

## Power to Live

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2160. When you hear this number, what do you imagine? Do you imagine something good? If you do, you're wrong. This is the number of people who commit suicide every day in the world. This means one person every 40 seconds! There are more than eight hundred thousand people who take their own life each year. Japan is ranked tenth in the world for suicide rate. Suicide is the leading cause of death among people from age 15 to 39. This is a really serious problem. We should lower the suicide rate among young people in Japan. Why do many young people commit suicide? We don't know the reasons, but we know they go through a period of hardships before they eventually commit suicide. We should support them especially in this period by being with them.

Several years ago, I volunteered to help Watoto's world concert tour. Watoto is a group in Uganda, Africa. They sing songs full of peace, hope and love. Their songs are so beautiful and touched me deeply. Moreover, I was moved by the video of their life stories that they showed in the concert. For example, in the video, one of the boys has never seen his family before. Another boy used to be a soldier. On the other hand, one of the girls was abused by her father in the past and has lost her fingers. Another girl had hardly any food, so she had to eat trash to survive. However, their eyes were filled with life and hope, and they smiled brightly. They were proud of themselves and fully faced their problems.

What about the situation in Japan? Our situation is not as bad as theirs. We don't have war, nor starvation and we get to go to school. In Japan, the first motivation of youth suicide are the problems with their families. A lot of children are suffering from their parents pushing too hard. Many kids feel so much pressure from their families to live up to their expectations that they feel worthless when they fail. We know that they have problems with their families and a feeling of isolation can develop. What we need is an organization that organizes activities for children to do something together with their peers to make them feel proud of themselves and give them the power to live. They share their lives together and have the same purpose. They also support each other by talking and doing things together. There are a lot of painful things in our lives but unfortunately, we can't change this fact. However, we should not run away from our problems. If we feel proud of ourselves and have the power to live, our problems will instead be the door of opportunity to change the world.

In the future, I will learn much more from Watoto, introduce Watoto to more people, and start an organization to help children in Japan. To be honest, I don't have enough

power to reduce the number of children who commit suicide, but I know Watoto has given me the power to live through my difficulties. I will make use of this power to motivate Japanese children not to let challenges mark the end of their lives, but instead, start a new chapter in life filled with peace, hope and love: the power to live.