

## **Let's Brick!** **Austria-Japan intercultural bridges**

### **About:**

Intercultural exchange project was inspired by art, architecture and ecological thought of the Austrian born international artist and ecological activist Hundertwasser (“Hyaky Mizu” in Japanese) and by Japanese **Sumitomo forestry’s** concept garden known as 育み Hagukumi, which was designed to stimulate the five senses and promote physical engagement for children within a familiar garden setting, as part of the broader objective of designing homes that naturally encourage curiosity and creativity. The name **Hagukumi** is a creation from the Japanese words hagu (“hug”) and hagukumi (to nurture or raise a child). The key design concept behind the Hagukumi garden is the theory, espoused by Osaka Chiyoda Junior College Professor and Kobe University Emeritus Professor Katsuyuki Hiroki, that the development of the five senses plus motor coordination forms the basis for all subsequent development of children.<sup>1</sup>

Hundertwasser's art reflects on “urban nature” and on development of the social and ecological attention through attentive life practice. In Japan, the following buildings created by Hundertwasser: The Kids Plaza in Osaka, Maishima Incineration Plant, Maishima Sludge Center are the works

### Timeline

The project has started in February 2019 among Kei and Harumi Murauchi from Japan, both ACD-Agency for Cultural Diplomacy Ambassador for the action platform let's Brick! ArtImpact2030 with ACD-President Tatjana Christelbauer.

The project took part online, through email-exchange and was finished with creation of the project. [summary with foto-colages which were published via ACD-media pages](#) for the European day of Languages on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2019

Background: shared interests for imagination, creativity, ecology; play with constructing materials combined with LEGO bricks; English as a bridge to brick languages

### Goal, purpose:

Intercultural exchange project in the current global discourses on sustainability, focused on quality education through ecological thought, creative and agile methods, educational partnerships and based on ‘play’ as a process of human development;

The project should also contribute to the 150 years. Anniversary of the Austrian-Japan cultural relations in 2019;

The summary of activities delivers a solid base and format for further presentations and cooperations within workshops for families, children up to 5 years old, corporations, embassies and other interested. Such experiences should serve as example of good practice within the field of intercultural education, ecological thought, international relations, urban development 2030 and more.

### Investments:

Personal investments of both, the project initiator (ACD-president: time, research, creation of working templates, administrative expenses for ACD-office);

colleagues from Japan (Kei and Harumi Murauchi): time, travel costs to visit Hundertwasser's architectural projects in Osaka, Books on Hundertwasser's architecture, LEGO Bricks, trial LEGO workshop for Harumi's class mates, time for research, creation of working templates and communication with ACD-president, play time.

### Perspectives:

Presentation of the project and workshop “Let's Brick! Austria-Japan intercultural bridges in Vienna in cooperation with Japanese information- and cultural center in Vienna, Kunst Haus Wien, Hundertwasser private foundation, ACD-Agency for Cultural Diplomacy,

Presentation of project and workshop “Let's Brick! Austria-Japan intercultural bridges in Osaka, Kid's Plaza and by possibility also by Austrian cultural forum in Japan; annual celebration of

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<sup>1</sup> <http://sfc.jp/english/pdf/20121120.pdf>

Hundertwasser's birthday with "Let's Brick! Austria-Japan at Kid's Plaza; format for creative language learning German-Japanese in museums, schools, for corporations, ...

### **Reflections on activities during the intercultural exchange project Let's Brick! Austria-Japan inspired by Hundertwasser's art and ecological thought**

ACD-Agency for Cultural Diplomacy president Tatjana Christelbauer  
and Kei and Harumi Murauchi ACD-Agency for Cultural Diplomacy Ambassadors for the Let's Brick! Platform in Japan

1. what have you learned about Austria within the project exchange?

Harumi: *Before participating the project, I knew the name of country, Austria. After starting the project, my first question is "who is Hundertwasser?". Then I search his works and thoughts. After that I understood Hundertwasser has his own perspective. I was really impressed about his style, following own flow.*

Kei: *After starting the project, I visited the art exhibition about Vienna. One of the art works was a photo on Japan's first joining to International Exhibition in Austria about 150 years ago. It reminds me that so long period over century. Participating the project has developed my curiosity on various things related to Austria, such as each history, emperor, food, and people.*

2. which words in German you could learn, which word you like the most?

Harumi & Kei: ***Hundert + Wasser***

3. What could you improve in your personal life and profession through the Play Well intercultural exchange project?

Harumi: *Playing with LEGO with my friends. For example, imaginal town with fun. LEGO minifigure people hold monthly party for discussing ecological matters. Early on, they reduced CO2 by planting many flowers. In the imagination world, over time too many plants caused too many O2. Finally, people understood that balancing is the key.*

Kei: *Play well is also important for adult. Time for play? What is play? No purpose? What is my own intrinsic motivation?*

4. How you perceive the art and ecological thought of Hundertwasser in relation to play, creativity and ecology?

Kei: *Follow own heart and mind, like flow.*

5. How was your experience in communication with and guide from Tatjana Christelbauer regarding content :)\_, kindness :)\_, creativity :)\_, curiosity :)\_? (evaluate by your choice with smiley, yes/no, numbers...)

6. Your general impression from project in one word: "adventure" and perspective for further "life" of activity/workshops: *participant's needs first.*

#### Short/brief reflexion of Harumi on her workshop on Hundertwasser:

*Harumi's trial workshop was with her close friend in rental space. We designed workshop based on Harumi's workshop experience in her school, so participators could join easily. For example: make – communication "Koryu" – make time. We prepared LEGO blocks for the workshop. During preparing period, shortage of Lego blocks was our concern.*

### Short/brief reflexion of Kei's workshop for families – activities:

*I had a plan of workshop for NTT's Family Day event as ACD Ambassador in April. From participators point of view, my plan has not close relation to Family Day as it's purpose is developing engagement employees and their family. So I determined that the theme of LEGO workshop was reflecting events on Family day*

**Activity:** Composing words together in Japanese for creative play as Hundertwasser did it and it is a kind of special "chaning-ability" of words in German:

In Japanese, "SouzouryokuWoHagukumuOmocha". (In English "toys for play to develop own imagination", in German: "Fantasieleitendesspiel")

Souzouryoku: imagination; Hagukumu: develop; Omocha: toy for play

### Word/s in Japanese/English/German to express:

*Kindness:* Yasashisa, Shinsetsu; German: Nett (Kind); Höflich (polite); Würden Sie ... (would You);

*Friendly invitation:* (to play, asking question): Asobahen? Common expression in Kansai area

*Expression of gratitude:* Kansha simasu; German: Herzlichen Dank! English: cordial thank You!

"I visit the Ume garden, "Bai-En" garden in Osaka Castle Park in every winter to see the plum blossoms. Plum blossom in Japanese is "Ume". (Kei)

A proverb with positive/optimistic meaning: Kahou wa nete mate.

Kahou: good results; Nete: by sleeping; Mate: Wait

In English: "just wait for good results by sleeping (after you did your best)". In German:

Chained Japanese word-plays by Kei and Harumi inspired by Hundertwasser and Tatjana's linguistic landscapes: HyakuMizu

We Japanese people use Katakana from German language, for example "Arbeit".

But most of us don't know they are from German.

Learning German (a little bit) was an opportunity to know about.

I will participate group photo exhibition in Osaka next month.

I joined about half year monthly class for learning photography, research and practice. We will bring what we learned and practiced during the class to the exhibition. My title of work will be "inspired by Hundertwasser". Gallery Solaris

[https://solaris-g.com/portfolio\\_page/191105/](https://solaris-g.com/portfolio_page/191105/)

Anyway, it is nice opportunity to learn and practice a first step of cultural diplomacy :)

Many Thanks, Kei and Harumi

### **Reflexion from Tatjana Christelbauer**

1. What have you learned about Japan within the project exchange? *I learned to perceive the culture through another "flower" - learning about the Reiya and the meaning of the plum blossom, patience and attention for detail and closeness and appreciation to the beauties of nature. Before, I associated Japan only with cherry blossom.*

2. Which words in Japanese you could learn, which word you like the most?

情氣る *lose ones heart (busy)* , Murasaki (violette), jouzuni asobe, (play well), 忙. 忙: 心+亡 Ame (rain), Hyaky Mizu (Hundertwasser), Reiwa- for new era ; Setsuzoku shimashou 接続しましょう

“let us connect!” “Lass uns zusammenkommen!”

3. What could you improve in your personal life and profession through the Play Well intercultural exchange project?

*I could find more connecting paths to the Japanese culture and traditions, learn more about interests, suggestions and needs of ACD-Ambassadors, improve my knowledge about Japan, approve the quality of digital communication through exchange project*

4. How you perceive the art and ecological thought of Hundertwasser in relation to play, creativity and ecology?

*Playful and imaginative art and architecture, nature-people friendly, urban-nature friendly architecture, remarkable examples for all generations in the current global discourses on sustainability and beyond, interculturally sensitive and world-open mind, warm and vital creative impulses ...*

5. How was your experience in communication with Kei and Harumi regarding content HIGHLY INTERESTING, EDUCATIVE, INSPIRATING\_\_\_\_\_, kindness HIGHLY EXPERIENCED\_\_\_\_\_, creativity OVER BORDERS, CROSS-SECTIONAL, FRUITFUL, STRATEGIC, MINDFUL\_\_\_\_\_, curiosity "AS A CHILD" :) HIGHLY OPENED MIND AND HEART, INSPIRATING!\_

6. Your general impression from project in one word: **HARUMI**

& perspective for further "life" of activity/workshops: *at Kids Plaza, Kunst Haus Wien, Schools, corporations, ...*

*Herzlichen Dank!*

*Kokorokara Arigato!*

*心からありがとう*

The summary of the exchange project is a donation of the ACD-Agency for Cultural Diplomacy and Kei Murauchi for the Documentation (anniversary book) Austria-Japan.

In Vienna, October 11<sup>th</sup> 2019

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