



02 SHARING THE LOSS AND JOY THROUGHOUT THE JOURNEY

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Some photos are provided by the interviewees



OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE IN ASPECTS OF WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

PUPIL IN FOCUS



SCHOOL CULTURE AND ETHOS



SCHOOL PREMISES AND RESOURCES MANAGEMENT



MANAGEMENT LEVEL MONITORING AND EVALUATION



LEARNING AND TEACHING



INTERACTION WITH COMMUNITY



There is an old saying that it is “walnuts and pears you plant for your heir”. Xianggang Putonghua Yanxishe Primary School of Science and Creativity (XPYPSSC) did plant a few fruit trees some years ago, and they have been harvesting since summer to autumn. There were mango, longan, lychee, orange, lemon and also star fruit on the day of interview. A teacher laughed “We didn’t even know there was harvest.” After Ms. To Kwan Kuen was appointed as the headmistress, she would prepare and cut fruits for staff and students, and so personnel in school have the chance to know the taste of “home-grown” fruits. Ms. To insisted “It must take all teachers’ effort to develop a green campus and to promote sustainable development.” The question is how to motivate them. Ms. To believed it all begins with tasting their home-grown fruits.



At the platform on the third floor of XPYPSSC, there are also hibiscus and blue pea. Since last year, Ms. Ho Sze Man, teacher-in-charge of the garden, has also been growing some Rutaceae plants to attract Swallowtails, a kind of butterflies found in Hong Kong. She was hoping to create a “butterfly garden”. The headmistress was brewing some hibiscus tea while sharing pictures of their harvest, Ms. Ho happily echoed with the headmistress. Harvesting has certainly been some fond memories for them but how could teachers manage to take care of all the plantations with their busy schedules?

TO AROUSE INTEREST OF TEACHERS

Ms. To explained “My greatest hope is that all teachers can be part of this.” Ecological education in campus is not only managing plants but also educating students to cherish the environment. It meant a lot of administrative work and activities. It also required effort in integrating environmental education and campus habitat into all subjects and the participation of all stakeholders to make it sustainable.

The headmistress knew it would take a lot of actions to motivate others. “Things can only be done right if you are into it.” Therefore, she spent some of her time to be the chef in school sharing the harvest with everyone. Taking mangoes as an example, if there is not much harvest, she would make mango pudding and invite teachers and students for tasting. In the case of a lot of harvest, she would share the mangoes to her staff each. Gradually, teachers became excited for the harvest as there were more and more sharing and so the headmistress seized the chance to bring out the concept of “whole school

approach”, even teachers with little knowledge of plantations were willing to start from growing vegetables.

Not only did the headmistress develop a culture of “growing our own food” and caring for their own campus, she has also formed a bonding between the campus and the teachers. With the foundation built, her next step is to develop environmental education in campus and to make an influence on students.

WITNESSING EMERGENCE OF BUTTERFLIES

When Ms. Ho was asked why building a butterfly garden when the school is already filled with plants and fruits, she explained “We have a lot of working parents. They might not have time to take their kids out to the nature, so we want to provide students an environment resembling the nature.” It seems best for children to learn through their senses and first-hand experience, just like how the teachers are slowly building up a bonding with the campus through their taste buds. They would protect the environment only when they love the nature.

“Headmistress! The butterflies are here!” Students were shouting during the interview. They have just found out the butterflies were emerging from the pupae. Ms. Ho continued “They can read the whole process in books, but witnessing its happening enables them to feel grateful for the joy of life. As cited in a Chinese ancient poem ‘Sympathy for the peasants’, ‘every bit marks the hard work’. The loss of harvest has made them cherish food more.” Despite learning about Swallowtails through STEM, the green student ambassadors are also collecting food waste everyday and making eco-enzyme detergent with fruit skins. The three leaders of the team even proudly mentioned the eco-enzyme detergent they made for home use.

Senior teacher, Ms. Li Chun Ying, explained “Their parents used not to focusing on environmental protection, but now when the kids tell them to ‘separate waste for recycling’, they went from not approving to gradually getting used to doing so.” Li believed there could be a progressive influence to our environment only if all stakeholders are willing to take care of our environment and to practice sustainable living.

EXPANDING RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

XPYPSSC has been rapidly developing environmental education in recent years. Headmistress Ms. To is convinced that setting their mind on it is crucial but resources and manpower are indispensable. Ever since she has taken the office, she has been applying different sources of funding, reallocating resources for teachers’ professional development and adding different kinds of facilities in the campus. Two years ago, the school has also joined the One Planet Education Programme organized by WWF where they could gain the latest information of environmental protection and participate in the outdoor visits led by WWF staff. Ms. To claimed “It is a relieve for teachers and it helped us to understand the importance of environmental protection. The knowledge we gained has become our motivation to develop cross-subjects curriculum and environmental-STEM education.”