

Volunteer activity in the matter of UN SDGs

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When I was in high school, I wrote reports about UN and NGOs. At that time, I encountered MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) for the first time. Many UN specialized agencies and NGOs started to enter upon business in the field of economy, society, culture, education, health, etc. in accordance with MDGs. As a result, people living in countries, which are in desperate need of aid, or in developing countries received benefit, and situations were improved.

With the agenda as momentum, I became more interested in global issues. It was a freshman when I put my thoughts into action. I volunteered at NGO called "FriendAsia." The association pursues activities for healthy life and happiness of children and youths living in Asian countries and supports ethnic Koreans in Central Asia by means of ODA (Official Development Assistance). While I was taking part in volunteer, I learned a lot of things. First of all, the term 'assistance' emphasizes that ODA is not unilateral acts, but interactive form of process based on partnership between ODA Recipients and Donors. Moreover, the reason why International Development Cooperation is essential is that it contributes not only to resolution of worldwide problems, but also to enhancement of relationship between nations, which consequentially leads to peace and stability in the international society, the ultimate goal of UN.

During my second year at a university, SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals), subsequent to MDGs, were implemented in force until 2030. In the views of the majority, African and South American countries required exigent actions in terms of SDGs. I agreed with their opinion, but judging by my major and experience at the association "FriendAsia," the common objectives had better come into action likewise in other nations like Central Asia, where vulnerable social group is not guaranteed basic livelihood safety and is endeavoring to find identity through education.

In my opinion, the key factor of SDGs is to plan ahead and be consistent in carrying out assistance policies. I pondered over what I can do as a student and a world citizen to realize the goals, and perceived that I have a great interest in cultural exchange and education. Thus in 2017 I participated in public diplomacy activities organized by the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Korea Foundation. My team outlined plans and proceeded to provide correct, handy information about real life in Korea for foreigners from English-speaking countries and Southeast Asia Nations by posting card news on social network service. And recently I volunteered as a substitute teacher at Sejong Institute in Moscow, Russia, assisting in providing Russian students with better education.

Korean wave (Hallyu) has enlarged the circle of South Korean public diplomacy actors around the world. The use of soft power through promotion of the Korean culture, especially K-pop, is a viable method to establish friendly relationship with other countries. I believe interest in Korea just started

getting bigger in Russia, in comparison with Central Asian countries where Korean wave reached more earlier. Because of poverty or unsupported system and environment, however, difficulty in learning arises. This is a sad reality, but it is true. That's why I decided to volunteer in domain of education and cultural exchange, so those who want to know and learn about Korea (language, culture, etc.) can rightly have opportunity for education. Even though my actions are small and limited in field, I hope they can help people and someday bring about change in the world. "Small steps, Big wins!"