

Sustainable Development Goals

learning from

Mount Hakusan Biosphere Reserve

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Key Messages/Lessons learnt

- Local population of Mount Hakusan Biosphere Reserve migrated from the mountain areas to the urban cities and nowadays, natural resources management and the mountain landscapes of MHBR have been rapidly changed and ecosystem services are in danger to be lost.
- Educational activities with SDGs can stimulate the learners and the local villagers to act towards the regional sustainable development. Using 17 SDGs as educational tools helped to raise awareness in regional issues and its' good practices, and inspired the locals to reevaluate their values.
- Equal rights and equal opportunities for all, was mainly learned in Shiramine village, of MHBR

Biosphere Reserve description

Mount Hakusan Biosphere Reserve is one among nine BRs of Japan. It is located on the central part of Japanese archipelago, with the Mt. Hakusan (2,702m) on its heart. The total area of BR is 199,329ha and population 17,023 people. The area is expanded over the four prefectures Fukui, Ishikawa, Toyama and Gifu. The core area has alpine and subalpine zones and is famous for its endemic vegetation and Japanese beech forest in the buffer zone. Transition zone with hilly and mountainous areas are settled by local villages. Heavy snowfalls and different seasonal temperature creates the unique and diverse alpine environment with endemic flora and fauna. The vegetation is distributed with the forest zones of summer green broad-leaved (Japanese beech zone) and densely inhabited with large mammals like Asiatic black bear, Japanese serow, Japanese macaque, Golden Eagle and mountain Hawk-eagle. It was designated by UNESCO's MAB in 1980 and only core area with alpine/subalpine zones and buffer zones was recognized. After 30 years, in 2016 transition zone was designated with the mountain villages.

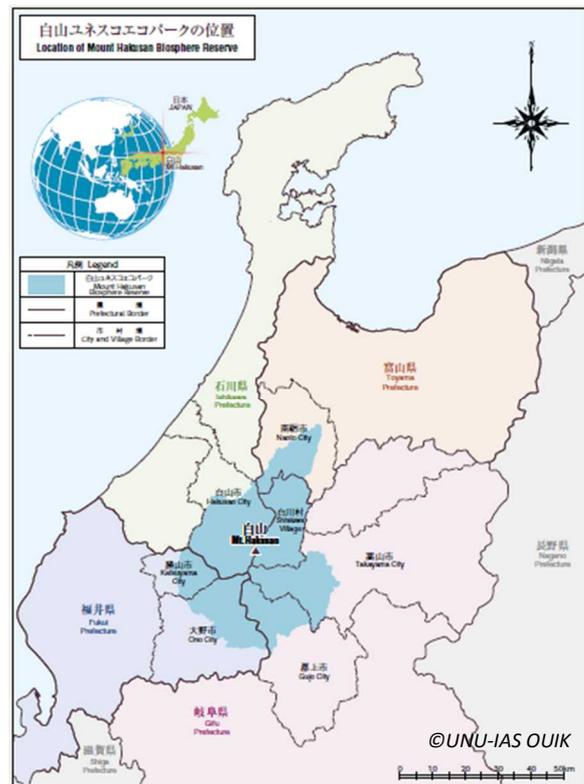


Figure 1: Location of Mount Hakusan Biosphere Reserve

BR challenges

Rural areas of MHBR which represents the harmonious coexistence between nature and culture or so called “encultured nature” started to decline, and faces many challenges because of the rapid industrialization and the shift from rural-based to urban-based economic governance. These kind of rapid changes resulted in land use decline, field abandonment and depopulation of the rural areas, and without constant inhabitants these regional areas, especially transition zones of MHBR, would not be considered as sustainable. Populations migrated from the mountain areas to the urban cities and nowadays, natural resources management and the mountain landscapes of MHBR have been rapidly changed and ecosystem services are threatened to be loss, due to the depopulation of the area. Depopulation results in the abandonment of the farmlands, loss of the local communities and traditional knowledge.

Initiatives/Actions on SDGs

Local government is trying to implement many new policies to attract younger generations to live inside the rural areas, and there is an urgent need to educate the youth to act towards regional conservation and regeneration. Academic Institutions are also involved in implementing a new methodology into the curriculum to contribute for the regional revitalizations, however, unfortunately, due to the modern changes in the 21st century student’s interest is exposed towards economical and technologically advanced societies and seizes the values towards rural societies.



Photo 2: Shiramine village and 17 fieldworks with 17 SDGs evaluation practices



Photo 3: One of the 17 community-service activities. Helping in local restaurant to receive local customer

Raising the awareness in the youth towards the regional issues, would be very critical and important to educate the senses of belongings into the rural areas, as the acknowledgement of the fact that the issue exists can encourage the youth for the personal commitment to act towards the issues. For this reason, from 2016, Kanazawa University together with the local NPO Hakusan Shiramine Nature School and Mount Hakusan Biosphere Council has organized the educational course towards the sustainable regional development by using SDGs as the tool to raise the awareness in local issues. We decided to

develop the integrated conservation and sustainable development oriented model by implementing SDGs through the fieldtrips in the specific environmental conditions in the transition zone of Shiramine village in MHBR. 17 SDGs were evaluated by providing 17 community-service activities during Summer and Winter fieldworks with nine overnight-camping's in total.

Covered Community-service activities:

1. Forestry and Energy sectors
2. Tourism
3. Local factories and construction companies
4. Welfare and Nursery schools
5. Nature and Scientific Centers
6. Local manufacturing and agriculture

Objectives:

- ❖ Increase the awareness towards the environmental/social issues and the skills to be applied for the regional revitalization in youth.
- ❖ Use SDGs as the tools for the re-evaluation of the regional “values” and distribute the new perspectives and views to the local villagers
- ❖ Communicate with local through the participatory and volunteering practices conducted inside the village



Photo 4: Workshop with locals about Elderly, Women and Youth activities in the village during the overnight camping

Practical Outcomes/Achievements

Using SDGs as the tools, had increase the awareness of the students towards the regional development, its values and issues. SDGs helped them to “See more”. After the completion of the courses, all students

indicated that the most inspiring “value” that they found in Shiramine was the strong bound of local people with each other. Each sector that they visited was linked to another one and every person or the owner of the company knew the activities of their neighbors. Also, it was very inspiring for the students to see, how local people are easily dealing with the daily troubles and any kind of difficulties. They were ready to easily act on any changings. These kind of factors were very similar with the concept of SDGs, as they emphasize on the interconnections of each goal with each other's.

Practice in Shiramine has showed the importance of the “Unity” to reach the sustainability. It was mainly observed, in the way how local people deal with nature and natural disasters. Nature taught local people how to become united to confront any obstacles in daily life. Only by unity they were able to overcome any difficulties and survive in this region for the centuries. Stated by student: “Because, local people are always living in the unpredictable rhythm with nature, they are always ready to face any changings and act towards the solutions. Those kind of living conditions taught them to share the capital and natural resources with each other.” Another student states, that “the concept of privacy doesn't exist, and each person knows well what is happening with his neighbor, and in case if something happens they are always ready to help.”

The idea of the strong bound for the sustainable development is very similar with SDGs, as 17 goals are strongly interconnected and depend on each other. In order to achieve environmentally sustainable conditions, we need to achieve the stable social, economic and political conditions, with fair distribution of capital and resources, where each individual will be able to meet their own basic human needs. Shiramine is very good example of that. Every capital is shared equally. Even if there are big possibilities to create big business sectors by using the natural resources, locals are very carefully considering the business conditions of the neighbors, and are trying not to exceed

the income of each other's, so that everything is equally shared.



Photo 5: End of the course, and celebration of Mount Hakusan Festival with locals

Compare to other rural villages around Mount Hakusan, recently Shiramine has increased flow of the youth. This is related with the Mountain Tourism activities, as annually more tourist started to visit the Shiramine before hiking, this is how creating many job opportunities. However, those young people are not in the search to gain the profits and creating the business to become rich in the village, but rather prefer to live inside the strong community with nature around. One of the students was told that "it is impossible to become a rich man here and no one is running for that".

Equal rights and equal opportunities for all this is what can be learned from Shiramine and applied in reaching the SDGs.

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