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Educational fieldworks towards urban biodiversity preservation: Case study of Japanese gardens management of Kanazawa city, Japan

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Japanese gardens can be considered as the unique hubs to preserve urban biodiversity, as they provide the habitat for the diverse network of living organisms, facilitating the movement of the rare species around the urban landscape, becoming the refuge for the moss and many endangered species. For the centuries, Japanese gardens were considered as ecologically sustainable and well organized ecosystems, due to the skilled maintenances and management. However, unfortunately due to the depopulations and ageing in Japanese societies, gardens are becoming more abandoned, and there is an urgent need to increase the awareness about the importance of the Japanese gardens to preserve the urban biodiversity. In this study we have conducted the participatory educational fieldtrips for 12 students into five gardens protected by Kanazawa city and learned about the preservation activities conducted at the governmental, municipal, and local levels. After the courses students have found a strong linkage between the gardens with the traditional culture. Kanazawa city, for more than 400 years is famous with traditional craft makings and tea ceremonies, and it was noticed that the cultural diversity of the city was strongly supported by the biodiversity of the gardens, and loss of the gardens would bring to the loss of the traditional culture. Using the experiential approach during the fieldworks it was observed by the students that the linkage between the bio-cultural diversity strongly depends on humans' activities. The continuous management and maintenance of the gardens are the contributing factor for the preservation of urban diversity. However, garden management is very time and capital consuming process, and it was also noticed that there is a big need to attract all levels of the society to preserve the urban biodiversity through the participatory urbanism.

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