



## 03 IT IS MORE THAN PLANTING A TREE

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Some photos are provided by the interviewees



### OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE IN ASPECTS OF WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

MANAGEMENT LEVEL MONITORING AND EVALUATION



LEARNING AND TEACHING



INTERACTION WITH COMMUNITY



“It was my first time to plant a tree on street!” a Primary five student, So Tsz Chun, said with his eyes sparkingly. The primary source of learning new knowledge is always from school and books. Hence, “People and Environment” is one of the strands in General studies in the Primary curriculum. However, environmental protection is an urgent global matter. It relies on everyone’s action to contribute. If students cannot apply what they have learnt in class, any discussion on environmental protection is meaningless. Headmistress of Tseung Kwan O Government Primary School, Ms. Ip Wan Ting, has spent four school years to develop environmental education systematically and to promote environmental measures from school to parents and to the community. Once Tsz Chun has planted a tree on the street, he already has grown a feeling for the street. One can imagine the effectiveness of such activity.



Senior teacher, Ms. Tam Wai Nei, is in charge of developing environmental education in Tseung Kwan O Government Primary School. Although she is a teacher with years of experience, she was frank about the challenges she has faced “When I was first appointed this position in 2013, I didn’t know where to begin. The activities were disorganised. We had participated in some activities and competitions suggested by environmental groups but we didn’t have a clear objective and plan. When Ms. Ip became the headmistress the year after, she suggested dividing environmental education into three aspects: ‘School-based curriculum’, ‘Activities in and outside campus’ and ‘Community participation’. We have also taken advice from judges at competitions to develop our scope gradually and to promote environmental education extensively.” In 2013/14, the school started participating in the “Hong Kong Green School Award”, and was awarded the “Gold Award” last year.

### TREE SEEDLING WITH EXCEPTIONAL MEANING

Starting from 2014/15, “Community participation” has been a focus of environmental education. Ms. Tam realised the importance of strengthening community education and to enrich students’ experience. Therefore, she hosted the first exhibition of students’ creative

work for environmental protection in MTR station. She then organised an activity called “Saving animals in extinction” at kindergarten to arouse public awareness of environmental issues in the community. In addition, the school has also joined the activity called “Wetland Detectives” organised by WWF to learn about the relationship between birds and habitats. The year after, the school offered students opportunities to experience beach clean-ups and to identify different types of recyclables at the Waste Recycling Centre. Teacher in charge, Ms. Chiu Hiu Tung, described, through the activities, students has learnt how to identify recyclables and reckoned how they can help “saving the world”.

The above activities have given students knowledge and skills of eco-friendly living. Nevertheless, it is the tree planting activity that made students feel they have the responsibility to take care of the community. Tseung Kwan O Government Primary School has organised tree-planting activity in Sai Kung before, but this was their first to plant trees in their community. So Tsz Chun, the Primary 5 student talked about his “happiest experience” excitedly “It was my first time to plant a tree on a street! It was just a block from my school and home.” Every time he passed by the little tree, he would check if “his friend” is doing well, especially after Typhoon Mangkhut has hit Hong Kong.

To adults, planting a tree in Sai Kung might not seem very different from planting one in Tseung Kwan O. But to these children, planting trees on a street they know well, the connection is much stronger. It is a street where their mothers walk with them and go to school everyday. As normal as it seems, the community has got their attention because of that tiny tree. Tsz Chun’s role has since switched from a user in the community to a carer of the community. Isn’t it the value behind environmental education?

### DEVELOPING MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES OF STUDENTS

From the experience shared by Tseung Kwan O Government Primary School, it is proven that “Community participation” allow students to join outdoor activities and gain new knowledge by enriching experience and form a bonding with their community.

In the hope of sharing their experience with other schools, Ms. Tam has successfully hosted a joint government schools environmental green day by taking references from outside such as the joint school activity of “The Plastics resources education: 3Rs & 3Cs” organised by the Education University of Hong Kong and the teacher training workshops organised by WWF. Ms. Tam was satisfied with the results. “I used to think that we couldn’t host this kind of events as it is a bit broad scale. Yet, we have invited four schools to join the event. Teachers could exchange ideas. Our students took charge of some activities and taught students from other schools to make recycled papers. We are already planning to invite more schools to join our next event, and we’ll continue to organise more meaningful activities.”