

Application for Participation
Associated School Project (ASP) for Promoting International Education

Have a heightened interest in the environment,
and deeper thought about our own region.

[1] Description of the Project

Since 2003, we at Tonami elementary school have enrolled our students in activities that encourage them to learn about and from nature. Using the school grounds, including the bamboo forest, we have continued a program of working with, and maintaining this environment. In particular, we have made use of our orchards for an idea we call “Your Family’s Tree”, wherein one family and one tree in the orchard are thought to develop together. There are even examples of parents who began raising a particular tree and who passed that job to a child at this school.

In addition, the children have learned that through the maintenance of the bamboo forest, we have kept that area in use where it would otherwise have become completely overgrown. “Human activity” and “environmental damage” are not one and the same. We have learned that it is not the case that using an area causes damage, but rather that how you use an area makes a difference to whether you simply damage it, or can continue to use it in harmony with nature, and we shall continue this way.

[2] Objectives of the Project

At this school, we are learning that our school, the people in this area, even the things around us makes up what we call the environment. Whilst experimenting with effective activities, we are learning how to create a society in which it is possible to maintain the environment.

The main activities are as follows.

(1) Bamboo Shoots Festival

This is a festival at which we taste and show our thanks for the bamboo shoots from our bamboo forest. Here, we appreciate the warmth and enjoyment that comes from communicating with the people of this area.

(2) Tonami Festival

Making use of what the children learn in the forests and by the ponds and marshes near the school, we hold workshops for local people.

(3) The “Your family’s Tree” activity

At this school, the family of each of the students plants a tree in the orchard. Periodically that family inspects the tree, takes care of it, takes fruit from it and makes it a topic of

conversation. This activity provides a chance for a direct personal connection to nature.

(4) Looking after and making use of the environment

We are trying to maintain an environment in which “shiitake” mushrooms will grow from cultured cells. We are also learning, by trial and error, from our maintenance and management of our bamboo forests and marshes.

[3] Execution

Centred on the forest, bamboo forest, orchards, paddy fields and farmland, we put together the following activities to help achieve our objective.

ESD Calender											
Month	4	5	6	7	9	10	11	12	1	2	3
	• Bamboo Shoots Festival					• Tonami Festival- Cutting grass on the bog					
	The cultivation of “shiitake” mushrooms										
	The cultivation of rice										
	The “Your family’s Tree” activity										

(1) Bamboo Shoots Festival

Continuing to manage the bamboo forest all year round, the children pick bamboo shoots in early spring. The head of the P.T.A prepares some rice with bamboo shoots and the school invites residents of the area to come and enjoy eating it.

Through that activity, we can appreciate the warmth and enjoyment of communication with many of the residents of this area.



(2) Tonami Festival

Through the continuation of our maintenance and management of the forest, bamboo forest, ponds and marshes near the school, the students are able to take part in



workshops both at those places and here at the school. We invite residents of the area and tell them about good points of our local environment.

(3) The “Your Family’s Tree” activity.

Each of our students, together with their families, plant and raise one tree. We use organic fertilizer (manure) and pruning. The students can pick fruit from the tree. This provides an interesting topic for the family to talk about and a direct connection to nature.



(4) Maintenance of the environment and related activities.

In order to continue the activities (mentioned above) safely, we carry out safety measures. In addition, (i) school staff and members of the P.T.A. also do some of the environmental maintenance and management. (ii) In the school’s forest, we are growing “shiitake” mushrooms from cultures cells and maintaining the forest so that we may continue to do so. (iii) We are learning, mostly by trial and error, about the marshes and the bamboo forests.



We learn from the students’ presentations of summaries of the results of their activities. From these summary presentations, the teachers understand what the children have done and what they have learned by doing those activities.

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