

Zero Hunger

Have you ever heard of SDGs? They're Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations Summit in September 2015. They consist of 17 goals and 169 targets to achieve those goals to improve people's lives by 2030. I learned about SDGs at school last year. One of the goals I especially got interested in was "Zero hunger": pledges to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, an estimated 690 million people are suffering from hunger. The majority of the world's undernourished are found in Asia and Africa. In addition, 144 million children under age 5 had stunted growth in 2019.

On the other hand, consider food waste: discarding food that could have been eaten. Privately and commercially, about 1.3 billion tons of food is wasted globally. In Japan alone, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries, over six million tons of food is wasted every year. This is one of the world's most serious problems. So many people are going hungry, yet so much food is going to waste. Learning these unbelievable facts left me very disappointed.

This is personal for me because my family are farmers. We raise chickens and grow rice and vegetables, so I understand the great effort and risks involved in producing food. Since I was little, my parents and grandparents taught me the importance of never wasting food. So, it doesn't make sense to me that there is such hunger in the world, despite such excess.

Learning about SDGs and food waste in the world got me thinking about solutions. One solution I learned about from my father is buying and eating locally. Lots of time, energy, and money is saved when you consume food that was produced closer to you. I also thought about what I could do to help those Asian and African countries struggling with food shortages. I want to be a computer programmer in the future. Maybe I can develop a robot to help grow food or an agricultural AI. I'm not exactly sure what I will do. But I am sure something must be done.

We cannot solve a problem until we acknowledge there is one. So I want everyone to know about food waste. There are hundreds of millions of people in the world going hungry, that don't have to. We waste far more than enough food every year to ensure that everyone is fed. This is a problem. But, it is definitely fixable. So, let's do something about it.