

Setting the target of soil education based on questionnaire survey to elementary school children: A case study in Tokyo and Tochigi, Japan.

Hideaki Hirai (1,3) and Takashi Kosaki (2,3)

(1) Utsunomiya University, Utsunomiya city, Japan (hirai@cc.utsunomiya-u.ac.jp), (2) Faculty of International Communication, Aichi University(kosakit8@vega.aichi-u.ac.jp), (3) International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS)

Target setting is a critical issue in soil education in terms of its efficiency. We prepared a questionnaire consisting of eight questions (Q1 through Q7, see below) to know who must be educated most in elementary school. The questionnaire was answered by 1,993 children in the first through the sixth grade in five elementary schools in Tokyo and Tochigi, Japan. The results of their answers were summarized as follows: 1) The percentage of those who replied "I would like to know as much as possible about soil" decreased with increasing the grade. 2) Their surroundings (i.e. the number of places where they can perceive soil) influenced their degree of interest in soil. 3) As their knowledge of soil increased, the percentage of children who replied "I prefer to have as much soil around me as possible" increased. 4) About 68% of those who replied "I would like to have as much soil around me as possible" also replied "I would like to know as much about soil as possible." 5) About 38% of those who replied "I don't touch soil at all" replied "I would not like to know about soil." 6) More than 30% of those in the sixth grade replied "I would not like to know about soil.", but only about 10% in the fifth graders did so in Tokyo 7) Of those in Tochigi, less populated than Tokyo, 70% replied "There are many places with soil close to where I live" and only 10% of these in sixth grade replied "I would not like to know about soil." Hence, we conclude that soil education is important and necessary for those in sixth grade, especially those who perceive less soil in their surroundings. The questions in the questionnaire are; Q1. Are there places with soil around where you live, such as a rice field, forest, park or garden? Q2. Would you like to have places with soil around where you live? Q3. If you replied that you preferred to have a place with soil, what are your reasons? Q4. If you answered that you preferred not to have places with soil around in Q2., what are your reasons? Q5. In what situations have you touched soil? Q6. Circle all of the functions of soil that you think are useful in the lives of people, animals and plants which you are familiar with. Q7. Would you like to know more about soil? The questionnaire is now available in English with an additional question Q8. What do you think two most important things to produce crops? 1. Sunlight, Fertilizer, Soil, Water" and has already been tested in Indonesia.