

## EDUCATION, PUBLIC AWARENESS AND TRAINING

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## Summary

In this chapter, the status of environmental education in Japan is outlined. The Ministry of Education and the Environmental Agency began to promote environmental education from the mid-1980s. It can be said that present environmental education is based on pollution education in the 1960s and 1970s. Therefore, environmental education in Japan has a critical social element. The ideas of environmental education differ between those at the grass-root level and the Ministry of Education and Ministry of the Environment. Directions of environmental education are not necessarily united. Environmental education varies widely, and it is necessary to identify instances of where it is teaching the wrong principles. Environmental problems in everyday life have deepened, so it is necessary for all citizens to examine their lifestyle and to help reform the socio-economic system in daily life. There is consequently a growing need for environmental education and for sustainable development.

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first part deals with the idea that education, public awareness, and training will be distributed and relative information about environmental education in Japan will be introduced. The second part deals with education, the third part deals with public awareness, and the fourth part describes training. Based on the above information, some recent problems and future perspectives will be discussed.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Definition of Education, Public Awareness, and Training in Agenda 21

Japan has experienced severe environmental pollution. In order to counteract this, it has developed excellent environmental technology since the early 1970s, when the period of high economic growth was nearing its end. Accordingly, Japan has intended to restructure its own socio-economic system that will enable sustainable development which reduces the environmental load, and improves global environmental conditions.

After UNCED, Japan determined to make the most of its capabilities in order to make a positive contribution toward the conservation of the global environment through international cooperation.

Education, public awareness and training are, in particular, very important measures for environmental conservation. In this article, these three topics will be addressed as central ideas on how to attain environmental conservation and a sustainable society in Japan. In Agenda 21, these three topics are addressed as the following essential points.

### **1.1.1. Education**

Education is critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of the people to address environment and development issues. To be effective, environmental and developmental education should deal with the dynamics of both the physical/biological and socio-economic environment and human (which may include spiritual) development, should be integrated in all disciplines, and should employ formal and informal methods and effective means of communication.

### **1.1.2. Public Awareness**

There is a need to increase public sensitivity to environmental and development problems and involvement in their solutions and foster a sense of personal environmental responsibility and greater motivation and commitment toward sustainable development.

### **1.1.3. Training**

Training is one of the most important tools to develop human resources and facilitate the transition to a more sustainable world.

## **1.2. Responsible Organizations for Environmental Education in Japan**

The ministries or governmental agencies that are directly responsible for managing and conducting environmental education in Japan are the Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture, and the Ministry of the Environment (formerly Environment Agency). However, local governments, NGOs, and citizens' groups also bear responsibility for accomplishing education, public awareness, and training. The whole nation must act for environmental conservation.

## **1.3. From Agenda 21 to Basic Environmental Law**

After the drawing up of Agenda 21, a number of environmental laws were enacted, and related administrative plans were established and enforced in Japan. The Basic Environment Law is related directly to education, public awareness, and training. Soon after the enactment of the Basic Environment Law, the Basic Environment Plan was created to make part of the framework of environmental administration. From this point of view, Japan played a positive part in formulating consensus through the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and bridging different

views expressed by developed and developing countries.

### **1.3.1. Basic Environment Law**

In Japan, Basic Environment Law was promulgated on 19th November 1993 (see *Environmental Laws and Their Enforcement*). The essence of the law is outlined around the following three points.

First, the Basic Environment Law states three fundamental principles for environmental conservation. They are the enjoyment and future success of environmental blessings, the creation of a society that can ensure sustainable development with reduced environmental burden, and the active promotion of global environment conservation through international cooperation. The law also identifies the responsibilities of the national and local governments, corporations, and individuals for conserving the environment.

Second, in reference to policies promoting environmental conservation, the law, stating guidelines for the formulation and implementation of such policies, requires the state to establish the Basic Environment Plan and to show people an outline of the policies. It also provides for environmental quality standards, environmental pollution control programs, consideration in the formulation of policies by the state and other parties, and the promotion of environmental impact assessments. The Basic Environment Law also stipulates regulations and economic measures to prevent interference with environmental conservation. It promotes the construction and renovation of facilities related to conservation and the use of products contributing to the reduction of environmental loads. In addition, it includes education and learning on environmental conservation and measures to promote voluntary activities by private organizations, the promotion of science and technology, and international cooperation for global environmental conservation as well as cost bearing and financial measures.

Third, the law stipulates the establishment of environmental councils at national and local levels and other related matters (see *Promoting Human Sustainable Development*).

In the Basic Environment Law, Articles 25, 26, and 27 are particularly related to education, public awareness, and training, as shown below:

Article 25 (Education and Learning on Environmental Conservation):

The state shall take necessary measures to increase corporations' and citizens' understanding of environmental conservation and to encourage their willingness to engage in activities related to environmental conservation, by means of promoting environmental education and learning and improving public relations activities with regard to environmental conservation.

Article 26 (Measures to Promote Voluntary Activities by Private Organizations):

The state shall take necessary measures to promote voluntary activities with regard to environmental conservation, such as tree planting and the recovery of recyclable resources conducted by corporations, citizens, or private bodies organized by these

entities (hereinafter referred to as the “private bodies etc.”).

Article 27 (Provision of Information):

The state shall make efforts to provide necessary information appropriately on environmental conservation, including the state of the environment, so as to promote the education and learning provided for in Article 25 and to contribute to the activities voluntarily conducted by the private bodies etc. provided for in the preceding Article, in consideration of the protection of the rights and benefits of individuals and legal entities.

### **1.3.2. Basic Environment Plan**

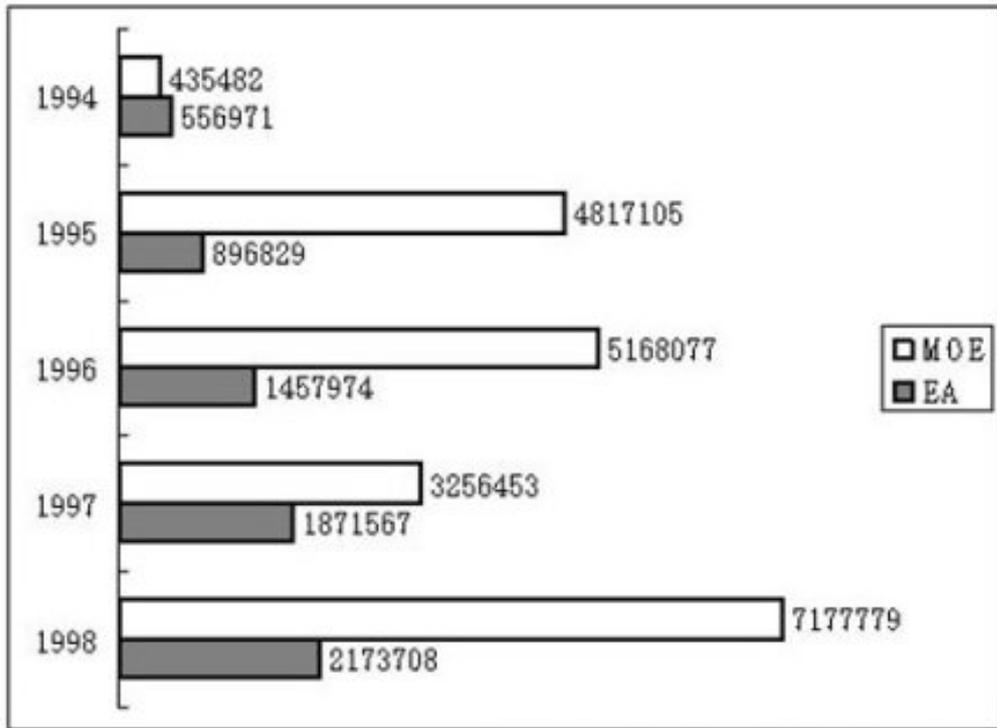
The Basic Environment Plan was established in December 1994, based on the Basic Environmental Law. The Plan states the long-term objectives of environmental policy, looking ahead to the middle of the twenty-first century, and specifies the measures to be taken by the government up to the early twenty-first century. In this Plan, descriptions about “Promoting Environmental Education and Learning” are given as follows.

Each member of society must understand the role that they play and the responsibility that they share for environmental burdens, otherwise sustainable development will never be realized. It is necessary that each be able to contribute in solving environmental problems and actively participate in environmental conservation. Regardless of age, each member must cooperate in the effort to maintain a healthy and sound environment in the community, whether in school, at home, at work or outdoors. Comprehensive education and voluntary learning shall be promoted in integration.

In the effort, people’s history of burdening the environment and the aspects of culture which helped to create this burden, must be more deeply understood. This cannot be accomplished by the mere transmission of knowledge and cold hard facts. In order to gain real understanding of the importance of nature, people must experience it firsthand. In particular, the next generation, the youth in society, must be given the opportunity to experience the relationship between life and nature. In this way, they will grow to appreciate, understand and show concern for this relationship. Measures shall be improved to secure this understanding.

### **1.4. Budget Allocation in Environmental Education**

By referring to the reports *Investigation in the environment protection expenditure (Kankyo Hozen Keihitou Shirabe* which have been published every year by the Ministry of the Environment, the total budget concerning environmental education in Japan can be understood. Fluctuation of the budget related to environmental education should be understood through these documents.



(Denomination: hundred million-yen)

EA: Environment Agency

MOE: Ministry of Education, Science, Sports and Culture

Figure 1: Budget allocation of National Government for Environmental Education  
(This arrangement is limited after 1994 because we could not acquire these documents after the 1994 version.)

## 2. Education

### 2.1. General Information about Education in Japan

The importance of environmental education in the field of formal education is now growing. Schools are expected to show awareness of this theme by developing a variety of activities and participating in school- and community-based projects. Environmental education should connect with daily educational activities at school through every subject, -- for example, social studies, science, moral education, and special activities. The understanding of the relationship between the environment, nature, and human beings must be deepened. Care for the environment and nature and an attitude of respect for them must be advanced. Initiatives to conserve the environment or improve it must also be promoted.

Various educational reforms are being implemented by the government through agencies such as the National Council on Educational Reform and the Central Council for Education. In preparation for the twenty-first century, there are more discussions than ever before regarding the education that can deal with the enormous social changes

resulting from internationalism and information technology.

The Ministry of Education, Science, Sports, and Culture assumes the responsibility of educational administration at the national level. The Ministry of Education prescribes guidelines for the curriculum, courses, and credit requirements for kindergartens through high schools. Curricular standards for elementary and secondary schools are described in the courses of study produced by the Ministry of Education, which is also responsible for authorizing textbooks in elementary and secondary schools.

## 2.2. Brief History of Environmental Education in Japan

Following UNCED, the Japanese Government has actively started to prepare policies for Environmental Education and Environmental Learning. One of the reasons is that, in Japan, the history of Environmental Education started in the 1960s as a concerted practice to improve severe pollution and recover a better environment.

	Japan	Overseas
1931	Enactment of National Parks Law	
1950	Establishment of National Park Association of Japan	
1951	Establishment of Nature Conservation Society of Japan	
1957	Enactment of Nature Parks Law	
1964	Primary and Middle School Teachers' Pollution Control Measures Study Association	
1967	Enactment of Basic Law for Environmental Pollution Control	
1970		U.S.; Enactment of Environmental Education Law
1971	Partial revision of Primary and Middle School Education Guidelines Establishment of the Environmental Agency	
1972	Enactment of Nature Conservation Law	Stockholm; United Nations Conference on the Human Establishment of UNEP
1973	Decision by Cabinet on Basic Policy on Conservation on the national Environment Establishment of "Environmental Week"	
1974	Establishment of Charter of Nature Conservation	
1975		Belgrade; International Environmental Education Conference

1977	Establishment of Japan Environment Association Promulgation of new primary and Middle School Education Guidelines	Intergovernmental Conference of Environmental Education of Tbilisi
1978	Promulgation of new High School Education Guidelines	
1982		Nairobi; 10 <sup>th</sup> special meeting of UNEP Directors Council
1986	Decision by Environment Agency on Long-Term Environment Conservation Plan	
1987	Report by Curriculum council Final report of extraordinary meeting of Educational Council	Report of World Conference on Environment and Development
1988	Report by Environmental Education Panel	
1989	Revision of School Education Guideline	
1992		United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
1993	Promulgation and enforcement of the Basic Environmental Law	
1994	Establishment of the Basic Environmental Plan	

Table 1: History of Environmental Education

The history of the environmental education in Japan started from the *Kogai education* (pollution education), which was one of the educational movements. This movement was caused by the occurrence of formidable pollution behind high economic growth. In particular, there were four large-scale pollution crises that were especially severe. People who were affected by pollution frequently became its victims. In addition, the means of production, ways of living, and communities in these regions were lost. Therefore, the people, such as patients or teachers who lived in these regions, held strong objections to pollution. Action started through them, and thus began the origin of Kogai education.

The Kogai education movement started from learning the process of pollution generation. The learning dealt with Japanese capitalism, which caused pollution, and was critical in further strengthening Japanese productive and economic systems. The Kogai education movement was very active from the 1960s to the 1970s, as the pollution problems were common during this period. It can be said that present environmental education in Japan has the background of the practice of the Kogai education movement.

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describes the trends in environmental education implemented in Japan.]

### **Biographical Sketch**

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