



Participant Voice

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Below is the experience of Erina, a participant of this program. Erina is a member of team 3 (Team A—SDGs Goal 1 “No poverty”) in the PBL program (*Finding Issues*). We asked Erina to share her reason for selecting the PBL topic, her reflection and what she learnt from the program.

“ When I joined this project, I decided to redefine the term poverty. The first thing that came up to my mind was those people suffering from the poverty essentially caused by COVID-19 in Japan. Many people lost their job, cannot find a way to survive with their entire family and some people even committed suicide. In our team, we were able to talk about the differences between relative poverty; what I think has been increasing in Japan recently because of COVID-19, and absolute poverty; that the situation that a lot of people might have imagined by hearing the word “poverty”, which is the households’ income being below the necessary level to maintain their basic living standards. They are both called poverty, but they are not the same because they both have different factors and solutions. As we talked about our plan for the project, we realized that gaining the knowledge and learning about it would encourage people to take positive actions to change the situation even if they are not interested in the topic in the first place. Therefore, we decided to post information relating to poverty issues and SDGs on social media. When we started the project, we mainly talked about what kind of information people around us want to know, and how we can approach the achievement of SDGs little by little. However, due to the situation with the COVID and other elements, we were not able to get a good response from viewers, and we also could not estimate how many people were motivated to take action by looking at our posts. Although the project seemed moving forward firmly, I, however, was questioning to myself, that whether I would want to take action and participate in those projects by reading our posts.

Additionally, when we decided on the contents of the posts, sharing experiences and some facts related to poverty on the social network would not be influential enough. I think it is because we were trying to get as many followers as possible, but not how many people have been influenced.

As the project moving forward, I started to feel like I was not taking action to decrease the number of people who suffer from poverty, but I was more like trying to get more followers.

Although I recognize some improvements in our project, many people have cooperated with our project and helped us to make the project better. I was so glad that some of them were interested in our project and nicely provided us information and their personal experience. I have interviewed a girl from my faculty, but I did not know what her motive was for joining the volunteer circle, and what she has learned from the study trip to Cambodia. As I was listening to her, I was naturally dragged into her stories. I consider that was because it was the primary source so she has the credibility, and also all the stories are unexpected; there were emotions that only she could understand. While I was listening to her story, I could be sympathetic to her and tried to imagine what I would have done if I was her.

In the future, if I would have another opportunity to start a project like this, I would like to start from what I have experienced and felt. I would like to seek what I can do to achieve SDGs goals and set more detailed steps of how we would do it. I was blessed with great teammates, so what we need to do from now on is to share our values and experiences so then we would be able to aim at achieving those worldwide issues.