

From Student Ambassador Activity to SDGs

National Institute of Technology, Tsuyama College

Juri: Koshi, Seina, have you been doing anything fun lately?

Koshi: I enjoy playing smartphone games.

Juri: Not passive things like that, but things that make you feel like you're alive.

Seina: I want to speak English and interact with international students! There's not much international exchange in this Corona situation.

Juri: If that's the case, NIT, Tsuyama College has a group called "Student Ambassadors", which connects to the United Nations SDGs.

Koshi: What's "Student Ambassadors"?

Seina: I've heard about it. It's a volunteer group of students for international exchange.

Juri: You can create your own international exchange activities. As you know, SDGs means "Sustainable Development Goals" which has 17 goals and 169 targets we should achieve by 2030. We can contribute activities to help achieve the SDGs.

Koshi: Sounds like fun. Tell me more about the Student Ambassadors and the SDGs.

Juri: Hello, everyone. Today, we are Koshi, Seina, and Juri. We joined to the Student Ambassadors because of the kind of conversation we just had. Today, we would like to make a presentation on the theme of "International exchange activities created by students themselves", and furthermore on the connection between Student Ambassador activities and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Today, we would especially like to focus on the goal No.4 Quality Education, No.11 Sustainable Cities and Communities and No.17 Partnerships for the Goals.

Seina: Student Ambassadors is a school-approved student group that plans and organizes international exchange activities. We believe that students will be able to act positively and effectively in many areas in the future. Further, we believe that the Student Ambassador is connected to the SDGs, because we are all concerned with sustainable development.

Koshi: This is the trend of the number of participants of the Student Ambassadors. Now we have 95 students participating. These unbalanced numbers are due to the fact that the new curriculum started this year, and the fact that we are building a new organization.

Juri: This is the current organization chart. There is a leader at the top, and under him or her are four group leaders and group members. There are four groups within the Student Ambassador. Let's take a look at the activities of each group.

Seina: In the Japanese Teaching Materials Group, we are creating games for international students to enjoy and to help them understand Japanese society.

Koshi: The "After School English Group" meets once a month with international students from Okayama University to practice English conversation. Before the corona problem we met face-to-face, but now we meet online. As you can see in this graph,

the number of participants in this activity has increased rapidly this year. It is very popular!

Juri: In the "Exchange with International Students Group," we have been interacting online with international students who have not yet been able to come to Japan due to the corona problem.

The Events Group supports events such as Tsuyama International Robot Contest, and this year, several NIT Colleges, collaborating online to make a video about the appeal of Japan as a regional partner and hold online exchange events.

Seina: There are three things that have changed for us through our activities as student ambassadors. The first is that in the Corona age, international exchange, which we thought would be difficult, can be done easily within the school. We have changed our perspective to that of globalizing the school by first getting to know the international students in our school and doing activities with them.

Koshi: Second, we became able to act proactively. Instead of being told what to do by the teachers, we were able to come up with ideas, and we realized that activities in which we take the initiative are fun and useful for the future.

Juri : Third, we have learned the importance of multiculturalism. By getting involved with foreign students in the school, we can learn about cultures we did not know, and realized that we had to understand them and act accordingly.

Next, let's think about the connection between student ambassador activities and the SDGs more. They address problems such as poverty, climate change, and social welfare.

Juri: Koshi, what do you think about the SDGs?

Koshi: Well, I don't know, I don't really understand them, but I think that each goal is not independent from each other, but they are related to each other, and they are essential for us to live in the future.

Juri: How about you, Seina?

Seina: The Student Ambassador is especially connected to sustainable development and global partnerships, which are SDGs 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities and 17: Partnerships for the Goals.

Juri: Yes, it is. We can learn about various countries and their efforts at sustainability through the international students, and also let them know about Japan. This knowledge will be useful for No.11 'Sustainable Cities and Communities'.

Koshi: By debating with international students in the After School English activity, I was able to hear opinions from them that were far different from what we had in our minds. Through this activity, we can learn about good points and problems of each country together. The relationship between students will be the basis of No.17 'Partnerships for the Goals'.

Seina: I think we can do a better job if we create more opportunities for international and Japanese students to discuss how to have a better school life, which is connected to goal 4: Quality Education.

Juri: We could see that the Student Ambassadors is closely related to the SDG goals, couldn't we?

Seina: This Student Ambassador program was first created at NIT, Ube College. What is especially important is that it connects with sister organizations at other NIT Colleges to develop into a more global activity.

Koshi: We believe that the results of these activities will lead to better understanding and implementation of the SDGs, and thus ultimately to a better society. We also believe that the process of planning and taking action by ourselves, although difficult, will greatly help us grow. Furthermore, in this age of Corona, we've learned that we can interact with many international students and students from other colleges without going abroad.

Juri: To those of you who are interested in international exchange and foreign languages at colleges in Japan, why don't you adopt the activities of the Student Ambassadors in your school and make the international exchange activities of the entire NIT College system more active through the cooperation of the students themselves?

Seina: We hope this presentation will be one of the opportunities for you to do so.

All: Thank you very much for your attention.