

Land Mine and Afghanistan Children

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Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. My name is Ayako Kawauchi.

Please close your eyes. Imagine there's a beautiful river flowing in front of you and is full of flowers blooming, green grass, and tall trees. The wind is blowing softly and gently, and you can hear the birds singing.

Now open your eyes. Can you tell me which country I have just described? Yes, It is Afghanistan. Afghanistan used to be a beautiful country.

But look! What has happened to this country? Long wars destroyed this country. Now that country is full of land mines, disease, hunger and refugees. In one hour, 12 people died because of war or hunger, and 60 people left the country as refugees. Have you ever thought about their feelings? Today, I'm going to talk about land mines and Afghanistan children.

Do you know how serious the situation of the land mines in Afghanistan is? It is said land mines are not to kill people but to injure them. According to the U.N, 11.9 million land mines are buried in the world and more than one million of those are in Afghanistan. Every month, 150 to 300 people become the victim of land-mines in Afghanistan. Most of the victims are women and children. It is said that land mines are made for people's self-protection but the truth is they are not. They just kill innocent people. Can you picture it?

Suppose you were an Afghanistan child. Please look at this poster. It shows the situation of the children. Some children have to work to support their families because their parents are victims of land mines. They have to grow clops and ani-

mals. They even become street children to pick up the garbage and sell. Of course they can not receive an education. When they grow up, they face the difficulty of getting a job. Therefore, they often become soldiers to get a wage. They may bury land mines and kill innocent people.

There's no end to this!

But is this fate?

I believe the key for a better life in Afghanistan is education, because education can save the children from land mines and that vicious circle. According to Japanese International Cooperation Agency; JICA, frontier, 3 million of a total of 4.5 million children started to go back to the school now, and Japanese government gave 60% of the money for schools. This is a very big step for children, because education enables children to choose their futures.

Please think. If the children can get enough knowledge, how will their life be in Afghanistan? I believe they can be as happy as before so it is obvious that they need our support. Think what the peace is and what we can do for Afghanistan. I'll take action for them because they need our help. For example, you can send money to them, and also you can give educational things such as pens or notes to them. Of course you can join NGO and go there to help them. But the most important thing is to try to be aware. Without knowing how can you think?

Today I talked about land mine, Afghanistan children and my opinion against those problems. Don't you want to see the children with big smiles on their faces? If the answer is yes, please try to know and think what you can do.

Thank you for listening.

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