Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction

Group 3
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1. Introduction

It is clear that how the developed countries industrialized was not the best way, as we left behind some problems unsolved, such as poverty in developing countries and environmental degradation. Now we know that if the developing countries follow the same way as we industrialized, these problems will become worse. We now know that the key concept has to be sustainable development, but we need explain to these countries why it has to be this way.

Although it is easy to say that these developing countries have to develop in a sustainable way, due the fact that our way of industrialization was not entirely successful or problem-free, and as the developing countries do not have enough money or technology to carry out sustainable development, it is unclear what the future of sustainable development will be in developing countries.

Instead, if we reckon that everything on our globe is interconnected, we can think that it is not just ‘their problem’ and it actually also is ‘our problem,’ and we can find solutions that will result in real globalization based on global prosperity and security. We believe that for both developing and developed countries, education on sustainable development is needed.

2. Our group’s approach - 3A’s on Education

This figure is our group’s approach to solve the problems of sustainable development. We reached these solutions from feedbacks on the lectures presented through this seminar. We came up with three approaches: agriculture, aid, and action. We think that it is important to educate about agriculture and aid for both developed and developing countries. Furthermore, we have to take action and send messages to the students to raise their awareness on poverty reduction and need for sustainable development.
(1) Agriculture

As for agriculture, both developing and developed counties should pay more attention to fair trade, and NGOs should make a larger effort to educate farmers in developing countries as well as consumers in developed countries about fair trade.

NGOs should educate farmers in developing countries about organic farming, which eradicates the use of pesticides and other chemicals in raising the crops. Organic farming is also more sustainable in that the land will not be overly exploited, and that chemicals that are not healthy to human health will be stopped from traveling up the food chain. Furthermore, when the idea of organic farming is introduced to the farmers, they should also learn to prevent overcropping, since overcropping exerts more pressure on the fragile ecosystem of agricultural areas and gives rise to lower yield during harvest season.

On the other hand, NGOs should tell the story of organic and sustainable farming of developing nations to consumers in developed countries, and introduce the idea of fair trade along with this process. This is because farmers in developing countries have to contribute more time, energy and money in organic and sustainable farming, and this should be acknowledged and recognized by consumers in developed
countries in the process called “voting with money,” which can also be called fair trade.

As we participated on the Satoyama field trip during the session, we strongly felt the necessity of education on the importance of protecting and living with Satoyama. However, Japan is facing a serious ageing population, which would make it difficult to co-exist with nature. Decrease in population in rural areas might lead to disappearance of organic farming.

(2) Aid

In developing countries, we believe that each person has the right to having a decent standard of living, and in order to do that, one has to know their rights. In the case of ODA, if they know about it, then they get to know whether or not their needs are met, and their wishes are respected. If their needs are not met, they can take actions such as appealing it to NGOs, and then NGOs would take their complaints to the government or the media, and ODA will be used to meet their needs.

Also it is important for the people in developing countries to be more informed about HIV/AIDS and hygiene. Every day, nearly 7,500 people are infected with HIV and 5,500 die from AIDS, mostly due to the lack of HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment. NGOs should increase the number of people who are sent to teach and raise awareness about basic contraception and sanitation that would stop the spread of the deadly disease.

On the other hand, schools in developed countries should teach what is ODA, how, where, how much and why ODA is used to support developing countries. At the same time, schools should give chance for students to think about ODA and whether there are alternative ways to deliver ODA. These alternative ways include sending experts to teach new technologies. Getting to know more about ODA at school will increase understanding and make room for future improvement.

Regarding the health aspect, individuals in developed countries can more actively help raise donations aimed at solving the problems that people in developing countries face, like lack of sanitation, medication, clean drinking water and so on.

(3) Action

For this seminar, most of the lectures were mainly on information about government action and it is hard to imagine the appropriate action we could take as students. We need to think about how we can apply what we learned from this seminar to our everyday life.

But the majority of today’s students lack the information. That is the reason
why they are not motivated towards taking action, and even if there is a will to solve problems, it becomes something close to impossible. This is the reason why we first need to provide everyone with the necessary information.

The next step after receiving the information, our advice is for everyone to take action. We believe that people have several options regarding how they might help. One would be to actively participating in activities which help sustainable development, such as taking part in NGOs, obtaining more information about the problems that developing countries face or even get involved with volunteer work.

Another one might be the kind of event we are participating right now, as a first step. The next step is by spreading the word about what took place here to everyone including friends and family members. For example, by writing about one's opinion and sharing their feelings after attending this seminar on social networking service (SNS), or if possible, even making presentations in one's university's seminar groups. By informing others in this way, creating a network of people that are interested and willing to help, others will start to follow the suit. And that will be the step towards the big goal which is to contribute to sustainable development.

3. **Successful examples of three A approaches in the world**

There are two examples of successful three A approaches overseas.

First, university students in Sichuan Province, China, organized organic farming retreat. Farmers educated students about organic farming and students and NGOs found a venue for the organic farmers to sell vegetables to city dwellers. This is a good example to promote organic farming. Moreover, this will enable city residents to buy vegetables directly from farmers at a cheaper price, but with good quality.

Secondly, Middlebury College has an office called Alliance for Civic Engagement (ACE), which helps link college students with local, national and intentional communities, through service learning. For example, Middlebury students can apply for funding to attend conferences on student activism or corporate social responsibilities (CSR). Moreover, if students want to engage in summer service-learning initiatives, they can apply for community outreach funding through ACE as well.

Middlebury has pledged to make the campus carbon-neutral by 2015, and it encourages students to contribute to this process. For instance, if students think about how the college can cut more carbon dioxide emission and devise good methods to deliver this goal, they can apply for Tree House funding, and if getting selected, they are supposed to accomplish their proposal within the school year.
As is known to all, US has not signed Kyoto Protocol, but US college students want to make a difference in terms how their government approaches global warming problem, and they are engaged in many pilot projects to achieve that end. For example, a huge movement called Step It Up took place in the US last year, and college students all across the country were organized to petition to their respective state governments and capitols on the same day to start legislature on reducing carbon dioxide emission.

4. Conclusion

In this era of globalization, when countries rely on open markets in order to survive the fierce competition, developed and developing countries need each other more and more, and thus, the duty of the former to help the latter in the fight against poverty and efficient change towards sustainable development also increases.

A second reason for developed countries to help developing countries fight against poverty is out of humanitarian reasons. Since we are human beings with common feelings, we cannot just stand by with our hands crossed and watch other people die of disease or starvation, therefore, the North has a moral obligation to help the impoverished South.

The third compelling reason is to think about the past and remember that today’s developed countries have tapped the resources of their ex-colonies, and used them towards the buildup of today’s wealth. As a result, people from the former colonies, out of desperate need and aspiration for a better life in the former colonizer, have started a wave of emigration, which has contributed to a major problem for the developed world today. Thus, illegal immigration should be fought by helping the former colonies develop a different, better and less damaging way than the one right now, in order to stop the migration of people in the detriment of both countries involved. In this way, the duties of the global community become clearer, in the effort towards poverty alleviation and transformation towards sustainable development of which our community and environment are in desperate need.

Just do it. You can do it.

'It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it.'
--Eleanor Roosevelt