

Minamata disease/mercury treaty research

Minamata High School

1. Do you know Minamata?

Minamata City is located at the southernmost tip of Kumamoto Prefecture, facing the Shiranui Sea and the Yatsushiro Sea. It was selected as an SDGs Future City by the Japanese Government in 2020. **However, it is also the place where the pollution called Minamata disease occurred 67 years ago. Minamata disease was caused by marine pollution from methylmercury discharged from factories.**



Googleearth



2. Our thoughts

We have been learning about Minamata disease since we were in childhood.



- ① we ourselves should inform the world about the effects of mercury use on human bodies and the environment.
- ② we wanted to deepen our understanding through this activity because even we do not know some aspects of the disease.



3. Our Approach

We were divided into three groups and chose topics to research.

1. Survey of the actual state of knowledge through questionnaires	2. We want to save Indonesia.	3. Disseminating information about Minamata disease
<p>We asked 80 students from Minamata High School questions about mercury and Minamata disease.</p> <p>● yes ● no</p> <p>About the global mercury situation Did you know that mercury is used in some areas for gold mining?</p> <p>Do you think the use of mercury is permitted in Japan?</p> <p>It was found that approximately 60% of students did not correctly understand the use of mercury.</p>	<p>Mercury is used in gold mining in Indonesia. Therefore, we propose a method of gold refining that does not use mercury.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>Our proposal: Alternative to amalgamation method Electrolytic refining of copper</p> <p>Advantages: No impact on the human body or the global environment, low cost</p> <p>Disadvantages: Requires large facilities</p> <p><u>There are ways to mine gold in developing countries that do not use mercury. However, it is difficult to realize this for economic reasons.</u></p>	<p>Activity Record (~September 14, 2023)</p> <p>(1) <u>Online meeting with Ministry of the Environment</u> ➡ We learned that there are many countries that use mercury even though they are parties to the Minamata Convention.</p> <p>(2) <u>Visit Minamata Disease Museum</u> ➡ After reading many documents, We learned anew the horror of Minamata disease.</p> <p>(3) <u>Interview to the storyteller</u> ➡ We learned about the real situation at that time.</p>



Prospects for the future



A similar survey will be conducted among students at high schools outside Minamata to clarify what knowledge is lacking and what is needed.

In the light of the Minamata Convention and Indonesia's current response, we would like to further I would like to deepen my thoughts on this.

Complete the materials and use them to learn about Minamata diseases in classes.