



カーボンニュートラル  
北九州市



Supported by



Ministry of the Environment

In cooperation with



©teitan, City of Kitakyushu

# Well-Being Kitakyushu

## A Guide By RCE Youth Members

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| About This Book                           | 01 |
| History of Pollution Challenges           | 02 |
| Organizations Oriented Towards Well-Being | 03 |
| Rich in Nature                            | 04 |
| Campus-Based Projects                     | 06 |
| Voices and Actions of Youth               | 07 |
| About RCE Kitakyusyu                      | 07 |
| Overview of Japan RCE Youth Meeting       | 08 |
| Profile of Japan RCE Youth Members        | 09 |



# About This Book



Photo: Robert Kovacs

As societies become increasingly complex and challenges such as climate change and a range of social issues intensify, the concept of well-being — encompassing physical and mental health, connections with nature and community cohesion — is being reassessed as a fundamental value. In Kitakyushu City, Fukuoka, Japan, a wide range of initiatives are advancing efforts to establish systems that enable all people to lead fulfilling lives in harmony with the city's natural environment, while promoting an inclusive, forward-looking and sustainable society.

This guidebook, *Well-Being Kitakyushu*, highlights how diverse community-based practices contribute to realizing well-being across the city through intergenerational collaboration. It also showcases various organizations oriented towards well-being that are members of the Regional Centre of Expertise in Education for Sustainable Development (RCE) in Kitakyushu.

Drawing on Kitakyushu's industrial pollution history and its successful environmental recovery, the city's deep relationship with nature, the leadership of its youth and grassroots community efforts, the guidebook demonstrates how local communities nurture meaningful lives and leverage their strengths to create a nature-positive, resilient future. It also aims to encourage Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) practitioners and other stakeholders engaged in environmental education and community-based collaboration, as supported by the RCE.

This guidebook was developed as an initiative of the 2024 Japan RCE Youth Meeting by young members of RCE Kitakyushu (Kitakyushu ESD Council), with support from the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS).

# 1. History of the Pollution Challenges

Kitakyushu City's journey to overcome pollution did more than restore the environment — it strengthened community collaboration, fostered trust and inspired hope for future generations, laying the foundation for a resilient, nature-positive and sustainable society.

## Reading Into the Future Through the *Kitakyushu ESD and SDGs Story Booklet*

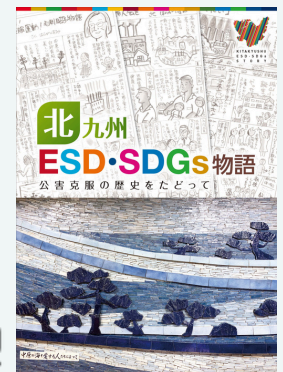
Once a hub of heavy industry, Kitakyushu City in Fukuoka, Japan faced severe pollution in the 1960s and 70s so severe that Dokai Bay became known as the Sea of Death. Overcoming this crisis required collaboration among citizens, businesses and the local government. Through coordinated action, the city restored its environment and became an early model of community-led sustainability, laying the groundwork for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and today's regional circular and ecological spheres. The *Kitakyushu ESD and SDGs Story* booklet preserves this legacy, showing how the city turned its polluted past into a foundation for a nature-positive, sustainable future.



**Izumi Haraga**  
**RCE Kitakyusyu**

### Voice of Author

The *Kitakyushu ESD and SDGs Story* was created during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 to share how the city confronted environmental challenges through community action. Once deeply affected by pollution, Kitakyushu recovered through the collective efforts of citizens, industry, and local government — an experience that aligns with Japan's current vision for sustainable and resilient communities. The RCE Youth Meeting 2024 reminded me that ESD is ultimately about learning from our past and passing on shared values to the next generation, supporting today's move toward regional circular and ecological spheres and a nature-positive society.



## Building a Sustainable Society through Reading *Kitakyushu ESD and SDGs Story*: Reflections from Youth

Working with others who share an interest in social issues and creating opportunities to expand collaboration. To grow this circle, it is important to build an inclusive environment where everyone can easily participate.

— **Maaya Onishi, RCE Hyogo-Kobe**

Taking action with respect for diverse backgrounds and perspectives, and involving people from all walks of life. It is also important to value and empower small communities by connecting them with inclusive initiatives that foster a sense of belonging.

— **Yuika Mori, RCE Hyogo-Kobe**

An environment where anyone can freely join discussions without special restrictions or barriers.

— **Abubakar Pae Flady Faliyenco Franggaratz, RCE Chubu**

As citizens and university students, it is important to quickly sense social changes and communicate them to the government. By sharing information promptly and encouraging appropriate responses, we can help build a sustainable society.

— **Mana Yoshida, RCE Chubu**

Identifying region-specific issues from a local perspective and continuously working toward their resolution.

— **Ryoga Hiroki, RCE Yokohama**

First, visit the site in person and pay attention to any sense of discomfort, exploring deeply to uncover problems. Through observation, sketching and interviews, share these issues so that even those unfamiliar with them recognize their importance.

— **Yukiya Shimada, RCE Chubu**



## 2. Organizations Oriented Towards Well-Being

Across Kitakyushu City, a variety of organizations are fostering an inclusive environment that supports both physical and mental well-being by creating safe, welcoming spaces for residents and promoting intergenerational connections rooted in mutual support, in line with community-based approaches to sustainable and nature-positive living.

### Moyai Seiyukai

Guided by the principle of “Smiles through Mutual Support,” Moyai Seiyukai fosters human connection through community-based activities. The organization provides safe spaces and consultation hubs where people can gather, interact and support one another, serving as a hub for inclusive and caring local networks.



Photo: Masahide Takashiro

### Sukiccha Kitakyushu



Photo: Jun Tanimoto

Under the theme “Fostering Love for the Community,” Sukiccha Kitakyushu supports local initiatives in school districts, helping children and residents deepen their love for Kitakyushu while encouraging others to do the same. Activities include community building, disaster preparedness and crime prevention. The student-led Sukiccha Academy nurtures future community leaders.



### KID's WORK

KID's WORK offers camps and experiential programs for elementary students that foster independent thinking, decision-making and action. These activities provide opportunities for both children and young staff to learn from one another. Throughout the year, the organization plans and manages a variety of experiential projects, including long-term camps. Based in Kitakyushu City, KID's WORK serves as an important hub for social education.



Photo: Yuya Oku

## 3. Rich in Nature

Natural and educational sites in Kitakyushu City, like the Sone Tidal Flats, Dokai Bay and the Environmental Museum, serve not only as places for nature observation and environmental learning but also promote well-being by nurturing physical and mental health and community connections.

### Sone Tidal Flat

Located in southern Kitakyushu City, the Sone Tidal Flats are an important wetland with a vast tidal environment and rich biodiversity, attracting many migratory birds. Loved by locals for nature observation and environmental education, it has gained attention for its roles in conservation, disaster prevention and education. Conservation efforts involve local schools and organizations, making it a key site for ESD.



Photo: Kazuya Fukutake

### Kitakyushu Environment Museum



Photo: Yuya Oku

The Kitakyushu Environment Museum is an experiential facility where visitors can see, touch and learn about environmental issues and the city's history of pollution. Established after the Kitakyushu Expo-Festival 2001, it serves as a key hub for ESD, providing learning opportunities for schools and the wider community. Today, it remains a central institution for citizen-led environmental education.



### Dokai Bay

Once severely polluted and called the Sea of Death, Dokai Bay faced an environmental crisis due to heavy industry. Since the 1970s, collaboration among citizens, businesses and government has led to major improvements. Today, the bay is a clean marine environment home to over 100 species. Its restoration is recognized nationally and internationally as a successful example of community-based environmental education and ESD.



Photo: Masahide Takashiro



# Aviewred Bridgeum



Photo: Kanae Kanesaki

Established in 2013 to promote the value and appeal of the Wakato Bridge, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2012, Aviewred Bridgeum is located inside the bridge and offers visitors an opportunity to learn about its history and construction. The exhibition room features original design blueprints and components that were used and replaced over the past 50 years. As the facility is situated in a critical structural area and is not always open, visits require prior reservation.



# Former Furukawa Mining Wakamatsu Building

The Former Furukawa Mining Wakamatsu Building, built in 1900, is a historic red-brick structure featuring sturdy Western-style architecture that reflects the era's prosperity and supported Kitakyushu's coal industry and industrial growth. Vacant since 1997, it was preserved through public support and now serves as a tourist facility and community hall. As part of ESD initiative, the building connects the city's industrial past with present-day sustainability education.



Photo: Masahide Takashiro



Photo: Tayawee Supan

## 4. Campus-Based Projects

University students across Kitakyushu City are taking the lead in addressing local community challenges through their own projects, contributing to community well-being and supporting the city's efforts toward sustainable, nature-positive development.

### Kankyobosai Kitakyudai-3Club, University of Kitakyushu

Kankyobosai Kitakyudai-3Club at the University of Kitakyushu leads student-driven projects on disaster preparedness and environmental awareness. In collaboration with the NPO Social Entertainment Laboratory, the club promotes global environmental learning through the interactive card game My Earth, including original cards that highlight Kitakyushu's unique features in an engaging and educational way.



Photo: Masasora Tatukawa

### SDGs Challenge Action Study Group, The Kyushu Kyoritsu University

The SDGs Challenge Action Research Group at Kyushu Kyoritsu University develops students' problem-solving skills through collaboration with local businesses and government. Students propose solutions to real-world challenges, engage with the community, gain practical experience and actively share their work via social media. This initiative serves as a strong example of ESD leveraging local resources.



Photo: Manami Sato

### Golden Z Club, Seinan Jo Gakuin University

The Golden-Z Club at Seinan Jo Gakuin University, supported by the Kitakyushu Zonta Club, addresses global and social issues such as gender equality and educational support for Cambodia. It also engages with overseas ESD regional centers, including participation in the Korea RCE Tongyeong International Forum, contributing to the development of the next generation of SDGs leaders.



Photo: Ayumi Matsuyama



## 5. Voices and Actions of Youth

### Voices of RCE Youth: Discovering Kitakyushu with Japan's RCE Youth Members

I visited the social welfare organization Moyai Seiyukai and was impressed by the multigenerational interactions among local residents within the facility. This experience reinforced for me the importance of creating spaces where people of all ages can connect — a key element of ESD.

— **Yuika Mori, RCE Chubu**

I participated in a cruise of Dokai Bay. I was moved by the sight of the Wakato Bridge, Japan's first interconnecting bridge, and the revitalized Dokai Bay, brought back to life through the efforts of the local community.

— **Yukiya Shimada, RCE Chubu**

### Youth Representative, 2024 Japan RCE Youth Meeting

This was my second time participating in the RCE Youth Meeting. As the youth representative of RCE Kitakyushu, I was involved from the planning stage, which allowed me to deepen my understanding of our region's challenges, strengths and their connection to ESD. Working with fellow youth members, we aimed to link local initiatives to global perspectives and engage youth from other regions. Through this process, we created a program that highlighted Kitakyushu's appeal while inspiring participants to take part in building a sustainable society. I am sincerely grateful to the United Nations University and RCE members across Japan for their support and this meaningful opportunity.

— **Masahide Takashiro, RCE Kitakyushu**

## 6. RCE Kitakyushu (Kitakyushu ESD Council)

Kitakyushu ESD Council, based in Kitakyushu City in Fukuoka, brings together schools, government, and civic organizations to promote community-based ESD. Recognized by the United Nations University in 2008 as RCE Kitakyushu, the council draws on the city's experience in overcoming industrial pollution to connect local learning with practical action. It also fosters youth engagement through diverse civic initiatives, contributing to the community well-being and the city's sustainable, nature-positive development. Today, Kitakyushu serves as a leading model for ESD, with the entire city functioning as a living classroom for sustainability.



Official Webpage



## 7. Japan's RCE Network

Regional Centres of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development (RCEs), recognized by the United Nations University (UNU), act as local hubs promoting ESD and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within communities. In Japan, eight RCEs actively advance sustainability through regional initiatives and youth engagement. Each center involves young people in hands-on learning, while the annual Japan RCE Youth Meeting brings together youth representatives from across the country to exchange ideas and strengthen networks.

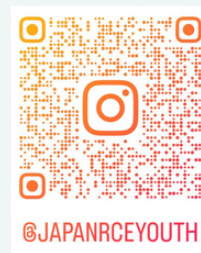


## 8. Overview of Japan RCE Youth Meeting 2025

**Date:** 10–11 February, 2025

**Location:** Kitakyushu City, Fukuoka, Japan

**Theme:** From Local to Global — Glocal ESD in Kitakyushu



### Event Overview

From 10–11 February 2025, Japan RCE Youth Meeting 2025 was held in Kitakyushu City under the theme “From Local to Global: Glocal ESD in Kitakyushu.” The event brought together 23 youth members from five RCEs across Japan.

On the first day, participants visited the Kitakyushu Environment Museum, starting with the card game My Earth and a guided tour by the museum director. They learned about Kitakyushu’s history of overcoming pollution and how local sustainability efforts connect to global challenges.

The second day featured visits to the Sone Tidal Flats, *Moyai Seiyukai*, and the Wakato Bridge Exhibition Room, offering insights into the city’s path from pollution to sustainability and its distinctive ESD practices. Through discussions, participants reflected on how local characteristics can inspire solutions in their own regions.

To continue sharing ideas and initiatives, the youth members also launched a new Instagram account to promote ongoing exchange and collaboration.



### Participant Data / Affiliations

Total Number of Participants: 23

- |                                   |                              |                             |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ● Kyushu University               | ● Okayama University         | ● Yokohama Guesthouse HACO. |
| ● Kyushu Kyoritsu University      | ● Chubu University           | TATAMI                      |
| ● University of Kitakyushu        | ● Nagoya University          | ● Kitakyushu Interpretation |
| ● Fukuoka Institute of Technology | ● Chukyo University          | Research Group              |
| ● Kitakyushu ESD Council          | ● Kobe University            | ● Yamaha Music Foundation   |
| ● Seinan Jo Gakuin University     | ● Institute of Science Tokyo |                             |



# 9.Profile of Japan RCE Youth Members

## Pre-Conference Interviews

- ① What Are Your Goals for Japan RCE Youth Meeting 2024?
- ② Your Top Three Favorites!



- ① I want to create a platform for sharing and disseminating information within Japan RCE network.
- ② I like camping, basketball, and traveling.

**RCE Kitakyushu**  
**Masahide Takashiro**



- ① I want to learn more about local uniqueness through exchanges with other RCE youth.
- ② Sleeping, mountaineering club and applying for two licenses.

**RCE Kitakyushu**  
**Yuya Oku**



- ① As a managing team member, I hope this helps foster exchange and growth among RCEs nationwide.
- ② I enjoy sports, filming and editing videos, and watching TV.

**RCE Kitakyushu**  
**Jun Tanimoto**



- ① As a managing team member, I hope this helps foster exchange and growth among RCEs nationwide.
- ② Karaoke, animation, eating

**RCE Kitakyushu**  
**Manami Sato**



- ① I want to deepen my understanding of RCE initiatives.
- ② I love games, movies and traveling.

**RCE Kitakyushu**  
**Masasora Tatsukawa**



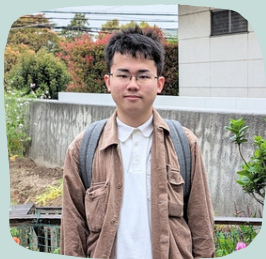
- ① Though the Japan RCE Youth Meeting, I want to facilitate smooth communication.
- ② I like donating blood and indoor activities.

**RCE Kitakyushu**  
**Kazuya Fukutake**



- ① I want to learn about activities of Japan RCE Youth in other regions and think what actions I can do nowon.
- ② Conversation, music and traveling

**RCE Kitakyushu**  
**Kaito Yasue**



- ① I want to communicate with Japan RCE Youth in other regions and broaden my horizons.
- ② I like taking a walk, cooking and sleeping.

**RCE Kitakyushu**  
**Ryo Iwao**



- ① I want to learn the regional initiatives of RCE Youth and put it into practice in university activities.
- ② I like dance, travel and food.

**RCE Kitakyushu**  
**Ayumi Matsuyama**



- ① I aim to develop meaningful action plans by rethinking the SDGs from new perspectives and addressing local issues. I also help promote ESD by sharing our ideas and activities.
- ② Eating, nature and animation

**RCE Chubu**  
**Mana Yoshida**



- ① Through experiences with people from various RCEs or youth meetings, I want to deepen my understanding of sustainability.
- ② Swimming, weight training and martial arts

**RCE Chubu**  
**Yukiya Shimada**



- ① Through studying the “glocal” approach, I aim to introduce knowledge of community activities from Kitakyushu to the Chubu region.
- ② Welfare, special support education, skiing

**RCE Chubu**  
**Flady Falienco Franggaratz Abubakar Pae**



- ① I want to connect with RCE Youth, share the challenges of my nonprofit activities and explore solutions together.
- ② I like airplane, traveling abroad and cycling.

**RCE Chubu**  
**Yuguchi Takuma**



- ① I aim to gain a glocal perspective through exchanges with other RCE youth and share ESD idea
- ② Japanese sweets and singing. I can fold a paper rose.

**RCE Okayama**  
**Aki Numata**



- ① I aim to deepen my understanding of sustainability.
- ② Knitting, Denmark and tennis

**RCE Hyogo Kobe**  
**Maaya Onishi**





- ① Promotes ESD and connections through social media at ESD Platform WILL
- ② Piano instructor passionate about music, education and supporting out-of-school youth.

**RCE Hyogo Kobe**  
**Shiori Kinoshita**



- ① Hopes to learn from Kitakyushu's pollution control history and promote ESD through social media; from Kitakyushu City
- ② Enjoy cooking and baseball.

**RCE Hyogo Kobe**  
**Yuika Mori**



- ① I want to think about sustainable communities through fieldwork and exchange of ideas, and apply that to activities in Yokohama.
- ② Enjoy photography, cafés and waterfronts.

**RCE Yokohama**  
**Riyoko Kobayashi**



- ① Aims to learn from Kitakyushu's challenges to build transferable problem-solving skills
- ② Certified Weather Forecaster and Level 1 Japanese Tea Instructor.

**RCE Yokohama**  
**Ryoga Hiroki**







Photo: Camille Brodard

## Contact

**Global RCE Service Centre, United Nations University,  
Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS)**

✉ [rceservicecentre@unu.edu](mailto:rceservicecentre@unu.edu)

🌐 <https://unu.edu/ias/global-rce-network>

**RCE Kitakyushu (Kitakyushu ESD Council)**

✉ [kitakyushuesd@gmail.com](mailto:kitakyushuesd@gmail.com)

🌐 <https://www.k-esd.jp>