

AGST Working Paper Series

No. 2016-01

November 2016

Environmental Policy &
Rural Development Studies



Studying Sustainable Development in an International and Multidisciplinary Setting: An experience of international graduate education at Kyoto University

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Asian Platform for Global Sustainability & Transcultural Studies
Kyoto University | Japan Gateway Program

Title	Studying Sustainable Development in an International and Multidisciplinary Setting: An experience of international graduate education at Kyoto University
Author(s)	Hisano, Shuji; Rajaonarison, Haja M.
Citation	Hisano, S. & Rajaonarison, H. M. (2016). <i>Studying Sustainable Development in an International and Multidisciplinary Setting: An experience of international graduate at Kyoto University</i> . (AGST Working Paper Series No.2016-01). Kyoto: Asian Platform for Global Sustainability & Transcultural Studies.
URL	http://agst.jgp.kyoto-u.ac.jp/workingpaper/755
Published online	October 2016
Right	CC BB 4.0
Type	Working Paper

This Working Paper Series has been made possible by the funding provided by Kyoto University “Japan Gateway” Top Global Program and published by the Asian Global Platform for Sustainability and Transcultural Studies (AGST) Project. For more information about the project please visit the webpage: <http://agst.jgp.kyoto-u.ac.jp/>

To consult other issues published by the AGST or the guideline for paper submission please visit the webpage: <http://bit.ly/2eS0F10>

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Studying Sustainable Development in an International and Multidisciplinary Setting: An experience of international graduate education at Kyoto University

Shuji Hisanoⁱ and Haja M. Rajaonarisonⁱⁱ

Abstract: This paper discusses the process of internationalisation of international curriculum of the Graduate School of Economics at Kyoto University with a particular focus on the case of the East Asia Sustainable Economic Development Studies and the activities of the agro-food study group in leading research in this regards. Building on these two cases, the paper aims at giving insightful views on the potential direction of the internationalisation of institution of higher education in Japan.

Keywords: Internationalisation, multidisciplinary approach, sustainable development

1. Introduction

The technical innovation and technological progress over the past centuries have engendered a great leap in our modern society. Nonetheless, great achievements also bring new challenges exposing the study of sustainable development (SD) under issues that are increasingly complex and often hard to identify. In the public policy jargon, such phenomenon is described as a *wicked* or *ill-structured problem* (Lönngren and Svanström 2016; Penaskovic et al. 2014). With the amalgam of crises that occurred over the past years, it goes without saying that the paradigm of SD has arrived at a critical juncture. To name few overarching challenges: the adaptation to climate change, the accelerated urbanisation, the increasing demand for natural resources, food, water and energy as well as the resurgent violent conflicts in weak states today require particular attention in a comprehensive and multidisciplinary way.

To respond to these complexities, pragmatic approaches are expected to provide new insightful solutions in problem solving. Such approaches, to a greater extent, can be translated into multidisciplinary methodologies that involve the disciplines of social science and concomitantly, natural science as well as engineering. While the adoption of such

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organisational style is easily feasible in a policy environment, building a multidisciplinary setting in academia is confronted with many obstacles as we shall see in the subsequent sections.

Today, a growing number of institutions of higher education offer a programme on SD supported by different global initiatives. [Macgregor \(2015\)](#), for instance, gives some historical references and the number of participating institutions since the 1990s to the recent date. These initiatives include: the declaration of Talloires in 1990 with 466 institutions; the Kyoto Declaration for SD signed by the International Association of Universities having 1200 members in 1993; the University Charter for SD signed by the European University Association with 305 institutions in 1994; the UN Decade of Education for SD in 2002; the Association for the Advancement of SD in Higher Education launched in 2006; and the Declaration of Bonn in 2009 ([see also: Corcoran et al. 2002](#)).

The Graduate School of Economics at Kyoto University launched an international graduate programme (hereafter EA programme) in 2009 with the aim of providing students with advanced academic knowledge and practical skills necessary to contribute to SD in East Asia and the World. Furthermore, since 2014, as part of the internationalisation of Japanese universities, Kyoto University has been funded by the Japanese government for its Top Global University Project under the name of “Japan Gateway Programme (JGP)”. For coordination purposes, the EA programme is now in a process of being integrated into the JGP’s Social Sciences and Humanities Unit “Asian Platform for Global Sustainability and Transcultural Studies (AGST)”. The JGP-AGST is meant to provide joint courses and research guidance and to develop “joint/double degree programmes” with international partner institutions.

This brief description and contextualisation of the different projects going on at Kyoto University pose multiple challenges not only regarding the scope and the degree of the units to be taught at the level of the department or university-wide, but also with respect to the institutional constraints imposed by the internationalisation, principally, the case of university partners. This is because the teaching of SD under its current configuration (i.e. EA programme integrated in the JGP-AGST) is concurrently self-reinforcing and occasionally conflicting. Furthermore, Japan is a country that has less internationalised higher education system, less competitive in the disciplines of social sciences, and whose academic environment is fiercely resistant to change ([Yonezawa and Shimmi 2015; Ota 2014](#)).

Nonetheless, the above mentioned shortcomings are not a reason to throw out the baby with the bath water. The internationalisation process at Kyoto University is gradually taking shape and continues to yield remarkable results. “Environmental Policy & Rural Development

Studies”, one of the five tracks within the programme, is one leading case in which experiences can be learned and expanded within and beyond institutional level. Having this in mind and in view of the current assessment, this paper aims to describe some of the more recent developments in the internationalisation process and the teaching of SD at Kyoto University and correspondingly, to share experiences as well as achievements so far attained – to draw some implications about the challenges that need to be overcome in the future.

The organisation of this paper is divided into four parts. First, with a descriptive approach, we will highlight the different on-going projects at Kyoto University and their interactions and interconnection with the process of internationalisation. In the second part, using a multi-level method of analysis with reference to the guideline developed by the [UNESCO \(2012\)](#) on “multidisciplinary approach for education in SD”, we will draw from our experiences based on the development of the curriculum of the EA programme, such as graduate seminars, field research and exchanges with partner institutions, to conceptualise the teaching of SD in an international setting at Kyoto University. The third part of this paper focuses on some remarks and reflections upon the significance of internationalisation not just for itself, nor for a given unit in the EA programme of AGST project, but rather for nurturing “sociological imagination” ([Mills 1959](#)) to go beyond boundaries between “here and there”, “now and then”, and “us and them” concerning whatever the future students at Kyoto University are going to study. The last part concludes.

2. The Kyoto University “Japan Gateway” Top Global Programme

Japan’s higher education and research have shown great scientific and technological achievement, as is in the case of an increasing number of Nobel Prize laureates. Japan has also enjoyed a long-standing reputation as an economic powerhouse with its advanced industrial technology. Nonetheless, the achievement in the disciplines of social sciences and humanities is left far behind other major countries in Europe and North America. Even in natural science, life science and engineering, the top level universities such as the University of Tokyo and Kyoto University gradually move down on the world university ranking in recent yearsⁱⁱⁱ ([Yonezawa and Shimmi 2015](#)).

Putting aside the fact that there are a lot of things to be done to improve the quality and quantity (first and foremost, public expenditure) of its higher education and research, the factors behind the poor performances of Japanese universities in international rankings are

ⁱⁱⁱ It should be reminded that Nobel Prizes usually go to those studies that were done in 20 to 30 years ago.

explained by the backwardness of its academic institutions in terms of geography and language. In North America, Europe or East Asian countries such as Singapore or Hong-Kong for instance, universities are offering a wide range of courses taught in English, thus, attracting international students and increase international faculty mobility. In contrast, Japanese institution of higher education only offers a few courses taught in English. As noted by Yonezawa (2010), discussions during seminars in the area of natural science are often conducted in Japanese, and for social science and humanities, Japanese language and culture is almost a prerequisite. One thing leading to another, the language barrier has also had an impact on the quality of research outputs as academic journals often require submitted papers to be written in good English.

Since its founding in 1897 as the second oldest national university in Japan, Kyoto University has cultivated a distinctive academic tradition. It currently comprises 10 faculties, 18 graduate schools, 14 research institutes, and 17 educational institutes and other establishments. International students hailing from over 100 countries represent about 8 percent, approximately 1,900 out of 22,800^{iv} students. The results are almost the same regarding the ratio of international versus Japanese faculty members. About 300 out of the 4100, approximately 7 percent of the faculty members are non-Japanese. Although these figures saw a slight increase in recent years, Kyoto University still receives a very low score for “international outlook” in various world university rankings. This is actually the rationale behind the launch in 2014 of the Ministry of Education’s Top Global University Project, which is aimed to enhance the international compatibility and competitiveness of higher education in Japan by providing prioritised support for the world-class and innovative universities that are expected to lead the comprehensive internationalisation and reform of Japanese universities. The Kyoto University’s JGP has been subsequently adopted as one of the *Top Global University Project*.

The JGP is aimed to establish international joint education programmes called “Top Global Courses” at graduate schools covering research areas in which Kyoto University has a significant international competitiveness, which will be implemented in partnership with universities that are world leaders in their respective fields. One of the goals pursued in this programme is to develop and introduce “joint/double degree programmes” with those international partners. In addition to the internationalisation of graduate education arising out of these initiatives, the university is also proceeding with the internationalisation of various

^{iv} The breakdown: 13,600 undergraduates and 9,200 graduates. This ratio shows that Kyoto University is highly research oriented.

aspects of undergraduate education including the reform of admission procedure, the promotion of employment for non-Japanese faculty members, the increase of inbound and outbound student mobility, and the development of a wide range of courses taught in English. Through the synergetic effects of these initiatives, the JGP is aimed at further reinforcing the university's strengths in research and education to produce the next generation of world-leading researchers ([Kyoto University 2016](#)).

The JGP focuses on the following research areas: Social Sciences and Humanities, Human Biosciences, Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, Mathematics, Environmental Studies, and Public Health. The Graduate School of Economics (GSE), as the principal member of the Social Sciences and Humanities Unit, is closely collaborating with the Graduate School of Letters (GSL) and the Graduate School of Agriculture (GSA, the Division of Natural Resource Economics). For this collaboration to be effectively implemented, the Social Sciences and Humanities Unit has established the Asian Platform for Global Sustainability & Transcultural Studies ([AGST 2016](#)). Embracing sustainability and transcultural as common keywords, the platform seeks to establish a cross-disciplinary international collaborative education programme in cooperation with international partner institutions, namely: Chulalongkorn University, Heidelberg University, Renmin University of China, the University of Glasgow, Wageningen University. Serving as a hub for interactions between students and young researchers mainly (but not exclusively) from East Asia, Southeast Asia and Europe, the programme also strives for developing individuals, who are grounded in Asia. Moreover, with the idea of multicultural societies based on coexistence, the programme intends to foster talented young people who can contribute to sustainable regional and global development with an international perspective.

The current President of Kyoto University, Professor Juichi Yamagiwa, has launched a new initiative called WINDOW, meaning that the university should function as a “window” to society and the world at large, with its each initial letter standing for some special meanings: “W” for wild and wise; “I” for international and innovative; “N” for natural and noble; “D” for diverse and dynamic; “O” for original and optimistic; and the last “W” for women, leaders in the workplace ([Kyoto University 2015](#)). Regarding the *international and innovative*, the university says that:

“By providing students and researchers with a rich international environment, keeping abreast of international developments, and engaging in an on-going dialogue with the international community, we aim to provide a fertile ground for the generation of innovation and discovery. These efforts are further enhanced by diverse spectrum of

engagements with overseas universities, research institutions, and industry” (Kyoto University 2016).

Following a part of the initiative and the idea of the former president and a director of education who was in charge of formulating the JGP, President Yamagiwa and his executive members are actively promoting various initiatives regarding the internationalisation of education and research both university-wide and across departments. There are similarities between the attitudes expressed by Kyoto University President’s current bold initiatives in this study and those described by Knight (2004) while defining internationalisation as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education”.

3. International Graduate Programme for East Asia Sustainable Economic Development

3.1. Outline of the programme

The GSE is relatively a small unit for graduate education and research, comprising of 76 members to ensure the effective operation of educational and research activities. Of these 76 people, 58 are faculty members and 18 collaborative members mainly affiliated to the Kyoto Institute of Economic Research. As far as students are concerned, as of May 2016, the number of enrolled students accounted for 1,145 undergraduate and 241 graduate students. International students represent about 13 percent of the total number of students hailing from 26 different countries. The repartition of this figure is as follows: 48 undergraduate, 63 Master and 47 Doctoral students. The ratio of international students among all graduate students is about 46 percent. Apart from this number, 19 are auditing/exchange students.

As one of the special programmes based on the Ministry of Education (MEXT)’s “university recommendation” scholarship, the GSE launched the EA programme. Although the MEXT’s Global 30 Project listed the EA program as part of its recommended programme for international students for practical reason, it has never been funded by the Ministry. Since its launch, the programme has received a total of 100 graduate students from 19 different countries, of which 69 masters and 31 doctoral students, as of October 2016 (Table 1). The current enrolment is 36 (20 masters and 16 doctoral students). Although the programme is

open to Japanese students since 2013, it only received 3 applications in total, supposedly due to the difference of academic calendars^v.

Table 1: Number of Students (by country) Enrolled in the Programme

2009	M: China 5
2010	M: Germany 1, Romania 1, Korea 1, China 2
2011	M: Korea 2, China 8 D: China 4
2012	M: Korea 1, Indonesia 1, Thailand 1, China 8 D: Korea 2
2013	M: Nepal 1, Indonesia 2, Egypt 1, China 4 D: China 4, Korea 2, Turkey 1
2014	M: Italy 1, Indonesia 1, Vietnam 1, Thailand 1, USA 1, China 3 D: Mexico 1, Malaysia 1, Thailand 1, China 5
2015	M: UK 1, Indonesia 1, Philippines 1, Korea 1, Japan 2, China 3 D: Indonesia 2
2016	M: Spain 1, Belgium 1, Germany 1, Indonesia 1, China 8 D: Italy 1, Indonesia 1, Vietnam 1, China 5

Source: Compiled by the EA Programme Committee.

At the national level, the MEXT imposed a regulation on annual enrolment limit. Thus far, the EA programme can only accommodate 12 students per year, including 4 MEXT scholarship students. The programme received 112 applications in 2017, 65 in 2016, and 41 in 2015 from all over the world; many of them have graduated from top level universities. The selection process is based on two stages that combines document screening (CV, research proposal, academic transcripts, TOEFL/IELTS scores^{vi}, and recommendation letter) followed by an online video interview (based on research proposal).

Between the two stages, there is the process of “matching” between applicants and prospective supervisors. This is necessary because, at the institutional level, the graduate education at the GSE is largely based on the small-group instruction scheme with an emphasis on supervising thesis research rather than lecturing. Although a great number of the faculty members are conducting a wide range of research covering various topics of economics, the matching of students and academic supervisor still remain a very complicated task. Putting aside the enrolment limit imposed by the MEXT, some faculty members are also constrained to

^v Usually regular Japanese programme and consequently, the first entry in the professional world, starts from April while international programme starts October.

^{vi} Although we don't set any minimum requirement for TOEFL/IELTS scores, most of successful applicants have above 95 for TOEFL and 7.0 for IELTS.

the limit of the student they can supervise over an academic curriculum (a minimum of 2 years for masters and 3 for PhD).

3.2. Sustainable Development: a view from the far-East

One of the key words in the EA programme is “sustainable development”. Over the past two decades, the concept of Sustainability has become a fashionable word without a clear consensus on its scope. The anthropologist [Victor Turner \(1967\)](#) has coined this tendency to give different interpretations as “Multi-vocal symbols” as different fields of academic disciplines have attempted to adopt particular definition and perspective that match their own standards. Nonetheless, since the launch of the initiative United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation ([UNESCO 2012](#)) has endeavoured to provide institutions of higher education with guidelines for setting up a multidisciplinary approach that embraces different perspectives including SD.

While sharing this pluralist view, for the authors, teaching of SD is not just a concept restricted to the simple element of a definition (i.e. environmental sustainability). SD should also be about a well-balanced development among different regions, different industry sectors, different socio-economic classes, different generations, and so on. It is about justice and equity; it is about diversity and mutual respect and understanding. In a sense, the EA programme is meant for students to seek out their own way of understanding and their own style of contributions to SD locally, regionally as well as globally. For this purpose, EA students are strongly encouraged to develop a multidimensional, multidisciplinary, multicultural perspective, and also a critical sense of reality, which is sometimes missing in economics. Whatever topics students are going to study in economics and other discipline of social sciences, we believe that they should start with a reality on the ground. Although many points of view exist on the way to approach contemporary development issues, [UNESCO \(2012\)](#), however, offers eight unique elements ([Box 1](#)) that make it possible to better understand the phenomena of complexities.

Box 1 Teaching with a Multidisciplinary approach

Scientific perspective – Science is a systematic and logical way of knowing about the world around us. The scientific perspective is understood internationally.

Historical perspective – History records the changes in the world over time; it examines the past to inform actions of today and the future.

Geographic perspective – Events, problems and issues take on different complexities when viewed from small to large geographic and temporal scales.

Human rights perspective – The Universal Declaration of Human Rights unequivocally states that all humans are to be afforded certain rights including, but not limited to, life, liberty and security of person as well as the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care, and necessary social services.

Gender equality perspective – Men and women as well as boys and girls often have different roles in life, which are to be equally valued.

Values perspective – The values that individuals, cultures and countries hold influence decisions on a personal level and on a national level.

Cultural diversity perspective – Each person brings worldviews and cultural traditions that help bind the individual to a specific cultural group. In a world where mobility is increasingly common and easy, people of different cultures are crossing paths and living closely together.

Sustainability perspective – Sustainability balances environmental, social, and economic concerns, and focuses on the future to assure the well-being of upcoming generations.

Source: UNESCO (2012)

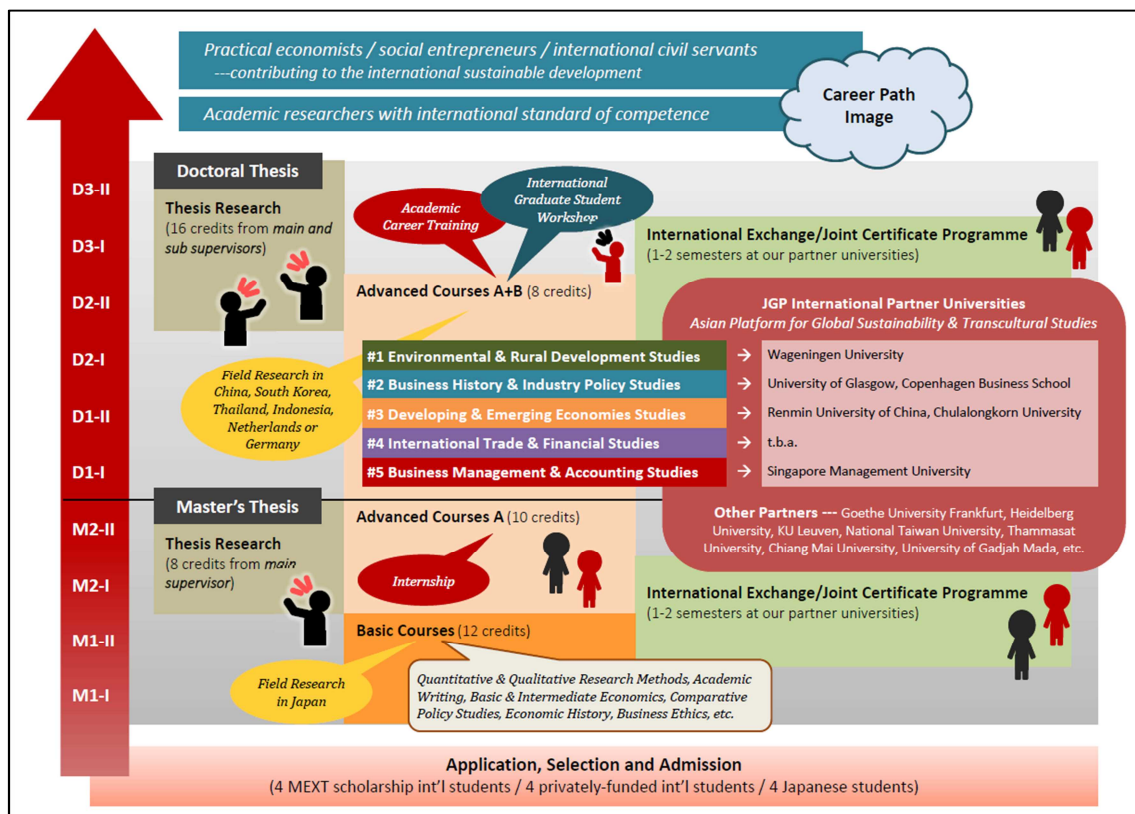


Figure 1 Course Structure of the EA Programme

Source: EA Programme Committee

In line with the UNESCO guideline, the EA programme is therefore designed to provide students with both advanced academic knowledge and practical skills in an international setting. The Master's programme offers both core and advanced courses through which students can enjoy a comprehensive curriculum (Figure 1). In addition to courses offered specifically for this programme, students can participate in selected subjects in the regular programme of the GSE as well as other graduate schools. Students also have many opportunities to conduct field work at diverse sites such as large manufacturing plants and small factories, cutting-edge businesses and rural farming communities in Japan, East Asia and Europe as briefly explained below, so that students can develop a multidisciplinary and critical sense of reality. These educational experiences are all needed to contribute to sustainable development in the region and the world as academic researchers, government officials, or social entrepreneurs.

Another key word in the EA programme is East Asia, which is defined to include both Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia as a geographical area. This does not necessarily mean that education and research themes conducted at the GSE exclusively focus on regional issues. In the same sense as "the global" is not an entity in its own right but a construction of aggregated local events and discourses, East Asia as a region is not ontologically given. It rather emerged through complex historical processes and spatial relations involving diverse social units and actors, which both from the "within" and the "outside" – are interacted and networked to construct and reconstruct something as "the regional". East Asia as a region can be (critically) understood only relating it with other regions as well as delving into its diverse nationals and locals within. This is why international programme offers many courses on comparative studies (e.g. inter-regional, inter-national, and inter-local). Still, it must be reasonable to take advantage of the knowledge and experiences derived from a leading region of the world in terms of economic, political and cultural influences. There are a number of challenges that East Asia must address if it is to maintain its role as one of the leaders and engines of the world. These include challenges relating to environmental stability, food and energy supplies, uneven development between agricultural and industrial sectors, widening income disparities and ageing populations, and less accountability of governments and business sectors. Human resource development through graduate education is crucial in meeting these developmental challenges.

3.3. Teaching and learning approaches

As in the case of different perspectives, [UNESCO \(2012\)](#) has also given some guidance on

methods of teaching and learning summarised in **Box 2** below.

As mentioned above, the GSE is actively engaged in the JGP and its Social Sciences and Humanities Unit “Asian Platform for Global Sustainability & Transcultural Studies (AGST)”. The EA programme is now in the process of being integrated into the AGST by introducing five tracks (or specialisations) according to main areas of study and theoretical and methodological orientations as follows: (1) Environmental Policy & Rural Development Studies (political economy, rural/development sociology, environmental governance); (2) Business History & Industry Policy Studies (socio-economic history, industry organisation, institutional economics); (3) Developing & Emerging Economies Studies (development economics, applied microeconomics); (4) International Trade & Financial Studies (international economics, macroeconomics); and (5) Business Management & Accounting Studies (management, organisation, accounting). Students must choose one out of these five tracks after consultation with the EA Programme Committee, but which specialisation they can and should take depends largely on their academic background as well as their supervisors’ scholarly expertise and research orientation. Regarding the list of courses offered in each specialisation, there is no strict regulation apart from some recommended curriculum models and course works. Each specialisation has one or two international partner universities. Students are given an opportunity to take part in various exchange activities and receive joint supervision with some of these partner universities. If the conditions are met, each specialisation will set up a joint/double degree programme or a joint certificate (non-degree) programme with its partner university in the future.

Box 2. Teaching and learning techniques for the Multiple-perspective Tool

Participatory approaches

Participatory approaches to learning give students opportunities to become actively engaged in a wide variety of learning strategies in which the teaching-learning process becomes more of a shared responsibility between *professors* and students.

Place-based learning

Place-based learning (PlaceBL) helps communities solve community problems through the efforts of students, *professors* and school staff. PlaceBL uses the local community as one of the primary resources for learning. PlaceBL draws on the unique history, environment, people, culture, economy, literature, art and music of a particular place. Community members are regarded as resources and partners in the learning process. The focus on the local community creates opportunities to pair relevance with academic rigour, while promoting action-oriented citizenship

Problem-based learning

Problem-based learning is a student-centred teaching and learning methodology in

which students learn about challenges to sustainability in the context of complex real-world problems. Working in small groups, students identify what they already know, what they need to know, and how and where to access new information that may lead to the resolution of the problem. Problem-based learning helps make concrete the abstract concepts often associated with ESD and the Multiple perspective Tool.

Case studies and documentaries

Case studies and documentaries are valuable ways for students to use and improve their multiple-perspective learning and analysis skills. For example, a class can view a documentary together with small groups of students assigned to listen and watch for information related to a specific perspective. Then the documentary can be analysed in large group discussion drawing together the findings of each group. Through discussion, it becomes more apparent what information was present and missing in the documentary. The group can discuss good points and biases in the documentary as well as ways to find missing information or solutions.

Community Investigation

Of relevance to students is the study of local sustainability events and challenges. News accounts from reputable Internet sources, magazines and newspapers can provide ready supplies of case studies. Furthermore, teachers or students can write their own case studies, revolving around local issues. The students can write case studies using the perspectives in the Multiple-perspective Tool as a basis for inquiry into their community. Students can identify information sources and then collect information from community members as well as collecting data from natural and human-built environments. Community investigation is one way for students to use skills from the science perspective, especially designing and carrying out research studies on community events and challenges.

Source: [UNESCO \(2012\)](#)

4. Bringing Concept to the Terrain of Sustainable Development

4.1. Field research experiences

Providing students with opportunities to visit and conduct field research is crucial to help them to better understand the current economic and social situations of wherever their studies are targeted and located. What they can learn from field research are often different from and sometimes contradict what economics theories and textbooks inform us. Even empirical studies in economics cannot tell realities on the ground comprehensively as they often narrowly focus on economic (or quantitatively calculable) aspects of more complicated social structure and human agency that are not reducible to factors or variables. This is why the EA programme places emphasis on multidisciplinary and multidimensional perspectives and approaches, and it also explains why time and energy is allocated to field research courses in the graduate education. While offering basic and semi-advanced courses on field research methods and quantitative as well as qualitative field data analysis, the programme provides

field research opportunities in Thailand (hosted by Thammasat University, Chulalongkorn University and Chiang Mai University), Indonesia (hosted by University of Gadjah Mada), China (hosted by Renmin University of China), South Korea (hosted by Kyungpook University and Seoul University), Germany (hosted by Goethe University Frankfurt and Heidelberg University), and the Netherlands (hosted by Wageningen University and Erasmus University Rotterdam) as well as in Japan, not only to the EA programme students, but also those from the regular programme of the GSE and the Graduate Schools of Letters (GSL), Agriculture (GSA), and Management (GSM).

4.1.1. Field Research in Japan

To help international students to get a better understanding of the current economic and social situation in Japan, they are obligated to take two courses: Field Research in Japan A (autumn semester) and B (spring semester) and participate in 3 field study trips to Japanese companies, government agencies and other institutions, as well as rural communities in each semester of the first or second year of the Master's programme. Each of the field study trips includes a pre-trip study session and a post-trip discussion session, after which students are assigned to submit essays to the respective instructors in charge. The destinations in the past years include the Kyocera Museum (Kyoto), Toyota Motor Corporation and its Commemorative Museum of Industry and Technology (Toyota and Nagoya in Aichi Prefecture), LAA-Kansai's used car auction centre (Nishinomiya in Hyogo Prefecture), Panasonic Eco Technology Centre (Kato in Hyogo Prefecture), the Fukui Atomic Energy Science Museum (Tsuruga in Fukui Prefecture), the Lake Biwa Museum (Kusatsu in Shiga Prefecture), the Kyoto Agricultural Council (Kyoto), the Kyoto City Central Wholesale Market (Kyoto), and several rural communities (Keihoku area and Ohara area in Kyoto).

4.1.2. Field Research in Thailand

As an economic, cultural and geopolitical centre of ASEAN, Thailand is a suitable place to observe and learn why and how multiple aspects of sustainable development should be taken into consideration. Since 2013, the EA programme organises a field research trip to Thailand annually for about 10 days with a group of about 10 graduate students. This project is funded mainly by the Kyoto University Asian Studies Unit (KUASU) as part of the MEXT Re-Inventing Japan Project "Rediscovering Japan through Collaboration in the Open ASEAN+6: International Human Resource Development Centering on the SEND Programme" (2012-2016).

In the case of the field research of 2014, the first half of the schedule was held in and around Bangkok in cooperation with Pridi Banomyong International College (PBIC),

Thammasat University. The students^{vii} attended lectures on various topics to acquire a multidimensional understanding of the country and ASEAN. To develop their sense of reality, they toured cultural sites in the capital and in the old capital of Ayuthaya, the industrial site of Nong Khae Industrial Estate, the food-processing complex of Charoen Pokphand Foods in Saraburi Province, and the corporate headquarters of the Japanese company AEON Thailand in Bangkok. To facilitate academic exchange among the students, an international student workshop was held where 9 students from Kyoto University, 11 graduate students from Thammasat University, and 3 graduate students from Chulalongkorn University made presentations on their research topics. The second half of the schedule was held in the province of Phuket, where they visited government offices, agricultural sites, and civil society organisations. They interviewed the governor, attended a lecture by the chief of the Phuket Provincial Employment Office, and discussed with the vice-chief of Phuket Agricultural Office to obtain a multi-layered perspective on the pressing issues and government projects in the province. They also visited a pineapple farm, a rubber pilot farm, and an organic goat farm to gain insights on agriculture in the country. Finally, they visited a waste management NGO and a community-based learning centre to learn and contemplate the role of civil society organisations in the Thai society.

The field research trip in 2016 was also comprised of two parts. The first half of the schedule was held in Chiang Mai in cooperation with the Faculty of Economics, Chiang Mai University. The students^{viii} attended a lecture on “Challenges for Sustainable Development in the Mekong Region”, given by the Director of the Regional Centre for Social Science and Sustainable Development (RCSD), Chiang Mai University. They also visited the regional office of Thailand Board of Investment (BOI), Fujikura Electronics (Thailand) Ltd. that is located in the industrial estate in Lamphun, and an organic farmer who practices agroforestry and manages a farm restaurant. The second half of the schedule was held in Bangkok, again in cooperation with PBIC, Thammasat University. As a joint activity almost regularly organised by Kyoto University, the PBIC and the Faculty of Economics of Thammasat University and the Faculty of Economics of Chulalongkorn University, an international student workshop on “Diversity in Sustainable Development in Asia” was held where 9 students from Kyoto University, 3 graduate students from Chulalongkorn University and 19 graduate students from Thammasat University made presentations on their research topics. Apart from the student

^{vii} 9 students from China, Turkey, Egypt, Indonesia, Japan and Thailand with diverse areas of research interest.

^{viii} 12 students from China, Indonesia, Vietnam, UK, Philippines, Japan and Thailand, also with diverse areas of research interest.

workshop, the group was given an opportunity to visit international organisations, such as the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) Regional Office of Asia and the Pacific and the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) Regional Office Thailand. To widen the students' horizons and perspectives on social, cultural and religious issues, they visited a church and a mosque to learn how different religions can co-exist and respect each other in the region. Another visit was made at the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, where the students learned the current situation and government policies as well as civil society activities to ensure that all children and youth can enjoy full rights to social development and human security. The students also had a chance to visit the Agro Tourism Service Centre near the Maha-Sawat Canal in Nakhon Pathom, a project supported by the Tourism Authority of Thailand as a drive to promote and develop community-based tourism in local destinations across the nation.

Box 3. Student Voices

I enjoyed very much the chance to interact with local people as we visited many sites: the pineapple plantation, rubber research centre, organic goat farming, community-based learning centre for organic farming, and garbage NGO. I sensed the humbleness of these people and how they try to live with nature in harmony. They tried to face the current social and environmental problem caused by human activities and to raise other people's awareness toward sustainable living at the same time. --- An Indonesian Master student who participated in the 2014 Thai field trip, currently a doctoral student of the EA Programme.

I feel very honoured to be appointed as the group moderator of Group Three in the Joint International Workshop. There were six members in the panel including me. We are from four countries and our researches are in different fields related to Economics. It is a challenge for me, since I had only been the facilitator in China and Japan, and hadn't been a moderator in an international seminar. And it is also a very valuable opportunity for me to practice how to chair at an international seminar. The panel presentation and discussion turned out to be a success, and I have benefited a lot from this experience. --- A Chinese doctoral student who participated in the 2016 Thai field trip.

I would say that this trip has furthered my interest in overseas studying and international understanding. Having the opportunity to share experiences with students from around the world, and alongside students of the Thai universities, we visited, means that we are able to hear and understand different perspectives and cultures. Talking to the students of these universities meant that I was able to develop a further insight into Thai society and culture from a first-hand perspective, which I would deem necessary for gaining deeper insights in which we gained. --- A British student studying in the EA Master's programme who participated in the 2016 Thai field trip.

Overall, the overseas field trip to Thailand was an excellent learning experience for me. The lessons I learned from my interaction with the various people I met will help me ground all the theories I have picked up from the classroom to the realities people are confronted with on the ground. The people I have met and new friends I have made have also made the trip a memorable one. The field trip has also made me more determined to develop a deeper

understanding of sustainable development and the various issues surrounding this topic. --- A Filipino student studying in the EA Master's programme who participated in the 2016 Thai field trip

Source: Compiled by the authors.

4.1.3. Field Research in the Netherlands

As part of the collaboration between Kyoto University and Wageningen University in the field of agriculture, food and rural development studies, field research in the Netherlands was organised in 2015 and 2016 with the support of the JGP-AGST fund. The students who participated in the previous two field trips include those studying in the field of political economy of agriculture and food, rural sociology, natural resource management, and development economics at the GSE (mainly in the EA programme), the GSA and the Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies (GES). They are also diverse in terms of nationality: Japan, China, South Korea, Indonesia, Nepal, and Mexico (and the Netherlands, Philippines and Madagascar if staff members are counted). For those from non-European countries, whatever learned and explored in the Netherlands are something uniquely valuable.

In the case of the field research trip in March 2016, the students paid visits to the Creative Community Garden Wageningen; De Hoge Born, an organic grocery shop near the campus; Boerderij Hoekelum for the cheese making excursion; Brandt & Levie, a “slow food” and high quality sustainable sausage maker; De Dikhoeve, an organic sheep farm producing sheep milk cheese near Amsterdam, to learn diverse and creative initiatives for alternative agriculture and food networks in the Netherlands. The group also had an opportunity for a series of roundtable discussions with prominent international CSOs (think-tanks for social movements) located in Amsterdam working for social, economic and environmental justice as well as advocating for the right to food and nutrition, such as the Transnational Institute (TNI), FIAN Nederland, and SOMO (the Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations). These visits and discussions enabled the students to understand the ideas, roles, functions and activities of these organisations and their expectations for the academia (university researchers and students). The students also benefited from discussions with professors and graduate students at Wageningen University as well as at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University Rotterdam in The Hague. In the field trip in March 2015 and the one planned in June 2017 are mainly meant for holding a joint graduate workshop on food, farm and rural development as elaborated in the next section.

Box 4. Student Voices

Particular highlights were our interactions with Wageningen students and professors, experiencing how professors lecture as well as advise students at the university. The Evening Seminar organised by Wageningen students was another great opportunity to discuss a wide range of issues surrounding agriculture in both Japan and the Netherlands. --- A Japanese student from the GES, then a doctoral student and now working at the Research Institute for Humanities and Nature.

The field trip has encouraged me to engage in critical studies further with multi-stakeholders on the ground. It provided me with invaluable moments to look back myself as a young researcher, global citizen, and individual advocate for civil societies. --- A Korean doctoral student of the EA Programme.

One of the main objectives of the trip was to give the students an opportunity to present and discuss their research plans with professors of the Rural Sociology Group of WUR. After presenting my research plan, I received comments and feedback from Prof. Guido Ruivenkamp. He thoroughly explained about the shortcomings of my research plan and suggested that it needed to be revised. He put forward a number of approaches that I could use to improve it. His words have given a significant boost to my morale as I now feel more confident and ready about my research. This session has been such an eye-opener for me and I am really grateful to have this experience. --- An Indonesian Master student of the EA Programme, now continuing his research in the doctoral programme.

Source: Compiled by the authors.

4.1.4. AGST Overseas Challenge Programme

The Overseas Challenge Programme funded by the AGST provides students of the GSE (including the EA Programme students) with opportunities to conduct field research overseas. It aims at fostering students' on-going thesis research under the guidance of host researcher(s) in universities and institutions abroad. There is no prescribed schedule for the programme. Applicants may design their original research plan accordingly. Furthermore, subjects, activities, and the destination are not restricted to the particular field or partner university/institution of the AGST project. Students are however highly expected to carry out solid and fruitful activities contributing to their on-going research. Prior to the application, students must receive a formal acceptance from host researcher(s) who can provide them guidance and academic support during the term of the field research. Official enrolment in the host institution is not mandatory for this programme. The applicants are required to make all the necessary arrangements for the implementation of their field research plan, including the initial contacts and appointments with persons or organizations to investigate, thereby students are expected to develop their skill necessary to arrange and conduct field-based research activities in an international setting.

4.2. KU-WU joint graduate workshop on food, farm and rural development

4.2.1. *The First WU-KU International Graduate Workshop on Food, Farm and Rural Development*

On 10th of March, 2015, eight PhD students and one Master's student from the GSE and the GSA went to the Netherlands. The students from both departments were under the supervision of Prof. Hisano and Prof. Motoki Akitsu, a rural sociology professor from the GSA. The workshop took place on March 12 and March 13, in which the nine PhD and Master's students from Kyoto University as well as seven PhD candidates and Master's students from the two groups of Wageningen University, RSO (Rural Sociology) and SDC (Sociology of Development and Change), gave presentations about their research. What made this workshop fascinating was its diversity in terms of nationalities: the students of Kyoto University were from Japan, China, Mexico, South Korea and Indonesia, while the students of WUR were from the Netherlands, Germany, Italy and India. Because of this, the workshop can be considered as internationally oriented, by the various research topics about food and agricultural developments in different countries.

The presentations were divided into four different panels (Box 5) chaired by professors from either Kyoto University or the WUR. They gave a brief introduction of their field of research before the presentations of the students. After the presentations there was space for discussion. From the almost 40 participants in total, everyone was free to ask something about the research topic or the methodology of the research, presented by the student. By doing this, the student could show his/her knowledge or improve their research by the given remarks.

Professor Han Wiskerke, the Chair of RSO of Wageningen University, gave an end speech after the last presentation. He concluded that the workshop has shown a great diversity of research topics with good discussions afterwards. The cooperation between the Wageningen University and Kyoto University, with its backgrounds, has shown that the sharing of knowledge is very useful and opens new possibilities for research.

Box 5. The first WU-KU International Graduate Workshop

Panel 1: Rural Development and Knowledge production (Chair Joost Jongerden)

- Nikolas Stüdemann (WUR-SDC) Neoliberal Governance and Rural Development in a Political Conflict Context: The case of Mapuche-Lavkenche communities in Arauco Province, Bio Bio Region, Chile
- Zhai, Yalei (KU-GSE-EA) Opium Eradication and Alternative Development in Border Areas of Myanmar: Strategies to eliminate rural poverty through development of non-farm

employment

- Soutrik Basu (WUR-RSO) Knowledge Production, Commons and Development: The case of Generation Challenge Programme (GCP)
- Mithun Bantwal Rao (WUR-RSO) Of Methodology: A paradigmatology of technical artefacts

Panel 2: Food Regime and Alternative Food Networks (Chair Prof. Shuji Hisano)

- Midori Hiraga (KU-GSE) Japanese Contribution to Making Soybean a Global Commodity: Political and economic forces behind the significant growth of soybean production in Manchuria, Brazil, and Mozambique
- Heriberto Ruiz Tafoya (KU-GSE-EA) Drawing the Food Regime in the Philippines: The case of Nestlé's business strategy and discourse for the BoP society
- Jung, Sungwoong (KU-GSE-EA) Sustainable Food Consumption as an Alternative to Market-driven Agri-food System: Focusing on needs assessment of Hansalim co-ops members in South Korea over consuming environmentally-friendly food
- Simona D'Amico (WUR-RSO) Alternative Food Networks (AFNs) in Calabria. A Sociological Exploration of their Dynamics: Implications for their identities and roles

Panel 3: Food Security and Food Sovereignty (Chair Prof. Han Wiskerke)

- Yang, Xing (KU-GSE-EA) Impacts of Food Security Policy and Migratory Workers on China's Agricultural Development
- Susanne Maenen (WUR-RSO) The Daily Realities of Peasant Resistance in the Food Sovereignty versus Food Security Discourse: A case study of Philipino peasants strategies in the conflict following the push for Golden Rice
- Anom Sigit Suryawan (KU-GSE-EA) Beyond Certificates and Labels: Implications of the Law on Halal Product Assurance for food security in Indonesia

Panel 4: Recognition and Behaviour of Agri-food Actors (Chair Dr. John Lambino)

- Ryo Iwahashi (KU-GSA) Alternative Model of Achieving Organic and Reduced Pesticide Agricultural Production: A case of the Kinokawa Agricultural Co-ops in Japan
- Esther Veen (WUR-RSO) Community Gardening in The Netherlands: Building social relations in alternative food networks?
- Kaoru Yamano (KU-GSA) Effect of Information of Consumers' Recognition of Eggs from Rice-fed Chicken
- Ron Methorst (WUR-RSO) Farmers' Perception of their Opportunities for Farm Development: An empirical study
- Ke, Jinghan (KU-GSE-EA) Pesticide Use Behaviour of Chinese Vegetable Farmers and the Influencing Factors: A case study in Henan Province

Source: Compiled by the authors.

4.2.2. The Second KU-WU International Graduate Workshop on Food, Farm and Rural Development

On 23-27 of May, 2016, the AGST project hosted the second KU-WU International Graduate Workshop in Kyoto. The first part of the workshop provided the students from both universities with opportunities to present their current research in an interactive panel format.

Dr. Hart Feuer, Assistant Professor of the GSA opened the session followed by welcome addresses by Professor Hisano, the Director of the AGST, and Dr. Joost Jongerden of Wageningen University, who is appointed as an AGST Project Professor. They each explained the milestones of the collaborations between the two universities, the purposes of the workshop, and the expected outcomes.

To explore the common theme of 'Food, Farm and Rural Development', the presentations were categorised according to four different sub-topics: 1) the political economy of food and rural transition; 2) Alternative Food Networks and sustainable agriculture; 3) place-based development and community livelihoods, and 4) the power of discourses and constitutional legitimacy (Box).

Box 6. The Second KU-WU International Graduate Workshop

Panel 1: Political Economy of Food and Rural Transition (Chair: Dr. Haja Rajaonarison)

- Heriberto Ruiz Tafoya (KU-GSE, PhD student) Corporate Food and BoP Subsumption: A study of squatter areas in Metro-Manila
- Midori Hiraga (KU-GSE, PhD student) Transnational Policy on Vegetable Oil after WWII and its Contribution to Developing the Global Vegetable Oil Complex
- Yang, Xing (KU-GSE, PhD student) Capital to the Countryside and Financialization of Agriculture in China

Panel 2: Alternative Food Networks and Sustainable Agriculture (Chair: Prof. Shuji Hisano)

- Leo Dvortsin (WU-RSO, PhD candidate) Mainstreaming Alternative Food Networks: Eating the way out of crisis
- Ke, Jinghan (KU-GSE, PhD student) Alternative Food Networks in China: A focus on vegetable provisioning system
- Ryo Iwahashi (KU-GSA, PhD student) Consumer understandings of food information in food choice: Reconnecting production and consumption

Panel 3: Place-based Development and Community Livelihoods (Chair: Dr. Joost Jongerden)

- Hilde Geerling (WU-SDC, PhD candidate) Food Security, Livelihoods and Aid Interventions
- Flora Sonkin (WU-RSO, Master student) Geographies of Connectivity: A relational perspective on 'autonomous' eco-villages in Romania
- Yuya Iida (KU-GSA, PhD student) Selling Bodyweight: The Filipino migrant farm workers in rural Japan
- Jordan Treake (WU-RSO, Master student) Social Economy and Place-based Farm Transition in Italy's Garfagnana region: Farm innovation, revalorisation, and specialisation toward multifunctional agriculture

Panel 4: Power of Discourse and Constitution of Legitimacy (Chair: Dr. Jessica Duncan)

- Zulfa Utami Adiputri (KU-GSE, PhD student) Legitimacy of Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) in Melawi District, West Kalimantan, Indonesia

- Anom Sigit Suryawan (KU-GSE, Master student) Religionisation of Biotechnology? An analysis of the role of Halal certification and labelling schemes in maintaining bio-hegemony in Indonesia
- Jonathan Tanis (WU-RSO, Master student) The Ephemeral Raft: Non-linear mythologies of soil
- Wang, Yiming (KU-GSE, research student) Food Security Policy of China: From an International Relations perspective

Source: Compiled by the authors.

The second part of the workshop was devoted to a public event in which three distinguished presenters shared their ideas on the theme "Agroecology and Peasant Agriculture as a Promise for the Future". In the opening remarks, professor Hisano, Director of the AGST, explained the origin of the special lecture, including the fortuitous synergy made possible by the collaboration between the AGST and the Research Institute for Humanity and Nature (RIHN), who respectively invited Prof. Jan Douwe van der Ploeg and Prof. Miguel Altieri, two important figures in the field of rural development and agroecology.

The last part of the workshop helped many of the concepts and theories discussed come alive in the field. On 26 of May, the workshop participants visited rural villages in Ayabe City of northern Kyoto prefecture and discovered the revitalisation approaches of depopulated marginal villages as well as a coping strategy of new entry farmers. The second day of the workshop excursion included a visit to a JA (Japan Agricultural Cooperatives)'s roadside farmers' market "Tawawa Asagiri", both located in Kameoka city. The participants learned that the strong social relation between customers and farmers in the farmers' market demonstrates that price is not the only element that matters in food, and that customers strongly desire alternative ways to access good quality food and support nearby farming systems. The group also visited a high-tech indoor lettuce farming facility, in which the production process is fully automated, seemingly very efficient and sustainable in terms of using less water and space. While promising in some respects, the future role of such new technology in society has not been sufficiently debated. This is an important challenge for the AGST project and the researchers both at KU and WU, since this type of "agriculture" is sometimes called the "Dutch Model". Similar advancements have long been promoted in the Netherlands and are now viewed as a potential model for Japan.

4.2.3. The Third KU-WU International Graduate Workshop on Food, Farm and Rural Development

The third WU-KU International Graduate Workshop in Wageningen is now under preparation, taking an opportunity of the international conference on the Value of Life: Measurement,

Stakes, and Implications to be held at Wageningen University in June 2017. This conference is organised and will be hosted by the WUR's Centre for Space, Place and Society (CSPS) that brings together researchers from three chair groups within Wageningen University – Cultural Geography (GEO), Rural Sociology (RSO) and Sociology of Development Change (SDC) – and beyond to advance critical-constructive scholarship within the social sciences. Although the details are still under negotiation, it is expected that three to four graduate students from KU and WU will give presentations about their research and have a roundtable discussion in two or three panels. Prior to the conference, there will be organised a PhD training course (summer school) on related topics. Five or six students from Kyoto University are expected to participate in the conference and the summer school.

4.3. AGST Working Paper Series as an incubator of ideas

In the academic world, scientific publications represent the culmination of a research project. Publishing is important not only for PhD students, as part of their requirements, but also for those who are engaged in research including faculty members and young researchers. Since July 2016, the platform has decided to devote a space of discussion and dissemination of research in progress for students and young researchers. The AGST WPS will serve as an incubator in which students and other researchers will have the opportunity to receive comments not only from Kyoto University faculty members but also and those from partner universities. This first screening is a strategy intended to enhance the publications performances of Kyoto University students, and faculty members in highly ranked academic journals. Another goal of the WPS is to strengthen the collaborative work that really embraces the multidisciplinary spirit. Despite the fact that students are encouraged to nurture their knowledge in their respective research, as mentioned in an early paragraph of this paper, understanding contemporary issue requires more interactions not only with the subject matters but also with other actors who have developed strong analytical thinking in a given field. Though not empirically established, experiences from countries such as France, the Netherlands, Germany and UK show that collaborative work enhances publication performance. The simple compilation of data on collaboration from these countries show that papers are now going through trans-national intellectual exchange before being submitted as described in Figure 2.

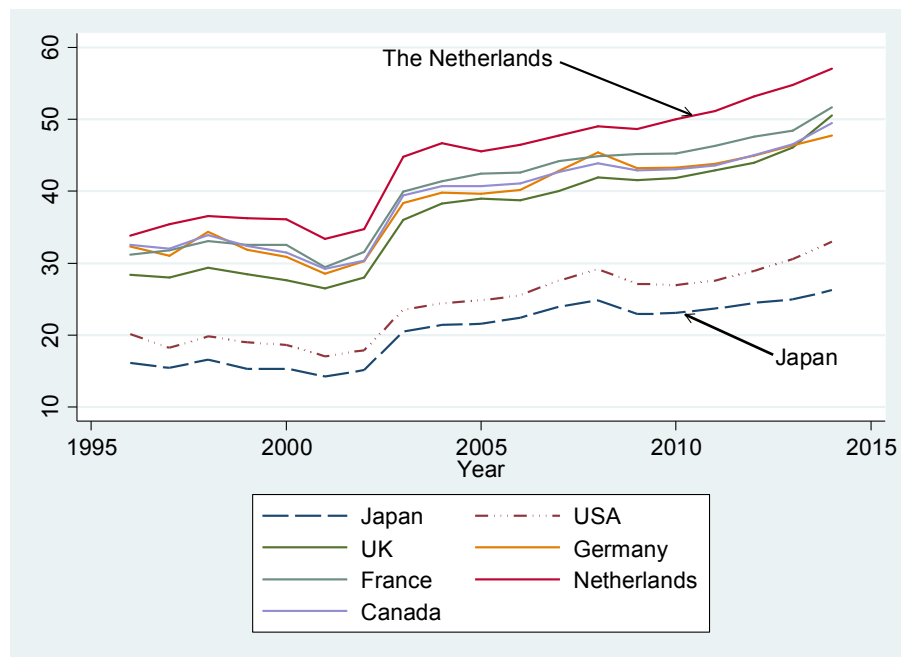


Figure 2. Comparison of Collaborative work for publications among 7 countries

Source: data compiled by the authors from Scimago Journal & Country Rank

To date, 19 faculty members from Kyoto University and partners institutions are members of the WPS Scientific Committee. They are supported by two young project research fellows who are in charge of the editorial management. Due to some organisational circumstances, currently, the WPS so far accepts manuscript relevant to Environmental Policy & Rural Development Studies (AGST Module 1), Business History & Industry Policy Studies (AGST Module 2) and Asian & Transcultural Studies (AGST Module 6), but further expansion in other areas (Developing & Emerging Economies Studies; International Trade & Financial Studies; Business Management & Accounting Studies) are expected on the basis of future international partnerships.

5. Moving Forward: Some elements of reflection

Thus far, this paper described the internationalisation process at Kyoto University and the teaching of SD through the international graduate programme hosted by the Graduate School of Economics. The paper attempted to shed light on the different interactions between and across actors and institutions actively shaping and influencing the programme. Furthermore, the paper also attempted to contextualise and conceptualise a particular approach at Kyoto University in the way to organise and to get important project moving, namely the JGP. The

points highlighted in this study put forth three important interactions in which positive results have been noticed for the understanding of SD: 1) the understanding of a particular problem starts at the ground; 2) collaboration and exchange through a specialised/topic-oriented workshop is essential to frame, contextualise and conceptualise a solution; and 3) first screening at institutional level through the platform incubator of the research result (i.e. AGST Working Paper Series) is necessary before publications to highly ranked journal, equally important is the effective collaboration. For the rest of this section, the authors will provide some reflections about the multidisciplinary experiences; we will also offer some pathway to handle some constraint in the solving of the global mobility issue.

5.1. Multidisciplinary experiences

Although the degree programme (both Master's and Doctoral) is focused on "economics" and its diversity is still within "social sciences", students are encouraged to study diverse theories, approaches and methodologies, and enhance their understanding and critical sense of reality of economic, social, political and ecological systems from a multidimensional and multidisciplinary perspective. This is precisely because sustainable development, in a broader sense as defined earlier, is only possible through understanding it as:

"The product of many stories, worldviews, values, actions and perspectives which, to be fully appreciated, require a readiness to listen to others, respect differences, suspend established opinions and see with others' eyes while allowing other voices to resonate and be heard" (Blewitt 2015: 2).

Interdisciplinarity is usually meant for research and teaching strategies that bring in together and integrate deeply two or more disciplinary approaches. What is often attempted is an integration between the natural/technical sciences (or beta science) and the social sciences (or gamma science), but disparities within the social sciences are sometimes no less wide and complicated than those between the natural/technical sciences and the social sciences. Materialising our idea of multidisciplinary graduate education programme in the curriculum is arguably very challenging, especially if it would be designed for nurturing individual students (young scholars) to have interdisciplinary skills and expertise, or put it differently, seeking for an interdisciplinarity as an "individual journey". On the other hand, it might be possible and reasonable to juxtapose different disciplinary approaches and perspectives (not in the sense of a relativistic way of thinking) within a team consisting of individuals with distinct disciplinary orientations, and encourage and promote communication and collaboration among them. This could be called "cross-disciplinary social science research" (Hulme and Toye 2006), though it is also considered to be "not easy in practice" (Kanbur 2002). We still believe that if students find

themselves in such a multidisciplinary or cross-disciplinary environment and involved in a “dialogue of values” (Blewitt 2015), they would develop their multidisciplinary sense and perspectives that are necessary to understand and contribute to sustainable development.

Compared to the “internationalisation” pillar of the GSE graduate education, its “multidisciplinary” pillar is not fully designed and implemented yet. That being said, it is worthwhile to mention that the EA programme has attracted and accepted students with diverse disciplinary orientations, such as mainstream economics, heterodox economics (e.g. political economy, institutional economics), politics and sociology, economic history, human resource management, and marketing and business strategy, both from quantitative and qualitative, historical and contemporary perspectives. A multidisciplinary environment can be found not only in courses offered by professors with different disciplinary expertise, including courses offered by invited international scholars, but anywhere our diverse students as well as those from other graduate schools and partner universities come to study and discuss in a group. Still, some of the students are hesitating to take part in courses of a different discipline. In this regard, opportunities to take part in field research trips seem working well to bring students with diverse disciplinary orientations together. Additionally, a new course will be created, in which PhD students are assigned to present a progress report of thesis research project at least once out of four half-day meetings a year and get feedback from other students and professors necessarily including those in different disciplines and sub-disciplines.

5.2. A KU-WU Joint Certification Programme as a way forward

As mentioned earlier, one of the ultimate goals of the JGP and its social sciences and humanities unit, AGST, is to set up and launch a joint/double degree programme in each targeted area. At the GSE, negotiations have already started with the University of Glasgow in global economy and business history studies, Chulalongkorn University in health economics and development economics, as well as Wageningen University in rural development and environmental policy studies. However, it’s turned out that there are many hurdles that need to be overcome for the future.

Firstly, there is a huge difference in management structure and regulation between Kyoto University, or Japanese universities in general, and partner universities. Overseas universities usually have a management structure in which master programmes and PhD programmes are separately organised and managed. In the case of Wageningen University, MSc programmes and BSc programmes are coordinated and supervised at the university level, while PhD programmes are coordinated by 6 graduate schools, one of which is Wageningen School of

Social Sciences (WASS). In order to set up a joint/double master degree programme, our counterpart groups there have to go through complicated and lengthy procedures at the university as well as government level, therefore, they are hesitating to opt for this option. Conversely, it is relatively easier for them to set up and launch a joint PhD programme (double degree is not an option for PhD programmes) since PhD programmes can be flexibly designed and coordinated by the Graduate School of each discipline, i.e. WASS in our case.

However, in Japan, universities and graduate schools are strictly controlled by the Ministry of Education and its bureaucratic rules, especially when it comes to PhD programmes. Despite the fact that degrees are offered only at the graduate school level, not the programme level, the number of enrolment is strictly controlled at the programme level. It is usually small number of students who take part in a joint degree programme. For the case of GSE, there is a plan to set up a joint doctoral degree programme with only a few students from each institute. This means that the number of students would vary every year. As a result, keeping the enrolment within the allowable maximum and minimum limitations would be very difficult task to manage. The executive committee members of the GSE have been hesitant to take such risks and decided to shelve the plan to set up a joint doctoral degree programme with Wageningen University, while there still is a possibility to negotiate for a double master degree programme instead. Due to these difficulties, although Kyoto University (GSE-EA Programme) and Wageningen University (WASS and RSO/SDC) are willing to have a joint doctoral degree programme, we are looking for another option to bring benefits to students of both parties in the coming years. One possible solution is to introduce a joint certificate programme, which will follow almost the same scheme as a joint degree programme, but instead of providing a doctoral degree the students will receive a joint certificate in addition to a degree from either university.

5.3. Going beyond just internationalisation

The recent policy trend of internationalising the higher education system in Japan is to a large extent focused on increasing world rankings of Japanese universities, and therefore its emphasis tends to be on short-term and measurable outcomes. Thereby the internationalisation of graduate education could be considered as an end in itself without paying attention to what kind of human resources are to be nurtured and cultivated throughout the international education programmes. Taking advantage of the opportunity given by the government and the university, however, the EA programme is aimed to design and develop the international education with its ambitious mission, which is: not just educate

and produce future academics, practitioners or social entrepreneurs, but rather to educate and produce global citizens who will have acquired “Sociological Imagination” (Mills 1959), an ability to see things interactively, between the personal and the societal, rather than from the narrow lens of personal experience; to understand that social outcomes are shaped by social context, actors, culture, history and social actions; and to pull away from the situation and think from an alternative (others’) point of view. Global citizens in our terms will also be engaged in “Real Utopias Project” (Wright 2010), in which we not only identify the ills of society, but demonstrate that these ills are rooted in the specific properties of existing institutions and social structure, and move on to developing a coherent, credible theory of alternatives, that are desirable, viable and achievable, for social transformation: making our society really sustainable for all in a comprehensive sense. This is exactly what the education for sustainable development, which crucially includes not only narrowly-defined economic development but also human and social development while preserving and enhancing cultural and ecological diversities, should be meant for.

6. Conclusion

This paper discusses the recent advancements in the internationalisation project of Japanese universities through a close outlook of on-going projects at Kyoto University namely: the East Asia Sustainable Economic Development Studies and the Asian Global Platform for Sustainability and Transcultural Studies. Drawing from the long-term experiences and the philosophy of the university it has been possible to establish new strategies focusing on different aspects of contemporary social problems. The paper underlines that the two academic projects are mutually reinforcing. While the East Asia Economic Development Studies makes it possible to create an international window for a global audience, the Asian Global Platform for Sustainability & Transcultural Studies provides a support for Kyoto University researchers’ community to experience the study of sustainable development in an utterly different fashion.

The policy to internationalise Japanese universities is however taking place in a new multi-polar and globalising world. Furthermore, Japan does not stand as the only country offering an attractive educational environment for international students. Other countries such as South Korea, China, Hong Kong, Singapore are promoting their images and institutions through attractive scholarships to study in a cosmopolitan environment. The new project of internationalisation will have to embrace the rising appeal of universities in the East Asian region alongside the global competition with European and North American institutions of

higher education. Two problematics have been underlined here: on the one hand, the aptitude of Japanese university to deliver an English-taught programme matching the standards of the neighbouring region and in the western countries. And on the other hand, being able to intensify collaborative work. Japan has not yet succeeded in instigating a high degree of collaboration with other universities. In this regard, a good practice could be learned from countries such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany and France. These countries have managed to place collaborative works at the core of their publishing strategies. Accordingly, adopting similar approaches should be extended to the disciplines of social science and humanities.

In light with these two problematics, the EA programme and the AGST have been devised to overcome the contingencies resulting from the externalities of administrative and policy incongruity. The international programme at the Graduate School of Economics offers the opportunity for international students to receive classes and courses in English and could be seen as a workspace for research design. Likewise, the AGST invigorates the knowledge of economics beyond the confines of formalism. The interactions with the Graduate School of Agriculture and Graduate School of Letters are giving a new feature to the study of sustainable development in a multidisciplinary and multidimensional environment. The AGST as a crossroad where different disciplines and ideas are meeting, is offering a new window for the students to be connected with prominent international faculty members who can jointly supervise research and conduct academic activities at Kyoto University. Not only, the program enables mobility for international faculty, but it also offers the opportunity for Kyoto University students, Japanese and non-Japanese, to pursue research in Japan and abroad while having the possibility to earn international degrees and certificates from different institutions.

Three keywords have been guiding this paper: internationalisation, sustainable and programmes. While conceptualising the approach to the teaching of sustainable development, the importance of capturing the political, social, economic, environmental, ecological, technological, cultural problems from the ground and develop theories on them, stands at the underlying basis of Kyoto University teaching style. Students are considered as the main actors in shaping the notion of sustainability.

Institutional policies and strategies remain a challenge to be tackled in the future. Equally important is the positioning and the promotion of the programmes among partner universities. Partnerships have been established with different universities across the globe, which so far collaborated significantly in Joint workshops and seminars. The possibility for students abroad to be the voice and vibrant actor of the programme is an important step to be achieved.

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