

## **LET'S CREATE AMBASSADORS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT!**

**Yumiko Yamashita (Korea)**

In Korea, designated as a water-starved nation by the UN, various attempts have recently been carried out to evoke water conservation. The Association of Environmental Preservation under the Ministry of Environment is making tours mainly of elementary schools with traveling environmental classrooms. These classrooms are remodeled trucks to teach children the importance of water. The back of a truck becomes a mini theater, and children can learn about water through images there. Children step on the back of a truck with great interest because they can watch films on it. After the film, experiments on water contamination get started on the school ground. Children learn how water is contaminated with milk and scraps of dumped food. They also learn how water is cleaned through real-life experience.

Caregivers of a kindergarten in Seoul are making environmental newspapers to encourage kindergarteners and their families to be more conscious about the environment. In the classroom, children are taught not to waste food and only serve themselves what they can consume. Also they are taught to stop the water while brushing their teeth; gargle with stored water in a cup, and save water while washing hands with stored water in a wash bowl.

Some children doing water-conservation activities in their kindergarten advise their parents about how to use water at home. Like this kindergarten, the movement to teach children the importance of water from an early age, and work on environmental problems together with children, school, and families as a whole has gradually expanded.

Although Korea is designated as a water-starved nation, there is never a lack of rainfall in Korea. From late June through July, there is a rainy season like in Japan. Consequently, the activities to take advantage of such rain water are gradually becoming fashionable.

Galmoi Elementary School in Uiwang City built an underground tank to store rainwater and use it for watering plants and cleaning. Also, Sorak Junior High School in Gyeonggi Province implements environmental experience activities as related coursework seven times annually. Through group discussion, some students analyze activity content. Some groups inspect water quality and research the life of creatures in

a river in cooperation with experts. Other groups work on projects to encourage general citizens to be aware of environmental problems through clean up and distribution of leaflets together with local environmental organizations.

The Ministry of Environment built a web site called KEED (Korea Environmental Education Database, <http://keed.net>) in 2003. This site was produced, aimed at providing various environmental education programs to teachers in schools and environmental activities. The site introduces many programs including an activity site and the required time for a designated activity that can be used in the field of education. In Korea, environmental education due to the involvement of the government, educators and environmental organizations is expected to become more popular in future.