



PARTICIPANTS OF THE FIRST TERRA SCHOOL



ABOUT THE ORGANIZERS

## About TERRA School

by Yuko Onishi

TERRA School is a short-term intensive course on co-creation and transdisciplinary research in practice, organized by the Research Institute for Humanity & Nature (RIHN) in collaboration with the Regional Centre for Future Earth in Asia.

TERRA School aims to build capacity for transdisciplinary research, where researchers and societal stakeholders work together to address challenges facing humanity in Asia. It is envisioned to be a cultivation encounter, aimed at creating awareness of what transdisciplinarity can offer and the challenges involved in its implementation.

The first training course was held from December 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at RIHN. The course featured lectures, workshops and interactive sessions on theories and practice of transdisciplinary research. It included structured learning on tools and methodologies used in TD (e.g. problem framing, stakeholder mapping, analysis and integration) and introduction to the various transdisciplinary research conducted at RIHN. A field visit and interaction with local stakeholders in Kameoka City, Kyoto provided on the ground exposure to participants of actual transdisciplinary projects.

A total of 16 participants coming from different parts of Asia and the Pacific attended the 1-week course. Participant's ages ranged from 32 to 51 years old (average of 40 years old) with 9 female and 7 male. All of them had a doctorate degree with varying degree of experiences and were currently connected with universities in their respective countries. One participant was working for a think tank/research consulting firm. The fields of expertise of the participants were also varied with a good mix of natural and social sciences. A few participants had experience with interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary projects, but most had none.

The objectives of the first edition were to:

- Introduce the and summarize TD activities at RIHN and to improve the name recognition of the institute
- To promote and build capacity for transdisciplinary research among young researchers (and to build capacity for new future earth projects)
- Network formation by graduate students



### RIHN

RIHN has conducted inter- and trans-disciplinary research in search of the ideal interaction of humanity and nature since its foundation in 2001, in addition to academic research spanning the natural sciences, humanities, and social sciences, while also considering regional characteristics and historical contexts.



### Future Earth Asia Centre

Future Earth is a new research initiative launched in 2015, which brings together 24 large global environmental change research networks. Interdisciplinarity and Transdisciplinarity are key concepts in Future Earth. RIHN hosts the Regional Centre for Future Earth in Asia.



# Summary of the program

## PHOTOS

### Day 1: getting to know each other

Prof. Hein Mallee gave a tour through the RIHN institute and provided a presentation on transdisciplinarity, Future Earth, and RIHN. In the afternoon, the participants introduced their research, using an iconic object they brought from their countries. Participants brought a variety of unique objects such as traditional Malaysian hats, playing cards with Cambodian endemic species, and traditional Bhutanese food. Dr. Agnes Rampisela gave a plenary lecture on the principles for enabling TD research. Dr. Rampisela worked as a co-leader of RIHN research project on Integrated Water Resources Management, where she was the primary investigator for the Jeneberang watershed project site on the Sulawesi island in Indonesia. The lecture provided tips for practicing TD research, such as encouraging dialogues with residents.

### Day 2: learning about TD methods

Dr. Lambino introduced "rich pictures" and stakeholder analysis as tools to enable TD process. Rich pictures are "a compilation of drawings, pictures, symbols, and text that represent a particular situation or issue from the view point(s) of the person or people who draw them." These rich pictures can help to better understand the complexity of entire situation and to encourage people to think deeply about the problem. It is also useful for organizing thoughts and analyze interactions to encourage discussions and attain shared understandings among different stakeholders. Participants were split into groups to exercise the two tools based on a particular problem.

In the afternoon, RIHN researchers introduced case studies and talked about their experiences with doing TD research. Dr. Okuda presented about the E-Rec project (Biodiversity Driven Nutrient Cycling and Social Well Being in Social Ecological Systems) which focuses on improving community well-being while managing phosphorous cycling. Dr. McGreevy presented about the FEAST project which focuses on the potential for sustainable agri-food transition at sites in Japan, Thailand, Bhutan, and China. The

presenters reflected on the TD approaches taken in the projects and shared lessons learned. During a campfire session, participants and other RIHN researchers also shared in groups about their TD research experiences.

### Day 3: fieldvisit to Kameoka city

On day 3, the participants took the bus to Kameoka city, a field site of the FEAST project. The FEAST Project has been conducting TD research in Kameoka city in collaboration with various stakeholders engaged in local food production, consumption, distribution and food-related practices. The project works towards building civic food networks. At the Kameoka City, Ms. Hirai, an officer in the city agriculture division, talked about the unique characteristics of agriculture in Kameoka.

Later that day, the group visited the farm of Mr. Katamoto, a farmer who recently moved to the area. He gave a tour around his farm and discussed various farming methods and products. After the farm visit, the group visited a restaurant called Kanematsu, where chef. Ozasa held a lecture about *Shojin Ryori*, a vegetarian dish usually prepared by and for Buddhist monks. "Shojin Ryori" differs from Western vegetarian meals in that it is prepared according to the spirit of "Mottainai" (zero waste). For example, vegetable skins are not peeled, or if they are peeled, are used for broth. During the lunch at the restaurant, Chef Ozasa and Dr. Tamura talked about their experience of participating in the feast projects and the achievements of the project. Later in the afternoon, the group moved to a local café called "Kiri Café" to meet with other FEAST partners involved in the research project, who shared about their initiatives to transform food systems in the area and their experiences with participating in TD research.



### Tour around RIHN

Prof. Hein Mallee gave a tour through the RIHN institute and Regional Centre for Future Earth in Asia.



### Fieldvisit to Kameoka city

TERRA participants walked through the Katamoto farms, seeing various vegetables grown in the fields and enjoying conversing with Mr. Katamoto on farming methods, products, etc.



### Workshops

TERRA school included structured learning on tools and methodologies used in TD (e.g. problem framing, stakeholder mapping, analysis and integration) and introduction to the various transdisciplinary research conducted at RIHN. Throughout the Terra School, participants were encouraged to reflect on and experiment with the ideas they learned after each lecture.



### Day 4: TD practice

In the morning, there was a debriefing sessions where participants reflected on the field visit and discussed about various aspects of TD practice and the role of researchers in TD. Throughout the rest of the day, researchers presented case studies about TD research and hosted workshops about TD methods. Dr. Oh presented a case study of a transdisciplinary project in Takashima city in Japan titled "Trans-disciplinary challenge toward collaborative regional development". Dr. Yuko Onishi presented a case study of the Japan Strategic Research Agenda, a project which formulated 107 issues that to be addressed in the next 10 years in research for global sustainability, based on discussions with various societal stakeholders and researchers in Japan. The Open Team Science project gave a talk that focused on overcoming

problems that arise when people from different disciplines collaborate and how to overcome these problems. Lastly, Dr. Mallee led the session on integration, drawing upon experiences of various RIHN projects. Participants were encouraged to reflect on and experiment with the ideas they learned after each lecture.

After the lecture, participants were divided into groups to develop TD projects proposals based on case studies. Using stakeholder analysis and theory of change, research questions and solutions were developed

### Day 5: Sharing lessons learned

Dr. Kada presented a case study of TD research projects, with the title: Managing Environmental Risks to food and Health Security in Asian

Watershed. The key theme of the project was the relationship between ecological deterioration (ecosystem services) and food (decline of soil fertility, food supply) and health (food safety, contamination, food-related infectious diseases) risks.

In the afternoon, the participants continued working on the research concept development following the integration session on Day 4 and presented their work to the group. The proposals addressed a wide range of environmental problems (such as food systems, chemical pollution, conservation of rare species, and climate change) and reflected the diverse nationalities and experiences of the participants. To wrap up the TERRA school, the participants sat together to discuss what they had learned and to reflect upon how they might want to use this.



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