

2019/04/13-GUS Basic Class-1st Year High School

Discussing global issues from each person's experiences

Today was the first lecture of Global Understanding Skills (Basic), where we address one of the most pressing topics within global issues – the environment. In this program we invite speakers from inside and outside of the school for discussions and group work. This is accompanied by field work outside the school which enables us to learn from innovative approaches to environmental problems being implemented in different areas. The lectures that are delivered in this program bring together instructors from different fields of specialization, including social science, mathematics and English, to explore transdisciplinary approaches. It is rare, even at our school, for teachers from multiple fields to jointly teach the same class.

In this first class, we divided into groups to discuss what countries we have lived in and what problems those societies are facing. The participants made lists of problems, dividing them into big and small problems, and then discussing among the group which of those problems are considered global issues. The students were able to reconsider what problems they understand to be of global significance.

This was the first group work task of the students' high school life, and it not only allowed them to exchange ideas about their experiences, but also provided an excellent opportunity for them to get to know each other. Enthusiastically stating their opinions, they observed how a leader naturally emerged in the creation of teamwork to help them pull together all the different ideas. There were many discoveries in all of the groups, making it an exciting time of interaction for the students.

We will continue to work on deepening the students' understanding of global issues, looking for possible solutions to the problems that we all face.



Mr.Sakashita (Science)

Mr.Sato (Social Studies)



Ms.Fukuda (Mathematics)

Mr.Yamada (English)

2019/04/27-GUS Basic Class-1st Year High School

Learning in GUS

Today's GUS lecture was a meeting of the entire first year class in the hall. Mr. Sakashita provided an introduction to the GUS program and the expectations for the coming year of study.

What is GUS?

In 2015 our school received the Super Global High School status from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, amidst high competition for this elite recognition. The program was kicked off under the motto of 'Learn from the environmental leadership countries, propose to the world', with Global Understanding Skills (GUS) as a core course for all first-year students, and offered as an elective for second- and third-year students. The GUS takes the environment, the issue we feel most closely in our daily lives, as the central theme, and fosters the students in the program to grow into global leaders that strive to realize the dream of 'a society in which all people can live in happiness'. Even after the five-year program supported by the Ministry has ended, our school plans to continue the program in a format similar to what we are doing here now.

Flow of work in GUS Year Basic 1

What is a global issue? We will increase our awareness of the sorts of problems that face us globally, and then begin work on environmental issues. To do this, we will learn from the experience of countries that are demonstrating leadership in this field, and study the measures taken by areas who are proactively engaging with environmental challenges. With this growing knowledge and experience, the students will formulate their own recommendations for addressing environmental problems. The first year of GUS is a time for students to absorb new basic information and ideas,

often through a wide range of lectures in the hall. Dividing into class groups, the students will use this information in group work to explore solutions to these problems. At the end of the year, the groups will make presentations, searching together for the best solutions.



2019/05/11-GUS Basic Class-1st Year High School

What is a global issue?

In the last class, students shared their own personal experiences and feelings about global issues. Today, we welcomed Mr. Yusuke Sato as our lecturer. He gave a basic talk on global issues.

Global issues are problems of a planetary scale that require cooperation from international society to solve. In 2000, the United National Millennium Summit was held in New York at United Nations Headquarters, in an effort towards solving these problems. The United National Millennium Declaration articulated a promise to cooperate in the name of creating a safer and more prosperous world, as the objective of 21st century global society. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)



were formulated at this time. The MDGs were objectives set for responding to issues that require global cooperation. These had concrete timelines for achievement, and consisted of 8 objectives, 21 targets and 60 indicators. Following from this, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted at the United Nations Summit, in September 2015. These established 17 goals and 169 targets, in order to realize the international community's objective of a sustainable world, in the period of 2016-2030. The international community, including not only the developing world but the developed world as well, pledged to work together in an effort that 'would not leave anyone behind'.

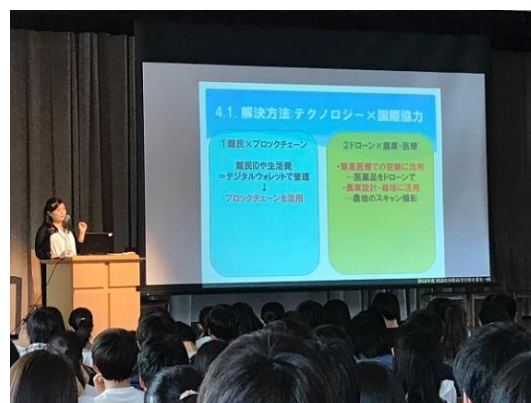
Through the next year of studies, we may come to realize that some issues we perceive as occurring far from us, may turn out to be closer to our daily lives than we thought. We hope that this realization will bring the awareness that each and every one of us is a stakeholder in the SDGs.

2019/05/25-GUS Basic Lecture-1st Year High School

'Global issues and global solutions', by Ms. Masaki Hiromi from Doshisha Uni. Graduate School of Global Studies

Today we were happy to welcome Ms. Masaki Hiromi from the Doshisha University Graduate School of Global Studies. She gave a talk on what she has learned from her own research and local engagement with global issues.

Ms. Masaki's journey started when she was an exchange student in England. This was her first experience interacting with non-Japanese, and within that were her minority friends who could not really say what country they were from. She described how shocking it was to have her assumptions challenged at such a basic level.



One country where Ms. Masaki is engaging directly with local issues is The Democratic Republic of the Congo, in Africa. This most impoverished nation is experiencing tribal poverty and refugee problems that intensify as tribal warfare continues. In recent years, the world has come to know of the realities of sexual violence within Congo's conflict, thanks to the work of Congolese Nobel Laureate Dr. Denis Mukwege. Congo's conflict is not a result of the land's poverty; rather, it stems from military struggle to control the rich rare metal resources of the country. The export destination of these rare metals is the developed countries that we live in. Because these rare metals are necessary in the production of smart phones and other high-tech products, they are extremely valuable resources. Living in the Internet community, we it is not enough to say that we don't know

about problems that affect far away countries. As part of global society, we are all stakeholders in these problems. There was an extremely memorable message in today's talk: our happiness cannot be based on someone else being a victim. Ms. Masaki's lecture showed us how when we think of our own happiness and prosperity, we need to look deeply to see the sacrifices and other problems and consider these within the context of our own actions and lifestyles.

Ms. Masaki works to bring technology into the solution of these problems, based on the understanding that it is crucial use these technologies to enable international cooperation – for example, providing support to refugees through block chain and identification, or conducting agricultural planning activities with drones. She is also aware of the difficulty of working across personal, cultural and other social differences, which leads to an appreciation of the need to deeply understand local peoples' circumstances and importance of searching for solutions that respond to their needs. Hers was a message about how critical it is to strive to generate 'glocal solutions'.

2019/09/28,10/09-GUS Basic Class-1st Year High School

Freiburg im Breisgau

The students are studying a wide range of environmental policy issues and approaches. As one case study, Mr. Sakashita gave a lecture about how city planning based on environmental policies has led to improved environmental outcomes in the small city of Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany.

Freiburg im Breisgau is a small city in southwestern Germany that is well-known for its environmental policies. The population is approximately 230,000 people, making it a city of familiar scale for us, similar to nearby Neyagawa City. Even though there is not much industry in this small regional city, one gets the impression of a prosperous, beautiful and refined large city. It is a university town as well, with many students living together with people involved in higher education. The history of this area is important background for understanding the city. In the 1970s, the Black Forest region located to the northeast of the city was facing serious degradation due to air pollution. As a result, the environmental awareness of the local people rose quickly. Through organized opposition to a planned nuclear power plant in the vicinity, BUND (Friends of the Earth Germany) was established, and the city began to take the lead in environmental policy and planning. This became the foundation for local city planning, and the creation of the beautiful city that we now see.

Many aspects contribute to the successful environmental policy of this city. Here we will introduce some of the incentives that we studied in our class.

Traffic Measures (regiokarte)

The *regiokarte* is an inexpensive transportation pass that allows people to use the 2,900km and 17 routes, including lending the card to friends and full family use of just one card on holidays. The city also has a zoning system that restricts automobiles' entrance into the city center, as well as park-and-ride facilities. These contribute to a marked reduction in use of automobiles, while promoting the use of public transportation and bicycles. The absence of automobiles in the city center creates a relaxed and safe environment for pedestrians. While some had feared that restricting automobiles would reduce the number of shoppers, in fact it has increased the number of people in town enjoying the comfortable space.

Trash/Waste Processing Measures (Grünepunkt)

In 1991, a decree on restriction of packaging waste was issued. This decree made it mandatory to reduce and recycle packaging waste, a large contributor of household waste and an important issue for collaboration between the community and the private sector. Collaborating companies are awarded Grünepunkt (Green Dots) for their products after they have met basic criteria. The waste of these products is collected for free. At the same time, people are charged for waste by bin, which has resulted in overall reduction of waste, as well as thorough efforts to recycle. Through these policies local people are playing a central role in the alleviation of waste problems in the city.

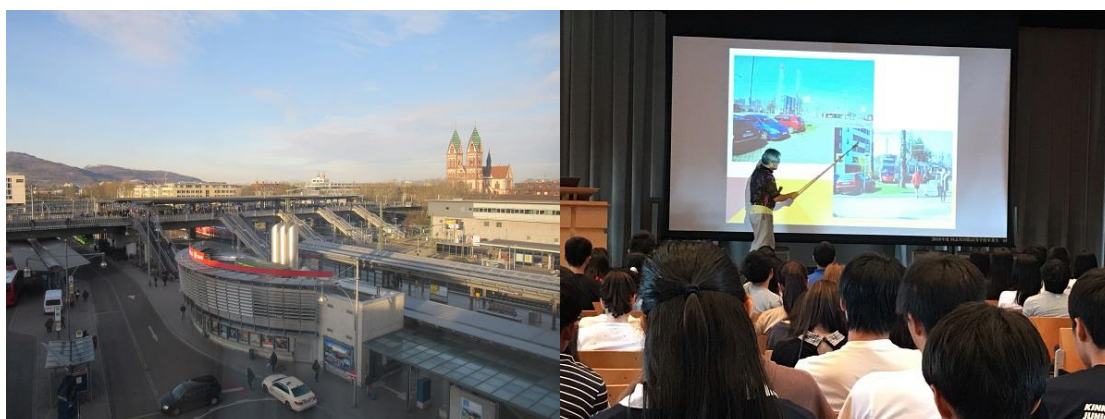
Energy Measures (Meisterlamp)

Energy-efficient light bulbs are distributed to all households, with the cost of the bulbs added to the electric bill. In the end, electricity costs are reduced so the actual additional cost of these bulbs to the users is zero. After this was started, there was a desire for these bulbs to be purchased, which further reduced the consumption of electricity. In addition, the city is working to increase use of several renewable energy sources, such as micro-hydro power on the Dreisam River, solar energy and wind energy. In 1995, large-scale solar panels were installed on the roof of the Dreisam stadium. This became the symbol of the city's environmental efforts. At the Hotel Victoria, sustainable services are provided to ensure the guests' comfort, including a cooling system that runs off of subterranean water sources, wind turbines, solar panels and wood pellets.

The city has also adopted a cogeneration system that runs off the heat of trash incineration. Collective housing such as the eco-friendly Heliotrope are designed by the residents to incorporate ecological considerations into their lives. The multiple and diverse ideas and innovations that are adopted shows the high awareness of the local people for the need to come up with local solutions. Life is pleasant and the value of land has increased. The people are proud of their community and its environment, as they is frequently raised as an example of highly livable city.

There was an announcement of a symposium to be held under the leadership of Prof Okamoto Yumiko of the Doshisha University Department of Policy. Prof Okamoto has also provided GUS

with a lecture concerning her research specialty, entitled ‘The Dilemmas of Developing Countries: The Case of Myanmar’. Those interested in participating in the symposium should contact Sakashita.



Dept of Policy PBL Education Symposium ‘Thinking about Creating Sustainable Societies in the 21st Century’

Date: November 11, 2019 (Sunday) 13:00-16:00

Venue: Doshisha University Shinmachi Campus

Presentation 1: Fieldwork in Developing Countries

‘Sustainable Development of Developing Countries and the Role of International Cooperation: A report from fieldwork in Uganda’

Presentation 2: Fieldwork in Developed Countries

‘Environmental Policy in Germany: Sustainable Local Planning in a Developed Country’

20191026-GUS Basic Class-1st Year High School

SDGs in Kyoto City

In the last class, we learned about the Freiburg, Germany as an example of successfully addressing environmental problems through local planning policy. Today we focused our studies on Kyoto City, which is number one in the national ranking of SDG implementation for all 815 urban areas in Japan. Our lecturer, Fukuda Nanako, gave us a talk on the rich range of measures taken to address the SDGs, with a particular concern for successfully environmental policies.

Kyoto City is the birthplace of the 1997 Kyoto Declaration adopted at COP3. The city is well-known for its successful reduction of energy consumption, large-scale reduction of waste and climate change response measures, promoted jointly with citizens and businesses. In this fascinating talk, we renewed our understanding of what has been done in Kyoto. The objective of today’s class was to maintain a comparative perspective on what he learned about Freiburg, while considering what types

of ideas motivate people to action. With a new reading of these hints, students will incorporate these ideas in the group policy idea competition in the third semester.

Effective measures – ‘Kyoto City’s Global Warming Measures 2018’

A City that is Fun to Walk

The walkway at Shijo Street was expanded from 3.5m to 6.5 m by reducing the number of automobile lanes from 4 to 2. To promote park-and-ride, parking coupons were issued. As a result, the number of people using public transit rose, and the 2015 traffic levels were reduced by 41% compared to 2006 levels.

A City that Produces Energy to Circulate in the Region

On hot days, facilities where people can enjoy cooled spaces are provided on a home page, encouraging people to go out and reduce household energy consumption. Cooperating businesses and organizations were provided with subsidies. Total energy consumption was reduced from its peak in 1997 by 27.2% in 2016.

Reduction of Waste

Measures promoted jointly with citizens and businesses, including charging for plastic shopping bags, successfully reduced by half the amount of waste produced at its peak level in 2000 of 820,000 tons to 410,000 tons in 2017.

The City issued the slogan ‘Do you Kyoto?’, encouraging people to do good things for the environment, and promoting eco-friendly measures among citizens and businesses.



20191109-GUS Basic Class-1st Year High School

Logical Thinking – Solutions that everyone can agree with

Today’s class was provided by Sato Tomoaki, and was entitled ‘Solutions that everyone can agree with’. Until now, we have studied a range of social problems, and looked at concrete measures that have been implemented to solve environmental problems. Now we will focus on problems that are around us in daily life, considering what types of measures are effective and how we do this analysis.

1. Organize our understanding of the issues

Synthesize understanding of the problem that needs to be solved

First, individuals were asked to organize a list of city names that were written randomly on a paper. These cities were all capitals, so it is probably natural to organize them by country and region. Next, the students looked at text describing the strengths of three companies, and were asked to organize this information. Last, the students organized information on the different modes of transportation between Kyoto and Tokyo in order to compare them. In this exercise, the information about modes of transportation was mixed with company names and types of ticket. These needed to be organized in steps into different elements first. The exercise demonstrated how complex problems need to be organized before consideration.

2. Framework

Identify patterns in the points that need to be considered, and present them in a way that is easily understood

One method for doing this is to use a logic tree, which allows us to search for the cause of a problem by identifying the critical factors and arranging them in a hierarchy. Thinking is expanded out from the problem, recording related information in order to achieve the progression of problem > cause > solution.

When filling in the spaces in the sheets prepared by Mr Sato, it was suggested that just finding the reference material and copying it in as the answer was not an interesting way to go about the problem. In order to reach solutions to difficult problems, each person needs to draw on their own insights and innovations. This is at the core of our GUS learning processes. In the next class, the students will divide into groups and engage with real problems using these methods.



20191116-GUS Basic Class-1st Year High School

Logical Thinking – Meeting the challenges of problem solving through implementation

Last time, the students learned about logical thinking as a method for problem solving. First, problems are categorized, but this categorization should be done based on each individual's own ideas, as this is where new ideas for problem solving arise. This message left a strong impression on us all.

Today, students put this method to work as they dealt with real problems around them. The problem was a practical one as they are getting ready for final exams – ‘Why isn't there enough time to study?’. On the handouts, there was only a blank logic tree written. The groups were asked to discuss among the members to organize their understanding of the problem, identify causes and write down solutions.

The discussions were lively. Some common points identified were ‘I often start looking at my phone’, and ‘I cannot resist the attraction of the TV’. In response to these problems, some solutions were ‘Don't look at them!’, ‘Keep trying!’. But are these really effective ways to solve the problem? Taking a new look at the problem, it became clear that solutions require many types of information and new ideas. The groups that got new insights on the problem of time constraints in studying will be able to test out their solutions in the coming final exam period!

20191130-GUS Basic Class-1st Year High School

Logical Thinking – Reflections

Last time, the students went through an exercise to implement what they had learned about the logical thinking method, examining the problem of ‘I don't have enough time to study’. The groups produced a wide range of solutions. In this class, the faculty introduced some of these problems, and for the first time the full group thought together about what is a truly effective solution. At the end, the faculty introduced some of the successful and unsuccessful solutions they tried out in their own student lives. This was an enjoyable way of ending the second semester with encouraging messages.

Is this really an effective solution?

I don't feel like doing it > The teacher makes class more interesting

I feel like I am in control for some reason > (This is a symptom, not a solution)

I am sleepy, feeling tired > Get enough sleep at night

The content is too difficult > Get a tutor or go to a cram school

Aren't these effective solutions?

I don't feel the importance of making my studies the highest priority

I don't feel the urgency of my future

> Create an image of your own future (Read books, learn about society); develop the awareness that your studies are necessary for this

Key points for understanding problem solving include the questions: Am I blaming someone else? Do I understand myself? How do I see myself fitting in to society? These questions bring new views on the problems. The faculty's stories about their experiences also showed how one can learn about oneself from the mistakes made. For example, some of the faculty told of trying sleep learning, studying like mad in an advancement school, and blaming others for failing in sports. Based on this self-learning, one can move forward toward success. In this class we are learning together how to deal with the problems we face, drawing on the strengths of our experience and knowledge.

2019/04/16-GUS II Class-3rd Year High School

The final school year of GUS

Today was the first meeting of the GUS (Global Understanding Skills) II course. As the last year in the course, the work will focus on producing outputs to address the issues studied to date. Yamamoto and Sato continue on from last year as the instructors for this course.



Today, we started off by refreshing our minds concerning the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, based on the SDG materials that had been prepared. The materials contained a proposal to consider whether solid waste is really just unneeded rubbish or if it could be a resource. Each student took up one item, thinking about how it could be recycled and reused as a resource. Through the individual presentations, the students were able to think about what measures are being taken near them, and what further measures are possible.

20190423-GUS II Class-3rd Year High School

Towards concrete ideas

The students have dedicated a lot of time to gaining knowledge about environmental problems and the measures that can be taken to address them. Today, the students went back to their final ideas from last year, and started to challenge themselves to come up with concrete ideas about how these possible solutions could be implemented.



After dividing into groups, they began to focus down on the issues. We are being asked to come up with concrete, easy to understand proposals. Many students were of the opinion that they wanted to start in their immediate environs, using events like the Culture Festival to encourage the school and neighborhood to become more environmentally aware.



2019/05/07,14-GUS II Class-3rd Year High School

Documentary ‘POVATY INC’

Our happiness may be causing pain to someone else.

Surely we all have a subconscious desire to ‘reach out to the innocent poor’, always feeling we want to ‘do more for the powerless people without hope’. This documentary illustrates the problems caused by the assistance of developed countries. The film shows us how developed countries should interact with developing countries, from the developing country point of view. It made us rethink what assistance is really necessary.

A leader from a developing country posed this question.

‘Does anyone really want to spend their entire life working for others?’ Rather than continuing the assistance that we all assume to be necessary, it is important to try to understand the situation from the point of view of local people.



Unitedpeople.jp/povatyinc/

2019/05/24, 31-GUS II Class-3rd Year High School

Proposing a film to send out our message

Following on from the documentary we watched last time, the students watched a several other films of interest, including one produced by Water Aid about water problems in Africa and another about women in India who took up the problems they faced in their toilets themselves. The students focused on the possibility of turning their studies, and the measures and messages they develop, into action that is communicated through film.

The students divided up into groups and first exchanged ideas about what content they would like to communicate. After this discussion, they further developed the ideas by identifying keywords for the film and identified some of the methods they could use to make a film. Each group was free to consider the issues as they liked, through any framework. The rule was that each group would concentrate on communicate one message to the world. Some groups went back to the SDG text to confirm details, some considered how to move beyond just raising issues to offer solutions and envision outcomes. Once the directions were decided, the groups move to developing outlines for storyboards to guide the films.

We envision unique and original films that reflect the personalities of our international students. The work will continue as the students refine their ideas.



2019/06/11,07/05-GUS II Class-3rd Year High School

Film Production

Based on their learning and discussions to date, the students decided that they can work on an effort to communicate their ideas. Having organized and refined their messages, the students have now begun to produce their films. Their target is to complete the film by the end of summer vacation, and each team is working enthusiastically. One team plans to create a picture book. The message to be communicated is focused on one of the 17 SDGs, and the communication is to be done bilingually for an international audience. These are the only rules that the students must follow.

The groups have identified a wide range of topics:

- Children's solitary meals
- Fair trade
- Our Trash Problems
- Plastic and the Marine Pollution
- Environmental Events at School
- Lost-and-Found at School

And many other interesting topics!



2019/11/12-GUS II Class-3rd Year High School

Summer reading - Discussion

Today, groups proposed discussion topics for their readings, based on the presentations they had already made. Each group chose one topic and led a discussion. The topics are listed below. Students made comments, drawing on their own experiences as well as materials they have learned in this class. The students were enthusiastic in participating in the discussion, making it a meaningful exchange of ideas for everyone.

Discussion Topics

Germany as an environmental leader

Why is environmental education not considered important in Japan

European Environmental Policies

Japan is a society that values convenient and inexpensive food, as seen by the popularity of McDonalds and other fast food chains. People also demand bananas from the Philippines and rice from America. Is a food culture based on bio-foods possible in Japan?

Europe's Energy Independent Regions

In Europe, different regions work hard to devise and implement their own environmental policies, but this is not the case in Japan. Why? What should Japan do to form its environmental policies?

Lessons from the German Environmental City Model

Would it be possible to implement urban redevelopment programs in Japan, similar to what has been done in Germany? What sorts of policies are needed to deal with overconcentration of urban population?

The Differences with German Environmental Policies

What kind of inconveniences were created by measures such as park-and-ride or regiokarte when implemented in dense tourist cities? What are effective ways to consider these inconveniences?

Germany and the Challenges of Eliminating Nuclear Power

What should be done in Japan to encourage citizens to be interested in abandoning nuclear power?

In the lively discussion, many raised points about the characteristics of Japanese people, education problems, policies to gather peoples' interest. While deepening the students' understanding of the readings, they also gained insights on the types of issues that they needed to be considering.

