

JICA Training, 3. Central and Local Administration in Education, Reflection

2021/11/04 Thu 15:00-16:00

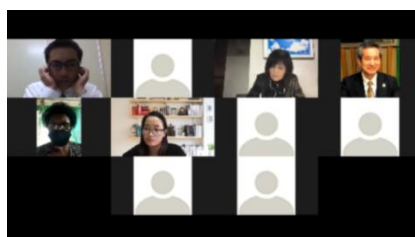
Group 1 had a reflection session on ESD activities in Okayama City with Mr. Kosaka from the Okayama City Board of Education. We started with self-introductions, then each of us watched the video and asked questions about what was interesting to us. The first question was about how to adapt UNESCO schools to PNG, a country that is struggling just to run a school. The answer was that the form of UNESCO schools is different between Japan and other countries, and that the Japanese Ministry of Education has a history of promoting ESD through the UNESCO school concept and mixing it with Japanese ideas, while overseas UNESCO schools are working to achieve the UNESCO mission. Pro.Yoshida said that in order to promote ESD as a UNESCO school, it is necessary to spread such a scheme and incorporate it into compulsory education.

The second question was how to achieve SDG 4 by 2030 in COVID-19 Pandemic, and whether revisions are necessary. Pro.Yoshida responded from a global perspective and Mr. Kosaka from a local perspective. He said that from a global perspective, 2021 is now the halfway point to 2030, and we will need to do a mid-term review to see where we are now. He also said that COVID-19 would need to learn from the positive side as well as the negative. And He said that it would be difficult to change the content and deadline of the goal itself. As for the local perspective, he said that it is important to check the current level of achievement with the children. He also said that it is not good to look back and think only with adults because we can learn a lot from the critical opinions of children. He also said that using Zoom to communicate with other countries and looking at other regions and schools from a broader perspective will lead to ESD and the achievement of SDG4.

The third question was whether local companies in Okayama have any activities to promote the SDGs with schools. The answer was that they do, and there are many inquiries to the Board of Education. He said that local companies and schools are collaborating to conduct various classes and activities.

The fourth topic was about the population and number of children in Okayama City. He said that the number of children is decreasing not only in Okayama, but in Japan as a whole due to the declining birthrate and aging population.

The fifth question was what is the role of teachers in promoting the SDGs. To answer this question, Mr. Kosaka said that it is important not to try to do things alone, but to collaborate with parents and the community, and to go out and deepen one's insight. And Pro.Yoshida said that in Japan, clear messages are conveyed to all teachers because manuals are created by the Ministry of Education, and the teachers themselves may have succeeded in Japan because they originally had the desire to do this. However, the answer in Japan may not be the right answer for the situation in your country, so you have to talk with the local people and children, and think about why this situation happened, and make it in your own country.



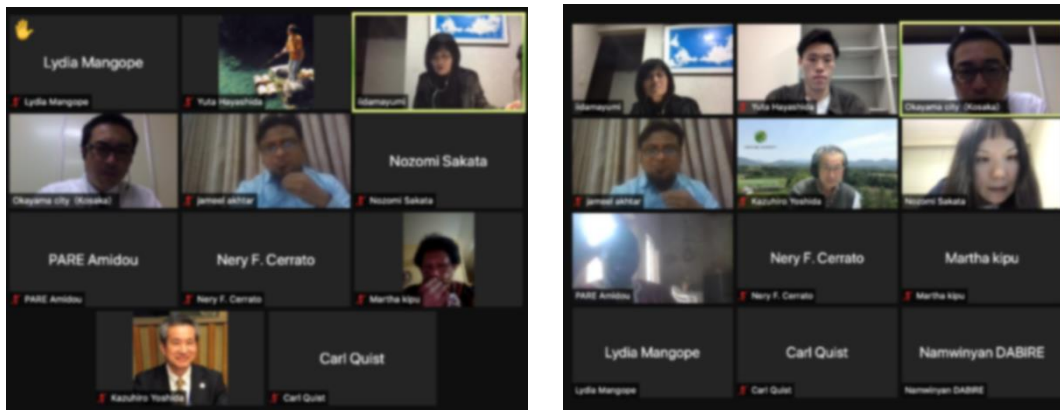
2021/11/04 Thu 17:00-18:00

"Discussion on ESD projects in Okayama Prefecture"

In this meeting, the participants discussed based on the case study of the ESD (Education for Sustainable Development) promotion project in Okayama Prefecture. This time, in addition to the research students from outside Japan, the presenter, Mr. Kosaka from the Okayama Prefectural Board of Education, joined the meeting.

First, Mr. Jameel facilitated a discussion on how ESD is being promoted in Okayama Prefecture through collaboration between local communities and educational institutions. Next, the participants asked Mr. Kosaka several questions from the perspective of developing countries. Ms. Carl asked about the situation of dropouts in Okayama and how to deal with it. He mentioned that the current situation in Japan is that compulsory elementary and junior high school education is well organized, and there are almost no dropouts. However, truancy and school closure due to corona are serious problems in Japan as well.

At this point, the focus of the discussion shifted to the issue of school dropout, and the situation in each country was shared. School dropout is a serious problem in developing countries. A variety of circumstances cause school dropouts, such as inability to keep up with learning, distance from home to school, early marriage or pregnancy among girls, care of livestock, and household chores.



On the other hand, Mr. Kosaka provided the perspective that "developing countries are the assets for achieving ESD. Although the living environment is completely different between Japan and Africa, the people of Africa already have the living infrastructure that humans have sustained for tens of thousands of years. Mr. Kosaka said, "On the contrary, isn't there something that Japan can learn?" Mr. Kosaka expressed his opinion that Japan could learn from Japan. The first step to promote ESD is to understand all the resources that a region has, such as human capital, natural environment, and ecosystems.

In addition, Pro. Yoshida presented the current situation in Japan, where educational policies are not flexible enough to deal with school closures and postponement of events due to the COVID-19 disaster.

They said that teachers and students are overburdened with limited time constraints and have to complete events and tasks as scheduled.

As discussed above, there was a lively exchange of opinions in all participants.