

Role playing game for learning about SDGs

SGHN026 Senior High School at Otsuka, University of Tsukuba

1. Introduction

Through the Asia-Pacific Young Leaders Summit, we realized how different the SDGs education system was between other countries and Japan. We are determined to change the SDGs education system in Japan. By hosting the "Azabu Tsukuba Leaders Summit", we would like to propose that "role playing game" is the best way. We are confident that this SDGs education will fairly affect the way high school students think about the SDGs. "SDGs education" means learning about SDGs and thinking what high school students can do to achieve these goals.

↓ Photo of the participants



2. What are SDGs?

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.



3. Purpose

High school students should not only have the knowledge, but should take action. However, we do not have a suitable SDGs education system. Thus, to achieve these goals and make the world a better place for all, we must find an adequate solution for this problem.

4. Investigation



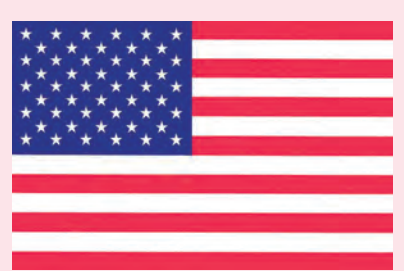
We participated in 14th APYLS this year. This summit is held every year by the Hwa Chong Institution in Singapore for high school students around the world. It was held online. We had a discussion through a role playing game; we

are given a role such as the minister of health, the CEO of a major company and discuss with the other members about what we should do, based on our job and capabilities. This time, the game was based on a virtual nation where a new virus had spread. Through it, we were able to learn deeply about how to deal with viruses through the summit.

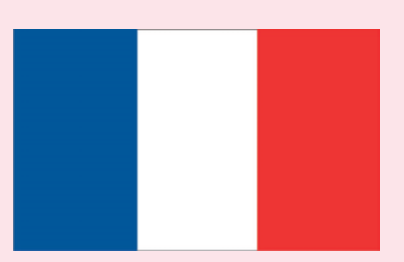
After the summit, we asked some of the participants from other countries about the status of education on SDGs in their country.



In Singapore, there are external curriculum courses known as "Values in Action Projects" whereby students help their community. For example, they take care of elderly people or clean up beaches. All students have to do these activities. The more students do these activities, the more points they get, which can help them out in their national examinations for going on to higher education.



In America, students learn the SDGs through various clubs, for example, Global Ambassadors club. The highest grade students in high school learn about the SDGs in Advanced Placement (AP) class.



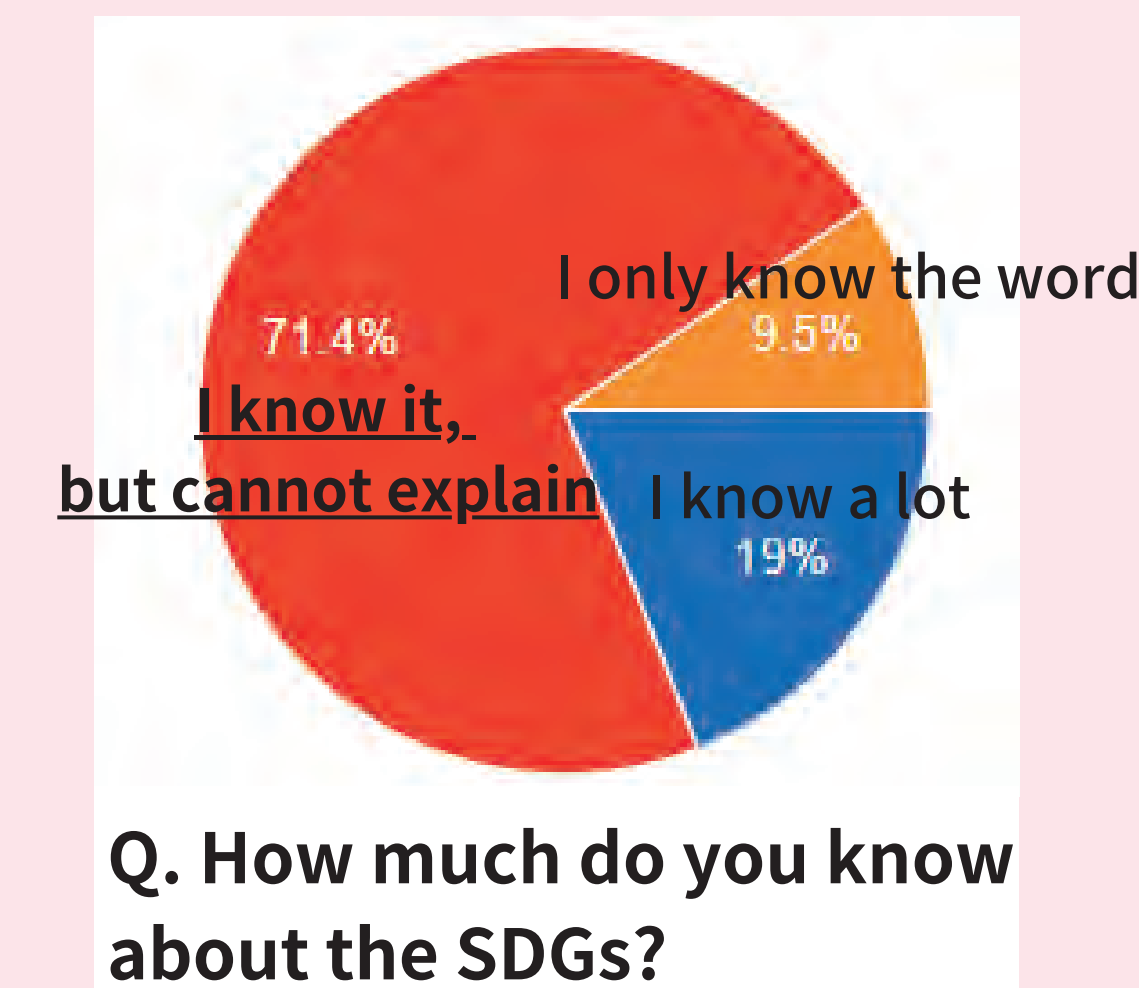
As a market leader in various energies, especially for nuclear energy, France provides "Moral and Civic Education" classes, including democratic debates as well as questionings on the ecological future of our citizens. Also, the minister of education vividly recommends establishing "Eco-delegates" in each class in order to make the students more responsible concerning their carbon footprint.

→ We realized we had to think of new ways to learn the SDGs !

5. Azabu Tsukuba Leaders Summit

We hosted the Azabu Tsukuba Leaders Summit with the members who joined the APYLS together. There we invited 26 students from both schools and played a role playing game. The topics were mainly related to the SDGs and we also had the players discuss in English.

A. Before the Summit



Q. How much do you know about the SDGs?

"I have joined an event about SDGs myself (apart from this)".

Before the summit, we had a questionnaire to see how much the participants knew about the SDGs. Most students answered that "I have heard about them, but I cannot explain to others". As you can see from the result, students are yet to fully understand the SDGs. All of the participants have heard about SDGs. However, 80.9% of the students cannot explain about it in detail. Also, there was only one student who answered

B. During the Summit

We divided the members into three different imaginary countries and gave them roles to play. The discussions were mainly in English and they discussed solutions for many difficult situations that we provided through a news magazine. We used Zoom and Slack. Zoom was used for discussions such as sharing questions and organizing problems. In addition, Slack was used by the management side to send news like a notice board. In discussions between countries, only representatives could speak, so other members wrote their ideas in Slack to support them.

Slack →



Examples of situations

1. Beautiful ocean or Natural gas?
2. Women not having jobs!?
3. Rural areas need schools and hospitals.

Examples of roles

Minister of health, Minister of education, journalist, CEO, NPO leaders

The countries

Saint-Paul (Developed Communism country), Britannia (Emerging Capitalism country), Amasia (Developing Despotism Country)

Amasian Times



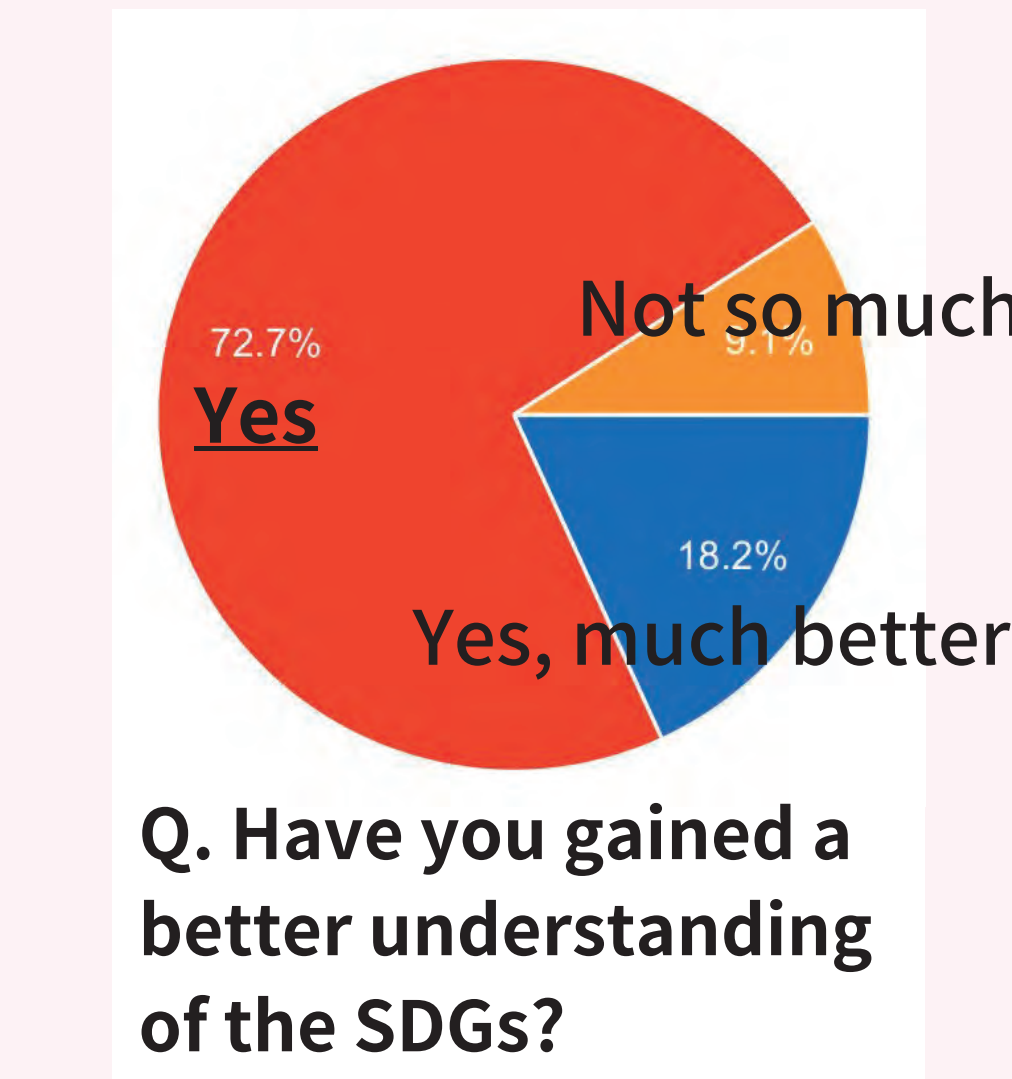
Education in rural areas
Does the government know the situation in rural areas? Children are not educated because of the school closure due to the pandemic. They don't have enough textbooks, notebooks, or even writing utensils. Still, the government saying "Start online education" like a developed country? It's ridiculous.



↑ Examples of news sent to the players

↑ Photo of the participants

C. After the Summit



Q. Have you gained a better understanding of the SDGs?

Impressions of participants

- I could think about many social issues as my own problems from a different perspective than usual.
- By thinking for myself and exchanging opinions with others, I naturally became interested in SDGs.

Improvement points

- I felt that it was necessary to bring it closer to reality. Otherwise, it's just a fantasy world.

6. Conclusion

We believe that "role playing game" is the best way for students to learn the SDGs. Here are five advantages of role playing game.

1. Students proceed by themselves, which makes them learn more independently.
2. Students need to solve problems in terms of different professions, which helps them to learn from various points of view.
3. Students cooperate and discuss with others, so they can gain new perspectives.
4. They can understand what to do to achieve the SDGs.
5. It will also be useful for students when they are adults.

7. Reference

- Cabinet Office, Government Of Japan, "National questionnaire survey on SDGs" https://www.chisou.go.jp/tiiki/kankyo/kaigi/sdgs_enquete_chousa.html (Accessed on November 3, 2021)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, "JAPAN SDGs Action Platform" <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/sdgs/index.html> (Accessed on November 3, 2021)