

Education for Sustainable Development -Community Learning Centers as the Platform for the Community Based Disaster Preparedness

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Abstract

Climate change and Disasters are the challenges to the sustainable society. The concept of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) was declared at the WSSD (World Summit for Sustainable Development) that was held in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2002. United Nations proclaimed the 10-year period (2005-2015) as the United Nations Decade of ESD (UNDESD) to promote ESD worldwide. The roles of the non-formal education and life-long learning are as important as the formal education system. Community Learning Centers (CLCs) that were introduced into the Asian Countries by the initiatives of the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Office. This program is based on the social learning system of “Kominkan” (public-citizen-hall) in Japan. In the Kominkan summit 2007, Kominkan-CLC was acknowledged as the platform of the community to link the CBOs (Community Based Organizations) for the learning activity to promote ESD as “Okayama Declaration” in 2007. In the final year of the decade of ESD (2005-2014), the World Congress on Education for Sustainable Development was held in Nagoya and Okayama. One of the stakeholders meetings of the congress, International Community Learning Center and ESD was held in Okayama. The roles of Community Learning Centers (CLCs) were discussed among the 650 international participants. Disaster Risk Reduction was one of the specific topics of the agenda. In the conference document of “Okayama Commitment 2014”, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and the ESD in the community were mentioned in the document. In the charter of Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), the role of the community was emphasized to create the resilient community to mitigate the damages of the disaster and prepare for the future disaster. In the UN decade of the disaster (2005-2015), the role of the community was emphasized for the immediate disaster response and preparedness. In the aspect of ESD, Community based disaster preparedness program had been done at the public schools of Miyagi prefecture before the Great Eastern Great Earthquakes (2011). Based on those experiences, the lives of the school children were saved from the Tsunami disaster in the Earthquakes. To strengthen the capacity of the community, the role of the education in the community would be reaffirmed. ESD should be integrated with HFA and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a community based strategy for the disaster to create the resilient community and society.

Keywords: ESD (Education for Sustainable Development), CLC (Community Learning Center), UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), Okayama Commitment 2014, HFA (Hyogo Framework for Action), MDGs (Millennium Development Goals), SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals)

1. Introduction

1.1 Challenge of Sustainable Development (SD)

Climate change and disaster are the challenges to the sustainable society. Sustainable development (SD) is needed for the adaptation of the climate change and reduction of the damage of the disasters. The concept of the sustainable development is understood as environmental, economic and economical well being for today and tomorrow. (United Nations 1992) The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), known as Brundtland Commission, initially proposed the idea of “sustainable development” in 1987. In the “Common Future” of the commission’s reports, it was defined as “Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. (The World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987) To discuss the economic development and find ways to halt the destruction of the natural resources and population of the world, The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), known as Earth summit in Rio De Janeiro was organized by the UN in 1992. In the conference documents, “Agenda 21”, gave worldwide impacts to the international community to achieve environmentally sustainable development. In the chapter 36 of Agenda 21 is devoted to ‘Promoting Education, Public Awareness and Training’.

1.2 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was introduced in the global development agenda in the UN general assembly in 2000. MDGs are based on the public management systems. (Hulme 2007) The target period was set as 2000 to 2015. The objectives and targets have become clear and the progresses have been visible – 8 goals and 21 targets with 60 measurable indicators. After the MDGs target period, the new development agenda (post

MDGs) was proposed. The concept of the “sustainable development” was emphasized. The new global agenda, “Sustainable Development Goals”, was proposed in the Rio+20 summit in 2012 as the Post-Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that starts in 2015. In this article, the role of “Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)” shall be discussed to reduce the disaster risk, minimize the vulnerability and create the resilient society.

2. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

2.1 ESD as the international agenda

In 2002, 10 years after the Rio summit in 1992, the WSSD (World Summit for Sustainable Development) was held in Johannesburg, South Africa. That affirmed UN commitment to "full implementation" of Agenda 21 and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that started in 2000. The role of Education was reaffirmed and emphasized as the foundation of the sustainable development. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) was main idea of the congress that was declared in the Ubuntu declaration. To promote the Education for Sustainable Development in the global society, Japan and Sweden government proposed the agenda of UN Decade of ESD in the general assembly of UN in 2002. The United Nations launched the Decade of ESD (2005-2014). UNESCO was designated as the lead agency of the UN systems for the decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). In the final year of DESD, Japanese Government hosted the “UNESCO World Conference of Education for Sustainable Development” to evaluate the progress of DESD and prepare the strategy after the UNDESD. The main congress was organized in Aichi, Nagoya and series of stakeholders meetings were organized in Okayama, Japan in October - November 2014. (Fig 1)

2.2 ESD and community

High quality of education should be provided at primary level to higher level, formal and non-formal, school children to life-long learning. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is beyond the environmental education, broader and inter-disciplinary learning process. ESD contains the 3 pillars plus one; 1) environment, 2) economy, 3) society and culture. The contents of education and teaching should be re-oriented and re-designed for the sustainable development. This teaching model should seek critical thinking, problem solving and understanding the complexities. The linkage of the stakeholders in the community and educational institutions are encouraged by the scheme of the UNU-RCE (Regional Centers of Expertise's).

2.3 Community Learning Centers (CLCs) and Kominkan

In Asia-pacific region, Community Learning Centers (CLCs) were introduced by UNESCO Bangkok office for the Education for All (EFA) initiatives in the 1990s.

The original model of CLC was Japanese Kominkans (public-citizen'-hall) that were institutionalized as social education Act in 1949. After the 2nd world war, Japanese government introduced this Kominkan system to promote the education for the adults to learn democracy and social development in their close community. In Japan, most of the Kominkan were usually built and maintained by the expense of municipal governments. The local governments have the responsibility for the proper managements of the Kominkan – maintaining of the buildings, staff and boarding committee of the Kominkan. Kominkan has given marvelous effects on the hosting Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and linkage of the community citizens that empower the people to solve the problems of the community and improve the lives of the community- such as public health or income generation. The number of the Kominkan has reached about 18,000.

The experiences of Kominkans have been shared with CLCs in ASEAN countries and CLCs have been well recognized and utilized in the communities of those countries. Although CLCs were initially introduced for the adult literacy program, the learning contents has been modified and upgraded based on the needs of the community. They have been interested in the environment issues (waste, energy, forest, agriculture), public health, income generation, computer skill etc. Disaster is an important topic to them as well. Since the Asia-Pacific areas are disaster prone area, they pay strong attention for the natural disaster.

2.4 Linkage of CLC-Kominkan for the model of ESD in the community

When the Decade of ESD began in 2005, UNESCO has assigned the lead agency of UN organization. United Nations University (UNU) also has a role to promote ESD through the research, train, exchange and advocacy activities. UNU acknowledged the model area of ESD as the Regional Centers of Expertise (RCEs). Two areas, Greater Sendai and Okayama, were chosen as the initial 7 RCEs. These 2 RCEs are unique in their models of the promotion of ESD. In the Greater Sendai area, it is based on the public educational system and school plays the center of the ESD promotion in the community. On the other hand, Okayama city promoted the community based ESD promotion program that were based on Kominkan. Kominkan plays the central role to facilitate the linkage of the people and promotion of ESD in the community.

In 2007, UNESCO Bangkok office and Okayama University UNESCO chair program of “Research and

Education for Sustainable Development” organized the *Kominkan summit Okayama 2007- Community Development and Promoting Education for Sustainable Development*” in collaboration with Okayama city, United Nations University (UNU), Asia/Pacific UNESCO Cultural Center for UNESCO (ACCU), Conference of Okayama International NGO Networks (COINN). International experts, government officials of life-long learning or CLC in 8 Asia and Pacific regions, were invited. They visited the Kominkans in Okayama and discussed with the participants on the role of Kominkan/CLC for the promotion of ESD. All the participants of the conference agreed and committed to promote ESD in the Kominkan or CLCs. It is documented as ”Okayama Declaration” on Nov 1, 2007. The contents of the declaration were implemented in their countries. Follow up meeting on ESD-CLCs were hosted in Okayama by COINN and Okayama University UNESCO chair program in 2008-2013 as RCEs Okayama activities.

2.5 Final year Congress of the Decade of ESD (2005-2014)- Okayama commitment 2014

Upon those initiatives, Okayama city was selected as the host city of the stakeholder meetings of ” *UNESCO World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development*” in Oct – Nov 2014 as the final year event of the UNDESD (2005-2014). One of the stakeholders meeting on “Kominkan-CLC and ESD “ was organized on Oct 9-12, 2014. 650 delegates participated in this conference. The products of the conference was documented as “*Okayama Commitment 2014- Promoting ESD beyond DESD through Community-Based Learning –* “. (Fig 1)

3. Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) and role of the community for the DRR

In the congress of the “*World Conference for Disaster Reduction*” that was held in 2005 at Kobe, Hyogo, Japan. Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) was adopted to build the resilience of Nations and communities (HFA: 2005-2015). In the charter 3 of the HFA, disaster preparedness should be linked with sustainable development. International Strategy of Disaster Reduction (ISDR) recommended that disaster risk reduction would be incorporated in the framework of the “sustainable development”. The strategy emphasized the role of the community to be prepared. Education on Disaster risk reduction should be organized in all the community. UNESCO described that ESD is the most appropriate framework for disaster preparedness in the following reasons: 1) Interdisciplinary and holistic, 2) critical thinking and problem solving, 3) locally relevant and acknowledging local language and culture.

Although the linkage of CLC and educational activities for disaster risk reduction (DDR) was not mentioned in the HFA, the DDR incorporated with ESD could be implemented at the CLCs.

4. Great East Earthquake- community and ESD

4.1 Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and ESD

Koganezawa T, (2014) mentioned that community and school based education for disaster risk reduction has been successfully saved the lives of the school children at the Kesennuma-city. Tsunami attacked the Kesennuma-city as high as 9 meter and 1,479 people out of 73,494 citizens were killed or missing. Kesennuma is the part of the Great Sendai Regional Center of Expertise (RCE) of ESD that was acknowledged by United Nation University in 2005. Various kinds of ESD promotion activities were practiced at public school. Before the Great East Earthquake in 2011, school based education for the disaster risk reduction that included the disaster drill that was designed in the aspect of the ESD – oriented in the local culture and history of the community. Several Tsunamis attacked this area and they were recorded in the historical documents or folk tales as historical wisdom. (Fig 1)

4.2 Reconstruction of the community with the ESD

Citizens’ earthquakes reconstruction committee of Kesennuma City (2011) reported, Great East Earthquake and Tsunami caused complete destruction of the towns. Although the public buildings, School, Kominkan and Gymnasium, were supposed to host the evacuees who lost the houses during the early phase of the disaster, the magnitude of the damage were much terrible than local government planned for the preparation of the Tsunami disaster. Ichinose, T, (2014) reported that School and Kominkans and in Kesennuma city were completely damaged or washed away by Tsunami. Where those facilities were destroyed, those communities lost the center of the platform of the local residents and community based organizations (CBOs). Since ESD was widely practiced in the Kesennuma city, Education of Sustainable Development (ESD) was recommended as the key concept of the reconstruction of the community. As Yamamoto, H., and Chiba, H., reported in 2014, the linkage among the local stakeholders that were based in the Community Learning Center resulted in the close communication and collaboration with different sectors and creation of the resilient community against the disaster. In case of the Maehama-District of the Kesennuma city, Kominkan of “Maehama Marine Center “ was washed way by Tsunami. This is the one of the 54 Kominkan that was washed away out of 194 Kominkan/community houses in Kesennuma-city. The community people in Maehama district organized the great efforts to relocate to the safer place and rebuilt the new building in the safer place in this community area.

5. Recommendations/Conclusion

The community is crucial for the disaster risk reduction and building resilient community. Strengthen the community is the challenge. Community based learning is one of the solutions. As the "Okayama Declaration" and "Okayama Commitment 2014" show, the Community Learning Centers (CLCs) are appropriate place to host the local stakeholders and promote the autonomous learning activities. They can learn the peculiar contents of the local community. In the *Okayama Commitment 2014*, it mentioned that "*We have developed and maintained communities' resilience against natural and human-induced disasters through relevant learning and cultivating human relationships anchored on selflessness, empathy and mutual-help. The role of CLC (community learning center) will be the keys to strengthen the community to stimulate bridging function of the social capitals that are necessary for the resilient community*".

Through this learning process, the capacity of the local community will be developed. This capacity will be the enriched resources for the resilience against the disaster in community. This mechanism should be ubiquities for the global community. Those attempts should be integrated with HFA and SDGs. As UNISDR (2015) mentioned, Promotion of ESD was "*use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels*" as articulated in the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015. Although the specific name was not mentioned in the 17 goals of the SDGs (2015-2030), 10 out of 17 goals are related to the disaster risk reduction. In the 4th goals of SDGs, it is mentioned as; Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. This is reflected the core concept of ESD. To promote lifelong learning opportunities to all people, non-formal education based on the community is needed. As IDSR recommended, the ESD should be understood properly and integrated with other international development agenda such as HFA and SDGs to create resilient community, region and country. Community based learning based on the ESD should be implemented in each country as post - MDGs development agenda for the disaster preparedness and creation of the resilient society. Monitoring of those efforts will be carefully evaluated as the 4th goals of SDGs. The innovative programs at CLC (Community Learning Center) should be shared by other region and country. The research network on the community based learning for the disaster mitigation will be needed.

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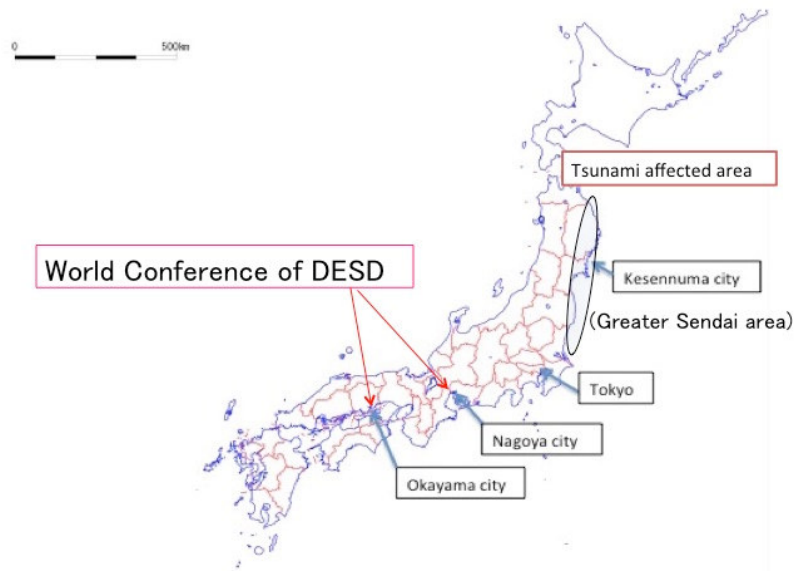


Figure 1. Tsunami affected area (2011) and Congress sites of Decade of ESD (2014)