



RANchi TIMES



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EDUCATION VITAL FOR CAMBODIAN KIDS



Credit: Kaoru Hashimoto

Angkor Wat, a symbol of Cambodia

Around the world, 58 million children of primary school age are not receiving any education, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) said in the 2015 Education for All Global Monitoring Report. In 2015, the United Nations adopted Sustainable Development Goals as “a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.” Goal 4 aims to resolve educational issues by “ensuring inclusive and quality education for all and promoting lifelong learning.”

UNESCO is playing a leading role in accomplishing this goal. In 2016, this organization carried out a project to support education systems in 16 villages of Siem Reap, Cambodia. According to UNESCO, these villages have

three main problems: many students drop out of school, unstable income and a shortage of human resources. High dropout rates are often the result of the parents’ lack of understanding about school education. The majority of residents are farmers and do not have enough skills to earn money from second jobs, and they lead lives of poverty in areas frequently affected by floods and droughts. Human resources are limited because of the mass killings committed by the Pol Pot regime in the 1970s.

Sixteen primary schools UNESCO built in these villages helped solve these problems by providing many courses for local residents. One course conducted for children who had dropped out of school enabled them to complete a six-year primary school curriculum within two years. Other courses

taught adults to read and write, master handicraft techniques, raise livestock and grow crops. UNESCO also put emphasis on training local teachers and, as a result, three schools now operate without any support by this organization.

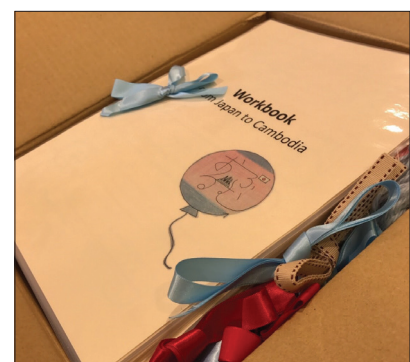
Ochanomizu University Senior High School students took part in an educational assistance project in Cambodia in 2017. C-Rights, a certified nonprofit organization, collaborated with them. In Thonat, a community where the project was conducted, many children have never been to primary or secondary school, or they dropped out before completing their education. Many beg or work as child laborers in casinos, factories or construction sites. The major cause of this situation is that parents do not understand the importance of school education and regard their children as breadwinners for their family, according to C-Rights.

The students made workbooks to help children in Thonat who cannot receive schooling. These workbooks contain arithmetic equations featuring examples involving banknotes, vocabulary in Khmer and English, and simple maps so they can acquire the minimum abilities needed in their daily lives. These workbooks were laminated to keep them in good condition even in Cambodia’s

humid climate and then sent to the children. The workbooks are now helping children learn important knowledge. “In the near future, we want to create an updated version of the workbook containing much more information, because we believe it is essential to continue to solve educational problems at a personal level. Though it may seem a little difficult at first, anyone can do it,” one of the students said.

As Malala Yousafzai said in her speech at the United Nations in 2013, “Education is the only solution” for various issues in today’s world. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations is calling for everyone “to do their part: governments, the private sector, civil society and people like you.” Leave no one behind.

By Nanaka Urano, Kaoru Hashimoto, Yuiko Mizuno



Credit: Nanaka Urano

Workbooks students made for children in Cambodia

Welcome to Bunkyo, the most livable ward in Tokyo



Credit: Yuka Inoue

The calligraphy club produced this work at a civic hall in Bunkyo Ward, Tokyo, in 2017

Do you know much about Bunkyo? Bunkyo is one of Tokyo’s 23 wards. It has a population of about 220,000 people and is a comfortable area for families and foreigners to live. Bunkyo has the third-lowest crime rate of Tokyo’s wards and the second-highest number of general hospitals and universities.

About 9,000 foreign people live in Bunkyo. The International Cultural Exchange Festival is held in a civic hall every February to promote mutual understanding between foreign and Japanese residents and create a welcoming community for everyone. The calligraphy club of Ochanomizu University Senior High School

performs at this festival.

For these and many other reasons, we believe Bunkyo is a nice place to live.

By Kana Endo, Eri Saito, Yuka Inoue, Airi Matsumoto

Lifestyle

Look stylish and help the environment with ethical fashion

Ethical fashion is clothing produced and distributed in ethical and sustainable practices. Supporting ethical fashion helps maximize the benefits delivered to local people and minimize the impact agricultural chemicals cause on the environment.

Starting a new brand called “ethico” and making blouses

and a movie to spread awareness of ethical fashion gave us more understanding about this concept. Ethico is a brand we created. We placed particular emphasis on making fashionable clothes using ethical materials such as pure cotton blouses made in Japan and handmade textiles made by people with intellectual disabilities. The brand targets young people.

One of the biggest challenges in the ethico project was making a promotion video. Our video was widely praised and described as being well-made, and we exhibited the video at

the EcoPro 2016 international exhibition on the environment and energy held in Tokyo. Our video impressed the audience and we received a lot of positive feedback.

Ethical fashion is eco-friendly and people-friendly. It starts from thinking about who made the clothes you buy, where these clothes were made and how. Clarifying the background of clothing is the first step to joining the ethical fashion movement.

By Mizuki Homma, Chiaki Maekawa, Momoka Yamamori, Shione Yokoyama



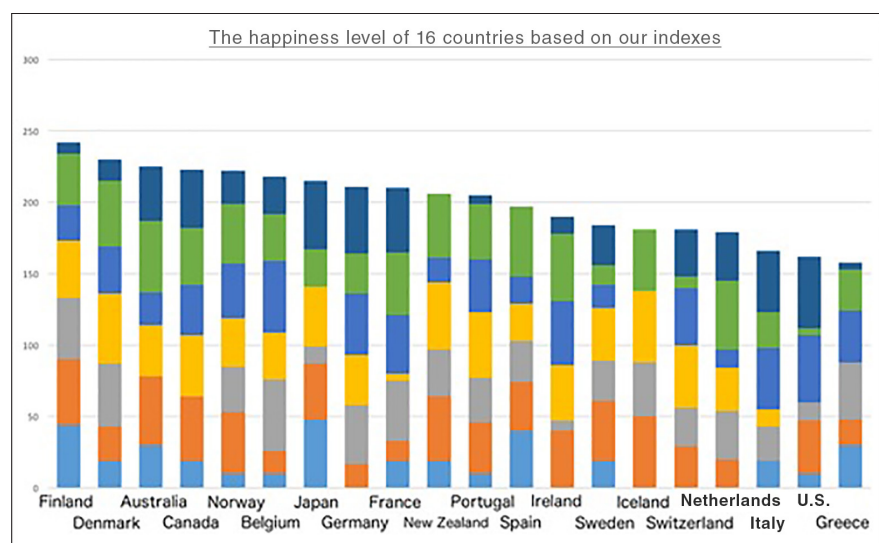
A part of the promotion movie we made.



An “ethico” blouse.

Credit: Momoka Yamamori

What makes you happy? The answer might be surprising



“What makes you happy?” If you were asked this question, what would you answer?

The World Happiness Report 2017 compiled by the University of British Columbia ranked the happiness level of 157 countries based on six factors: GDP per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy at birth, freedom to make life choices, generosity, and perceptions of corruption. Japan was ranked 53rd in this report.

Do you agree with this

finding? When it comes to freedom to make life choices and generosity in Japan, women’s participation in society and gender equality remain below where they should be. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, the rate of women’s regular employment in Japan is about 20 percent. This low employment rate for women contributed to Japan’s ranking.

However, a Chinese student studying in Japan said, “I envy Japanese women because they can choose whether they

work or not.” Can it be said with certainty that women’s participation in the workplace always equates to happiness?

These indexes have drawbacks because they are unfamiliar to many high school students and too abstract to easily comprehend.

Inspired by this, we made our original indexes for determining happiness levels. Our indexes are the number of national holidays, air pollution, availability of safe drinking water, global safety index, energy intake from food, enrollment rate in secondary education and GDP per capita. These indexes were considered and selected from the perspective of high school students based on our experiences. We sent a questionnaire to people in 15 countries, which enabled us to realize how “happiness” is grasped worldwide. It revealed that differences in culture lead to differences in how happiness is interpreted.

When calculated using our original indexes, Japan’s ranking moved up to seventh. This is

significantly higher than the result given by the University of British Columbia report. By changing perspectives or indexes, the level of “happiness” varies. From our research, we realized the difficulty in measuring “happiness.”

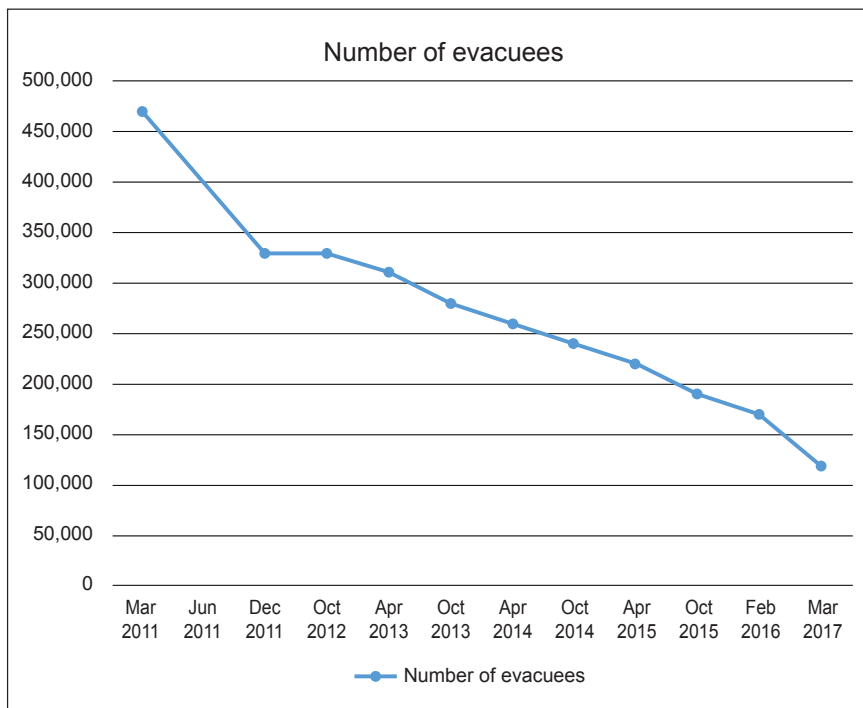
The process and analysis of our research is described on our website. Our achievements were highly evaluated and won second prize in a competition in which junior high and senior high school students choose a subject to research and create a website to display their work.

Please check out our website: <http://what-makes-youhappy.jp/index.e.html>

By Nanako Aoyagi, Natsumi Ii, Suzu Ikuma, Mizuki Inage, Yuki Ueda

Regions

Tohoku still needs support to recover from 2011 disaster



Credit: Satomi Tooyama

maximum seismic intensity of 7 and triggered a massive tsunami that devastated the Sanriku coast. As of December 8, 2017, 15,894 people were confirmed dead and 2,546 people remained missing. The number of evacuees has dropped from a peak of 470,000 to 119,000.

However, cleaning up debris and rubble and sending relief supplies are not the only assistance disaster victims need. A first step for volunteers is to know the actual situation and issues the victims face.

Students in Ochanomizu University Senior High School's Afghan Volunteer Club visited the Tohoku region in 2015. Local residents told them about the disaster, and the students visited a temporary shopping street. This visit taught the students about

the situation in the region and how reconstruction work was progressing.

Going to the affected areas is an excellent way to learn about the disaster, and books and television programs also are good sources of information. Buying goods made or grown in Tohoku also is a great way to support the region. To prevent people from forgetting about the disaster, it is important for each of us to continue supporting the Tohoku region.

By Saya Kaneko, Arisa Ito, Satomi Tooyama

Japanese people should not forget the disaster that happened almost seven years ago. Many people in the hard-hit Tohoku region still live in evacuation shelters. On March 11, 2011, the Great East Japan Earthquake struck off the Pacific coast of Tohoku. The earthquake had a

Clever plants, tasty treats highlights of Okinawa trip

Mangroves

On our trip to Okinawa, we had a precious experience of observing mangroves with our own eyes. Our guide told us mangroves are groups of plants growing in mud containing sulfur between a river and the sea in subtropical zones and tropical zones. We were surprised to learn mangroves do not mean a single type of plant. We realized the importance of learning about nature by seeing it firsthand.

Mangroves grow where seawater and freshwater mix. It is hard for most plants to live there because of the high salt density. Mangroves have evolved to adjust to this severe environment and escape the struggle for survival in the jungle.

We will introduce two peculiar features of mangroves. The first is the slim shape of their seeds. Thanks to this shape, the seed can pierce the unstable mud when it falls, and it then is able

to sprout. Not all seeds stick in the ground, though. According to our guide, some seeds are carried out to sea and start to germinate in other lands. As a consequence, mangroves prevent themselves from becoming extinct due to environmental changes.

The second feature is their ability to excrete salt by dropping their leaves. Mangroves filter seawater through their roots. Salt that does not get filtered out concentrates on the leaves, which hinders efficient photosynthesis. Mangroves drop those leaves to remove this salt.

The ability of mangroves to remove excess salt has attracted the attention of farmers. Mangroves can be a good solution for the problem of salinization, which makes a large impact on farming because most plants cannot live in places with a high salt density. In their book, Takehisa Nakamura and Hisao Nakasuga say in Thailand the mangrove forests have shrunk from 370,000 hectares to 200,000

hectares. The forests, which could help prevent salinization, are being transformed into timber and shrimp farms.

Taco rice

In Okinawa, we ate taco rice and found it delicious. Taco rice is a traditional dish of Okinawa and consists of spicy meat covering a pile of rice topped with cheese, tomatoes and lettuce. The origin of this dish is the Mexican taco. It can be said that the method of mixing these ingredients resembles Okinawa's traditional cooking method called chanpuru, which stirs various ingredients together. It is a symbol of Okinawa's unique food culture.

Local residents said fast food has recently become more popular among people in Okinawa, and fewer people eat traditional dishes. We came up with an idea of selling taco rice at the school festival to spread

the word about its deliciousness to people of various generations. We sold 500 servings of taco rice in two days and many customers said it was tasty.

By Emi Sen, Yuuka Niwa, Kaede Kokufuda, Yuka Negishi, Yuki Katayama, Saeko Osada, Minami Ohara, Yuka Toyoshima



Credit: Emi Sen

Credit: Minami Ohara

Left: Mangrove saplings.

Right: The taco rice we made for the school festival.

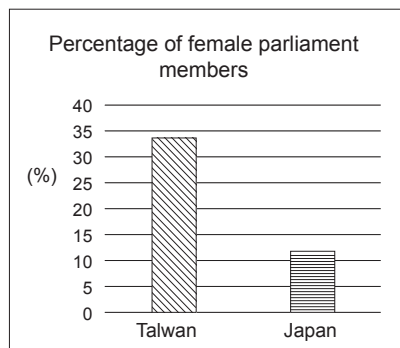
Social challenges

Learning from Taiwan on women's empowerment, infrastructure

Women's empowerment

Taiwan ranked sixth among the 14 Asia-Pacific countries included in the Mastercard Women's Entrepreneurial Index 2016, a survey gauging women's social advancement and economic power. Taiwan ranked higher than neighboring countries China, South Korea and Japan. It is evident that women in Taiwan are steadily increasing their participation in the society.

Thirty-three students from Ochanomizu University Senior High School visited Taiwan in October 2016 for an international exchange. During their stay, a female parliament member gave a lecture about women's political participation in Taiwan. Taiwan employs a quota system in which a woman replaces the



Credit: Rurika Morishita

male candidate with the fewest votes if no other woman gets elected in that electoral district. Statistically, the percentage of women lawmakers has increased. The adoption of this system represents Taiwan's active attitude toward further women's rights and gender equality.

Infrastructure upgrade

On March 24, 2017, Taiwan's government announced it would carry out a massive infrastructure

development plan that would cost about 3 trillion yen over eight years. This plan includes five big building programs, including development of a green energy system, upgrading the internet environment and improving water resources.

Why did the government decide to implement this plan at this time? The answer lies in the deterioration of infrastructure across Taiwan. Most of Taiwan's infrastructure systems were developed by the Japanese government during the colonial period, and they have recently become increasingly susceptible to problems caused by their age. Some Japanese people who have been to Taiwan will have experienced this when they flush the toilet.

However, this situation is also

true in Japan. Most of Japan's infrastructure was developed during the period of high economic growth, which means in about 10 to 20 years Japan will face similar difficulties as Taiwan does now.

With the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics approaching, the Japanese government should soon do something to maintain and upgrade the infrastructure because the threat to our lifelines is growing faster than we expected. It won't be long before infrastructure failure causes a catastrophe.

Japan can learn various things from Taiwan.

By Ayu Nozaki, Rurika Morishita, Miki Kanai, Kurumi Namai

Get a haircut and donate your hair to a worthy cause

Six students in our class participated in a hair donation campaign in which donated hair is used to make wigs for children aged under 18 whose hair has fallen out while they undergo cancer treatment. Some of the six students already had long hair; others grew their hair especially for the campaign.

The participants sent their



Credit: Moe Shimada

This 30-centimeter ruler shows how long the cut hair is.

hair to Japan Hair Donation & Charity (JHD&C), the nonprofit organization managing the campaign. The minimum length of hair needed to make a wig is 31centimeters (see photo accompanying this article). Anybody can donate their hair, even if it is colored, frizzy or has a permanent wave. A wig made with artificial hair looks unnatural when blown by the wind. On the other hand, a human hair wig is natural, even when the wind is strong. According to JHD&C, the organization had given wigs to 189 recipients as of September 13, 2017.

According to our research, most students at our school feel it is difficult to keep their hair longer than the minimum length needed for a wig. However, one student who participated in the campaign said she was excited when she imagined someone would be pleased to wear a wig made of her hair. In most cases,

when you have a haircut, the hair is thrown away. The campaign ensures this hair is used to make someone smile.

In an interview, one student told us, "When I read an article about these hair donations for the first time, I was impressed. I had never thought about donating my hair. What a nice idea! You can help people who need your hair, and it doesn't cost anything. After I decided to donate my hair, I found myself taking care of my hair more than before. It is like a 'donation relay' and I am looking forward to passing the baton, my hope, to the next runner."

This campaign has not been widely publicized. We hope more people will learn about the campaign and participate in it so more children can get wigs.

By Moe Shimada, Miwa Shimizu, Mina Someya, Haruka Takei

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