

# Children's Multicultural Exchange Project kruco × kruco Activity Report 2019



  
Sharing Caring Culture  
Non-Profit Organization  
Unleashing the POWER of DIVERSITY!



We contribute to society by what we're good at and what we like, regardless of our Japanese ability. We promote foreign residents' participation and their advancement in society.

## What is SCC?

### Mission

To raise children who understand each individual is unique and who recognize our differences through multicultural, diversity and inclusion activities.

### Vision

We create a community and society that celebrates cultural diversity based on mutual respect.

### Value

Organized and implemented by the parents from all over the world, the values of this project will be:

- Empowerment
- Community engagement
- Self-expression

All of these will have a positive impact on their children's identity or cultural roots.

## We want to solve the problems of...

Information gap due to Japanese language skills

Difficulties of career development in Japan

Isolated parenting

Culture stress



## Unleashing the POWER of DIVERSITY

SCC is a community where each person with diverse cultural backgrounds can maximize the use of their uniqueness, and can fulfill their potential in the area.



Parenting Support in Multiple Languages

Multicultural Event

Co-Production Project for Multicultural Society

## How to tell my home country's culture to children as a foreign born mother ...



Rujida Kuga

Hi ! My name is Rujida Kuga. You can call me Eve. I have lived in Japan for 14 years. I have a son and a daughter. My children are half Thai and half Japanese. I'm fortunate to work as an instructor. I teach Thai culture to Japanese students at Yokohama elementary school, using English. I've been teaching for 8 years. I found that teaching is my passion. I am proud to be Thai and I really love to share my culture. SCC (Sharing Caring Culture) is an organisation which has the same goal as I have. "kruco x kruco" is a project that answers my question. kruco x kruco's activities aim to promote diverse cultures to non-Japanese families. As I'm a mother, I would like my children to be open-minded and to understand other cultures, not only Thai and Japanese culture. We all live in the same world, with differences and a variety of cultures. It is



participating in a multicultural playgroup with her eldest daughter, Ren. It was the year we started SCC as a voluntary organization. Using her talent in cooking, she has held five Thai cookery classes in English, for both adults and children. In addition to the cooking classes,

she read Aesop's Fable "The Ant and the Grasshopper" in the Thai language at our multilingual story-telling time. We were concerned that the children would not be interested in it because the Thai language was an unfamiliar language for most children. However, she used gestures and songs to express the difference of the characters in the story to get the children's attention.



important to survive and stay together peacefully. "Culture shock" will not happen if we know and understand each other. "kruco x kruco" means Cross(Cross country and culture through education activities). We can learn and have fun through kruco x kruco's activities. The preparation for kruco x kruco activities is to clean your heart, open your mind, learn new things and have fun with other cultures.

Thank you, Eve

### Eve launched a social group in Japan to maintain her mother tongue and culture

Eve became involved in SCC's activities in 2014 after

she is not only working as an instructor in SCC, she also launched a social group to support children who are connected to Thailand in September 2019. Having children who have Thai heritage, she is responsible for teaching her language and culture to them. Most children with Thai heritage who were born and raised in Japan don't have many opportunities to learn Thai language. She has gathered those children to teach the Thai language and culture, which are connected to their parents' roots. At the beginning of every activity day, a student on duty leads to sing Thailand's national anthem. Also, she carefully teaches them how to greet in Thai. She teaches them in the same way she was taught by her parents. For example they should bow deeply while holding their hands together if the other person is older than them.



### Online Family Thai Cooking Class 2020.7.25

Since March 2020, it became difficult to hold family cooking classes in person due to COVID-19 pandemic. We held an online Thai cooking class for parents and children for the first time. We cooked Thai pineapple fried rice. It has unique ingredients such as jasmine rice and nam-pla (fish source) that were mailed to each participant together with the recipe in advance. On the day of the event, they were cooking at home while listening to the lecturer's explanation using an online meeting room "Zoom". We used Granjapon Co., Ltd. as the live streaming venue.





## Multicultural Family Cooking Making rice balls at Tsuzuki Minkaen



**Date:** Sunday, October 20, 2019 10:30am -12:30am  
**Location:** Tsuzuki Minkaen (2 Odanishi, Tsuzuki-ku, Yokohama)  
**Participants:** Four children having heritage to foreign countries (two from Germany and two from China) and six Japanese children



With the cooperation of a Japanese instructor from H & K, an NPO that works on dietary education for children in Tsuzuki Ward, we held a rice ball making class both in English and Japanese. We cooked rice in a pot (kama) of the Tsuzuki Minkaen. Also, they introduced a simple side dish using local Japanese mustard spinach (komatsuna). While we were waiting for the rice to boil, we played with beanbags, a traditional Japanese passtime, and read the picture-story show of "The Monkey and the Crab" in English and Japanese. At the end of the cooking class, we wiped the floor with wet rags in the traditional Japanese style of cleaning. The international children were particularly excited because it was their first time to join this kind of event. A German mother who had just started living in Japan said, "I wanted to make some time for my child to get to know more about Japanese culture. I'm glad we had a valuable experience today." A Chinese mother said, "I wanted to make rice balls with my son who was born in Japan."



## Multicultural Family Cooking Making Malaysian food - Nashi Lemak



We held a parent-child cooking class to make "Nashi lemak", a Malaysian national dish. May, the instructor of this event is a Chinese-Malaysian lady. She showed a world map and explained Malaysia's location, the national flag, and the time taken to travel there by plane, etc. Also, she described the diverse ethnic groups in Malaysia. "Nashi lemak" is usually eaten with some special sauces, so parents mainly made the sauces. The



**Date:** Sunday, February 8, 2020 10:00am -12:30am  
**Location:** JA Yokohama Cooking Studio (1-26-6 Nakagawachuo, Tsuzuki-ku, Yokohama)  
**Participants:** four children having heritage to foreign countries (three in Germany, one in Malaysia) and five Japanese children

children cut cucumbers, peeled the shells of boiled eggs, and enjoyed serving them individually. While the children were eating, the staff of JA Yokohama introduced the agricultural products of Yokohama city by using a map and a video. They gave notebooks to the children as a souvenir for the cooking class. All the participants were very satisfied with the outcome of the event. This event was successful because of the cooperation of local companies.



2019.10

2020.1

1.18 "Chinese New Year"

7.4 "Multilingual Storytime in English, Spanish and Thai"

9.20 "BONSAI making"

7.25 "Multicultural Family Online Cooking - Thai Pineapple Fried Rice"

9.26 "Explore India!"

## World Event "Loy Krathong Festival" in Thailand



In Thailand, it's customary to hold a water festival called "Loy Krathong" every December of the lunar calendar (currently October or November). Although it is an unfamiliar event in Japan, we held this world event to introduce children to "Loy Krathong Festival" in an open space on the 3rd floor of Kohoku Minamo, a commercial facility in Tsuzuki Ward. "Loy Krathong" is a traditional event. Thai people release lanterns (Krathong) into rivers (Roy). In the beginning of this tradition, people placed candles and incense sticks on the lanterns made of banana trunks and leaves and threw them into the river. We made lanterns with children and

thanked the God of water. Mothers from Thailand gave us an opportunity to learn about Thai musical instruments and performed Thai dance. We immersed ourselves in Thai culture all day.

**Date:** November 2, 2019 10:30am -12:30am  
**Location:** Kohoku Minamo (2-7-1 Nakagawachuo, Tsuzuki-ku, Yokohama)  
**Participants:** 15 children having heritage to foreign countries (14 from Thailand, one from Indonesia) and four Japanese children



## Multilingual story time Story of India, China, and Indonesia



**Date:** Sunday, February 15, 2020 10:30am -11:45am  
**Location:** Tsuzuki MY Plaza (5th floor, Northport Mall, 1-25-1 Nakagawachuo, Tsuzuki-ku, Yokohama)  
**Participants:** Nine children having heritage to foreign countries (nine children from Thailand) and two Japanese children

We had a multilingual story time session and read picture books in English, Chinese, and Indonesian. The first book, "Asian Spice Kids", was read in English by an Indian lady. The book is about Eastern and Western spices. She let children smell the actual spices. We used spices as the characters of the book. The children read the book, and also reenacted the characters in it. The second book was an Indonesian one named "Krauk! Krauk!" The story is like a race for eating buns (Pan kui kiyousou) but instead it is rice crackers. An Indonesian lady read the story both in Indonesian and English. As the book showed, we had a competition to eat rice crackers with children and we had a fun time together. The last one was a Chinese book about a pig that had eaten papaya seeds and was worried the seeds would grow inside his stomach. We enjoyed the story by using a panel theater style inside a darkened room.





## Report of the Indian cultural event, from a child who has a heritage to a foreign country

Edward Dons 

I really enjoyed the Indian culture event in September. It was fun to learn about Indian culture with lots of children. First we looked at a map of the world and found India on the map. The instructor, Akhila Mohandas, put a bindi on our heads. Bindi is a coloured powder that you put on your head. Then she let us smell some different types of spices and she let us eat a tiny bit of a very hot spice. Akhila showed us a colourful Indian dress called a sari. She said it was about 10 metres long. She wrapped it round all of us at the same time. At the end Akhila wrote my name in Sanskrit on a piece of card that I took home. Also we took a photo together. I had a very fun time, and I want to learn more about India.



### "Differences" and "Similarities" that can be noticed during childhood

Indian instructor, Akhila, invited children to "travel" to India for an Indian culture event. She created scenes to let children experience Indian culture and customs. When Indian people invite others to their homes, they burn incense. Therefore, Akhila put her hands together in front of the incense plate and greeted the children. Also, she introduced "bindi". A seven-year-old girl (Edward's sister) whose father is from England stepped forward and had a bindi on her forehead. Next, Akhila showed them pictures of Japanese curry rice and Indian curry and the children thought about their "differences". They gave their opinions about what they noticed, such as "The ingredients of Japanese curry rice are



### Indian instructor, Akhila Mohandas: her thoughts

Akhila, the instructor of this event, has just moved to Japan from South India last year. This was due to her Indian husband's job-transfer. In her home country, she had studied at a science university and had worked on creating educational content. She has a five-year-old son. She worries about raising her child in Japan because she is not familiar with Japanese parenting style. However, since meeting us, SCC, she often comes up with ideas for activities to do with children. She told us she feels fulfilled by putting her skills to use, even though she cannot speak Japanese well.



potatoes, carrots, onions, and meat, but Indian curry has different ingredients." Children learned that Indian curry is made of spices. Akhila opened the bottles of spices one by one, and the children smelled them. An 11-year-old boy whose father is from Israel said, "My dad makes chai tea with cinnamon." After explaining about Indian food, she introduced the Indian sari and described the differences between it and a Japanese yukata, which a volunteer was wearing in the event. The children tried on a sari and saw how long the cloth of a sari is. Finally, Akhila introduced Indian festivals. Children learned about the Holi Festival. In this Hindu festival, people use a lot of colored powders on their bodies. In the beginning, the children were a little scared but one brave child put them on his hair! Then they found out this tradition was very interesting and they started to add the colorful powders on their bodies. Akhila was very pleased to see the children's positive reactions because it was much more than she expected. She says "It's just like an Indian festival." Also, she introduced "Henna tattoos" as an Indian tradition. In India, people use henna tattoos as a body decoration or an amulet. Akhila let the children wear the gloves drawn with "henna art." After experiencing all the activities, Akhila wrote the names of each child in Hindi on the whiteboard. The children were attracted to the shape of letters, which is very different from the English alphabet, and they enjoyed that their names were written in the unfamiliar language for them. When they wrote their comments on the event review sheet, a child whose father is from Israeli wrote, "I realized that there is "henna" in both India and Israel." His comment shows how he was able to connect to his own roots. We felt the significance of this project because we provided an opportunity for the children who have heritages to foreign countries to discover their own roots.



## Activity Report

The Children's Multicultural Exchange Program aims to develop an inclusive community to respect other countries' cultures and differences. We would like to create opportunities for both children who have foreign heritages and Japanese children to experience various cultures and diverse people. Then, we started this program in October 2019.

Our intention with this program is for children to enjoy learning through participation rather than learning passively. We always strive to evoke children's sense of "fun" and their "inquisitive mind" through our cooking classes and multilingual story events. At the same time, we would like to develop children's awareness of global citizenship and human rights, as well as their own roots and cultures.

Foreign families are favorably involved in our activities as instructors and also providing operational support. As a result, we were able to hold nine events from March 2020 despite the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

We held a family online cooking for the first time. It was a very good opportunity for us to learn effective management styles using a small amount of resources through careful preparations and cooperation with our instructor.

Number of participants	103 people 65 children having heritages to foreign countries, 38 Japanese children
Counties connected with the participating children	India, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Germany, United Kingdom, Canada, Israel, Kyrgyzstan, Hong Kong, Japan, China
The instructors' home countries	India, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Costa Rica, Japan, China

## Sponsorship and Cooperation

We sincerely thank the NPO Mobile Communication Fund for providing a subsidy for this project. Also, we appreciate the great support from the Regional Promotion Division in Tsuzuki Ward, and all the people and companies who cooperated with us.

NPO Mobile Communication Fund / JA Yokohama / Tsuzuki Ward Office / Tsuzuki Minkaen / Minamo Kohoku / Granjapon Co., Ltd.

### We do event planning and management!

Because of this project, we have received requests from local nurseries and libraries, etc. They asked to plan programs to promote multicultural understanding for children, to coordinate with foreign instructors, and to facilitate events. Please contact us with your questions and your requests using the contact information provided below. Include details of the nationalities of the participants, their languages, and the project budget.

Get in Touch

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