



Lori Chen

Hello everyone. I wanted to start off by saying what an honor it is to be invited by all the hosts as an attendee of the Symposium this year. My name is Lori Chen and I am an International Humanitarian Worker from Taiwan, with trainings in Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Search and Rescue (SR). To begin with, let me give you a quick overview on Taiwan. Taiwan is an island located in East Asia, which has a geographical area of 36,193 square kilometers. We recently elected our first woman president, whom leads the country with a population of 23.4 million. Which makes it the 17th most densely populated country in the world. As an International Humanitarian Worker, I have travelled to many developing countries, whether it be natural disasters or man-made disasters, I have had the privilege of seeing just how important the infrastructure of a country is to the well-being of its citizens.

According to the 3rd Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), it is crucial to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. As a result, the EMS in any country strive to be the solution of that; but unfortunately the reality is, it is still always the second line of defense for any medical situation. The actual first line of defense is the pedestrians, families and friends that are with the patient on location. So that is why massively promoting CPR certification classes and basic medical knowledge is vital in any country. Taiwan is very fortunate due to the fact that we are a very small island and our medical technology is very advanced. With a small surface area of an island, hospitals and clinics are only 5 to 10 minutes away on any given ambulance ride. Plus, we have universal health care, where an ambulance is free of charge for anyone, resident or visitor. Even though hospitals are close by, when someone is in a medical emergency, every second counts. Especially when it comes to cardiac arrests or strokes. So if the bystander on-site can quickly assess the situation and is CPR certified, the chances of survival for that patient dramatically increases. This is why it is essential to educate the masses about not being afraid to do CPR if someone is in need and continue performing until EMS arrives to take over. Each chest compression is a chance at re-oxygenating the brain and to get the person back to life. In the last two years, the Bystander CPR Protection Law was put in place. Due to this type of legal protection, we have seen a dramatic increase in bystander CPR being performed before EMS arrives. Another improvement has been the implementation of installing more Automated External Defibrillators or AED devices in most public areas and apartment complexes. This is the best friend to a proper CPR, because the AED can coach someone vocally who does not know how to perform CPR do what is necessary, it is also a recording device to use as evidence in any legal battle, and the device will determine if the patient needs to be shocked or not. All of these tools are essential in the out-of-hospital chain of survival.

When working with EMS, we are directly in contact with many different types of institutions. Health problems do not choose its targets by their age, gender, race or social status. It can happen to anyone at any given time. Whether it is responding to a call at a 5-star hotel, climbing into a car flipped over on the highway, or going directly into the home of a bedridden grandmother, each call is multifaceted and will need multiple types of immediate care and after care. This is why, as an EMT, I am constantly in contact with different organizations in order to make sure that the patient is treated holistically.

In Taiwan, just like the majority of the developed world, there is a rapidly growing aging population that is not properly dealt with in many aspects. Many elderly people are just sitting there watching their lives go by. Their bodies are still functioning, but their minds are slowly escaping them. This is why the Happy Corner Association, an NGO founded in 2015, was established to give the aging population, especially Alzheimer's patients, a means to live a more dignified life. The mission also expanded to their family members, caregivers (local or international), friends, and volunteers. The goal is to have a corner in every apartment complex and neighborhood, where people from all different backgrounds can have a safe haven. For the families, they can safely drop off their aging parents or their disabled relatives. For the caregivers, mostly Indonesian women, it is a place for them to bond by cooking together and chatting in their native languages. For the volunteers, both working and retired, they can directly give back to their communities. Lastly, the participants are loved and cared for and it actually re-motivates them to live a more fulfilling life. This has become a giant support system for all parties involved.

It is really true what they say, when one has a purpose, both psychologically and physically, there is a drastic change that happens. So we see many participants and volunteers, due to their regular interactions, are more high-spirited and some have even made great strides in their medical status. We, as a society, need to simply change our perspective on the aging population. We need to stop viewing them as a "burden", but more so a vulnerable population that we need to take care of. Since if it weren't for them, we wouldn't even be here today.

According to the Taiwan Suicide Prevention Center (TSPC), suicides among people aged 65 and over accounted for 25 percent of the total suicide for all age groups. It is estimated that senior citizens in Taiwan will have a suicide rate of 32.3 per 100,000 people in 2017, with depression being the number one culprit. As an EMT, I go into a lot of homes where senior citizens are living alone or looked after by a foreign caregiver 24/7. They are not only high-risk fall patients, but also loneliness and isolation makes them suicidal. This is why both private and government funded long-term care programs for seniors will drastically help reduce not only the suicide rate among this population, but also bring the communities together.

Another issue that is present for EMS workers is Domestic Violence (DV) and Human Trafficking. On average, there are at least 4 to 5 calls per week that come in for DV. Many times, it is the children that make the call to us. At times, it feels like a revolving door and vicious cycle until something irreversible happens. No human being should ever have to put his or her hands on another person in anger. No matter what gender you are, it is just unacceptable. Just like the 5th SDG states that we need to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls worldwide. As an EMT, we have all been trained to recognize signs of abuse and also human trafficking situations for all genders of all ages. I have worked closely with the Garden of Hope Foundation, which is an NGO that helps disadvantaged females caught in the sex industry, survivors of sexual abuse, DV, and human trafficking. Working closely with local NGOs in dealing with DV gives us a gateway to give survivors direct information for local shelters and counseling services once a DV situation has been established. Since the EMS works almost in sync with the police department, records of abuse are documented on both sides. The goal of a multi-disciplined team of responders is to identify the problem and connect the survivor with available services.

I have personally been on worldwide disaster relief teams for multiple natural disasters over the years: Haiti, multiple countries in Africa, Europe, Nepal, and Taiwan. For me personally, I cannot recount how many times a child has passed away in my arms due to a preventable disease. It could be a simple vaccine that he or she needed just to get to their 5th birthday this year. How many times due to the lack of hygiene or clean drinking water, an individual passed away from contracting Cholera, which resulted in death from extreme diarrhea and vomiting in a 72-hour period. How many times has a child been abandoned on the side of the road or left in the middle of the field when they took their first and last breath in this world.

Life is short, we need to take actions to protect those who are the most vulnerable, the most innocent, and the ones that are going to reap the benefits of us taking responsibility and doing the right things right now. The world is at a threshold moment, we cannot turn back now; the only way is forward and at a very fast pace. Each one of us is a catalyst for change. We all come from different backgrounds, cultures, countries, and even speak different languages, but we are sitting here today, all in harmony, all in acceptance, all working together to make the future brighter than right now. THIS is what the world should look like in every single corner. WE are the generation that is going to light up all the dark corners of the world and teach and inspire everyone to live with a purpose, not just "existing" in the world. I always tell myself, don't ask for fewer responsibilities, but ask for more strength. That should be the attitude we all have, especially as youth. WE are the ones that are going to make a difference and bring the world back together in harmony.

Thank you.