

**2018/04/14 -GUS Basic Class- 1<sup>st</sup> Year High School**

## **First Session Global Understanding Skills BASIC**

This was the first meeting of the BUS BASIC class, which was an unfamiliar area for the new first year students. GUS is part of our school's SGH, a system under which the Minister of Education, Culture, Science, Sport and Technology identifies schools and provides support for them to foster global leaders that will work at the international level. Our school was designated in 2015, so this will be the fourth cycle to be implemented. This course does not follow a particularly text book, but rather endeavors to foster interest in social problems and develop ways of looking at the world that are directly linked to problem solving. With a spotlight on environmental problems, we aim to develop global citizens that will take on the challenges of creating a sustainable society for the future. Deepening our various interests, we will learn from countries that have taken the lead in environmental sustainability. Our efforts are not limited to international education. Our program will work to strengthen broad-based skills in communication and problem solving. For those who desire to participate, there will be an opportunity to conduct domestic fieldwork for first year students. In the second and third years, there are elective courses and international fieldwork. Through these, we will deepen our understanding, with the objective of developing the capacity to make recommendations based on our problem-solving skills. After hearing the explanation provided by Sakashita Jun'ichi, who oversees the program, the course teachers gave introductions to the program's work.

Toda Mitsunobu: We find that global issues are surprisingly close to our daily lives, so I hope that this will be a chance to gradually change our lives.

Kasuga Haruhiko: What is global? I would like everyone to become confident in stating your own opinion, based on respect for different opinions and backgrounds. We will be informed by the wide range of personal experience in our student body, with students from all over the country and returning from as many as 30 countries.

Takuma Tetsuji: I would like everyone to share our various local values, working to realize and understand the global issues that exist near to us.



At the end, Toda-sensei provided information about the start of the World English course. This is another part of the GUS program. The course is available to English I Class students as well, as an effort to enhance our communication tools through English education. Those interested are encouraged to apply!

**2018/04/24 -GUS Basic Class- 1<sup>st</sup> Year High School**

### **Group Work (Global Issues at Hand)**

Today's work was done in small groups. The teams were formed in order to provide the most internal diversity in terms of area of origin, gender and other characteristics. On the table the students found large pieces of construction paper, color pens and post-it notes. Students identified issues in the areas they grew up in, dividing them into large issues and small issues, writing them onto different color post-its. These were stuck onto the construction paper. From here, the students engaged in discussion, dividing the issues into different categories. The issues were further categorized as global issues (those problems that cannot be solved unless they are addressed at the global level), with students paying attention to ways of presentation that would make it easy for the observer to understand their thinking. The results reflected the unique personalities of the members. All the groups were active and lively in their discussions. The students enjoyed considering and sharing issues from their own local areas. The global issues identified in this exercise will be further developed in the following learning activities.



**2018/04/28 -GUS Basic Class- 1<sup>st</sup> Year High School**

### **From MDGS to SDGS**

Today we had a lecture from Mr Toda in the Hall entitled “From MDGS to SDGS” In 2000, the United Nations held an international meeting to discuss world peace and safety, showing a concrete vision for sustainability objectives through eight quantifiable and time- bound targets to be achieved by 2015. These were the Millennium Development Goals, a global plan of action to address the central issues

faced by the international community. It is believed that globalization should bring prosperity to all, and opportunity should be available to all, not just those holding power. In reality, the eight targets, including poverty and reproduction, education and disease, were all quantifiable, and brought about other benefits that could not be measured. However, it became apparent that the many benefits of the MDGS still were unevenly distributed, and many of the poorest were being left behind. This created large gaps. Deep rooted gender inequality, extreme poverty, poverty resulting from climate change and environmental degradation, war refugees and other issues remain, despite the implementation and success of MDGS. This issues became part of a new global development agenda consisting of 17 goals and 169 targets, known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGS). These goals envision a universal sustainability for all, including both developed and developing countries.

For example, we have the recent irregularity in climate. I would like you all to begin to realize that in many daily aspects of your life there are global issues involved. Furthermore, there is not just one solution to the problems that we face in the world. If you discuss things that you can do in your daily life, can you find a way to create a sustainable society? You all can be influential. Today's theme of 'sustainable' is a keyword for our lives in these times. It is time to rethink the prosperity that we have at hand.

Toda-sensei's last message remains in our hearts: "Your happiness cannot be built upon the sacrifice of others."



source: World Bank  
[\(https://blogs.worldbank.org/\)](https://blogs.worldbank.org/)

## 2018/05/12 -GUS Basic Lecture- 1<sup>st</sup> Year High School

### Thinking about living in the Glocal Age

Today we invited Ohashi Yusuke, of Doshisha University's Graduate School of Global Studies, to give



us a lecture on “Thinking about living in the Glocal Age”. Ohashi-sensei has been directly involved in work on the SDGS that were introduced in the last session by Toda-sensei. At the start of the talk, he stated that today was not just a chance to listen to what he had to say, but rather to consider what each of us thinks about the topic. At that time, he was working primarily in the Philippines together with the government on humanitarian aid response to natural disasters. His research has looked at the concrete issues of constructing wells for water consumption, as well as developing ways to spread local knowledge and experience into communities. There are many extremist groups operating in the Philippines, but these should also be considered upon the backdrop of widening resource allocation inequalities, environmental destruction, as well as resulting disasters, poverty and social exclusion. The environment is an important context for all of these issues. The Philippines and surrounding areas are being affected by continuing conflict, environmental degradation and climate change and resulting natural disasters, all of which have intensified over recent years. The most vulnerable victims are the poor agricultural and fishing communities. There are many people forced to commit crimes because of the lack of alternatives in the oppressive inequality of society.

Ohashi-sensei introduced the key word “glocal” for today’s work. The shift from global to glocal involves flexibility. This means being aware of one’s own thoughts, searching for information that is closest to the facts of reality, and being open to change. His talk gave us many hints in this regard. We thank Ohashi-sensei for taking the time out of his busy domestic and international schedule to provide us with a valuable talk.

(from materials provided by Ohashi-sensei)



**2018/06/02 -GUS Basic Class- 1<sup>st</sup> Year High School**

## **Uruguay President’s Speech at the Rio+20 Global Summit**

We have learned about and considered many global issues. Today, an individual who made a

remarkable speech at an international environmental meeting several years ago was introduced. Video of that speech was shown to get us to think about that persons questions and requests regarding environmental problems. In 2012 meeting, heads of state came together to discuss global environmental problems, and at that time, not many people took notice of the speech given by the president of the small country of Uruguay. However, the words of President Mujica resounded within the hearts of the people of the world, and the response resulted in a Nobel Peace Prize nomination for him. President Mujica has lived an extremely modest life, donating as much as 90% of his income.

He is thus known as the world's poorest president. He tells his story like this: "I am known as the world's poorest president, but I myself don't feel poor. The wise people of the past have said that poor people are not those that possession only a few belongings, but rather those that have unlimited desire and are not satisfied no matter how many things they have."

In his humble way, he also posed sharp questions:

"The topic of this meeting's discussions was sustainable development and the alleviation of world poverty. What is our real intent? Is it to copy the rich countries' model of consumption? Where do the resources to bring the Western level of consumption to the world's 7-8 billion people on this planet?"

"The difficult challenge we face is not just the environment, but clearly includes the political problem that we have lost the ability to control consumption in society."

"Is it possible to have a discussion about how to co-exist peacefully in this society that is based upon the fierce competition of capitalism?"

"Are we able to control globalism? Or does it control us?"

"We must remember that if we are going to fight for our environment, human happiness is the most important element of that environment. We must change our lifestyles."

There were many other words in his speech that have moved us to new insights on how to consider our own position in environmental problems. The students divided into groups after watching the video. Students recorded point that they could relate to on blue post-its and points that they could not relate to on red post-its. They also discussed what concrete efforts could be made and what difficulties they might experience. These were coded with different color pens to wrap-up the discussion.



2018/06/09 -GUS Basic Class- 1<sup>st</sup> Year High School

## Reflection: Speech of Uruguay President at Rio+20

Last week we watched the Rio+20 Speech by the Uruguayan President; this week we divided up into groups to share opinions about which parts we could relate to. Many of the students felt they could relate to what Mr Mujica said, but today we worked to deepen our understanding of what was being proposed. This also helped us to look inward at our own society.

Our society is dependent upon petroleum, even though we know it is drying up. And in this arrogant consumption society we continue to produce ‘things’ and discard them. So what needs to be done in order to implement the proposals made by Mr Mujica? We broke this question up into five areas for discussion:

- Life around us (individual and family level)
- City and prefecture level
- National level
- Global level

The students engaged in a lively exchange of ideas. The areas that seemed particularly difficult were further discussed in an effort to identify the core of the associated challenges. As we move into summer vacation, we hope that the students take the opportunity to reflect upon this semester’s learning and consider the rampant consumption of things and energy that makes up our daily life. What consideration do we need to make for the environment, and how does that link to our happiness? There is much to think about going forward.

After finishing his term as president, Mr Mujica has used his own funds to build schools, in an effort to improve the education of children in his own country. This education teaches children not to struggle over material items, but rather to appreciate their value. He is planting the seeds of thought for the future. We hope that the seeds planted among our students and this international high school will sprout and develop in the future.





**2018/06/16 07/03 -GUS Basic Class- 1<sup>st</sup> Year High School**

## **Environmental Problems Overview – Moving toward Energy Issues**

We had a two-part lecture on “Environmental Problems Overview” from Mr Junichi Sakashita. Environmental problems are not recent issues. The thinktank The Rome Club presented “The Limits of Growth” in 1972, predicting that in 100 years human growth would reach its limits. Buckminster Fuller wrote *Spaceship Earth* in 1963, explaining with the metaphor of a space ship, that “the earth is a complex machine but we don’t have the user’s manual. The control is left to us.” He warned us that, “We cannot be so stupid as to continue to use up our stored energy in an instant.”

Using NKH archives, we further deepened our understanding of the environmental problems that result when we prioritize economic growth. For example, the Suruga Bay pollution led fishermen to demand accountability from the private firms responsible, and the finding that Shinjuku residents had abnormal levels of lead in their blood.

In the second lecture, we deepened our understanding of about nine important issues that are defined in the Ministry of Environment White Paper. The lecture demonstrated how these issues are not isolated, but are related to each other. In particular, we learned much about the connections with energy. The environmental problems that are caused by burning of petroleum fuels are well known, including climate change and acid rain. Critical issues for developed countries include saving energy and developing new sources of energy that do not have negative environmental impacts. In addition to the energy problems, we also must think more about the disposal of waste products. Our goal is to understand the problems that surround us and make a contribution their solution.

At the end of the class, the summer work themes were given to the first year high school students, as they move into the first summer vacation. Mr Takuma provided the explanation – no matter where you are, be sure to research the the environmental measures that are being taken at regional or national level. Mr Takuma is also a teacher of the Chinese language and presented an idea about researching restriction on automobiles in China. With a population of 1.3 billion people, if everyone decides that they need their own personal automobile this will create a massive environmental problem. The various policies that exist to control the number of people that own their own car were very interesting. China is also trying to be a leader in the development of electric cars, but the technology is still being developed with preferential policies and they will continue to think about how to make sure that the technology is adopted widely in society. We hope that it is a summer of environmental interest and discovery for the students.



**2018/06/23 -GUS Basic Lecture- 1<sup>st</sup> Year High School**

## **Report on Europe Study Tour – High School Year 3**

Today's lecturers were the High School Year 3 students, who presented on their participation in the European Study Tour and shared what they felt about what they have been learning in GUS.

The presenters seemed to be a little nervous at first, but when they started to speak the experiences and learning from their study trip come to life and it became a very lively session.

The students go to know a range of places: from the small German villages of Breitnau and Freiamt and the Danish island of Funen to the large cities of Freiburg, Hamburg and Copenhagen. At each different scale, the local authorities are strengthening their approaches to environmental problems, including private sector firms as well. From their observations and interactions with local people they were able to gain much first-hand insight. The students produced their own informational materials ahead of time, but there were many things that they would not understand until they actually arrived there. Experiencing the issues directly leads to the first realizations of the extent of the issues. It was particularly impressive to see how at the level of individual citizen, people were thinking deeply about the environmental problems they face. And this leads directly to actions, such as for example investments, which give meaning and fulfillment to their lives.

The students were likely to feel that considering environmental problems in Japan was a very serious matter, but they soon learned that it was not all the weight of responsibility. The people that they met were very friendly, and we felt that consideration of other people was the first big step towards larger first investments in solutions to environmental problems. People are creating convenient systems that bring more meaning to their lives through choosing environmentally friendly options. Early education is key to developing this state of mind and personal outlook.

Through this training, environmental issues in Japan became much clearer. In the GUS activities we have been able to improve our observational skills and sharpen our communication skills in presentations. The students are ready to continue to work on these for the future.





2018/04/13 -GUS I Class-2<sup>nd</sup> Year High School

## First Session Global Understanding Skills 1

“The rule of this class is to think positively. Always applaud other people’s opinions!” This was the first message from Yamamoto-sensei. As part of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, Sport and Technology’s designation of our school as a SGH, 38 students were divided into two class and registered. Last year first year high school students registered in GUS BASIC, moving to the second year GUS I elective. Yamamoto Shinji and Sato Haruko are the teachers in charge.

First off, the group formed a large circle at did Good and New as a way of getting to know each other. Each person introduced some good thing that happened, or some new thing they did within the past 24 hours. We heard many things about the students’ new school lives.

Next, we randomly formed groups and played an inference and discussion game. In the game, teams competed for total points, working on group dynamics and a framework for getting to know about the unique characteristics of each individual. By this point, students had gotten over their feelings of nervousness. The results of the analysis will be introduced next week.

In this course, we will take environmental problems as a key word. Over the course of the year, we will have lectures from professionals, expanding our perspectives and gaining knowhow. We will be looking to develop our thinking about how we can act in different settings and how we can realize the ideas we form. We are planning international fieldwork to learn from environmental leader countries. This work, which will focus on Germany, will be open to those who desire to participate.

[From the teachers]

Sato-sensei: I am looking forward to working on this course with the other teachers to deepen our curiosity about unknown worlds.

Yamamoto-sensei: Our class will develop creativity based in experience. Let’s make this a class where we dare to say “I don’t know”, respect each other and make the mistakes that we can only make now.



2018/04/20 -GUS I Class-2<sup>nd</sup> Year High School

## Group Dynamics

In the first class, we took a large step in breaking the ice by playing a game to get to know each other and work in groups to understand each other's unique characteristics. In this week's class we validated the results of the game. Students reflected on their words and deeds, filling in a worksheet and then discussing the causes of the game's outcomes.

- what role did each person play?
- did anyone find that they had different opinions than other people?
- why did some people only offer onions three times when they were allowed four times?
- why did some people stop after achieving a high score on the second time?
- what enabled the big come-back at the end?

As a result of the validation, we learned what is necessary for making decisions together, as well as seeing what we can learn about each other from our short-comings. This showed the importance of fully expressing and making use of our unique characteristics in order to achieve results.

In the second hour, we played a different game. In this game, Hanako makes a map to get to the dentist in a neighboring area. The team members all search for information in order to recreate the map within an allocated period of time. There is unnecessary information contained within this. So, did Hanako make it to the dentist? When the results were compared, students could see that some areas were the same, while others were wildly different and incorrect. The game demonstrated the importance of working together as a group after information has been collected in order to achieve the objective. Through the exercise of recreating the map, the students saw the value, and difficulty, of group collaboration.



2018/04/27 -GUS I Class-2<sup>nd</sup> Year High School

## Reflection on the documentary “Tomorrow”

In the first year GUS BASIC course we watched the documentary film “Tomorrow”. What sorts of impressions remain? In 2012, the influential science journal *Nature* published an article in which 21 scientists asserted that if we do not change our current lifestyles civilization will collapse. In this documentary, the French actress Melanie Roland became aware of this fact and decided that she must do something for own, as well as other children of the world. Looking for alternatives to respond to the article’s challenge, she sets out on a journal to meet people who have already started to change their lives.

There were many interesting reflections:

“While many other documentaries are dark and heavy, this one had a bright proposal.”

“I was drawn into the director Melanie’s journey to meet a wide range of actors, from charismatic leaders to normal people, all of whom are trying to change the world.”

“It was not a proposal of how to save the world, but rather action that is taken nearby in order to bring a happy future.”

“There was much information about people who are acting in order to achieve the goal of creating a sustainable society.”

“Rather than shocking you with a heavy reality, the film asked us questions.”

We decided to watch the documentary again, in hopes of further deepening our understanding of its messages. Together with last week’s game, this documentary shows the common point about the importance of gathering many diverse opinions as we move from a blank sheet of paper to realization of a goal.



©MOVEMOVIE - FRANCE 2 CINÉMA - MELY PRODUCTIONS



2018/05/15 -GUS I Class-2<sup>nd</sup> Year High School

## Reflections on “Tomorrow: In search of permanent life”

After re-watching the documentary film “Tomorrow”, the students divided into groups for discussion. The main character felt the danger that her children face in the future, and set off in search of a brighter future. In order to identify things that each individual can do, she travelled around to gain insight and inspiration from people who are actually involved in efforts to change their worlds. This was the general story of the documentary, which was presented not as a dark and heavy message of future destruction, but rather as a flow of ideas and music. This leaves the viewer with the feeling, so now what can I do to respond to these issues. The documentary was is thus a motivational experience.

We cannot continue the current trends of high production and high consumption. This form of consumption is not sustainable. Having realized this, the characters set out to use less resources and be more self-sufficient. The commitment and successes they found left a large impression on us. Their message seemed to be, we cannot directly change the world, but we can certainly change the small part of the world that surrounds us. These activities are all built upon personal connections and efforts, but must also be enjoyable. The changes they work on are themselves sources of happiness for the people involved. That is what they mean by a bright tomorrow. The final message was, “Tomorrow, let’s all join together!”.

The blank construction papers were quickly filled with the students reflections and ideas, and marked with many post-it notes. The contents of these notes included freedom of thinking, bold new measures, community building, the importance of democracy, fully inclusive politics, reconsideration of local monetary flows, economic destruction resulting from the convergence of big business and government. A very diverse range of ideas!

Next week we will summarize this work.



**2018/05/22 -GUS I Class-2<sup>nd</sup> Year High School**

## **Uruguay President's Speech at the Rio+20 Global Summit**

Today we started with a wrap-up of last week's work. After presentations on the main points of the documentary and students' reflections, there was a general discussion. The group deepened its awareness of the main messages, based on the rich body of keywords generated by the group. These included diversity, independence, large scale to small scale, civic leadership, education and other important concepts.

In the next hour, we listened to a speech that threw out new questions about environmental problems. In the 2012 meeting of heads of state to discuss the future of the earth's environment, not many people had paid attention to the speech of the president of the small country of Uruguay. However, the words of President Mujica resounded within the hearts of the people of the world, and the response resulted in a Nobel Peace Prize nomination for him.

President Mujica has lived an extremely modest life, donating as much as 90% of his income. He is thus known as the world's poorest president. He tells his story like this: "I am known as the world's poorest president, but I myself don't feel poor. The wise people of the past have said that poor people are not those that possession only a few belongings, but rather those that have unlimited desire and are not satisfied no matter how many things they have."

In his humility, he also posed sharp questions:

"The topic of this meeting's discussions was sustainable development and the alleviation of world poverty. What is our real intent? Is it to copy the rich countries' model of consumption? Where do the resources to bring the Western level of consumption to the world's 7-8 billion people on this planet?"

"The difficult challenge we face is not just the environment, but clearly includes the political problem that we have lost the ability to control consumption in society."

"Is it possible to have a discussion about how to co-exist peacefully in this society that is based upon the fierce competition of capitalism?"

"Are we able to control globalism? Or does it control us?"

"We must remember that if we are going to fight for our environment, human happiness is the most

important element of that environment. We must change our lifestyles.”

There were many other words in his speech that have moved us to new insights on how to consider our own position in environmental problems.



**2018/05/29 -GUS I Class-2<sup>nd</sup> Year High School**

## **Rio+20 Earth Summit Speech by Uruguay President: Reflections**

We reflected on the speech by the Uruguayan President Jose Mujica.

First we wrote up the words and assertions that left a large impressions on us, and then divided into groups to share opinions. The discussions led us to draw out three key words that reflected the most important messages from the speech. A representative from each group presented the key words and their justification.

Many of the key words were shared across the groups, including “happiness”, “politics”, “globalism”, “development”, “effort”, “friends”, “thinking about life” and “consumption society”.

Mr Mujica stated that, “We must remember that if we are going to fight for the environment, the happiness of humanity must be the central part of that environment.” We heard the opinion that feelings of happiness may be different between people. Mr Mujica issued the challenge to think about a sustainable development that does not just take the replication of Western models as a strategy towards happiness. Many students expressed agreement with this idea. At the same time, the students were reminded of how difficult it is to achieve cooperation on environmental issues in our age of globalization and social diversity.

Mr Mujica’s memorable words have planted seeds around the world. We felt that one day, with the caring hands of the young people, these plants will sprout and grow.





**2018/06/05 -GUS I Class-2<sup>nd</sup> Year High School**

## **Virtual Water**

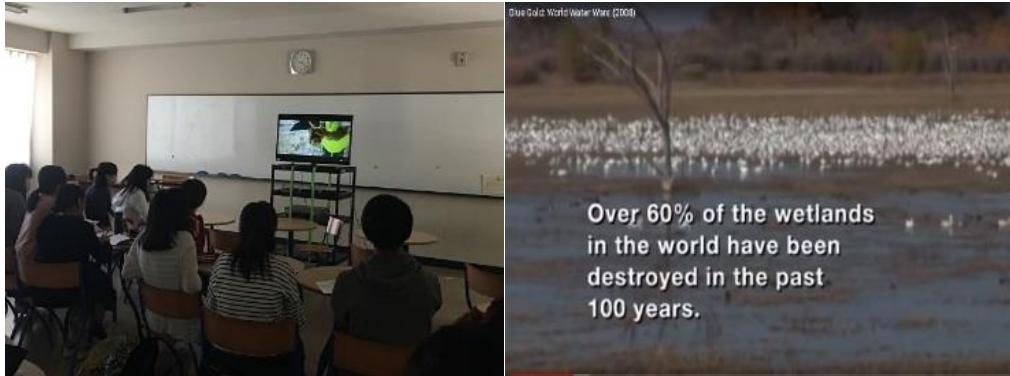
In today's class, we deepened our understanding of the concept 'virtual water'. Water is a central part of our understanding of environmental problems. The planet Earth has a rich abundance of water, with 80% of its surface made up of ocean. Water that we can drink comprises only 3% of that, and we are actually facing serious drought conditions. "Virtual water" is not the water that we actual use each day, but is composed of the water consumed by the food we subsist on; water that we cannot see, but that we consume nonetheless. If we look at the Ministry of Environment webpage, we can find out how much water we actually consume each day.

3,000 PET bottles of water are required for every gyudon we eat.

We need 2,000 PET bottles for one hamburger.

Students could not contain their surprise when they ran a simulation to calculate how much water their meals from the previous day consumed. They believed that as residents of Japan, we had access to vast resources of fresh water. One never hears of water shortages. When we think about Virtual Water, we are reminded that we consume a huge amount of water in other countries where a large amount of our food is produced. If Japan was to produce all the food it needed domestically, it is unlikely that the water resources would remain abundant. It is ironic that Japan faces water problems because of the foreign food that the country is dependent on. We realized that world water problems are Japan's water problems too.

Next, we watched the first half of the documentary film “Blue Gold: Water Wars”, which takes up the issue of water wars in the world. This documentary is based on the 2003 book “Battle for Water”, by Maude Barlow and Tony Clarke, which argued that in the 21st century humans will make war over water. As fresh water is increasingly scarce at the global level, the precious water that should be the shared resource of all people is being controlled by a small number of large corporations. The story is a chilling report on the world water crisis.



**2018/06/12 -GUS I Class-2<sup>nd</sup> Year High School**

## **Blue Gold: World Water Wars**

Today we watched the second half of the documentary Blue Gold, which deals with water wars. The water wars that this documentary talks about are no longer something from the world of science fiction, and the director Sam Bozzo is calling out to people to deepen their understanding of water issues, even if only a little. If water disappears, people and other animals will not survive. The water crisis is a question of whether or not we can live.

Well-known soft drink makers are featured in the film. The huge companies that produce these drinks search for private rights over the water that should be shared common resources. These firms have turned their backs on the problems of water consumption, pollution and shortage in order to secure the water that they will turn into their own profits. There are lakes that once held enormous stores of fresh water, but have now been consumed and depleted to the point of drying up. The film introduces the people that stand up to these firms in order to protect our common rights over this shared resource. Starting with just 70 dollars these students and citizens fought the firms in court, and gradually extended their activities out into local regions and schools. Currently Project Ryan supports the youth that dig wells. In the same way, a single boy has taken his boycott of bottle water to schools, business and local areas by writing letters to politicians. Watching this story of how even a single voice can have great impact if it is translated into action made us think about our own engagement with environmental problems around our classroom.

These Water Wars are our fight as well.



2018/06/19 -GUS I Class-2<sup>nd</sup> Year High School

## Reflections on Water

We cannot see virtual water, but we learned about how much we consume in our lives. We found out that much of the virtual water we consume comes from abroad. Water, which is supposed to be a shared public good, is commercialized and controlled by big capital. These remind us that we face a serious water crisis.

We divided into two groups and considered the water issues we learned about from two different perspectives. The students suggested key words, issues and possible solutions, and then held group presentations about the discussions. Afterwards we shared our doubts and feelings about the material.

Many students felt that the water they were buying in PET bottles needed to be reconsidered. Water is necessary for life and should be a shared resource, but it has become commercialized. This raised doubts among the students, as they realized that what they thought was an abundant resource was in fact not so. Water has become a commercial product because of the control of big capital. It is sold as if it were just another product with a market value. Unable to purchase expensive water, the poor must live with unhygienic water. When a natural disaster strikes, they cannot use clean water and may result in loss of life. This is the tragic and absurd reality of commercialized water.

Environmental problems are not only for certain people with high awareness of the issues. The students are learning that environmental awareness should be a matter for every individual in society, and this contributes to the students' thinking about their role in environmental solutions.







2018/06/26 -GUS I Class-2<sup>nd</sup> Year High School

## Reflecting on the semester – Choosing GUS

This was a semester of drilling down into the detail of environmental problems using group work and reports, to uncover the many facets that our issues cover. After a test to review the material that we learned, there was time for each student to present their reflections on the material. The students' sincerity was clear in each presentation and we were reminded of how wonderful a class it is. Some of the details are introduced below:

- We got to know the different aspects of many environmental issues that we do not come into direct contact with in daily life. We also got to know the people that are involved in these issues. This was a very stimulating experience and helped to broaden our perspectives.
- Thinking about the environmental issues that we see in our daily lives, it was a chance to be critical of what we do and to start to change our behavior.
- It was wonderful to have a chance to talk and exchange ideas with people with different international backgrounds. This helped us think about the environmental issues that we only have a general understanding of each week.
- More than anything, it was 'meaningful' to me. When we see people engaging with environmental problems with a smile on their face, it makes us think about what type of ideals we want to strive for in the future.
- Working on a wide range of environmental issues and writing reports about what we learned, it showed us how when we really engage with the issues, we find that they are all linked in their root causes.
- I only knew about environmental issues in a very superficial way. But we learned how to look deeper to see how politics and people's ideas about happiness are deeply related to them.

The reports, presentations and discussions were the unique outputs of the class, and we heard many

opinions expressing how the class had become increasingly fun. We look forward to the discoveries and growth of each and every child. Next semester we will invite many individuals who work in international settings. This will make an even more stimulating class!



**2018/04/17-GUS II Class-3<sup>rd</sup> Year High School**

## **First Session Global Understanding Skills II**

This class follows on from the GUS I course. We will continue our learning from the Germany experience, moving on to the challenge of producing our own messages based on the applied ideas we have developed. This year's course will be led again by Mr. Junichi Sakashita and Ms. Kaori Chosa.

Today we had presentations from the students who participated in the March Europe fieldwork training. Many things that we studied in the initial period of research only became fully understood after experiencing them directly in the local settings. The teachers gave their opinions of the

students' excellent performance during the trip including not only their proactive participation but also their positive attitude towards dealing with problems along the way.

It is necessary to make sure that all of the information is shared among both those who went and those who did not go on the training. Memos and pictures were saved in a folder and shared among students and teachers. Today's activities also included a further step of processing information from the Europe training. Next week we will present the results of this week's work will be presented to other invited teachers.



Freiburg



Vauban area



Breitnau village



Freiamt village



Hamburg



Copenhagen

**2018/05/01-GUS II Class-3<sup>rd</sup> Year High School**

## **Summary and Report on Field Work to Germany and Denmark**

Today was an opportunity for presentations in the big group. The students who participated in the trip shared their information and learning by group. The objective is for each study to develop their own opinions, as well as deepening their understanding. We invited Kawai Principal and other teachers to join the presentation session.

The common point in the Freiamt and Breitnau village ecological approaches is the fact that it is not the government, but rather the local institutions and people that drive their movement. Their plans give consideration to the next generation, as they developed a system to make full use of the valuable



resources. In addition to being surprised at the way these systems are being developed, we were also impressed with how open and friendly all the involved people are. Even though they are both small villages, there are no signs of the local decline that is commonly found. They are beautiful places, very inviting spaces to live in. From there we moved to Freiburg, which is a mid-sized city that has a highly developed public transportation system. Not only are cars excluded from the central area, but the system is designed to promote the use of public transport and bicycles. In addition to the transportation system, supermarkets have also constructed efficient reuse and repository systems, as well as waste separation protocol. Our impression was that the local people are very pleased with these systems, which are widely implemented.

The Hotel Victoria combines an energy self-sufficiency approach and refined accommodation. In Denmark, Lolland Island implements a produce-locally/consume-locally policy for food and energy. The presentations also reported on visits to the Danish Vestas Corporation which works on the potential for recycled energy, and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and their marine wind power generation activities. There were also visits to the Osaka consulate in Hamburg and the ski facilities located on the slope of a Copenhagen waste processing plant. Two-hours of presentation was certainly not enough for all the detail and insights from these trips.

Each student was able to clearly articulate their own opinion. The experiences are being integrated into a final research book, which will soon come to completion.



**2018/05/15-GUS II Class-3<sup>rd</sup> Year High School**

### **Recommendations for improving the school's "environment"**

In this class we have been increasingly concrete and detailed in our studies of environmental problems and policies. Starting this April, we will not only be deepening our understanding, but moving to a position of developing and expressing our own ideas for application in society. The first engagement will focus on the environment problems at-hand, around us in school. Our frame of reference will be expanded to be a bit broader, to match the scale of local institutions.

To start off, we discussed in groups the environmental problems found at our school, moving forward with generating ideas for intervention. We divided the issues into three large categories, including



waste, energy and urban development/transportation policy. For all of the issues raised, we began theoretical analysis and initiated discussions about how these problems could be addressed. Groups focusing on school waste problems were popular, perhaps as a result of our previous studies and trainings.

The next step was for each student to do an individual evaluation of the issues and responses that were proposed. Do we have the right perspective? The discussions were guided by a visual aid created to show the comparative scale of expected results and the difficulty of achieving them. At the end, the groups discussed the information covered, and each group chose one issue to focus on. Some of the important considerations include whether or not we will be able to get people in the school to cooperate, how to generate interest in participating and how to cover costs of activities.



**2018/05/22,29-GUS II Class-3<sup>rd</sup> Year High School**

## **Recommendations to the school**

In this class we began to bring together the recommendations for the school. We also began group-based research to follow up on various environmental issues coming out of the Germany fieldwork, including the measures taken at the city and institutional levels.

While there was a lively proliferation of student ideas in today's group work, we decided to focus on those options that could be implemented right away. The agreed approach was to implement right away, and then consider other issues that may arise and move on to refining the implementation approach.

[Recommendations that are currently on the table for presentation to the school]

- promote recycling of plastic bottle caps and reduce waste through class competition
- raise awareness of energy consumption by making a display of school energy use and setting targets, for display on the school public boards
- create a school environmental committee to sustain efforts
- change cafeteria to refill containers

[Areas being researched for new ideas about environmental measures]

- Kyotanabe City
- Kyoto City
- Hamburg
- Copenhagen
- OECD

Next week we will invite a lecturer from the OECD Tokyo Center, who works on the frontier of policy recommendation. We will hear about concrete measures being implemented, and students are encouraged to do some background research in preparations for the lecture.



**2018/06/05-GUS II Lecture-3<sup>rd</sup> Year High School**

## **OECD as case of international social movement for low-carbon society**

Today, the vice-director of the OECD Tokyo Center, Mr. Atsushi Higuchi, visited us to give a lecture. He works on the frontier of policy recommendation in several countries. In his talk we learned of his experience in connecting countries to work together on international environmental problems, gaining insight into issues that are not normally accessible. Higuchi-san's talk was informative and enjoyable, giving us a clear and direct view on international negotiations.

- What is the OECD? Established in 1961. 37 member countries, including Lithuania and Colombia, which have recently joined. As an international think tank, the organization collects a huge amount of data, and is involved in many critical areas of policy, including security, military and others.

Of particular note was the fact that all policy implementation depends upon someone that sets the direction of policy. Policy direction includes the public sentiment, mass media, business, politicians, officials and international relations. There is a constant consideration of who benefits and who stands

to lose? The “who” in this consideration is extremely variable. In this case, the logic of facts will demonstrate its influence. With its enormous stock of data, the OECD is able to make a large contribution to this logic.

The 2019 G20 Meeting will be held in Japan. This is a large opportunity to demonstrate international leadership, and the OECD will participate as an important strategic partner. It is said that “quality infrastructure” will be a keyword of this coming G20. This topic is the result of the OECD negotiation and facilitation between the G20 and Japan resulting in agreement. This topic is closely related to the environmental problems we are addressing in our class, and has raised our interest in next year’s G20 meeting.

The OECD is involved in a wide range of issues that need to be solved. How is the direction of policy set, and what drives implementation? These questions provide important hints into what recommendations we can make for society. Higuchi-san, thank you very much for your talk today.



**2018/06/12-GUS II Class-3<sup>rd</sup> Year High School**

## **School Environment Improvement Proposal Decision**

Each group shared opinions about improving the environmental conditions of the school. The decision was to propose a plan for a system to refill the disposable food containers in the cafeteria. Specifically, students will bring their own plates for foods like french fries and collecting a deposit for other containers. There are still many issues to work on, and different issue groups presented their ideas. Everyone had a chance to make a proposal.

The groups were further divided into sub-groups to take care of the various tasks: oversight executive, marketing division to collect information needed to convince the school, a promotion division to

consider how to mobilize students, and a public relations division. It was a stiff competition for oversight executive, with seven candidates coming forward.

The next steps are to create a process for making the proposals more concrete and more practical. We will also be thinking of a motto for the project.



**2018/06/19-GUS II Class-3<sup>rd</sup> Year High School**

## **Various Environmental Policies**

We continued group work to research the environmental policies of cities and institutions that will be added to our soon-to-be-finished Research Book. Groups presented on their work. After sharing our ideas, the students compared the different cities through a worksheet.

- City planning (urban design, transportation policies)
- Waste (reduction of trash, recycling)
- Energy (energy production, saving energy)
- Others
- Questions

In nearby Kyotanabe City, the motto “Citizens Protecting the City’s Environment’ has been the catalyst for the Kyotanabe Citizens Environment Partnership, which is a collaboration between citizens, students, business people and the local government. In Kyoto, “Do You Kyoto” is the catch phrase used to develop a range of things that are good for the environment. There is a surprisingly diverse number of people and organizations involved in this collaborative movement, but we realized that the question of how to implement these in our daily lives still remains.

In Germany, however, environmental thinking is deeply rooted at the individual level. For example, in 2011 Hamburg was given the European Environmental City Award by the European Commission. The basic criteria for this award are 1) are environmental standards being met?, 2) are high levels of environmental reform and sustainable development being promised? And 3) Is the city providing



stimulation for other cities to improve? The assessment is made based on 12 areas under this basic framework. Making environmental improvements that contribute to the prosperity and convenience of society is also one reason that eco-friendly thinking has become so deeply ingrained among citizens.

Once the results of the worksheet are summarized, students will review their ideas about cities and institutions to include in the article, and then it will be finalized.



**2018/06/26-GUS II Class-3<sup>rd</sup> Year High School**

### **Towards the Final High School Summer**

Starting last week, we have included several more cities, institutions and environmental policies in our research books. After a test to confirm our reflections on what we had learned until then, we heard a presentation from the group that has been researching the Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark. This group researched the many environmental policies that exist in Denmark. The biggest difference with Japan is that ‘no matter who looks at the policies, they are clear and easy to understand’. Infrastructure naturally take environmental problems into account, and eco-friendly design is very high quality. The importance of environmental issues are addressed regularly and in an up-beat way, so that the public is well-aware and interested in them. The concept of “hygge” is a very important part of Danish life. Denmark has been identified as the world’s happiest country, but it is difficult to translate this concept into Japanese – it refers to a warm and comfortable way of living life. At first glance, it may seem to be unrelated to environmental issues, but hygge is achieved by finishing work early and spending time with family and friends. This is the highest source of happiness. Thus, there is no need for extra car trips outside or unnecessary consumption. We can see how the value of hygge and consideration of the environment. With this thinking so deeply rooted in Denmark, we are able to learn many important lessons from their experience.

After the presentation, the teachers gave the students their summer topics.

- Proposal to Kyotanabe in Kyoto City

Share lots of ideas about what you have learned from classwork, fieldwork and lots of discussion!

- What you can propose to the OECD as high school students

We got lots of hints about proposals that could be made, thanks to the lecture by OECD Vice-Director Mr Higuchi. What would you propose if you had the chance. Try to improve your recommendations based on the keywords 'high quality infrastructure'.

We are looking forward to seeing what discoveries and findings the students experience in their last summer.

