

**Invited Talk: Contribution to grass-
roots movements – The case of Minato
UNESCO Association**

Hiroshi Nagano, Minato UNESCO Association

Email ID: nagano@grips.ac.jp

Abstract

To attain the SDG goals, it is inevitable to obtain the support of ordinary citizens; one way to realize it is the grass-roots movement. Japan has a good example case, such as the non-governmental UNESCO activities. Japan was admitted to UNESCO in 1951, five years before it became a member state of the United Nations. It was realized, because Japanese people at that time echoed the spirit of UNESCO and successfully persuaded the US occupation army. The core of this movement was carried out by regional UNESCO associations which consisted of local people. At that time there were already over 100 UNESCO associations in Japan. Currently there are totally over 270 associations, one of which is Minato UNESCO Association located in the center of Tokyo Metropolis.

Its activity is broad. There are two categories of activities. One is to enhance the communication and understanding of other culture by means of holding events, such as calligraphy class, tea ceremony class, zazen (meditation in Zen) class. These activities are appropriate to enhance the international communication, because many foreign people attend them. The other is to hold symposiums. These years, Minato UNESCO Association is holding a series of symposiums on peace. The topic of the first one in 2019 was “What can we do about climate change? - SDGs-oriented learning and action” and the second one in 2020 was “Passing Attractive Oceans to The Next Generation -The Start of United Nations Decade of Ocean Science”. In November 2021, we will hold the next one on the topic of UNESCO Eco Park. It celebrates the fifty years’ anniversary of the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) which supports Biosphere reserves as learning places for sustainable development.

Peace is the abstract concept and is not easy for us to consider what we can do for it. So we try to find chances to think about it by understanding the spirit and concept of UNESCO activities. It is also expedient that these topics are deeply concerned with some of the SDG goals.

While support of the ordinary citizen is inevitable, it is also important that we understand the role of science and technology and utilize them for the sake of attaining the SDGs. In the world many scientists and experts in technology are making an effort to produce good research results. However, without people digesting them, they will be forgotten without being recognized in society. Here is the role of science and technology communication with the society. Minato UNESCO symposiums can function as a stage of delivering the idea of how science and technology can contribute to attaining SDG goals to the ordinary people. There are establishments and similar activities of people aiming at similar goals. Science and Innovation museum is typically one of those. The uniqueness of the UNESCO association is functioning as a hub for diverse people, from school students to elder people in the region. The COVID-19 has additionally broadened the spectrum of participants using the remote

system from the Northern to the Southern island of Japan. In this regard Minato UNESCO Association is endeavoring to function as one necessary part of society to connect people with SDGs and technology.

References

[1] Minato Unesco Association New & Calendar, No.163, June 1. 2021

<https://minato-unesco.jp/en/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/06/%E8%8B%B1%E6%96%87%E4%BC%9A%E5%A0%B1163%E5%8F%B7.pdf>

[2] Minato Unesco Association New & Calendar, No.159, June 1. 2020

<https://minato-unesco.jp/enpdf/pdf/bulletin159e.pdf>