

Report on EDU-Port Symposium FY2023

The EDU-Port Symposium was held on Tuesday, March 12th, 2024 on the theme of “Expectations for International Cooperation in Education”.

The EDU-Port Symposium brings together education stakeholders including relevant ministries, government agencies, universities, education providers, NGOs and NPOs for the purpose of confirming the achievements of the current year’s projects and establishing the future direction. Amid calls for stronger collaboration with ASEAN and other countries of the Global South, together with cooperation with developing countries to build a peaceful, stable and prosperous international society, it has become increasingly important for Japan to engage in international educational cooperation to meet the demands of the changing times. At this year’s EDU-Port Symposium, the seventh such event, various stakeholders came together to share specific initiatives and good practices in past international educational cooperation and to discuss the future direction of such cooperation and expectations for EDU-Port projects.

The symposium was held in a hybrid format of in-person and online sessions, with approximately 300 participants from Japan and overseas.



(The positions and titles of the speakers below are as of the time of the symposium.)

■ Opening Remarks

KITAYAMA Koji, Director, International Affairs Division, Minister’s Secretariat, MEXT

(Summary) Amid discussions on strengthening collaboration with ASEAN and other countries of the Global South, it has become increasingly important for

Japan's international educational cooperation to meet the demands of the times. In the area of government-led international educational cooperation, JICA plays a central role in various initiatives, while EDU-Port Japan promoted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) also plays an important role. In order to further enhance EDU-Port's effectiveness, we need to raise its profile both domestically and internationally, leading to an even greater contribution to the internationalization of Japanese education. Furthermore, we aim to leverage our past achievements, knowledge and networks, while also strengthening collaboration with JICA, JETRO and other relevant organizations. In today's symposium, we will hear a broad spectrum of opinions from experts with varied viewpoints, together with expectations for the EDU-Port Project, and engage in discussions based on successful case studies and feedback from the field. We hope that this will provide an opportunity to contemplate the future direction of international educational cooperation as well as the trajectory of EDU-Port Japan.



■ 【Guest Speech】

International Educational Cooperation of JICA and Expectations for EDU-Port
KAMEI Haruko, Director General, Human Development Department, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

(Summary) Today I am going to focus on: 1. Overview of JICA and educational development cooperation, 2. EDU-Port and JICA partnership projects, and 3. Expectations for EDU-Port and collaboration possibilities. The goal of JICA's cooperation policy under "Global Agenda: Education" is to provide "quality education where each individual shines with vitality." Examples of collaboration

with EDU-Port include textbook development in Papua New Guinea and promotion of Fukui-style education in Malawi. Expectations for EDU-Port are: (1) Providing solutions based on Japan's education development experiences and excellent educational content for achieving SDG Goal 4, (2) Providing opportunities for information sharing and networking (partnerships) among relevant actors, and (3) Returning the benefits from overseas education cooperation to Japan. Such collaboration is expected to lead to achievement of SDG Goal 4, high appreciation of Japan's education and the success of Japanese business, and further globalization of education in Japan.



■ 【EDU-Port Japan Project Activity Report and Successful Case (1)】

Internationalization and quality assurance of Tokkatsu aimed at fostering non-cognitive skills in Egypt

KYOMEN Tetsuo, Associate Professor, Institute of Human Science, University of Tsukuba

(Summary) In this study, we examine the status of localization of extracurricular activities (Tokkatsu) in primary schools in Egypt and clarify the effect on non-cognitive skills. The survey results will be fed back to Japanese educational institutions, contributing to the globalization of education in Japan. In Project A, we engaged in joint development of the Tokkatsu diploma program, and in Project B, we verified the effectiveness of non-cognitive skills development in primary schools. In Project C, we conducted interviews on the localization of Tokkatsu, and in Project D, we organized activities to promote interaction between the Cairo Japanese School (CJS) and Egypt-Japan Schools (EJS). This study aims to explore connections between the culture (values) of the partner country and Japanese-style education. It also pays attention to the negative aspects of Japanese-style education, facilitating mutual learning through "reverse importation." Furthermore, government, practitioners and researchers will work together to

promote the overseas expansion of education. We anticipate that these initiatives will provide suggestions for future international educational cooperation.



■ 【EDU-Port Japan Project Activity Report and Successful Case (2)】

Learning through implementation of Japanese style of music education and return to Japanese education

OTAKE Yuji, Group Manager, Music Popularization Group, Asia-Pacific Sales Division, Yamaha Corporation

(Summary) The Yamaha School Project aims to contribute to the sustainability of music culture through its business activities. It proposes package solutions to the challenges faced by partner countries, and supports the introduction of education through music and musical instruments while customizing it to fit the circumstances of the country concerned. To date, the EDU-Port Japan project has been implemented in five countries: Vietnam, Egypt, Brazil, India and Colombia. It is said that collaborative and creative activities are the preferred means for fostering non-cognitive skills, currently a global trend in education. Yamaha contributes to the overseas expansion of Japanese-style education through its engagement in the music business, where such activities can be easily incorporated. The value of Japan's music education is reconfirmed in surveys of non-cognitive skills in partner countries, and the use of digital teaching materials leads to suggestions for reducing the burden on teachers, a challenge also faced by Japan. In addition, cross-cultural exchange and understanding are also being promoted through music exchanges between students from partner countries and Japan.



■【EDU-Port Japan Project Activity Report and Successful Case (3)】

The process of nationwide rollout of school health room system and implementation of school health checkup data management in Cambodia
 SHIMIZU Hiroko, Professor, Chronic Care/Adult Health Nursing, Faculty of Medicine, Kagawa University

(Summary) Kagawa University has been collaborating with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, and Tokushima University since 2016 to work on a project promoting hygiene education and a school health room system with Ministry of Education, Young and Sports of Cambodia. The Development Project for Hygiene Education and School Health Room System in Cambodia was implemented by Kagawa University as an EDU-Port Japan Research Project in 2021-22. In September 2021, the local government issued an ordinance to establish school health rooms throughout the country, leading to the gradual opening of health rooms from kindergarten to university using a Cambodian version of the Kagawa model. In the field, government officials have begun self-initiated activities such as setting up school health rooms and conducting school health checkups. Proceeding with activities based on a relationship of trust with partners and in line with the Cambodian government's policy intention contributed to the success of the initiative. In international educational cooperation with developing countries, it is essential to clarify long-term goals (relevance to local government policies) and project outcomes (endpoints).



■ Panel Discussion – Expectations for Future International Educational Cooperation

<Panelists>

SUZUKI Kan, Professor, University of Tokyo

KITAMURA Yuto, Professor, University of Tokyo

Speakers of Guest Speech and Reports

The panel discussion on the theme of Expectations for Future International Educational Cooperation featured two experts who have been deeply involved with EDU-Port Japan, as well as a speaker and three presenters who reported on publicly solicited project activities and successful cases. After appraisal of the talk and presentations, the following discussion took place.

(Summary)

Summary of talk and presentations

- I feel that the hardships of the Covid-19 pandemic have led to the essential activities and considerations of each project.
- As the history of education in Japan since the Meiji era differs significantly from that of Anglo-Saxon education, we recognize how important it is to disseminate this trajectory widely internationally. The PISA 2022 results announced in December 2023 revealed that one of the characteristics of Japanese education is children’s strong sense of belonging at school. The results of creating schools as learning communities that are not limited to subject-based education, which Japan has seen as culturally important, are becoming apparent.

Future Recommendations for EDU-Port Japan

- In the course of implementing the project, we were able to find new issues that could become the next theme for the project. We would like EDU-Port to move forward with creating a system that can realize these possibilities.
- I feel that we are seeing greater awareness of EDU-Port Japan in Japanese embassies overseas. To enhance Japan's presence abroad, I would like to see continued participation in international education fairs through collaborative exhibitions with companies.
- A two-way learning perspective is necessary. We recognize that Japanese-style education is incomplete and believe that there is potential in learning from partner countries and continually updating. We plan to put into practice what we have learned from partner countries in Japan and then feed back the results to those countries.
- In order to raise the level of education in Japan, diversification of financial schemes aimed at reinvesting in domestic education is called for. Additionally, we hope for further enhancement of collaboration with private companies and other entities.
- It is wonderful that EDU-Port Japan has created a two-way open platform.
- In the new Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education announced in June 2023, "Japanese well-being" was listed as one of the two main pillars¹. The OECD is in the process of formulating "Education 2040" which aims to reexamine the question of what education is for. They want to challenge the Western-led trend toward well-being, which views climbing the Cantril Ladder, used to measure happiness, as a good thing, and that education is necessary for that purpose. The *raison d'être* of Japanese schools goes beyond just climbing the ladder; they serve as good communities with cooperative elements, while being mindful of peer pressure. This contributes to the strong sense of belonging among Japanese children, as mentioned earlier.

¹ The new Basic Plan for the Promotion of Education, announced in June 2023, cites as its concepts for the next plan "Fostering the builders of a sustainable society looking ahead to 2040" and "Improving well-being based on the Japanese social context."



■ Poster Session

After the symposium, a poster session was held at the venue by 17 of the organizations currently implementing EDU-Port Japan-adopted projects for this fiscal year. Participants were seen engaging in lively conversations with project representatives in front of each poster, creating a vibrant atmosphere at the venue.



In the post-event survey, feedback from respondents included comments such as, "I was able to get an overall understanding of the initiatives by government, industry and academia," "The presentation content provided a more concrete understanding of Japanese-style education than last year's symposium," and "I had the opportunity to hear a discussion about EDU-Port Japan's contribution to future international educational cooperation."