

# ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND CITIZEN'S ALLIANCE INITIATED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

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## 1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

It has been the recent trend for municipality units to institutionalize citizen participation along with decentralization of the government. This study aims to find the relationship between environmental education and local-government-driven collaboration.

## 2. METHODS AND SUMMARY

This study is conducted through review of previous works about environmental education and collaboration between citizens and local governments. Toyonaka city, Osaka, where the author had internship between the end of August 2005 and the end of February 2006, is examined as a case study.

Examination of historical development of environmental education reveals its objectives as changing in people's behavior and leading to people's action toward the sustainable society. Thus, the environmental education in this study is defined as "education for the environment" with which learners develop their critical thinking skills and problem-solving skills. This educational practice can be carried out through civil activities to solve public problems. However, Japanese tend to recognize "public" as "governmental" or "administrative." Therefore, public problems are not the problems that citizens solve but only the governments do. This attitude is one of the obstacles for people to participate in civil activities, the practice of "education for the environment." The possibilities of citizen's alliance to alter people's attitude toward public problems are discussed in this paper.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Environmental civil activities are one form of "education for the environment." Citizen's alliance initiated by the local government welcomes citizens with various levels of knowledge and interest; leads to noticeable change in the area and; puts citizens and the local government on an equal footing. For these reasons, people are encouraged to involve themselves in the civil activities.

Toyonaka city was studied as a case, and improvement strategies such as conducting consensus-building activities by the citizen's alliance, are suggested.

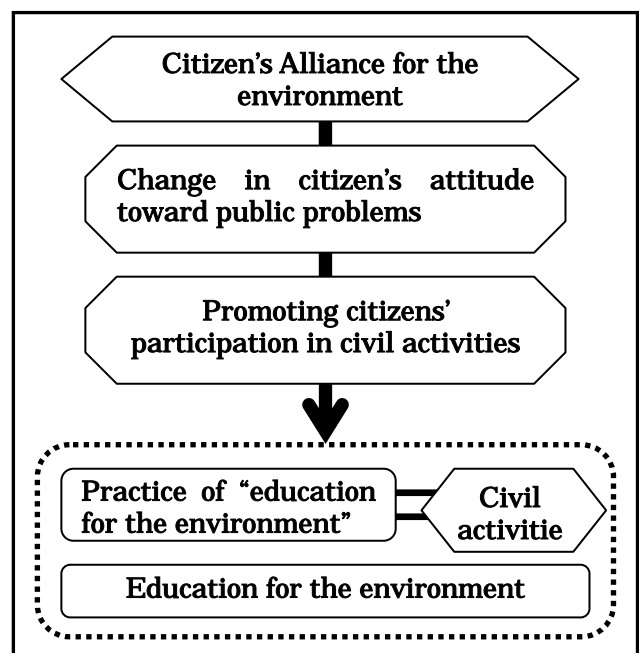


Figure.1 Linking Environmental Education and Citizen's Alliance for the environment