Kominkan's activities (in Okayama City). It is reflected in the recovery of the community's lives and community sense in the Private "Common Houses" in the disaster-afflicted areas (Minamisoma city). And, it is also reflected in the growing number of cultural, artistic, sporting, scientific, and economic promotion activities in the Kodani village. However, alongside the achievements, the thesis also tried to point out the constraints and challenges of the communities in practising ESD within their localities

Regarding the theories that were examined in the case studies of community education. There are two social theories considered in the thesis: the Social learning theory (is also mentioned as cognitivism theory as well), and the theory of Constructivism. Corresponds to two basic models of community education Bottom - Up and Top - Down, Social Learning theory seems to fit the Top-Down model (Okayama city), whereas the Constructivism theory seems to applied effective in the Bottom-Up model (Minamisoma city, Kodani village).

Finally, I also attempted to present my own ideas about ESD practice in the community level of Japan, by comparing the case studies and comparing them with some of the other examples in the world (Vietnam and Australia). In addition, I also pointed out the limitations and shortcomings of the thesis. These restrictions are expected to be corrected by more detailed and scientific studies in the future.