

«Essays on Volunteering in addressing the UN Sustainable Development Goals»

-SDGs: Challenges of our time -

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'It's better not to do it if you will not long keep doing. The children are rather hurt. '

During my undergraduate years, I have volunteered at a local children's center for three years. It was also because of the words of the director of the center, that after six months of service time required for college graduation to be completed, I continued to serve. I did not want to see the center as a way for fulfilling my another graduation condition like any other student. It took an hour from the school dormitory to the local children's center and 5 hours round-trip at home for the vacation. It was both economically and temporally inefficient, but it was a sense of responsibility to help children in the underprivileged, and there was a personal commitment to the sustainability of service.

The importance of English is increasing day by day, and for low-income children, English has always been a boring and difficult subject. English education taught at school was not fun in my memory. I emphasized that English is not a subject, but a method for communication. I prepared my lessons in order to encourage their interest in English. On the one hand, I thought that it was unfair that the difference in income would determine the quality of education and lead to the gap between the rich and the poor. Volunteering gave me a lesson to understand that the issue of wealth is concerned with education and quality of life.

"Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) In the 10th goal of reducing inequalities between countries and inside countries, inequality is more relevant to developed countries than to developing countries. In modern times, inequality is deepening. "

The first time I had an in-depth consideration of the goal of UN sustainable development was at the session discussion on "Inequality: Challenges in our Age" of the Jeju Forum in 2018. At that time, I was in charge of writing down the discussion session in English to Korean as a graduate student rapporteur. I could often hear about SDGs, and I remember that I was wondering what SDGs mean.

The UN secretary-general, who was in the discussion, stressed that "why some countries are rich and some are poor" and that resolving inequalities is not solely on issue of 5 or 10 of the SDGs. In order to solve it, it should be preceded by efforts to realize gender equality, human rights, political, socio-cultural and equality societies and promote sustainable development. The following panels emphasized that we should discuss measures to resolve economic, social, political and cultural inequalities, in addition to simply improving indicators such as economic inequality, income growth and GDP growth.

The UN adopted the 'UN 2030 Agenda' in 2015 based on the 17 goals and 169 milestones of SDGs' development at the UN General Assembly in September 2014 to respond to the challenges that were not met by the Millennium Development Goals adopted in 2001. The goals of the SDGs are to lay the foundations of the UN 2030 Agenda for 5P: People, Prosperity, Planet, Peace, and Partnership. They

address the 17 goals of sustainable development: poverty eradication, hunger elimination, health and quality of life, education, gender equality and etc. UN also identified volunteers as key implementation partners for the implementation of SDGs.

SDGs are not just abstract goals, they should be understood in the direction of action. The realization of the SDGs proposed by the United Nations as a giant task eventually alleviates inequality, and each goal is intertwined. Volunteering to achieve the goals of the SDGs should be accompanied by a volunteer as well as sustainability. It is also important to understand that each of the objectives of the SDGs is interrelated and, above all, include activities to inform the SDGs.

In the modern age, inequality is deepening. Even Pareto's law of the 80-to-20 rule cannot explain the wealth of the top 1%. The problem is that this inequality problem is simply the cause of global problems as well as the polarization problem due to income disparity. Inequality leads to poverty, terrorism and extremism, disease, environmental destruction, unemployment, migration, refugees, and conflict. The realization of the SDGs is therefore crucial to alleviating inequalities and preventing global problems. In order for volunteer activities to be meaningful, it is necessary to lead them to the interest of more people by sharing personal experience and publicizing the solution of problems, in addition to personal efforts. We must strive to face the inequality issue, which is an uncomfortable truth, and to emphasize that this is important for global problem solving so that we can practice the contents of the SDGs in detail.

Among the young people in 2018 in Korea, "YOLO(You Only Live Once)" and small-scale happiness, "Insider cultures" were mainstream. The young generation, who is at the center of the problem of economic hardship and economic polarization, became simple selfish that 'I will live only for my pleasure' without concern for the international community. It is contradictory, impossible, and unfair that "I" am not interested in global issues and living in happiness. As a practical task for global problem solving, this is why volunteering should be the responsibility of the citizens of the world, not a few goodwill activities.