

# ***We are more than 10 million!***

Yuuka, from Girl Scouts of Japan, reflects on her experience representing WAGGGS at the UN conference on Education for Global Citizenship. She asks us all, “Whose responsibility is it to make a difference in your community today?”

In the same way as many other girls around the world, from a young age I started having doubts about the messages I heard from people around me; messages such as, “Girls should be like this...” or “Be a man and stop crying”. However, at the same time as wondering about these words I felt that I couldn’t challenge them. At the time I didn’t know that I have rights, and I have a voice to speak out.

The Voices against Violence curriculum has enabled me to put a voice to my confusion. The curriculum has shown me that these comments about gender play a big part in contributing to gender-based violence, at the very root of the issue. Now I know my rights and I know I have my voice to speak out for girls and young women.

From 30th May – 1st June, in South Korea, the United Nations Department of Public Information (DPI) hosted its 66th DPI/NGO conference, in partnership with the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) community. The theme of the conference was “Education for Global Citizenship: Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals Together” and WAGGGS was invited to share best practice, specifically in the context of the Voices against Violence curriculum and the achievement of Goal 5 on gender equality. As someone implementing the curriculum at a national level I was honoured to attend and speak about my experience.



The conference was such an exciting opportunity for me to speak out for girls’ and young women’s rights, raise awareness on gender inequality and promote the power of non-formal education. During the conference I experienced the great reputation the ‘WAGGGS voice’ has and the important role it plays in being heard by others. I also saw clearly why delivering Voices against Violence



わたしが変わる。  
未来が変わる。

girl scouts

is necessary to achieve the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While I interacted with youth representatives from various organizations I felt myself identify as a global citizen, one who has been fully empowered through Girl Scouting. By speaking out Girl Guides and Girl Scouts prove that girls and young women are not only victims or potential victims of violence, we are actually agents of change.



Throughout the conference and especially after I had raised my voice and delivered my two speeches – one at the Youth Caucus alongside Ediola Pashollari, the Secretary-General for the World Assembly of Youth, and one at the official closing session – many young women came up and

spoke to me, sharing their experience of gender inequality in their culture. Young men also had thoughts to share on the issue. All of them were concerned about gender inequality as passionately as I was, as well as the need for quality education to tackle it.

***To me, this showed that we, Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, are not working alone in our efforts to tackle violence and achieve gender equality. Each conversation revealed to me that we have the support of so many others, across a variety of communities, as we use the Voices against Violence programme to transform lives. We are more than ten million!***

One thought that really stuck with me was from Ahmad Alhendawi, the UN Youth Envoy: “We have 17 goals to achieve within 15 years; we have no time to waste.”

If we, Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, want our vision of the world to become a reality – one where girls and young women fulfill their potential and are equal to boys and men as citizens of the world – we need to use these 15 years wisely. So I ask you, “Whose responsibility is it to make a difference in your community today?” This experience has taught me, loud and clear, that it should be you and me, because we are Girl Guides and Girl Scouts and we have a responsibility to make a difference, as global citizens.