

- Volunteering in the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) -

"Systematic and continuous volunteer work through partnerships between organizations"

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U.N. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) cover economic, social and environmental issues - the end of poverty and hunger, good health and well-being, quality education and gender equality, clean water and sanitation, decent work and economic growth, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, affordable and clean energy, responsible consumption and production, climate change measures, conservation of marine and land ecosystems, peace and human rights, protection of liberal democracy - which countries of all around the world share and fight together. To step forward to the era of common prosperity, the most important thing is not the determination itself, but our action which follows to it. Above all, the most indispensable part is an active participation of regular citizens. An individual who actively recycles, does not use disposable cups and straws to reduce plastic consumption, choose to walk instead of drive to tackle with climate change and fine dust, regularly does volunteer work to contribute to the improvement of poverty and inequalities - even if it is only one who does these- is not meaningless at all and should not be depreciated. However, to enhance the professionalism, sustainability, and influence of civic volunteer activities, it would be more desirable to participate as a group than as an individual.

'A group' in this sense does not mean a simple gathering of people. A group, in other words an organization refers to an NGO or NPO which specializes at providing systematic programs and educations for volunteers. 'Consumers Union of Law', an NGO which I belonged to for 6 months and where I could experience various law-related volunteer activities, is a good example of an organization described above. Each quarter, the union recruits volunteers among regular citizens and students and the ones recruited can start volunteer work only when they completed 4 hours of volunteer education. Volunteers then can selectively choose volunteer programs which they want to participate in, for instance, monitoring of the civil and criminal courts, media monitoring, translation of Anglo-American law, citizens juries and they should receive feedbacks from staffs of the union, twice at least, before the final submission of reports on volunteer work. Only the volunteers who are qualified and authorized by the union can get certificates at the end of the quarter. From my personal experience, I believe that the system and professionalism of the union are what make civic volunteer work more significant and sustainable, as the volunteer programs which the union provides are not just an once-off event or an event for show that starts in the morning and ends in that very evening. In addition, even after the volunteer programs are officially finished, volunteers who were belonged to the union are more likely to understand and recognize the importance of individual contribution to society and keep interested in those matters.

To activate the volunteer participation of regular citizens, complete support of the government on NGOs(NPOs) for volunteering should be preceded. Governments and local authorities which consider the resolution of sustainable development goals as their priority agenda need to realize that it is essential for all economic players - governments, businesses and of course, citizens - to cooperate with each other. If the institutional support of government is preceded, the next thing to accomplish is building partnerships between organizations. Partnerships between NGOs(NPOs) can create a synergy effect by accumulating and sharing a lot of information that each organization has, as well as establishing social network. By way of example to build inter-organization cooperation,

relevant ministry can host a volunteer project which NGOs(NPOs) that specialize in volunteering can apply for. After the participating organizations are selected, they can recruit citizen-volunteers based on the volunteer project plan. Civic centers can provide places for orientation and training session for volunteers and then participating NGOs(NPOs) can take charge of the specific volunteer programs when the project begins. Not to mention the cooperation between a number of organizations and government-affiliated institutes, cooperation between organizations and businesses can also bring strong synergy for the development of civic volunteering. Some enterprises like Hyundai Motors Group run their own volunteer programs for citizens or students, but if it isn't available for all enterprises, it would be desirable for them to support NGOs(NPOs) both morally and financially.

Voice of a crowd is definitely louder and lasts longer than voice of a person. To support the professional and continuous volunteering of regular citizens, there should be organizations which citizens can belong to, and an active cooperation and partnerships between the organizations. I strongly hope that our world can develop based upon voluntary participation of the public.