

Summary:

For the sustainable development of human society, social systems must be established in harmony with nature and the environment. Human resource development is the key to accomplishing this goal. People with an understanding of the concepts and skills for sociological management, as well as scientific knowledge and monitoring methods of biodiversity, will be able to contribute to sustainable development.

Launched in July 2012, the Educational Programme for Sustainable Development of Regional Society with a focus on Biodiversity project trained experts in sustainable development, with a focus on biodiversity. The project focused on suburban and rural areas, where local people sustain traditional culture based on rich biodiversity and seek social development through the sustainable use of natural resources. The biosphere reserves of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme were chosen as learning sites, thereby incorporating MAB into the project.

Project members and partners:

Yokohama National University (YNU)- Project leader
Hokkaido University
Shinshu University
Yonsei University
Japanese Coordinating Committee for MAB
Domestic biosphere reserves: Shiga Highland, Mt. Hakusan, Mt.
Ohmine and Mt. Ohdaigahara, Aya
Rikkyo University
University of Tokyo
Nara University of Education
Nature Conservation Society of Japan
Tadami Town
Katsuyama City

Background:

After the Industrial Revolution, social activity grew and traditional lifestyles quickly evolved into a more productive, modern style. While this led to a better standard of living, traditional ways of living with biodiversity were lost in the process. For thousands of years, humans sustained life wisely, using natural resources and keeping a balance with nature, suggesting the viability of building a sustainable society by using biodiversity. This project focused on biodiversity as a key function for sustainable development. However, national or local biodiversity is rapidly lost in developed and developing countries alike. Such loss can be a serious problem in the context of conducting sustainable development.

A methodology for wise use or conservation of biodiversity must be region dependent. Biodiversity and natural resources themselves must be differentiated between regions. Backgrounds such as human population or economic condition also vary in each region. In such a situation, leaders are required to help develop a suitable strategy for their region, from a multidimensional viewpoint. This Education Programme was created to develop leaders in this arena providing them with information and knowledge for the wise use of

biodiversity, as well as giving them actual experiences in the field.