

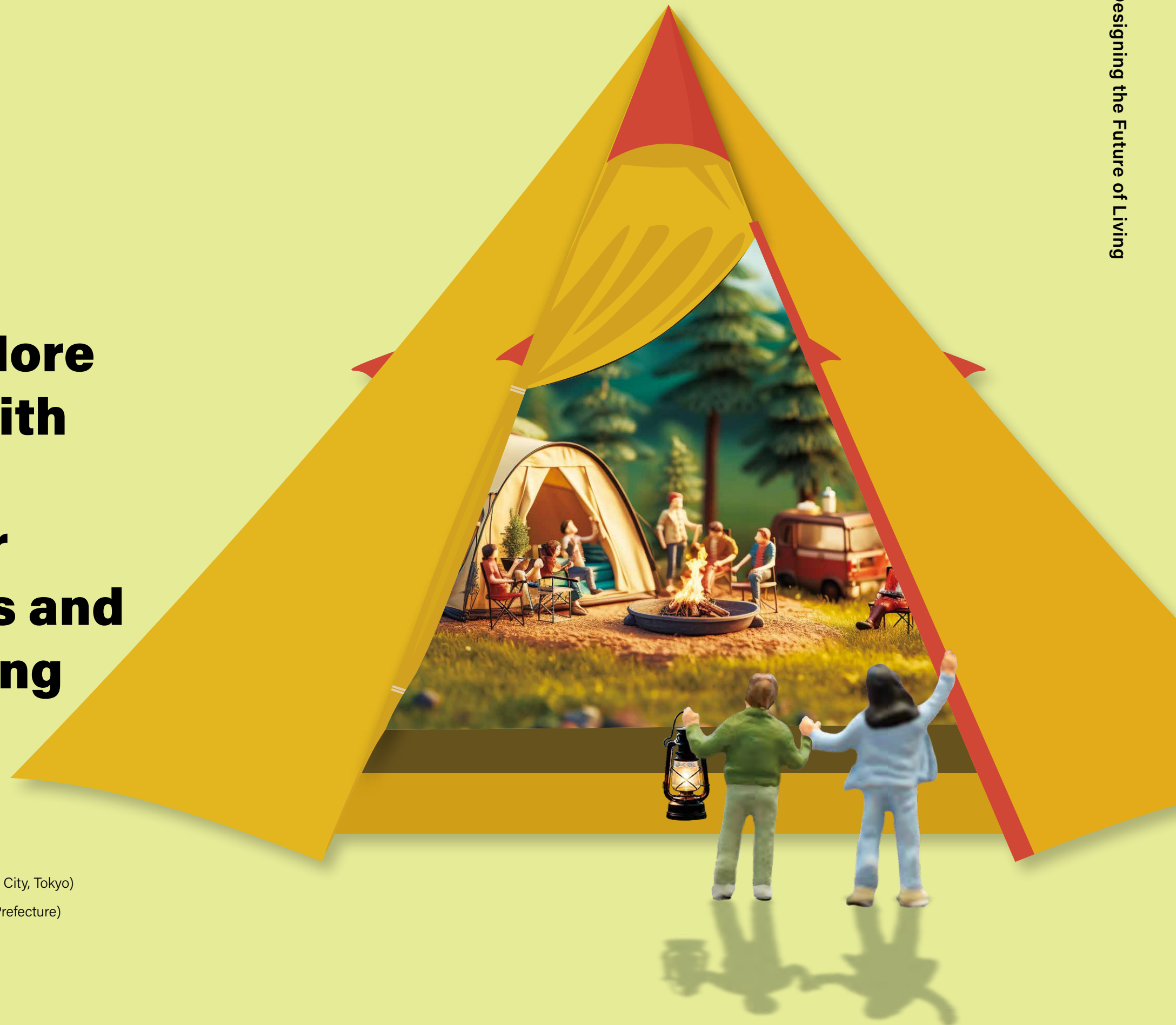
03

Environment

A Future Where More People Engage With Nature and Take Responsibility for Local Ecosystems and Resource Recycling

[Activity Overview]

- Building and learning about wildlife habitats | AEON MALL Tokoname (Tokoname City, Aichi Prefecture)
- *Tsunagaru* Garden Project -Rice Paddy Biotope- | AEON MALL Shinrifu (Rifu Town, Miyagi District, Miyagi Prefecture)
- Children's Satoyama Project | AEON MALL Tamadaira Woods (Hino City, Tokyo)
- Sustainability Drive | AEON MALL Takaoka (Takaoka City, Toyama Prefecture)



Building and Learning

About Wildlife

Habitats



Illustration by Hitomi Iwata

Project Overview

This project aims to create spaces where local residents can connect with greenery and local wildlife. Children from the mall nursery school joined in building homes for lizards and a bug habitat called a Bio-Nest* in the greenery on mall property. These activities gave the children a fun way to learn about the local ecosystem.

*Insect habitat using branches and fallen leaves found on the premises of the mall



Learning about local ecosystems
and contributing to biodiversity
conservation



Co-Creation Partner: S-chil RINKU NURSERY SCHOOL

S-child RINKU NURSERY SCHOOL is a licensed nursery school located in AEON MALL Tokoname that accepts children 365 days a year from early morning to night. The school adopts a mixed-age group childcare, supporting children's growth beyond standard age-based class divisions.



Illustration by Hitomi Iwata

This original illustration by Ms. Iwata was created to introduce children to the ecology of lizards. The warm, friendly style was chosen to help children who feel uneasy around animals become comfortable by starting with illustrations before moving to photographs.

Location: Tokoname City, Aichi Prefecture

Tokoname City has a long-standing and thriving ceramics industry. Tokoname ware is one of the six oldest pottery traditions in Japan, and the area retains a strong sense of history and tradition. The city has continued to grow as an international destination since the opening of Chubu Centrair International Airport in February 2005.

Unique Features

Children built the lizard homes, which are typically made from stone, using discarded Tokoname ware, a traditional craft material from Tokoname City.



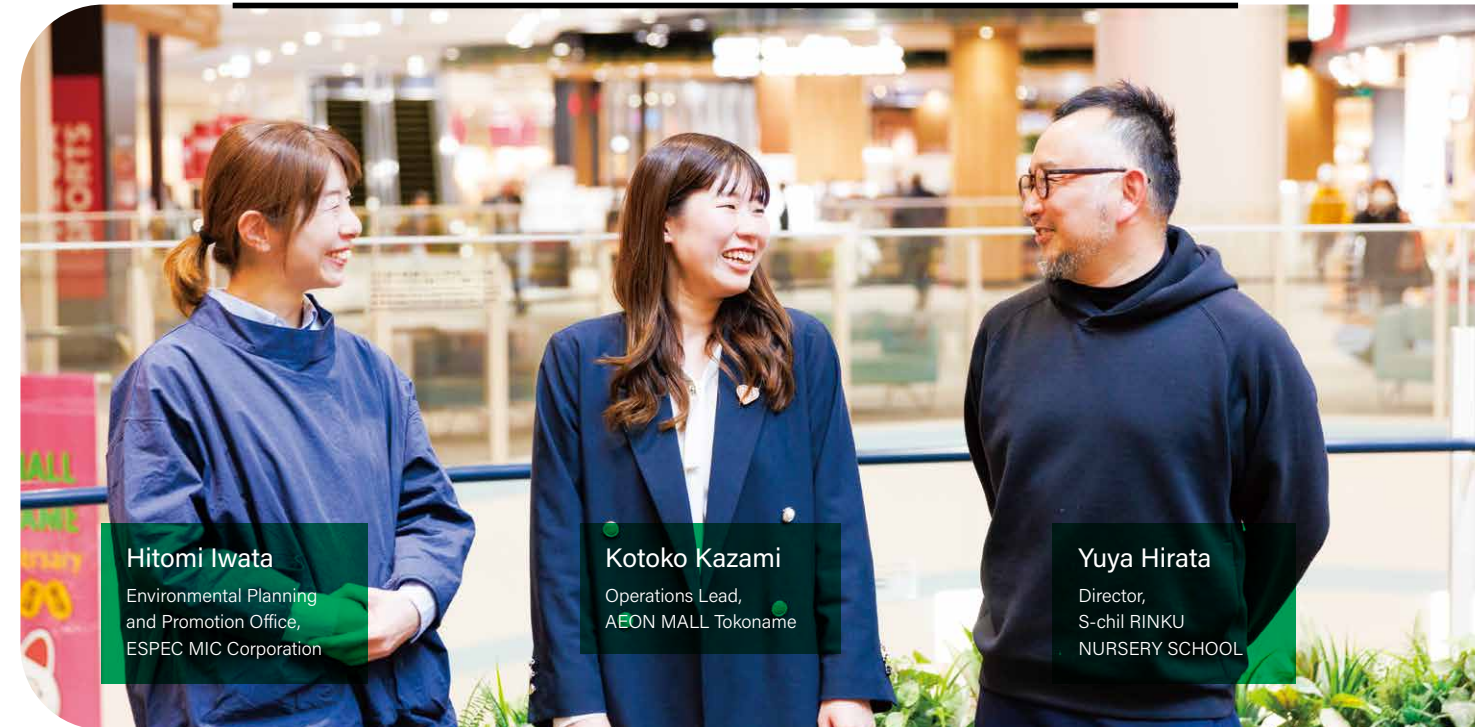
Facility: AEON MALL Tokoname

AEON MALL Tokoname sits along Ise Bay with views of Chubu Centrair International Airport. The mall promotes glocal (global + local) initiatives and under their concept of being an entertainment park that offers 120% enjoyment of the sea and sky. The mall also received ABINC certification* in February 2016.

Basic market area	: 170,000 households and 480,000 people within a 30-minute drive
No. of stores	: 180 (specialty stores)
Land area	: Approx. 202,000 m ²
Parking spaces	: Approx. 4,200
Opening	: December 4, 2015

*ABINC certification is a program operated by the Association for Business Innovation in Harmony with Nature and the Community (ABINC) that certifies facility greenery developed with consideration for biodiversity.

ESPEC MIC × S-chil RINKU NURSERY SCHOOL × AEON MALL Tokoname



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Building a Space That Brings the Community Closer to Nature

Ms. Kazami: The land where AEON MALL Tokoname now stands was originally created through land reclamation. Building a lush, green environment and creating spaces where people and local wildlife can coexist remains an important challenge and something we need to take responsibility for as a part of this community. We established the outdoor entertainment park Wonder Forest Curio when the mall first opened, but I often felt the space hadn't yet become a place where people could truly feel close to nature and living creatures. I continued asking myself what we could do for the community and how we can work together. This point is something I've discussed many times with Ms. Iwata's team.

Ms. Iwata: Yes, that's right. ESPEC MIC supports biodiversity initiatives and conducts ecosystem surveys in local areas. Our first collaboration with AEON MALL Tokoname involved selecting the tree species for the opening of AEON *Furusato no Mori* (Hometown Forest) Tree-Planting Ceremony and other support on the day of the event. The mall sits about three to four kilometers from the forested hills of the central Chita Peninsula, so it's important to

create pathways for wildlife to move between habitats and to make the site livable for the species that arrive. Our conversations focused on the need to take a medium- to long-term approach and involve the community for this very reason. We planned efforts in fiscal 2024 as a starting point to this future approach, including building homes for lizards and the Bio-Nest project which used fallen branches and leaves gathered from the greenery around the mall.

What's a Lizard?: Children's Research Using Picture Books

Kazami: I was really surprised when I realized we needed to prepare the space just to attract wildlife. We wanted to involve the children who regularly play at Curio, so we reached out to Mr. Hirata, who gladly agreed to the idea.

Mr. Hirata: I did. I felt this initiative would be a special opportunity to create lasting memories for the children. We opened the nursery school inside the mall when it first opened. This nursery school now cares year-round for children aged 0 to 5, from 5:30 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. as of April 2024. Families appreciate not only the extended hours but also the convenience of the location and being able to shop at AEON MALL when picking up their

children. And although Curio provides the children with greenery, there wasn't many chances for the kids to interact with living creatures. When we introduced this project, some children asked, "What's a lizard?" and began looking it up in picture books. Once they understood what kind of animal a lizard was, they lit up and said, "I want to build the lizards a home!"



Co-Creation Partner ESPEC MIC Corporation

ESPEC MIC Corporation is an environmental engineering company involved in researching local ecosystems, cultivating native seedlings and products, and restoring diverse ecosystems, including woodlands, riparian areas, and grasslands. Other business lines include environmental control testing equipment and plant factory business.

ESPEC MIC × S-chil RINKU NURSERY SCHOOL × AEON MALL Tokoname

New Ideas Sparked by Watching Children Engage

Kazami: I was thrilled when Ms. Iwata suggested that we build homes for lizards using discarded Tokoname ware. Blending the traditional craft of Tokoname into a nature-focused project felt unique and meaningful.

Iwata: I want to respect the background of each region. On the day of the event, the children placed the materials carefully while saying things like, "I hope a lizard comes to visit," or "I wonder how the lizard will spend its time here." The team members looked like they were enjoying themselves too. Members sawed wood and bundled branches, fully focused as they worked up a sweat. Watching the team members return to a childlike mindset and share stories from their early years left a lasting impression. The project also sparked new ideas among participants, like expanding bird monitoring into observation events or starting insect surveys.



Kazami: Absolutely. This experience has strengthened my desire to continue creating opportunities for children and local communities to connect with living creatures.

Hirata: Thank you. I also hope we can continue building homes for lizards together.



Kazami: I introduced this project at an SDGs lecture for nearby high school students. The participating students took notes enthusiastically while observing the lizard homes, and I think the experience helped them see AEON MALL as more than just a place to shop.

Iwata: The students seemed surprised to learn that a shopping mall could take on a project like this. How lovely would it be if those same students share what they learned with family or friends and feel inspired to build habitats for living creatures at home or school.



Working With the Local Community to Grow More Lush, Green Environments

Kazami: I plan to keep creating opportunities for the local community to feel closer to nature. First, I want to enrich the soil through the use of the Bio-Nest and turning it into a habitat for insects. Doing so would enable insect surveys and even bug-catching activities for children.

Iwata: AEON MALL has already built strong partnerships with the local

community through many collaborative efforts. I hope the work on coexistence with living creatures continues beyond AEON MALL Tokoname. Expanding



these efforts to grow more lush, green environments with local residents could help create a broader ecological network.

Hirata: S-chil RINKU NURSERY SCHOOL is a special place. Most children don't return to their nursery school once they grow up. Here, though, some may feel like stopping by just because they happen to visit AEON MALL. This kind of connection makes the center feel more like a home. I think this experience might leave a lasting impression on the children. Twenty years from now, someone might say, "Back then, there were no lizards or other creatures, so we built them a home." I hope we can continue working together to create more of those meaningful experiences.



Environmental Projects

The following section introduces a few of our regional initiatives.

PROJECT | CASE 02

Tsunagaru Garden Project -Rice Paddy Biotope-

AEON MALL Shinrifu | Rifu Town, Miyagi District, Miyagi Prefecture

Learning About Biodiversity Through a Sensory Hands-On Rice Farming Experience

Students brought seedlings they had grown from seeds planted in milk cartons (provided by Doutor Coffee and Karin) and transplanted these seedlings in the rice field. Over the course of the year, the students engaged in sensory-based learning through rice harvesting. Activities included traditional Tohoku-style pole drying, making New Year decorations from leftover straw, and wildlife observation. At the harvest festival, a local farmer from Karion Farm shared insights on protecting endangered wild geese and practicing pesticide-free cultivation.



PROJECT | CASE 03

Children's Satoyama Project

AEON MALL Tamadaira Woods | Hino City, Tokyo

Expanding Connections Between Local University and Elementary School Students Through a Shared Commitment to Nature

AEON MALL Tamadaira Woods was looking to revitalize the mall's rooftop biotope when students from the School of Science and Engineering at Meisei University proposed using the biotope as an educational space for elementary school students. Students from the university then led an outdoor class in the biotope with children from Higashi-Yamato Municipal Daihachi Elementary School. Together, they planted trees, maintained the area, and prepared for a lighting display. The elementary school later created its own biotope based on the experience, helping to expand local cycles to live in harmony with nature.



PROJECT | CASE 04

Sustainability Drive

AEON MALL Takaoka | Takaoka City, Toyama Prefecture

Encouraging Local Resource Recycling Through Reuse That Benefits Others

Sustainability Drive is an initiative to encourage resource recycling by collecting

unneeded items and reusing them for someone else's benefit. The drive collect a wide range of food, picture books, clothing, and other items collected in the mall. Additionally, Takaoka City cooperated to expand the cycle by collecting picture books and food from elementary and junior high school students and donating them to nursery schools and other facilities in the city. We will continue to value our connections with Takaoka SDGs partners to address local issues.

Permanent Clothing Collection
Implemented at **87** malls