

## Considering What it Means to Think Globally but Act Locally

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A: Hello, everyone. I am Hosomi Sosuke.

B: I am Soga Futa.

C: And I'm Seki Mami. We are from the National Institute of Technology, Akashi College.

A: First of all, we'd like to show one photo that might leave you astounded. Are you ready? Here it is! Did you know that there are people who live in places referred to as "dumpsites"? You can see mountains of garbage in this photo. As you can imagine, life in a dumpsite is a daily struggle for survival. People living in dumpsites can be found all over the world, from Asia to Africa to South America. The estimates vary, but it's believed that millions of people worldwide are trapped in these conditions. Today, we want to inform you about a particular example of this and talk about why people live in these conditions, and more importantly, why it's necessary for us to reflect on the impact of our actions on their lives.

B: Before we talk about the lives of people in dumpsites, let us introduce you to our volunteer activity called the "Overseas Community Project", held in Cambodia for about two weeks every March. Our school, Akashi college and Temasek polytechnic in Singapore collaborated in March 2023 and about 40 students participated in the event. Our mission included three activities: donations, teaching children, and renovations. While all of these activities were essential, donating supplies was the most impressive and thought-provoking activity for us. We filled over 1,200 bags with food and seasonings and gave them to the villagers in 8 villages. We also visited a dumpsite in Phnom Penh city and handed over the bags directly. So, all three of us witnessed the existence of a community struggling to survive in a dumpsite.

C: Now, you try to imagine life at this dumpsite. At the dumpsite in Phnom Penh, large amounts of garbage from the lives of people living in big cities accumulate every day. This continues for years and years, and as you can see in the photo, huge piles of garbage are created in a large area. People collect anything salvageable and travel to the city to sell these items. Since 'dumpsites' are garbage dumping sites, they are naturally located far away from urban areas. But why do they choose to stay in such a severe condition? The answer lies in their history and social factors. Their ancestors started living there, and generations have continued to do so even up to this very day. Children born at dumpsites run around and play among the garbage piles and have no interaction with children living outside. Of course, they do not go to school, and they grow up without receiving a sufficient education. In other words, the people living at the dump site are like a community, and it is difficult to suddenly change their lives.

A: Then, what can we do for them? We want to introduce some common ideas and discuss whether these ideas are effective or not. Firstly, most people would agree that the 3Rs: Reuse, reduce, and recycle are good ways to decrease the amount of

garbage, especially plastics. By observing the 3Rs in our daily lives, our actions become not only a benefit for the environment, but also, we could indirectly help those people in the dumpsites. We can be a role model for developing countries. We can show how people can reduce waste in our daily lives. However, implementing the 3Rs doesn't always result in immediate success, we cannot recognize that our action really helps those people in the dumpsite.

B: While the 3Rs may have an indirect impact on the lives of dumpsite communities, how might we make a more direct impact? What do they need to live? The answer is very simple: Money. And, we know a way to provide it: Donations. There are many charity organizations in Japan, and you can donate without having to go to the dumpsite yourself. You can definitely help people by donating not only money, but also food, clothing, medicine, and other essential items. Then, how does this affect the people at the dumpsite? Even if donation activities are temporary or intermittent, they are effective because they still help people in their daily lives whether donations are sold or used.

C: In addition, educational goods and services would be so helpful. As we mentioned before, they have lived in small communities in dumpsites since their birth. In other words, the only way they know how to survive is to collect and sell trash. Therefore, if we provide basic education for them to survive, it may be possible to have choices in how they lead their lives. They will be able to live a better life than exchanging 1 kilogram of plastic trash for 20 yen. So, what can we do? Remember: Donating with little knowledge about their current situation just encourages a prolonging of their plight.

A: For the first step, it is important to know what they need now and how we can improve their lives. Not everyone can go to dumpsites and see the situation for themselves. In this presentation, we told you some information about life in dumpsites. Are you surprised that there are people who are living surrounded by garbage? Do you want to find out more? If so, that's what you can do right now. We think developed countries have the obligation to help to raise the living standards in neighboring developing countries. Naturally, we want those around us to live well. Therefore, we who live in developed countries should be concerned about the current situation of dumpsites.

B: And, you can take action. There are many resources available on the internet and in books. Just 30 minutes of watching TV programs, YouTube channels or websites about developing countries can be a great inspiration for you. By being interested in and understanding their daily lives, we can become aware of our own situations and reduce waste in our lives. Then, you might find something that you can do for them. Do what you notice to be right and guide everyone to do the same, such as reusing plastic products, buying recyclable products, and supporting donation organizations.

C: As you can see, there are people who must live in severe conditions. This is not a problem isolated to one corner of the world; it is a global issue that demands our attention and empathy. We encourage you to take action. We have to learn what is going on globally. To start, do your own research about those who live in a lower standard of living. Consider supporting organizations which aim at helping those people. We should contemplate what we can do from now, what we can do locally. The

environment we live in is not the norm for all the people in the world. Our actions can make significant differences.