

R E N K E I

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DEMONSTRATING
EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY
THROUGH
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

PROJECT REPORT

INSTITUTE FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES
LEARNING AND ECOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN
SHELBURNE FARMS
ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERSHIP OFFICE

Major support for the Renkei project was generously provided by the **Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership**, with additional support from **Ben & Jerry's Homemade, Inc.**, **the Freeman Foundation**, **Green Mountain Coffee Roasters**, **the Lintilhac Foundation**, **the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation**, **Barry Switzer**, and **the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**.

Renkei's success was enhanced by the many individuals, organizations, businesses, agencies, and other entities that supported activities throughout the two-year initiative.

Photography by Ms. Suzanne Clark, Mr. Haruo Soeda, Mr. Sumitaka Kawai, Mr. Tim Donnay, and other project participants. Children's artwork from the Nishinomiya Eco-Panel Exhibition.

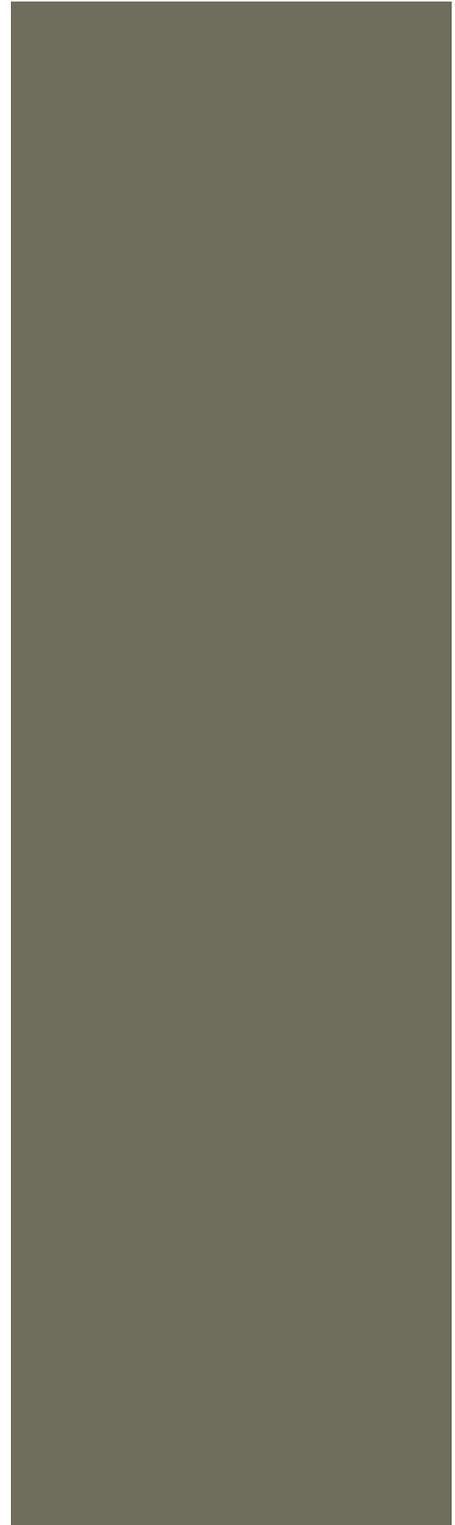


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RENKEI

DEMONSTRATING EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY
THROUGH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

2000-2002

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Renkei—or collaboration—is at the heart of the effort to prepare citizens and leaders for the complex challenges of the 21st century.

Through the two-year *Renkei* project, the Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC), the Learning and Ecological Activities Foundation for Children (LEAF), Shelburne Farms, and the Environmental Partnership Office (EPO) have successfully strengthened the practice of education for sustainability (EFS) in the United States and Japan on both the local and national levels. Project partners engaged a wide variety of leading education professionals, local practitioners, business and government representatives, nonprofit/nongovernmental organizations (NPO/NGO) staff, and community members in elevating the concept of sustainability and developing innovative curricula promoting it in the classroom.

The project led to new collaboration among the various sectors in society on a subject of vital interest to both countries—preparing citizens and leaders for the complex challenges of the 21st century. Renkei—or collaboration—was at the heart of this effort.

Renkei was timed to coincide with the launching of the Period of Integrated Learning in Japan, and the introduction of “sustainability” and “sense of place” in the Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities (the statewide education framework). The partnership focused on a common agenda that provided supporters of sustainability with new tools and methodologies for implementation at the local level and activities that could impact the global environment.

Renkei took an integrated approach blending face-to-face exchanges, international conferences, and Internet communication that provided hands-on learning, created practical tools, and strengthened each partner’s global network.

Education practitioners from businesses, local government, schools, and the community assisted in the design of innovative and practical strategies for integrating EFS into the educational systems in Nishinomiya, Japan and Vermont in the United States. Incorporation of an international perspective into EFS curriculum design strengthened participation in two exchanges, a series of meetings and conferences, and two publications.

The project also fostered greater individual responsibility for global issues in Nishinomiya and Burlington that was shared and replicated on the regional and national levels. Sharing ideas and strategies with the goal of influencing students to make healthy choices further reinforced the content of Renkei activities.

Over the course of the project, delegates from Japan and Vermont participated in innovative project applications of EFS, presented education for sustainability activities to peers, and shared strategies for broadening the constituency that supports education in the schools. During each exchange, project managers, educators, teachers, and business and community leaders developed tools that integrated new methods for EFS in both Japan and the United States.

Renkei’s Japan partners have had significant positive impact locally, nationally, and internationally. On the local level, LEAF’s Nishinomiya Project for Community-Based Environmental Education (NCEE) reached 24,000 elementary school children through its interactive Eco-card Project.

Renkei was also the catalyst for other activities, including two new initiatives to further develop education for sustainability curricula. Both projects are strongly supported by the City of Nishinomiya and its Board of Education. Nationally, LEAF has been recognized as a leader in developing innovative educational programs that involve parents, teachers, and the business and NPO sectors. Internationally, LEAF has expanded their Chikyu Kids Environmental Network, organized the Third Junior Eco-Club Asia-Pacific Conference in August 2001 and hosted the International Eco-Panel Exhibition in March 2002.

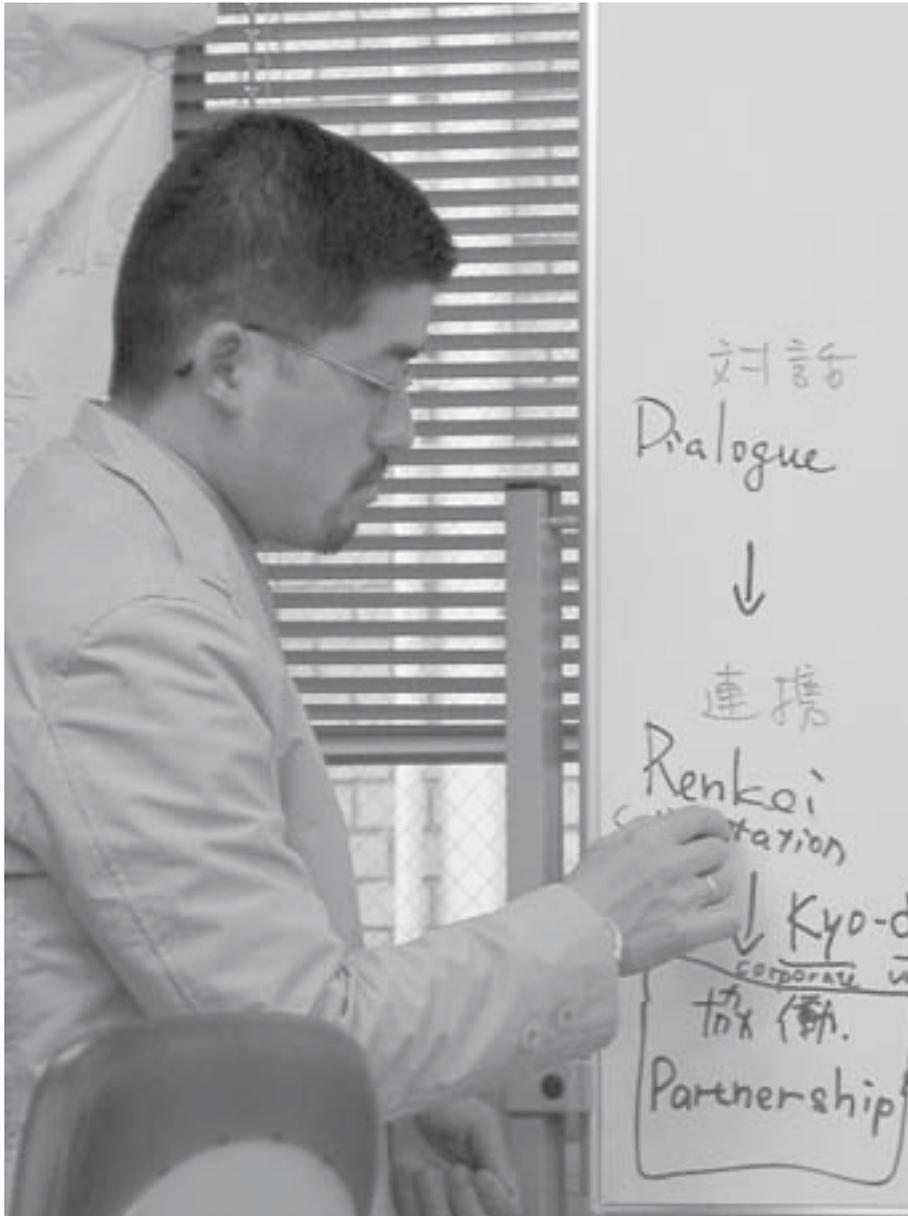
The Vermont Education for Sustainability (Vermont EFS) project coordinated the Making Connections conference (March 2001), which was attended by more than 180 education practitioners. The conference provided an opportunity for a diverse group of participants to promote and share teaching strategies that integrate environmental, economic, and social issues into lesson plans. Japanese delegates presented their project activities, reminding participants of the global nature of EFS. Presentations on the Renkei project to the Burlington School Board further increased support and visibility for international collaboration.

Two seminal EFS resource guides were created with independent funding by the partner demonstration projects. The *Education for Sustainability Framework Report* was produced by the Japan Renkei partner LEAF. This framework, the first of its kind in Japan, outlines the key sustainability themes identified as priorities by a diverse group of Japanese educators.

Similarly, the *Guide to Education for Sustainability*, being written and published by Vermont EFS, will provide a comprehensive look at exemplary activities and curricula from Vermont, Japan, Hungary, and Poland. This guide is expected to be published in the summer of 2002.

The success of the two demonstration projects and the partnership between the implementing organizations has been the key to exceeding Renkei's goals. The project facilitated opportunities for collaboration and led to significant enhancements for each demonstration project. Mutual understanding and respect among the partners was essential to ensuring project success. Building on these accomplishments, project partners are exploring a new phase of collaboration, Kyo-do, meaning "to work together on a shared vision." Renkei partners envision a deeper effort at integrating school-wide sustainability and sharing Renkei's lessons learned and activities with other regions of the world.

BACKGROUND



Two years ago, the Institute for Sustainable Communities (ISC), the Learning and Ecological Activities Foundation for Children (LEAF), Shelburne Farms, and the Environmental Partnership Office (EPO) formed a unique partnership and embarked on an effort of vital interest to both countries—preparing citizens and future leaders for the complex challenges of the 21st century. Throughout the project's implementation, Renkei—Japanese for collaboration—has been at the heart of the process and not merely the project's name. The project was designed to strengthen the practice of education for sustainability through collaboration at the local level and disseminate results on the regional and national levels.

Renkei's current partnership was established on the foundation of the successful U.S.-Japan "Dialogue on Education for Sustainability" (Dialogue) that was supported by the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership and the Freeman Foundation. Dialogue was completed in 1999. The Renkei project's definition of education for sustainability (EFS) adheres to the U.S. President's Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) as "a lifelong learning process that leads to an informed and involved citizenry with creative problem-solving skills, scientific and social literacy, and commitment to becoming effective stewards of natural resources and the environment" (PCSD, 1994).

Building on the success of the Dialogue project, Renkei strengthened the concept of education for sustainability by sharing and creating practical models and resource guides for its application in the classroom. Above, Mr. Kinji Yamada of LEAF records the past, present, and future of U.S.-Japan cooperation on sustainability.

PROJECT GOALS

The Dialogue project led to better cultural and historical understanding of education and the environment among the partners. It ultimately strengthened mutual trust and appreciation for each partner organization's mission and experience. Finally, a strong shared interest in the EFS concept and an interest in influencing the future grew out of the Dialogue process.

Renkei was developed on the premise that because the U.S. and Japan collectively consume a major portion of the world's resources, they have a shared responsibility to educate young people about sustainable development. Each country has traditionally been looked upon as a model for determining appropriate living standards by the rest of the world. Education for sustainability was attractive to both countries due to its emphasis on individual and collective responsibility, cultural awareness, inclusion of economic factors, and environmental basis. EFS has inspired educators to work with all sectors of society to examine the relationship between the economic, cultural, social, and environmental aspects of communities, and develop integrated solutions for future generations.

Inherent in EFS is the notion of using community-based methodology to connect all members of a community to support the education of its children. It includes using parents as resources and the key to their own children's learning. Oft forgotten sectors such as business and the elderly can play crucial roles by imparting "hands-on" learning. NGOs can provide important professional development opportunities for teachers as they integrate social, economic, and environmental pieces into a curriculum. Educational reformers in Japan and the U.S. have eagerly sought models and activities



that help schools and teachers cope with globalization and community change.

The Renkei project initially facilitated the exchange of ideas and activities between two projects, the Vermont Education for Sustainability project (Vermont EFS) and the Nishinomiya Community-Based Environmental Education project (NCEE) (see Appendix A for full project descriptions). During the second year of the project, Renkei has also promoted the joint development of EFS methodology between two cities, Burlington, Vermont and Nishinomiya, Japan. Two important goals of the project were to:

- strengthen the concept of EFS by providing practical models and resource guides for its application; and
- incorporate an international perspective into education for sustainability curriculum design in both Japan and the United States that will foster greater individual responsibility for global issues.

Through the dynamic leadership of Mr. Masayoshi Ogawa, director of LEAF (pointing), the community-based approach to EFS has received strong support from the City of Nishinomiya, the Board of Education, and local schools. This has led to two new projects in 2002 and two new locations for field activities, one of which is a bird sanctuary at a tidal wetland preserve.

PARTNERS

The Renkei project comprised four partner organizations (see Appendix B for organizational contact information for each partner):

INSTITUTE FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES (ISC)

ISC is a nonprofit organization in Montpelier, Vermont that helps communities around the world address environmental, economic, and social challenges to build a better future shaped and shared by all. Throughout Renkei, ISC provided general and financial management, guidance on exchange trips, integration of EFS experiences from Central and Eastern Europe, and links to its Burlington Legacy project.

LEARNING AND ECOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN (LEAF)

LEAF is a nonprofit membership organization in Nishinomiya, Japan working in the area of community-based education and providing training and information dissemination to schools, businesses, local government, and community leaders. LEAF was the implementing agency for the NCEE project and the host agency for Vermont participants visiting Japan.

SHELBURNE FARMS

Shelburne Farms, located in Shelburne, Vermont, is a nonprofit conservation-education leader in place-based learning and EFS throughout the northeastern United States. Shelburne Farms guided the Vermont EFS project that promotes professional development for educators. It was the host agency for Japan participants visiting Vermont.

ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERSHIP OFFICE (EPO)

EPO is a project of the Ministry of the Environment in Tokyo, Japan that promotes environmental protection through collaboration among citizens, nonprofit organizations, corporations, and local government. EPO disseminated Renkei's results by establishing and maintaining a website and connecting the partners with key national organizations in Japan.



Mr. Masayoshi Ogawa, director of LEAF and Ms. Megan Camp, vice president of Shelburne Farms discuss the educational systems and the framework for integrating education for sustainability at the local, national, and international levels. Discussions such as these led to the first Education for Sustainability Framework Report in Japan and the inclusion of international activities in Vermont's Guide to Education for Sustainability.

HIGHLIGHTS OF YEAR ONE

PRIMARY ACTIVITIES

Primary activities in year one (March 2000-February 2001) included the identification and selection of multi-sector EFS advocates, coordination of two exchanges, and facilitation of strategies promoting and elevating EFS within communities and schools at the local, national, and international levels.

FIRST EXCHANGE

In the first exchange, eight Japanese professionals representing the business, NPO, and government sectors traveled to Vermont to identify successful practices in teaching about sustainability. The participants also initiated collaboration on an EFS resource guide, and established connections with Edmunds Elementary School, the pilot Vermont school. Participants learned about other innovative programs such as Linking Learning to Life, the Lake Champlain Science Center, the Burlington Intervale, and living machines. This highly successful trip provided the practical knowledge necessary to develop creative models of EFS linked to education reforms in Japan and Vermont.

SECOND EXCHANGE

During the second exchange, eight Vermont professionals traveled to Japan. They joined in NCEE Eco-Exhibit and the Earth Watching Club's Eco-Walk Rally activities, and participated in presentations and discussions at a national-level EFS symposium in Tokyo. They also participated in a Municipal Assembly meeting in Nishinomiya. In addition, site visits and additional participation in NCEE activities realized further information sharing between schools, parents, and businesses.



The first year of Renkei made great progress in establishing trust between schools and demonstration projects, engaging key sectors of society (private and government) in promoting EFS and establishing a dissemination outlet for sharing results. This page, top left: Teacher Mr. Sumitaka Kawai and his students from Hiraki Elementary School look at Eco-Panel exhibits. Top right: Mr. Keith Wheeler from Center for a Sustainable Future and Ms. Anne Bijur from the Vermont Education for Sustainability project admire elementary school art work on nature. Middle: Mr. Masayoshi Ogawa (left) leads a group of Hiraki Elementary School students on a field trip exploring the water quality of a city canal. Bottom: Mr. Marc Companion (far left) from Ocean Arks International, leads a discussion of Vermont students on the mechanisms of the "living machine."



SELECTED ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- engaged the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), and the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) in the EFS discussion in Japan;
- involved the Environmental Education Division of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Vermont Cultivating New Partnership Consortium in instituting a global perspective in the Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities;
- built a relationship between Hiraki (Nishinomiya) and Edmunds (Burlington) elementary schools on sustainability in the classroom;
- supported international participation in an EFS symposium that explored the concept of teaching sustainability in Vermont and Nishinomiya, and included examples from both Burlington and Nishinomiya elementary schools. It included key participation from the Ministries of Environment and Education in Japan;
- elevated the dialogue of the EFS concept in the cities of Nishinomiya and Burlington;
- created a Japanese Education for Sustainability Framework that builds a foundation for integrating education for sustainability into the Period of Integrated Learning; and
- developed a website, enhancing a network of EFS practitioners within and between the U.S. and Japan (<http://www.geic.or.jp/geic/projects/efs/>).

MILESTONES

A number of milestones resulted from the exchanges. First, the engagement of MEXT and MOE in Japan during the EFS symposium in Tokyo bodes well for integrating sustainability into the Period of Integrated Learning.

Second, through the Renkei project, the cities of Burlington and Nishinomiya elevated the importance of, and support for, education for sustainability. The mayors of both cities made initial commitments to promote and support the concept of sustainability in their respective city and schools.

Third, deepened cultural understanding and appreciation of the similarities and differences in teaching sustainability strengthened the demonstration projects.

Finally, the exchanges created an enormous amount of enthusiasm and synergy and resulted in many ideas that were further developed during the project's second year.

Top: Hiraki Elementary School Teacher Ms. Noriko Onishi participates in a class at Edmunds Elementary School in Burlington. Middle: Arts and crafts activities are shared by elders with parents and school children during the Eco-Walk Rally to city hall in Nishinomiya to promote sustainable living. Bottom: Students from an elementary school in Burlington learn the Japanese art of origami.

REPORT ON YEAR-TWO ACTIVITIES

EVALUATION OF PROJECT CONTENT

The second year of the project (March 2001-April 2002) focused on sharing practical activities and curriculum strategies for integrating EFS into the educational system. This, in turn, fed into the framework report for EFS in Japan and the Vermont guide to EFS. Through two professional, multi-sector exchanges and participation in international conferences, the partners were able to advance the concept of EFS to the implementation level and expand the development of activities to support sustainability at both regional and national levels. A key component of the process was collecting, testing, and discussing tools and models of EFS practices and activities among the primary authors of the framework report and guidebook.

EXCHANGE HIGHLIGHTS

Four Japan participants, including two Hiraki Elementary School teachers, an assistant professor from Osaka City University, and the Director of LEAF (who is also a City of Nishinomiya staff person), traveled to Vermont in March 2001 (see Appendix C for exchange trip schedules and bios). New connections were formed as participants:

- presented results and led a discussion of the NCEE project at the Making Connections conference, which 180 Vermont educators attended;
- visited four projects/organizations that are successfully integrating EFS concepts—Lake Champlain Science Center, Ecological Learning for the Future (ELF), 21st Century Community Connections, and Shelburne Farms; and
- shared EFS activities and curriculum strategies for integrating EFS into the Japan and Vermont educational systems.

The exchange inspired Hiraki Elementary School teacher Mr. Sumitaka Kawai and his 5th grade students to develop an interactive unit entitled “hands-on rice-growing experience” (see Appendix D for a full description). The innovative unit begins as students learn about farming, then prepare and cultivate their own rice field, planting and caring for the crop and finally harvesting and cooking the rice—all on school property. The presentation of the unit earned the teacher and students top honors in the Eco-Panel Exhibit held in March 2002 in Nishinomiya.

In the second exchange held in February 2002, five Vermont participants, including two elementary school teachers, a City of Burlington representative, the Intervale Foundation’s outreach coordinator, and ISC’s education director, traveled to Japan (see Appendix C for exchange trip schedules and bios). Over the course of the trip to Japan, participants:

- developed a multi-sector team to support teachers and students who are implementing the Sustainable Schools Project at Champlain Elementary;
- shared partnership strategies with a group of education NPOs and discussed sustainable city initiatives in Burlington with a group of 20 medium-sized businesses;
- encouraged a link between the cities of Nishinomiya and Burlington around the promotion of sustainability, cooperation, and a declaration of Nishinomiya becoming an “environmental learning city”; and
- explored new opportunities to share demonstration projects results.

Soon after the exchange, Champlain Elementary School teacher Ms. Colleen Cowell introduced the concept of an “Eco-Card” to her school. She adapted the model program to meet the needs of the new Sustainable Schools Project being implemented by Shelburne Farms.

Exchange outcomes and conference participation led to the inclusion of international activities into the Education for Sustainability Framework Report in Japan (see Appendix E) and Vermont’s Guide to Education for Sustainability (see Appendix F). Through Renkei, each demonstration project incorporated a global perspective of education for sustainability in their activities and published products.

A minor change in scheduled activities occurred when the final exchange trip was delayed. The February 2002 exchange trip was originally proposed for August 2001; however, the partners agreed that to develop and test EFS materials shared in the March 2001 exchange, more time would be needed. The best opportunity for Vermont teachers to travel was during the winter break in February. The project took full advantage of the schedule change. Two teachers participated during their winter break, the group attended the Eco-Panel Exhibit, and Japan teachers used the time to implement EFS activities in the classroom during the autumn.

PROJECT RESULTS

At the completion of the second year, project partners met and, in most cases, exceeded expected results as described below.

Strengthening the demonstration projects in Vermont and Nishinomiya

Renkei brought people from **government, NGO/NPOs, schools, and businesses** together to explore how each can contribute to sustainability. Creating, sustaining, and expanding these multi-sector partnerships, such as business support for LEAF and government support for Vermont EFS, has been a top priority for the project. Increased involvement of these diverse groups has led to the incorporation of different perspectives into the teaching of EFS in both Japan and Vermont. Through the NCEE and VT EFS demonstration projects, dissemination of ideas has occurred through open discussions, parent-teacher meetings, professional development trainings, symposia, and Internet communication. The expansion of the business sector's role in education and youth, and increased parental involvement in student learning were particularly important accomplishments (see Appendix G for contact resources).

Renkei supported the international aspect of education for sustainability through two important events, the **Education for Sustainability Symposium** in Tokyo, funded by the Japan Environmental Corporation, and the **Making Connections conference** in Montpelier, Vermont, funded by the Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust, the Josephine Bay Paul and C. Michael Paul Foundation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the North American Association of Environmental Education. Each event played a role in increasing support for and visibility of the demonstration projects.



In Renkei's second year, delegates focused their efforts on sharing education for sustainability strategies on the local, national, and international levels, and developing practical lesson plans to integrate into the curriculum. Top photo: Vermont teachers Ms. Suzanne Clark and Ms. Colleen Cowell (left to right) give an interactive lesson to Hiraki Elementary students about the water cycle as an example of an integrative activity. Bottom: Mr. Hirobumi Kondo, LEAF's board director, shares his views on education and sustainable development with Mr. Michael Monte, representing the City of Burlington, and Ms. Naoko Ii, international projects coordinator from LEAF.



PROJECT RESULTS (CONTINUED)

Teachers from Nishinomiya and Burlington had the opportunity to present their activities and raise awareness of the EFS concept within city governments, schools, and communities.

New classroom-community opportunities were created with **local businesses and municipal agencies** whose missions support sustainable development as a result of collaboration among Linking Learning to Life, Vermont EFS, and the Burlington Legacy project on an adaptation of the city's summer internship program with teachers. With support from the Fieldstone Foundation, teachers in Burlington are working with municipal and business partners to develop projects that support the inclusion of economic, social, and environmental themes in their curricula. The internships encourage teachers to develop creative service-learning opportunities and other classroom-community partnerships for students.

The City of Nishinomiya has committed itself to becoming an **"Environmental Learning City."** LEAF organized a diverse group of education practitioners to develop the EFS framework and connect the exchange participants with key City of Nishinomiya representatives to promote sustainability. Mayor Satoru Yamada, the chairman of the Board of Education, the chairman of the Nishinomiya Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and business community leaders have joined forces in formulating a comprehensive approach to make their city sustainable and ensure that its citizens are well educated about social, environmental, and economic challenges.



Innovative education activities included the use of Internet technology and having students work directly with local businesses. Top photo: Mr. Masayoshi Ogawa observes a student at Edmunds Elementary School exploring computer-based activities. Bottom: Hiraki Elementary School students conduct a survey at Co-op Kobe to determine where food products come from as part of the "Let's Think about the Relationship between Food and the Planet" activity (see Appendix D).

Through participation in Renkei activities, Vermont EFS project coordinators strengthened their **connection with the successful Burlington Legacy project**. Legacy, under the guidance of ISC and the City of Burlington, has been successful in engaging youth in community development activities and ensuring that they have a voice in the city's decisionmaking process. Similarly, Renkei has encouraged deeper relationships between some Burlington schools and the city government to promote and develop sustainability. This connection will have a positive impact on future project results as new school initiatives begin and seek city government support.

Adapting demonstration project activities in other Vermont or Japan communities

Inspired by their trip to Japan, Vermont teachers Ms. Suzanne Clark and Ms. Janice Case at Edmunds Elementary School initiated an innovative **Schoolyard Habitat project**. The activity aims to turn a portion of the school playground into a water exhibition for experiential learning. Curriculum will be developed and linked to different aspects of the local ecology, Vermont and Burlington history, and science-related topics. Former Renkei participant Mr. Marc Companion of Ocean Arks International completed the landscape design based on the creative water catchment designs and recycling he observed in Japan. The National Wildlife Federation provided project funding.

At Hiraki Elementary School in Nishinomiya, **parents are increasingly assisting teachers** in getting students into the community to explore local nature and historical sites. Renkei's LEAF participants were influenced by the Vermont Institute of Natural Science's Environmental Learning for the Future (ELF) program, which has provided "hands-on nature" workshops to tens of thousands of parents, teachers, and community members in Vermont for the past 30 years. Hiraki Elementary School parents are currently working with teachers, developing their own programs, and leading educational "field" trips. Ultimately, their involvement has led to better parent-teacher collaboration and better community-school understanding.

Renkei participants at Edmunds and Champlain Elementary Schools are developing two concurrent **Earth Watching Clubs** inspired by the Eco-Card project in Japan. After participating in Eco-Card activities in Japan and learning about the project at the Making Connections conference, a new activity called "Legacy Quest" is being developed at Edmunds. In this activity, students will learn about their community and then design a quest or treasure hunt to follow clues to historical places and natural areas within their community. The activity provides each school with an opportunity to involve parents and students, strengthen a connection to the history of Burlington, and enable community members to enjoy a fun and challenging activity.

In April 2002, the Vermont EFS project sponsored a **public display and recognition of teacher and student works on sustainability** at the Vermont State House. It paralleled a similar event, the Nishinomiya Eco-Panel Exhibition, which the two co-organizers, Ms. Erica Zimmerman and Ms. Anne Bijur, learned about on a Renkei exchange. Vermont citizens were recognized for their innovation, commitment, and leadership in helping students and communities create a more sustainable world. Three Renkei exchange teachers, Ms. Colleen Cowell, Ms. Suzanne Clark, and Ms. Janice Case, and Mr. Marc Companion from Ocean Arks International, were among those honored for their achievements in supporting sustainability.

Including global activities of education for sustainability in the Vermont and Nishinomiya education curricula

The publication of two reference guidebooks, the Vermont *Guide to Education for Sustainability* and the Japan *Education for Sustainability Framework Report* will **expose formal and non-formal educators to creative international activities** that support EFS concepts. Renkei participants from Vermont and Japan gained tremendously by sharing EFS teaching using a "systems" approach. Equally important were the face-to-face exchanges and sharing among peers through professional gatherings such as the Making Connections conference in Vermont and the EFS Symposium in Japan.

PROJECT RESULTS (CONTINUED)

The Vermont *Guide to Education for Sustainability* presents an overview of EFS and links it to the Vermont education standards (see Appendix F). Following a template for integrating EFS into the curriculum, the guide provides two sections with curricular examples of sustainability in action. Within these sections, readers will note that some of the activities were written by Renkei participants from Nishinomiya (Hands-on rice growing experience) as well as by past ISC education project participants in Poland and Hungary (see Appendix D).

The *Education for Sustainability Framework Report* in Japan includes the full presentations from the Vermont EFS project and Vermont teachers delivered at the EFS Symposium in Tokyo. The report provides a rich background of what Vermont has accomplished in integrating EFS into the classroom and its future plans. This framework report (see Appendix E) was distributed at numerous conferences and meetings and to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT).

Renkei partners and participants have supported such **international efforts** as the Chikyu Environmental Kids Network, the Junior Eco-Club Asia-Pacific Conference held in Nishinomiya, and the 2002 Eco-Panel Exhibition. These events expanded the reach of EFS activities to additional international organizations and networks. Action plans and eco-messages written at the Junior Eco-Club Asia-Pacific Conference were shared with students in Montpelier. Similarly, Eco-Panel Exhibits this year were received from 53 countries (as compared with 23 countries in 1999) with the common themes of global warming, acid rain, global citizenship, community life, water resources, and recycling and waste reduction.

Cross-cultural teaching, such as Burlington teachers Ms. Suzanne Clark and Ms. Colleen Cowell's sharing of the popular "rain/water cycle" game with a 4th-grade class in Hiraki was a rewarding and inspiring experience for both teachers and students. The game and the teachers received a warm reception from the students, parents, and school administrators. In a similar situation, Hiraki teachers Mr. Sumitaka Kawai and Ms. Noriko Onishi gave a project presentation to their Vermont peers at the Making Connections conference, an opportunity that honored both of their commitments to EFS work in Nishinomiya.

Strengthening the role for Japan NPOs in education for sustainability

LEAF obtained corporation status as an NPO in April 2002, a standing that recognizes its local and international commitment and accomplishments. LEAF now has an expanded board of directors, increased corporate membership, and secured two new locations for field activities with access to mountains, rivers, and a bird sanctuary at a tidal wetland preserve.

LEAF has expanded its education programs and secured two multi-year EFS projects supported by the City of Nishinomiya. Both projects aim to provide support for EFS activities for the Period of Integrated Learning. One project is funded by the MOE and the other by MEXT, the latter being a new source of funding for LEAF.

LEAF has accepted responsibility for coordinating outdoor activities at **Nishinomiya's Nature House environmental education center**, which was previously run by the Board of Education. This will allow LEAF to develop

stronger links between outdoor environmental activities with local community-based programs in the city center.

LEAF continues to be the lead NPO in guiding the City of Nishinomiya to become an "Environmental Learning City." With full support from the mayor, LEAF is collaborating with the city to develop an innovative plan for greater sustainability. An official declaration of Nishinomiya's new status is expected in December 2003.

LEAF is helping other NPOs discuss how to coordinate and integrate education for sustainability and environmental education activities into their programs. Representatives from numerous NPOs, including the Museum of Nature and Human Activities, the Nature Conservation Society, Kansai Gakuin University, the National Camping Association, the Recreational Society of Hyogo, the Boy Scout Association, and the Hyogo Environmental Advancement Association, have met to coordinate activities and strategize on the development of common "standards" for teaching EFS. Their alliance will strengthen the programs each of the NPOs is offering to its constituency.

LEAF has earned the respect of a number of leading **socially responsible businesses** in Nishinomiya, including the Co-op Kobe, the Henry Charpentier bakery, and Kokuyo Co., Ltd. During the March 2002 exchange, LEAF spoke about its community-based educational programs to representatives from 20 influential medium-sized Nishinomiya businesses. These opportunities are valuable in exposing the business community to how they can be more involved in supporting community education efforts.



The exchange trips provided substantive professional development opportunities for the Renkei participants, particularly through numerous small group discussions, teaching experiences, and international conferences. Top photo: Mr. Michael Monte shares sustainable development strategies the City of Burlington has undertaken with officials of the City of Nishinomiya, including (seated from left to right) Mr. Satoshi Chikami, representative director of LEAF; Mayor Satoru Yamada; and Mr. Munekazu Takeshita, director of Environment Bureau. Bottom: Mr. Masayoshi Ogawa gives a presentation of the NCEE project at the Making Connections conference in Vermont in March 2001.

PROJECT RESULTS (CONTINUED)

Making education for sustainability a priority on the local, state, and/or national level(s) in Japan and Vermont

The creation of an **international “education for sustainability”** bridge between Vermont and Nishinomiya allowed for cross-sectoral sharing of information between non-formal and formal educators, parents, local government and NPO representatives, and business people. Through the exchanges, information sharing has led to interaction beyond the United States and Japan and created new connections with Poland and Hungary (see Appendix G for international EFS resources and organizational links).

Through the EFS symposium in Tokyo and the Making Connections conference in Montpelier, Vermont, **nearly 300 educators were exposed to the EFS concept**. The exchanges provided substantive professional development opportunities for teachers who are leading the integration of EFS into curricula in Nishinomiya and Vermont.

LEAF has been a key leader in the **Tripartite Environmental Education Network** that includes Japan, China, and South Korea. The network’s meetings provide important opportunities for countries to share ideas and strategies as they move toward more sustainable communities.



An important accomplishment of Renkei is the expanded involvement of parents, businesses, and government officials in the promotion of education for sustainability. Top photo: A Nishinomiya parent teaches Hiraki Elementary School students about nature in a local park, something that would have been unheard of five years ago. Middle: Nishinomiya Mayor Yamada thanks City of Burlington representative Mr. Michael Monte for a letter from Burlington Mayor Clavelle inviting him to visit the Vermont city. Bottom: Mayor Clavelle (third from left) welcomes Mr. Sumitaka Kawai, Ms. Noriko Onishi, Mr. Masayoshi Ogawa, and Mr. Haruo Soeda (taking photograph) to Burlington.



Nishinomiya and Burlington are leaders in advancing a more sustainable approach to municipal development. Each city realizes what can be gained through cooperation and has embarked on a path to learn and support each other's initiatives. The relationship has encouraged more city-school partnerships and strengthened collaborative efforts such as those between the City of Burlington and the Edmunds and Champlain Elementary schools, and the City of Nishinomiya and Hiraki Elementary School.

Improving the framework for education for sustainability in Japan and Vermont

Beginning with the Dialogue project in 1998, a core group of EFS practitioners in Japan and Vermont expanded the breadth of sustainability and the **knowledge and tools available** for integrating it into their respective education systems. In Japan, LEAF is a recognized leader in providing dynamic activities for the Period of Integrated Learning that promote local sustainability. In Vermont, Shelburne Farms and Cultivating New Partnerships—a consortium of groups including the Agency for Natural Resources, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Education, and the Statewide Environmental Education Program—were the leaders in including “sustainability” and “sense of place” in the Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities. The Renkei project enhanced the credibility of EFS as an integrative theme and allowed each country to build teaching tools and activities that respond to its cultural and community norms.

In 2001, the Central Environment Council, a consultative body of the MOE, recommended the **introduction of EFS into Japan's educational system** through local communities and schools for the Period of Integrated Learning. Nishinomiya has been selected as one of seven pilot cities, and LEAF has been selected to implement one of the projects.

Sharing practical activities has strengthened the ability of key individuals and organizations to **leverage resources, develop new partnerships**, and reach the necessary critical mass to **make institutional changes**. Two new projects at Hiraki and Champlain Elementary Schools support this sharing. Sustainability is being integrated into their classes throughout 2002.

As Burlington and Nishinomiya develop a collaborative relationship on sustainable development, the impact on **local educational priorities** will be noticeable. City government support in both communities is important since it plays a role in connecting businesses, schools, community members, and other sectors to support ideas that are positive for the community as a whole.

A **“common agenda” of EFS** was shared with other countries through many local and international conferences and networking opportunities (see Appendix H), raising the profile and understanding of sustainability to a new international level.

Nishinomiya and Burlington are leaders in advancing a more sustainable approach to municipal development. Each city realizes what can be gained through cooperation and has embarked on a path to learn and support each other's initiatives.

THE U.S.-JAPAN EFS PARTNERSHIP

Having impact on education for sustainability in the United States and Japan depends largely on the effectiveness of the organizational partnerships formed. The Renkei project was built on the results of the Dialogue project collaboration. While ISC, LEAF, Shelburne Farms, and EPO had a common long-term understanding of the role EFS could play locally and internationally, each organization provided the partnership with different experiences and assets with which it could help achieve project goals. This section defines what is meant by a partnership, examines the elements within a partnership, and explores how the partner organizations worked together to fulfill the goals of the project by means of nine indicators.

WHAT IS A PARTNERSHIP?

Definitions of partnerships range wide and far, frequently depending on which organizations are trying to form a partnership. For the purpose of Renkei, a general definition of partnership could be a “thoughtfully created, value-added, and mutually beneficial relationship between consenting organizations that is nurtured over time and leads to a measurable result.”

Wisdom suggests that partnership implies equity in the relationship and the ability to enter freely into a venture together. What each partner receives that is of value and what each partner invests in the partnership should be explicit. In the end, the amount of time and energy necessary to learn about each partner, plan together, and gain consensus is a cost of partnership often only recovered through better projects in the long term.

During a World Bank initiated e-group discussion (Learning to Partner with Civil Society, January 2002), a participant suggested that partnerships often could be categorized into three distinct stages of development: nascent partnership, expanding partnership, and mature partnership. These stages of development may be dynamic and interactive.

The earliest stage of development is when partners share information about initial project objectives and activities and assess the organizational capacity of concerned parties. The Dialogue project is a good example of this with Vermont NGOs like ISC and Shelburne Farms connecting with Japanese NPOs, including LEAF, JEF-Japan Ecology Foundation, and EPO.

During the emerging partnership stage, partners agree to work together and implement pilot activities. During the development of the work plan in Renkei's first year, JEF-Japan realized it could not fulfill its role and responsibilities. Thus, roles and responsibilities were reviewed and reassigned.

Mature partnerships require trust, common understanding, an agreed manner of discussion and decisionmaking, and clearly identified common objectives. Activities undertaken with a mature partnership are fully functioning and sustainable, as with the LEAF, Shelburne Farms, and ISC partnership in education for sustainability.

ELEMENTS OF A STRONG PARTNERSHIP

An abundance of literature exists about the “essential” elements of a partnership. Considering that each partnership could be defined differently, essential elements often vary with each partnership formed. Within development circles, practitioners have identified two categories: hard elements that include strategy, systems, and structure; and soft elements that include staff, style, skills, and shared values.

Partnership is working together to accomplish agreed-upon results and accepting joint responsibility for achieving them. It requires defined roles and responsibilities and carries with it a long-term involvement. It is about trust, respect, integrity, accountability, and equality.

Partnership requires acceptance of the principle that organizations have the right to set the final agenda for their own work, and must not alter basic priorities related to the identity, vision, and values of any of the individual organizations. It assumes that through cooperation, each organization concerned will become more competent in reaching its own goals beyond the specific partner relationship.

Any one individual or agency should not be in a position to “manage” a partnership or move different entities towards a “state of partnership.” Partnerships must develop based on the mutual benefits to each organization and must be driven by those organizations. Moreover, partnerships should not always be cast as a way to solve a “problem.” Experience shows that forced or managed partnerships are neither possible nor desirable and such attempts typically break down over time.



For Renkei, a general definition of partnership is a “thoughtfully created, value-added, and mutually beneficial relationship between consenting organizations that is nurtured over time and leads to a measurable result.”



Strong partnerships are built on mutual respect, sharing ideas, and learning from one another. One of the Japan participants at the Tokyo EFS symposium commented “I realized the importance of partnership and vision. It was stimulating to hear the example from Vermont ...” A similar sentiment was heard from a number of the Vermont educators during the Making Connections conference in Montpelier after they had heard about LEAF’s program.

Top photo: Elementary school teachers Ms. Noriko Onishi and Ms. Janice Case worked in partnership to exchange teaching ideas and techniques. Bottom: Ms. Lindsey Ketchel (center), marketing and outreach director at the Intervale Foundation, shares Burlington’s Eco-Park plan with Mr. Munekazu Takeshita, director of Environmental Division (right) and Mr. Kinji Yamada of LEAF (left).

PARTNERSHIP (CONTINUED)



Renkei encouraged teaching methodologies using a “systems” approach. Equally important were the face-to-face exchanges and learning among peers through active participation in cultural traditions such as (pictured top to bottom), Japan delegates and students collecting and making maple syrup at Shelburne Farms, and Vermont delegates participating in a tea ceremony in Nishinomiya, hosted by Mr. Takuya Watanabe (left).



INDICATORS OF A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP

Using the frame of these partnership elements, Renkei project characteristics are described below in terms of nine successful partnership indicators as identified by the New Partnership Initiative (NPI) Learning Team (New Partnership Initiative: A Strategic Approach to Development Partnering, Volume I. Washington, DC: USAID, pp. 228-230).

Use experiences elsewhere to stimulate locally generated strategies. Prior to joining the Renkei partnership, each of the four member organizations had established international networks in sustainable development and environmental education. Therefore, partners were able to immediately share lessons learned from other countries, which were then adapted to promote EFS and the goals of Renkei.

Acknowledge differences but focus on common ground. Partner organizations quickly acknowledged the clear differences between both the cultural and education systems of the U.S. and Japan and agreed to move beyond these differences to focus on a “common agenda”—that of preparing future citizens and leaders for the global challenges of the 21st century. Each partner organization agreed that the two countries could and must take concrete actions to becoming more sustainable. This commitment and focus kept the partnership together.

Take time to build commitment from key actors. The importance of the Dialogue project preceding Renkei cannot be understated. Dialogue's two years of work provided partners with an opportunity to learn about one another's strengths and address one another's weaknesses. As they shared and learned about one another, each was able to create an exchange team that was beneficial for the host organization as well as the participants. The high quality of the exchanges and participants was due to a profound understanding of each other's needs and solid preparation.

Balance power differences to foster mutual influence. Although ISC was the recipient of funding and the coordinating agency, LEAF and Shelburne Farms were the implementing organizations. Roles and responsibilities were clearly identified and accepted at the start of the project. When JEF-Japan could no longer participate, its role and responsibilities were quickly and fairly redistributed. Moreover, partners' accepted the differences in resources that existed and worked to support fair solutions.

Meet regularly for information-sharing and decisionmaking. During the preparation for exchange trips, host partners met regularly to develop exchange schedules and committed necessary resources to meet the needs of visiting delegates. Partners were able to anticipate problems and issues, address differences, accept multiple perspectives, and in the end, provide alternative solutions. This commitment of energy and resources was often above and beyond the time the project could financially support. In the end, the host partner's preparations led to connections that strengthened other ongoing initiatives within its organization and new networking opportunities with others.

Share resources among all partners. The two demonstration projects were well established in each of the locations, Burlington and Nishinomiya, and each project was able to offer complementary advantages within its geographical region. One example of resource use was the connection between Vermont's EFS demonstration project and Linking Learning to Life, which connects businesses to schools through Burlington High School. In Japan the collaboration between the NPO LEAF and the business community to support education outside of the school complemented Vermont's experience. In both cases, delegates from the projects were invited on an exchange that led to significant sharing of sustainability strategies.

Frame solutions in terms of mutual gains. The international partnership raised the profile of the demonstration projects to a new and higher level. At the beginning of the Renkei project, both demonstration projects were responding directly to educational needs within their constituencies. Formal and non-formal educators were preparing "sustainability" and "sense of place" standards in Vermont, while NPO staff were supporting the launch of the Period of Integrated Learning in Japan. Therefore, LEAF and Shelburne Farms could engage in a vision that would lead to mutual long-term benefits. In particular, both organizations gained international perspectives from what were basically local demonstration projects. For ISC and EPO, both benefited from the expanded international EFS network and gained from participation in concrete activities at the school level. Finally, experiences and activities have been shared at larger international venues, helping to disseminate results.

Emphasize both process and product. Each organization placed a strong emphasis on a broad range of activities, including networking, professional development trainings and workshops, exchanges, and local level interaction. A critical element for each demonstration project was the expected product—a guidebook for EFS in Vermont and an EFS framework report for Japan. The goals of Renkei were easily achieved due to the partners' previous collaboration on the Dialogue project, a common vision and model for achieving organizational goals, and concrete outcomes for the final product.

Build many bridges to expand cooperation. Over the project's course, the well-established network that each partner brought to the project produced a multiplier effect. The project endorsed selecting exchange delegates from multiple sectors—including business, NPO, and local government—and trip schedules that included visiting a variety of projects. New links grew within individual countries, between the partner countries (as ties developed between Burlington and Nishinomiya), and among multiple countries, due to new relationships with Poland and Hungary.

PARTNERSHIP (CONTINUED)

THE RENKEI PARTNERSHIP SUCCESS

Renkei's uniqueness lies in the common vision yet varied path that each organization is pursuing to educate the public about sustainable lifestyles. At the beginning of the project, partners agreed on a framework for Renkei implementation. They also agreed to be flexible about organizational needs, accept each partner as equals, and take individual responsibility for achieving project goals and objectives. Each organization filled a role that matched its own vision and values. This foundation allowed the partners to be comfortable with Renkei's exploratory learning style and resulted in greater creativity. The high level of trust provided genuine opportunities for thinking and learning together, and a two-way process that was critical for innovation. Today, Renkei partners are committed to the promotion of EFS in the future—a result that will reach beyond this specific project.

In the larger picture, Renkei partners recognize the important role that NGOs and NPOs play in collaborating with local governments and businesses to effectively engage citizens in decisionmaking. There is a growing awareness in both the U.S. and Japan that current lifestyles are placing a burden on the environment. Environmental problems such as global warming are now seen as closely related to economic and social issues at all levels, from local to international. As world leaders, Japan and the U.S. are challenged to set an example for other countries and will benefit from further collaborative efforts.

EXAMPLES OF CONTINUING PARTNERSHIPS

Impact on the educational systems in Nishinomiya and Vermont has been significant. Activities that grew out of this project will continue for many years to come as partners deepen their existing activities or expand and create new partnerships. Through the Internet, partners will continue to share resources and project results. The following examples are a few of the key ongoing education for sustainability projects which share lessons learned:

Experiential Environmental Learning Promotion Project. LEAF, funded through the City of Nishinomiya and a grant from the Ministry of Environment, is supporting a children's initiative to raise awareness of the impact decisions and actions make on environmental problems. The project will also focus on how children can make positive contributions locally and globally and expands the community network supporting this initiative.

Sustainable Schools Project. Supported by the Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust, Cultivating New Partnerships and Shelburne Farms are using sustainability to enhance curricula, professional development, community partnerships, school climate, and environment. The project will be implemented at Champlain Elementary School in Burlington, Vermont.

Sustainability as an integral theme for the Period of Integrated Learning.

LEAF, supported by City of Nishinomiya through a grant from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, is developing and testing EFS activities and model curriculum for the Period of Integrated Learning. A key aspect of the project is the involvement of parents, community members, and business representatives in the proposed activities.

Project of Miyagi University of Education. Miyagi University is organizing an international conference to support the development of a Japanese approach to environmental education. The conference will look for more innovative educational practices that build on Japanese traditions and equip children with the knowledge and skills needed in a globalize world. LEAF's NCEE project will be highlighted at the conference. In addition, Andrea Déri, formerly of ISC and currently working at the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies in Japan, will speak at the conference.

Kanagawa Prefecture's Environmental Planning Initiative. Kanagawa's planning division is embarking on an initiative to develop partnerships with schools, corporations, small local businesses, and families to improve environmental conditions in the prefecture. Children from Kanagawa will be contacting counterparts in Hyogo prefecture through LEAF to share environmental strategies.

EVALUATION OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Kataribe or “Legacy” Tellers. After the Hanshin Earthquake in 1997, which caused tremendous damage to more than 60,000 houses and the loss of 1,134 lives in Nishinomiya only, residents realized the importance of a true “sense of place” that opens them to the beauty and legacy of the area as well as the risk and danger of the environment. As a result, Kataribe’s was started with an aim to revive local legends and historical facts so that people will be able to pass their heritage on to the next generation through these stories.

Strengthening Community-School Partnerships project. Supported by the C.S. Mott Foundation and the GE Fund, ISC and Child and Environment (a Ukrainian NGO) are building collaborative working partnerships between communities and schools in Ukraine. Lessons learned during Renkei are incorporated into the project design. The partnerships will lead to greater civic responsibility by linking education to community life. The project will engage youth and other community members in identifying educational needs, use local resources to support those needs, and solidify positive civic actions to address community priorities.

International EFS Network. Building on 10 years of education projects, ISC continues to support and nurture its network of partner organizations from Poland and Hungary to Ukraine and Japan.

Scheduling of the exchanges in year two, as in year one, was the most challenging aspect of project implementation. Differences in schedules and activities such as the Eco-Panel Exhibit in Nishinomiya and the Making Connections Conference in Vermont had a great impact on the timing of the exchanges. Through each partner’s committed effort, project coordinators were able to organize demonstration project activities and opportunities, maximize the effectiveness of each exchange, and minimize the overall travel costs. Although the March 2001 exchange was shorter than originally proposed due to school commitments, the opportunity for Hiraki Elementary School teachers to make a presentation at the Making Connections conference and learn about the other Vermont-based EFS activities offset the schedule change. Likewise, the second exchange of Vermont participants traveling to Japan was originally proposed for July 2001, then rescheduled to increase the partnership’s effectiveness. As such challenges were encountered, e-mail proved an important aid for communicating and developing solutions.

With varying levels of ability in both languages, regular communication required extra time and commitment from all partners. Frequent translation of articles and other communication was necessary. Project participants Ms. Michiko Oishi in Vermont and Ms. Naoko Ii in Nishinomiya were critical to the success of the project. Both are bilingual and have strong education backgrounds. They quickly sifted through correspondence and ensured the appropriate distribution of materials. Ms. Michiko Oishi was hired as a short-term consultant. One recommendation for the next stage would be to have a part-time bilingual staff person.

One interesting contrast between Japan and the United States were the different roles business, NPOs, and citizens played in schools. Participants also acknowledged that Japan’s more centralized educational system contrasted with the more decentralized U.S. education system. Furthermore, participants found the interest, support, and access that businesses are giving to the schools in Nishinomiya intriguing and encouraging. Interestingly, with the introduction of the Period of Integrated Learning, the trend in Japan is to move away from the centralized system. Meanwhile, in the U.S. there is a movement to create a more centralized educational system through the implementation of a national testing system for schools. The models and tools being developed were based on two educational systems moving in different directions. This difference provided challenges within the sharing process and future direction of educational activities.

Teachers in Vermont have frequently developed out-of-school activities and curriculum with support from formal and non-formal resources within the education community. In Japan, teacher, parent, and community involvement in developing a curriculum is relatively new and exciting. This factor posed an additional challenge as U.S. and Japan participants worked to identify a common starting point for the development of EFS models and lesson plans. To offset the difference, exchange participants looked into the systems “process” of a particular theme within the curriculum. Two examples of adaptations were the previously mentioned rice-growing experiment at Hiraki Elementary School and the proposed Eco-Card project at Champlain Elementary School.

KYO-DO—THE NEXT STEP

Renkei project partners share the belief that Japan and the United States have a responsibility to take a leadership role in educating their citizens about sustainable development. One effective way to fulfill this responsibility is through education for sustainability.

The United States and Japan collectively consume a major portion of the world's resources as well as provide a model standard of living for the rest of the world. Other countries will follow their lead if these two influential countries embrace sustainability.

Based on the partnership built through the Dialogue and Renkei projects, there is much to gain from pooling resources and sharing experiences to develop new models of sustainability.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

As Renkei built on the Dialogue project, unique opportunities exist to cultivate these successful cooperative efforts. Some of the ways in which partners and exchange participants can collaborate in the future might include:

Build on the established relationships between the cities of Nishinomiya and Burlington. Focus on how municipalities can encourage more sustainable communities and partner with all sectors of society to create that vision. Support could be requested through the Japan-U.S. Community Education and Exchange program.



In the final exchange, the delegates had ample time to review the successes of the Dialogue and Renkei projects, and look toward the future. Delegates came up with the idea of Kyo-do, whereby the future collaboration would enhance the already numerous new “sprouts” or activities in the community and continue moving towards a more sustainable society—together cooperatively. Above, Mr. Koh Nakakita (far right), founder of Nakakita Ecological Architecture and Renkei participants discuss opportunities to share eco-friendly building design models between Japan and Vermont.

Extend the integration of sustainability to a school-wide effort and develop student-to-student exchanges via Internet technology and video-conferencing. Two projects at Champlain and Hiraki Elementary schools are already strengthening education and sharing strategies for the innovative use of community-school ideas on sustainability.

Deepen the agricultural theme within EFS and develop activities that provide students with opportunities to reconnect with the land. Students can look at where food comes from and consider the decisions associated with food production and transportation. Burlington's Intervale Foundation is currently developing plans to link community gardens to the educational needs of area schools. Likewise, Linking Learning to Life is supporting the development of an "Introduction to Sustainable Agriculture" course, an experiential, cross-disciplinary service-learning curriculum that explores basic plant biology and social, economic, health, and environmental issues.

Expand cultural and technical exchanges. One example of a cultural exchange is Burlington Taiko, a Vermont-based musical group, which is planning to travel to Japan this summer to play in a festival in Tottori. Prior to the exhibition, the group will meet with the Shukugawa Taiko group from Nishinomiya to be "ambassadors" of continued Burlington-Nishinomiya relations. An exciting example of a technical exchange is the connection between the Vermont Energy Education program and the Nakakita Ecological Architecture office, who plan to share strategies on developing innovative eco-friendly building designs and education programs.

Monitor and evaluate education for sustainability project activities, lesson plans, and curricula. Vermont and Nishinomiya are implementing new EFS programs in 2002 and will share results and lessons learned on implementation.

Expand the original Eco-Panel Exhibition from Nishinomiya to stage a new exhibit in Vermont. Participants would share exhibits and ideas, and winners could potentially travel on an exchange to the other country.

Enhance the University of Vermont's Asian Studies project to develop a stronger link between it and LEAF's activities in Nishinomiya. In 2001, participants of this exchange spent two days with LEAF. In 2002, they may spend the majority of their time with LEAF. One potential action could connect the upcoming exchange with Assistant Professor Haruo Soeda at Osaka City University and expand interaction to other network universities like Warsaw University in Poland.

Linking EFS projects to other countries where partner organizations have connections, such as China, South Korea, Poland, or Ukraine. The Center for Environmental Education and Communications and the Chinese State Environmental Protection Administration invited LEAF to participate in an international teen forum on environmental education in Chengdu, China in June 2002.

WORKING TOGETHER ON A SHARED VISION

Many countries are contemplating their accomplishments in sustainable development during the past 10 years as they prepare for the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development. Sustainable development practitioners will need to evaluate the role education has played in realizing sustainability targets. Education must be recognized as one of the most effective means by which society can confront the challenge of creating a more sustainable lifestyle.

Much can be gained through committed partners working together to shape a more sustainable society, locally and internationally. Events such as the tragedy on September 11, 2001 reaffirm that nations need to better understand one another and work in concert at the local level to address global challenges. Kyo-do—or working together on a shared vision—is one such opportunity for Vermont and Nishinomiya to move forward together.



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