

## **Development and Implementation of Effective Programs for Health Education and Practice Appropriate for Japanese Characteristics**

Project Leader: Fumio Kikuta

### **【Goal】**

To develop and practice people-centered health education programs in which experts support citizens in their developing abilities to create a lifestyle suited to themselves. These programs are aimed to be:

- Fun for participants to experience
- Expected to be smoothly incorporated into the daily life of urban people
- Not making participants feel as if they are forced to participate
- Expected to be sustainable and long-lasting
- Open for families (parents and children) to participate together
- Inspiring participants to develop a healthy lifestyle on their own for everyday life

With the aim of developing programs that meet these criteria, we set the following three implementation goals.

- 1) Developing software that allows users to keep records of their lifestyle every day and objectively reflect on their lifestyle in a trouble-free manner that is similar to playing a game; with the use of this software, offer an environment that gives citizens opportunities to identify characteristics of their own everyday lifestyle and educate themselves in a fun manner and through experiences that are focused around what can be done to make improvements.
- 2) With the aim of preventing and/or controlling lifestyle-related disease, launching a community sports complex in the Tsukiji and Akashi-cho areas in Tokyo, where advice and assessments are provided by medical professionals; through this, providing support to the formation of a lifestyle that naturally incorporates sports into people's livelihood at least several times a week.
- 3) Planning and implementing seasonal programs in which participants stay at a lodging facility with their families in an area richly endowed with nature on their holiday, and enjoy nature-experiencing activities and sports in nature, including life experience-oriented health educational activities to prompt participants to review their everyday lifestyles and health educational activities to help participants become aware of the importance and value of life and health through their experiences in nature; developing programs that can be smoothly incorporated into the daily life of urbanites and eventually organizing them into a system.

### **【Plan and Implementation Process】**

Planning and implementation process for each of the programs 1) to 3) listed above is as follows:

- 1) Developing a pilot tool that users can employ to identify their own everyday lifestyle, and educate themselves about the importance of improving such a lifestyle or decision-making concerning everyday living activities, in an experimental and game-playing manner, using game-inspired educational materials that run on i-Mode mobile phones, so users can use it whenever and wherever they wish.
- 2) Gathering information from community residents as to needs for a community sports complex to run in the Tsukiji and Akashi-cho areas in Tokyo; based on the results, planning activities to support citizens at varying stages in their life, to control lifestyle-related diseases (selection and determination of diet and luxury food intake, or guide to safe sporting activities), and

developing and implementing health educational programs to encourage citizens to incorporate such activities into their everyday lives.

- 3) Developing and implementing hands-on health educational programs that employ nature-experience activities that participants join in while staying at accommodations with their families in an area surrounded by nature, and making evaluations; in evaluating the programs, points of focus are whether the participants have had an inspiration to reflect on their own everyday lifestyles through experiencing a program developed as part of this project, whether they have been able to feel the importance and value of health and life, and whether they think the program may be incorporated into everyday life of participants who live in urban areas.

The key messages that we intended to communicate to participants of these programs are the following nine concepts:

- Have fun (the bottom line is to have good time; do not turn against your own instincts)
- Open atmosphere (not giving participants a sense of being confined in implementing a program; creating a space comfortable for both the newcomer and repeat participants)
- Experience-focused learning (programs are designed to give opportunities to enjoy learning through experiences)
- Nature and wildlife experiencing activities (perceiving life)
- Lifestyle experience activities (participants sharing living hours)
- Communication (Giving weight to children's communicating with adults other than their own parents; making sure all adults keep an eye on children)
- Reflection (participants' awareness; opportunity for them to have thoughts on how to make the best of their own situation in their daily life from now)
- Sharing (sharing sympathies with other families)
- Influences of the site ("Kiyosato magic" produced by a site filled with nature's gifts)

### **【Goal Attainment】**

Goal attainment for each of the programs 1) to 3) listed above is as follows:

- 1) In FY2003, we developed the pilot version of a lifestyle experience-oriented, health-themed game that runs on i-Mode mobile phones, available for downloading from the server. This served to materialize the basic foundation of a system to enable users to collect data that allow them to look objectively at characteristics of their own everyday lifestyles from a long-term point of view. In actually running this test-developed, life experience-oriented health-themed game, however, it has been learned that it is largely affected by the model and functions of the i-Mode mobile phone to be used, and that maintaining the basic functions of the software alone would require significant funding. We have therefore, been seeking hardware and software that works in line with the concepts pictured in this project with reduced cost.
- 2) In FY2003, we conducted an interview survey to gather information from community residents regarding needs for a community sports complex to be open in the Tsukiji and Akashi-cho areas, covering board members of the Tsukiji block association, business owners, and Chuo Ward physical-education instructors. The results showed that there are a number of sport clubs targeting juveniles and adults, some of which are highly active as they may be competing with teams from other wards, suggesting that the new community sports complex we may build is unlikely to have much impact. This has led us to conclude that, in order for the program to work effectively, we should participate in activities at different sport clubs targeting varying

populations, through which we plan activities to help citizens to control lifestyle-related diseases and implement health educational programs that may be incorporated into citizens' everyday life on an ongoing basis, and that it would be ideal for us to assume an administrative role to support and control the implementation process. As a result, we have been contemplating strategies for us to effectively implement the program in partnership with multiple existing sport clubs that are actively working.

3) From FY2004-2007, we have developed and implemented life experience-oriented health educational programs that employ nature-experience activities. The following is an overview of the programs:

(1) Distributing brochures (public relations) - asking three primary schools neighboring St. Luke's College of Nursing to distribute the brochure to all pupils

(2) Site and activities - Kiyosato Educational Experiment Project (KEEP) St. Francis Discovery Center (Kiyosato, Takane-cho, Hokuo City, Yamanashi Prefecture)

(3) Camping programs implemented to date

2-Day parent-child camp (12 sessions) at KEEP St. Francis Discovery Center

11-Day parent-child camp (3 sessions) at KEEP St. Francis Discovery Center

1-Day parent-child camp (1 session) near Tsukiji, Chuo Ward, Tokyo

(4) Staff members

Health education researchers

Rangers (nature experience activity instructors)

Administrative dietitians

Farm workers (in charge of dairy experience)

Farmers (in charge of farming experience)

St. Luke's College of Nursing graduate and undergraduate students

(5) Engaging participants

Developing programs by combining expert knowledge

Maintaining exclusively a role as a catalyst (avoid excessive engagement with participants)

Developing an atmosphere that is comfortable to be in and always open

Acting on equal terms with, and from a point of view of, participants

Effective feedback to participants (Slideshow about a "reflection meeting")

Safety management

(6) Evaluations by participants to parent-child camps

- Acquired health knowledge and methods of practice through hands-on learning session
- Recognized the link of life (Willing to keep in mind that to eat is to receive life in living daily life / Witnessed proof of animals living in a "natural" setting)
- Had a new discovery with respect to parent-child relationship (parent looking at child / child looking at parent / as a result of living together with other families)
- Observed Father roles on many occasions ("outdoor activities" and "adventure activities" involve a number of occasions for fathers to play an active role); the "inner child" of fathers resonated together, serving to connect different families
- An atmosphere encouraging the watching and fostering of children together was created; experience for children and adults who met each other for the first time at the camp to work together
- Found the program to be a comfortable setting (in parent-child camps held in FY2005)

and onward, the ratio of repeat participants and newcomers changed from 5:5 to 6:4)

- A number of parents seem to be interested in the parent-child camps even if they are yet to actually participate, suggesting a large population of potential applicants

(7) What is required of staff

Creativity; flexible responses; enthusiasm; moderate engagement; safety management

(8) Evaluations from staff members

- Staff can also learn from participants
- Children will not grow up with a *laissez-faire* attitude alone
- Fresh recognition that family keeps growing up
- What nature teaches us is significant

**【Future directions】**

- Continuing seasonal programs (parent-child camps) (continuing to serve as one of a number of valuable options for citizens)
- Longitudinally checking whether what participants experienced or felt has been smoothly incorporated into their everyday life in the urban area after the program
- Working to smoothly link together participants' everyday urban life and their life experience at the parent-child camp (seasonal program)
- Working to foster communication skills of parents to socialize well
- Making the hands-on health educational programs that employ nature-experience activities into packages and developing implementation instructions