OPEN UP TO THE WORLD

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How can we change the world to be a better place?   I'm going to tell you about it.

A few years ago when I was an elementary school kid, a Pakistani exchange student home stayed in my house.   Her name was Kashaf and she was from the central Pakistan.   She had dark brown eyes and beautiful black long hair.   Kashaf was shy at first but she tried really hard to understand Japanese culture and language.   She was not very different from my other Japanese friends.   And we became good friends.   This experience opened up the world beyond Japan in my little heart.

After she left, I became curious about Kashaf 's country, Pakistan.   So, I researched on the Internet and was shocked to learn that Pakistan has long periods of military rule, political instability and conflicts with India.   Pakistan also faces challenging problems like over population, terrorism and poverty.   On top of that, female literacy was only 45% compared to 70% for males.   Living in such a harsh environment, Kashaf behaved just like any of us.   I began to realize how strong her spirit must be.

After I met her, I began to take a great interest in world news.

Did you know there is a civil war in Syria?   Children held pictures of "Pokemon" and said 'There are many Pokemon in Syria. So, please come and help us."   In Syria, the civil war has killed over 250,000 people.   The UN Refugee Agency says that 4 million people fled Syria to neighboring countries and over half of them were children.

Hearing these stories brings me great anxiety.   The empathy I feel makes me think we need to know what is going on in the world right now.   However, some would argue "Why should we be concerned when the country we live in is peaceful and prosperous?"
Well, I gave it a lot of thought.   In the name of humanity, we need to help other human that are in trouble.   So, I wanted to do something about it.   But how?

We can do this by reaching out and be closer to other countries.   We should respect and be receptive to each other country's culture, custom, and religion.   Having friends from other countries is a good start.   Also watching world news is a good way. You'll learn about what's happening around the world.

We always see bad news around the world but we are desensitized.   We are used to these news.   For us, it is so far away, and it doesn't feel real.   But they are happening on the same planet where we live.   We should be concerned and take it seriously. Step forward and take an interest in world news. Open up to other cultures and try to find out what we can do for the world. We can change the world only if we change ourselves.