

SGH Learning Cluster Program

【Program Overview】

Kansai Soka High School's Super Global High School (SGH) Learning Cluster Program (LC) is a special extracurricular SGH program comprising of students from grade 11 and 12. The foundation of this program is created upon Founder Dr. Daisaku Ikeda's Annual Peace Proposal, which called out for global education based on the four fields of development, environment, peace and human rights. In the course of one year, students learn research skills in English to fully explore global issues related to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) proposed by the United Nations.

The purpose of this program is to provide students with the opportunity to deepen their understanding about current global issues that humanity faces and to nourish a sense of responsibility and hope through their research and autonomous learning. Through this program we hope that students will discover passion in their learning which will be carried out through their university studies, future career and lifework, which will lead to fostering the next generation of global leaders who will live contribute lives for the betterment of humanity.

【High School Peace Proposal (HSPP)】

As a yearly final research project of the Learning Cluster Program, students are divided into groups of four-five students to conduct their own research on one global issues topic. This project includes detailed analysis of one global issue from each group provided with a concrete action for solution based on student's research, discussion, presentations and fieldwork throughout the year.

【History of Learning Cluster】

1st Class (2014-2015, SGHA)

- 15 students selected from grades 10-12
 - Group Research Topics (4 Fields)
 - Development: Renewable Energy
 - Environment: Water
 - Peace: Collective Self-Defense Act
 - Human Rights: Refugees in Japan
 - Tokyo Fieldwork

2nd Class (2015-2016, SGH 1st Year)

- 16 students selected from grades 11-12
 - Group Research Topics (4 Fields)
 - Development: Bullying in An Education
 - Environment: Peace Proposal for Environmental Education for the Future
 - Peace: Actions for High School Students Towards the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons
 - Human Rights: Suggesting Concrete Actions to Provide Basic Human Rights to Syrian Refugees
 - Tokyo Fieldwork, Overseas Fieldwork



Picture: Students during LC class

3rd Class (2016-2017, SGH 2nd Year)

- 24 students and 2 student advisers selected from grades 11-12
 - Group Research Topics (SDGs)
 - No Poverty (SDG 1): Child Poverty in Japan
 - Zero Hunger (SDG 2): Equalizing Food Distribution to Achieve Zero Hunger
 - Quality Education (SDG 4): Education for Nuclear Abolition
 - Gender Equality (SDG 5): Gender Equality through Education
 - Decent Work (SDG 8): An Educational Program for Japanese High School Students against Child Labor
 - Peace and Justice (SDG 16): Using Dialogue to Counter Terrorism and Create Inclusive Communities
 - Tokyo Fieldwork, Overseas Fieldwork

4th Class (2017-2018, SGH 3rd Year)

- 25 students selected from grades 11-12
 - Group Research Topics (TBD)



Picture: Students during Tokyo Fieldwork: Tsukuba Space Center

Learning Cluster 2017: Yearly Course Outline

【Selection Process of LC Students】

All students from grades 11-12 are eligible to apply for Learning Cluster. Students are expected to have an English fluency level of Eiken 2 or above with a strong interest in global issues research. Completion of SP during grade 10 is also required. The selection process includes the following tests:

- **Paper Test:**
 - Assess: Basic English ability
 - Reading, listening, and essay writing questions (Pre-1 Eiken / TOEFL)
- **Group Interview Test:**
 - Assess: English speaking, discussion, creativity, and leadership skills
 - Students discuss together in English to solve a prompt question related to global issues.
- **Individual Interview Test:**
 - Assess: students commitment and responsibility
 - Students are asked questions about their reasons for joining LC, study habits, club activities, etc.

【LC Teachers】

- Ramon Paras (USA/ Philippines, MA: TESOL)
- Swati Raj (India, MA: TESOL)
- Louis Butto (USA, MA: TESOL; PhD Candidate in Applied Linguistics)
- Ritsuko Rita (Japan, MA: TESOL)
- Kazuhiro Iguchi (Canada/ Japan, MA: TESOL)
- Kazunori Yamagishi (MA: TESOL)

【Materials】

- 2016 Peace Proposal
- A Forum for Peace
- Newspaper Articles
- TED Talks
- Library Books and Online Resources



【2016 Yearly Course Plan】

1st Semester: Students acquired a broad understanding of current global issues through discussions, presentations and lectures on founder Ikeda's Peace Proposal, global news, and SDGs. Students then were divided into groups of 4-5 students, and chose topics from SDGs to research throughout the year (see above). Students were then taught how to write the literature review and research questions section for their own High School Peace Proposal. With a general understanding of various global issues, literature review of one research topic, and questions for further research, students participated in a fieldwork to Tokyo to present and discuss with experts (for more details see Tokyo fieldwork report).

2nd Semester: After gaining professional feedback from professors and experts during Tokyo fieldwork, students continued to complete their High School Peace Proposal by learning how to write the methodology and results sections. Based on the acquired knowledge, experience, and data collection, students create a proposal for the SDG global issues topic from the perspective of high school students.



Picture: After a special session with Dr. Kevin Clements, Foundation Chair of Peace and Conflict Studies and Director of the New Zealand National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (NCPACS) at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand

3rd Semester: Several students were selected to participate in our second overseas fieldwork to California where they presented their completed High School Peace Proposal to local high school students, university professors, and experts. After coming back from fieldwork, students shared their learning experience from fieldwork and their completed High School Peace Proposal through broadcasts to all classes, after school presentation sessions, open campus, SGH final presentations, and a final presentation session for the school.

【Overseas Fieldwork, January 29– February 4, 2017】

12 students (8 LC, 4 non-LC) had the opportunity of participating in our 2nd overseas fieldwork to California in 2017. The main purpose of this fieldwork was for students to share their SGH activities (i.e. GRIT, and all 3rd Year MUN Project) and the completed High School Peace Proposal with overseas experts and gain critique and further information, as well as learning from experts about their current research. The following are a list highlighted activities which took place during the fieldwork:

- University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA): Gender research group shared and gained critique about their research from Dr. Lisbeth Gant-Britton, and UCLA students.
- University of Southern California (USC): Counter-Terrorism research group shared their HSPP and gained feedback from Dr. Varun Soni, USC Dean of Religious Studies.
- Soka University of America (SUA): Each research group shared and gained critique about their HSPP from SUA professors specializing in each SDG fields. After this, each group presented their research to Former United Nations Secretary General, Ambassador, Anwarul Karim Chowdhury and gained feedback.
- Orange County Waldorf School: Each research group shared and discussed about their school and research to grade 11 and 12 high school students.
- Nuclear Age Peace Foundation: Education for Nuclear Abolition research group shared and discussed about their HSPP to President David Krieger.

After the fieldwork, students shared their learning experience and HSPP through broadcast presentations to all classes, after school presentation sessions, open campus, freshmen guidance, SGH final presentations, and a final presentation session for the school.



Picture: Students during their Overseas Fieldwork: Gaining feedback about their research from Former United Nations Secretary General, Ambassador, Anwarul Karim Chowdhury