

## Publication of Oral History Textbook

### ***Implementing Partners***

United Nations University (UNU)  
Network for Coexistence with Nature (NCN)

### ***Background***

NCN works for building societies in harmony with nature and developing a renewed sense of value based on the idea that clues to achieving a sustainable society lie in the accumulated wisdom and skills of people living traditional lives in rural areas. In particular, “Kikigaki Koshien” has been one of their main annual activities since 2002. Each year, a new group of 100 high school students visits 100 elderly masters who are engaged in primary industries and lead traditional and ecologically-friendly lifestyles in rural areas of Japan. The students record and transcribe the masters’ descriptions of their lives and skills. Their transcripts are compiled into a book and are also available online. Their continuous activities exemplify the usefulness of their approach of conducting an oral history project to record traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) and raise awareness of the importance of such knowledge in younger generations.

The *Satoyama* Initiative’s approach values TEK as a source for innovation, but tools for effectively recording and at the same time raising awareness of TEK are not widely available. TEK is rapidly disappearing in many parts of the world. As such, UNU and NCN will jointly develop an oral history textbook as a tool to be shared with IPSI members and others dealing with socio-ecological production landscapes.

### ***Objectives***

The publication of the oral history textbook will support the dual aims of making a record of the lives of skilled craftspeople and providing students with opportunities to connect with older generations.

The publication could be a resource book for people working or intending to work on educational activities and materials related to the topic, which in turn will serve as sources of reference and information.

The oral history textbook also envisages three important impacts, namely: 1) promoting dialogue as a nexus of mutual understanding among diverse individuals; 2) building bridges across generations; 3) enhancing positive relationships between humans and nature through the transmission of knowledge.

Using these principles will enhance understanding and raise awareness of the significance of oral histories and the concepts of the *Satoyama* Initiative, including the recording of local TEK, and catalysing collective efforts of local communities.

The textbook will consist of both instructional and methodological elements, including an introduction of “Kikigaki Koshien” as an example of an oral history method, approximately 50 pages.

***Milestone and Project Completion***

The final product is to be published at the benchmark event Rio+20 in June 2012.

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