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MAGAZINE KOICA

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Special interview with President of KOICA

THEMATIC FOCUS

Cooperation to enhance healthcare in Ghana

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Partnership

for a better future

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Chain of global crises : Finding sustainable solutions through partnership

The eventful year of 2023 is already coming to an end. It has indeed been a year of constant tension in the international community, from the Russia-Ukraine War that has been ongoing since last year to the earthquake in Türkiye that caused numerous casualties, Canada's large-scale forest fires that heightened concerns about climate change, and the Israel-Hamas conflict persisting since last October.

In modern society, where politics, the economy, culture, and the military are intricately connected, a country's crisis no longer remains isolated but has broader implications. A crisis in one country quickly spreads to neighboring countries, triggering a chain of crises and even influencing people's daily lives on the other side of the world. Therefore, the international community must promptly collaborate in various sectors, such as food, medical care, education, and refugees when a crisis occurs. Only active and organic cooperation among the international community can offer a sustainable solution to the global crisis.

In this context, we have set the theme of this volume of 〈MAGAZINE KOICA〉 as "Partnership." KOICA has designated "promoting development cooperation partnership" as one of the four strategic directions in our Mid- to Long-term Management Goals (2023~2027). We are endeavoring to expand collaboration with various actors including global partners, private companies, civil society, and public institutions; utilize limited ODA resources more efficiently; and create synergies necessary to address development problems.

At the global level, KOICA is not only carrying out various cooperation projects with international organizations such as UNHCR, UNICEF, and IOM but also expanding and reforming projects to support conflict-affected and vulnerable countries. We are establishing measures to strengthen the HDP Nexus approach, which organically links humanitarian, development, and peace efforts. In addition, KOICA is expanding cooperation projects through donor partnerships among Korea, the United States, and Japan in Ghana and Pacific Island countries. KOICA is also actively pursuing cooperation with advanced and emerging donor agencies, including by organizing the MIKTA Development Cooperation Institutions Network in cooperation with Mexico, Indonesia, Türkiye, and Australia.

Domestically, through the Creative Technology Solution (CTS) program and the Inclusive Business Solution (IBS) program, KOICA is actively connecting the resolution of development problems in developing countries with the development, verification, and overseas expansion of innovative technologies by Korean companies. We are also focused on strengthening strategic partnerships with civil society and fostering linkages between grants and concessional loans. These achievements of collaboration are presented in this volume of 〈MAGAZINE KOICA〉.

In addition to news on KOICA's partnership projects, 〈MAGAZINE KOICA〉 also features coverage of the 16th Seoul ODA International Conference held last September, the outcomes of projects implemented in Uganda, Nepal, etc., and the latest ODA-related information.

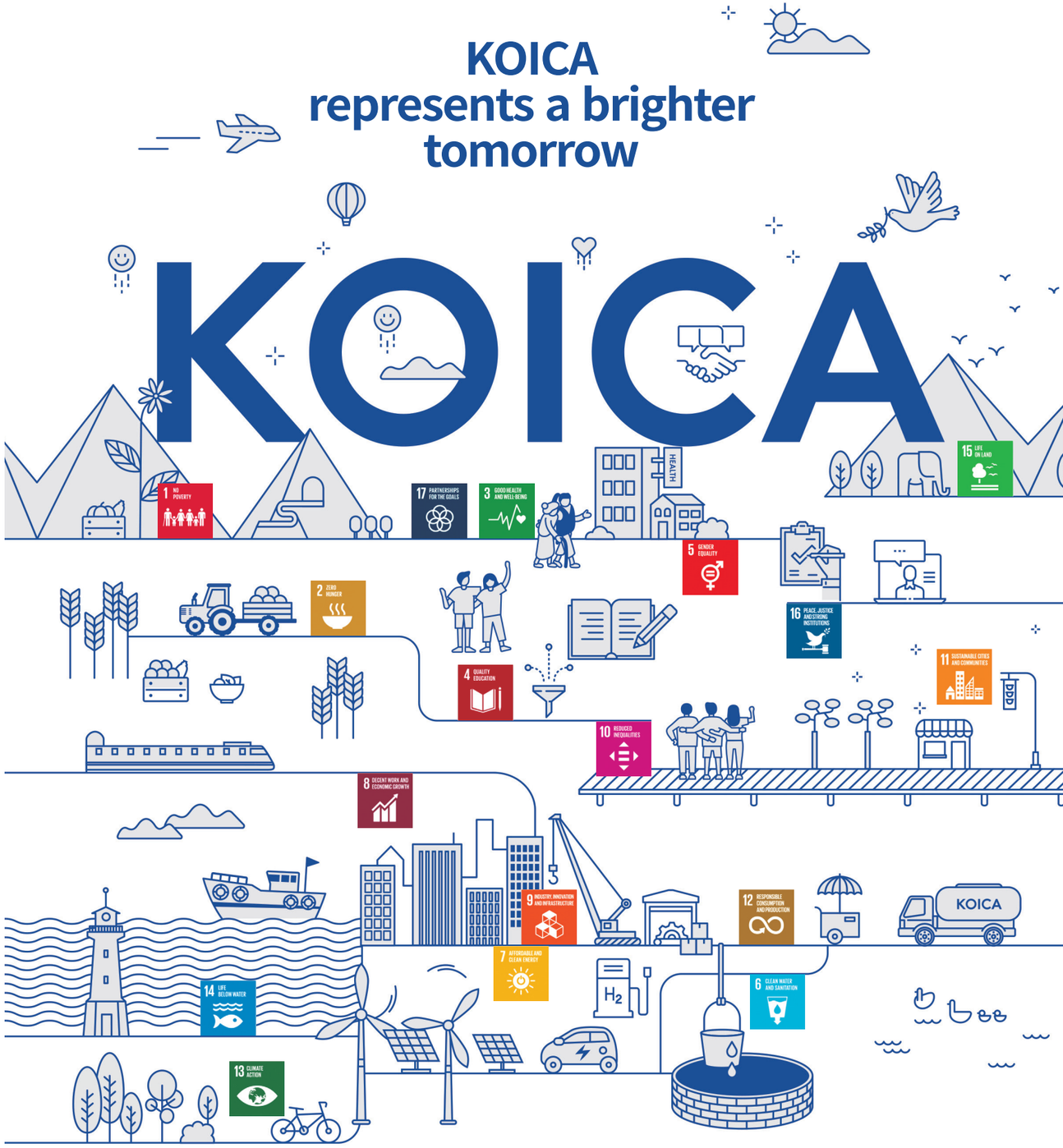
"When my neighbor's house is on fire, closing the door doesn't ensure the safety of my house."

This is what Jun Hai-kyung, the Representative of UNHCR Korea, said in her interview with 〈MAGAZINE KOICA〉. It was a metaphor expressing the seriousness of the refugee problem, but this quote is not limited to the refugee issue. Crises occurring worldwide are bound to impact all of us negatively, and the international community must collaborate and respond wisely to them. KOICA, aspiring to be a leading global development cooperation organization, will continue to collaborate with diverse domestic and foreign partners and remain committed to actively responding to the changing needs of the times, aiming to promote human prosperity and world peace.

President
Korea International Cooperation Agency

장원삼

CHANG, Won Sam



KOICA creates a world where everyone can dream of a brighter tomorrow through inclusive and mutually prosperous development cooperation where no one is left behind.
KOICA is Korea's representative development cooperation organization that implements advanced ODA projects.

Interview with President of KOICA CHANG, Won Sam: Why partnerships are important

"Resolving global crises, strengthening ODA capabilities, realizing universal values"

Current global crises including disasters, climate issues and conflicts cannot be resolved solely through the will and efforts of individual countries. The crises of today are complex and occur simultaneously, quickly spreading to neighboring countries and causing other crises in succession. To overcome such challenges, global solidarity and cooperation must come first. KOICA, along with numerous advanced donor organizations, considers partnership the key to development cooperation and is carrying out various related projects with development actors at home and abroad. We spoke with President CHANG, Won Sam, who assumed office in 2023 to discuss KOICA's directions for partnerships and more.



President of KOICA CHANG, Won Sam

Q What is your view of Korea's current Official Development Assistance (ODA)? What are some ways we can achieve improvements?

So far, Korea's ODA has demonstrated significant progress in both scale and system. The government raised the ODA budget by 21% in 2023 compared to 2022, and aims for a further increase by more than 40% in 2024 compared to 2023. If realized, it is anticipated that the government's goal of more than doubling the ODA budget by 2030 compared to 2019 will be accomplished ahead of schedule. Expanding ODA despite fiscal austerity symbolize our government's strong determination to increase its contribution to the international community as a Pivotal Global State.

It is also encouraging that we are experimenting with diverse policies to overcome the issue of fragmentation in Korea's ODA, such as strengthening the integrated role of the Committee for International Development Cooperation, and developing government-wide strategies regarding Green ODA and development cooperation in Africa. Inefficiency in the field arising from the excessive fragmentation of grants is an important issue that needs resolving as Korea takes on the role of an advanced donor country.

For the sustainable development of Korea's ODA, it is essential to not only pursue quantitative expansion but also cultivate skilled individuals capable of efficiently implementing the increased ODA. To achieve this goal, KOICA is making various efforts to nurture talent in the development cooperation field, including establishing a system for dispatching interns, volunteer groups, and experts to international organizations, aimed at young individuals aspiring to enter the development cooperation field.

Q What specific initiatives do you plan to prioritize during your term?

At the United Nations General Assembly in September 2023, President Yoon Suk Yeol declared our government's commitment to actively contribute to overcoming the three divides caused by the global complex crisis: the development gap, climate gap, and digital gap. In this regard, KOICA will actively promote tailored development cooperation that leverages our strengths, focusing on green ODA for the mitigation and adaptation of the climate crisis in vulnerable countries; digital ODA that supports digital transformation in countries with insufficient digital distribution and utilization; and educational training and health infrastructure support for developing countries' self-reliance.

Moreover, we seek to actively implement the Ukraine Peace and Solidarity Initiative to participate in the international community's commitment to solidarity in protecting universal values. In addition to providing humanitarian support, considering the current conflict situation, KOICA is planning to prepare and promote various reconstruction projects in areas such as health, education, and infrastructure.

Last but not least, KOICA will strengthen global partnerships with traditional and emerging donor countries and international organizations. We aim to continue strengthening cooperation with advanced donor organizations that share universal values, and create excellent examples of cooperation that enhance synergy effects. We are also determined to build mutually beneficial partnerships through cooperation with emerging donor countries. I believe that Korea, having transitioned from a least developed country to an emerging donor and now a top 10 global economy, can play a crucial role in establishing a new global development cooperation partnership.

Q Please share with us the importance of partnerships in the field of development cooperation.

Although we are entering the concluding phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, the international community still faces uncertainty. Unprecedented global crises, including the war between Russia and Ukraine, the subsequent surge in raw materials and energy prices, the outbreak of large-scale natural disasters due to climate change, and the increase in refugees and migrants due to conflicts and disasters, are casting a shadow over prospects for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We are thus living in an era of complex global crises, of intertwined and multilayered crises. Complex crises are characterized by their occurrence in both developed and developing countries, and thus unable to be resolved through the efforts of one country alone. Therefore, solidarity and cooperation to solve our common problems are becoming increasingly important.

To respond to the global crisis and contribute to achieving the SDGs, KOICA is pursuing development cooperation projects in partnership with various actors, including advanced and emerging donor agencies, international organizations, companies, and civil society. This cooperation mobilizes additional financial resources for international development cooperation, including foreign and private resources and domestic ODA resources. It also contributes to improving project quality.

For example, KOICA is implementing a project for universal health coverage and global health security in Ghana through a partnership among the donor agencies of Korea, the United States, and Japan. KOICA supports the project with approximately $22 million (KRW 16.4 billion); through cooperation, the total project scale has expanded to $160 million (approximately KRW 200.6 billion), benefiting more than 5.81 million ▶▶

people across Ghana. As seen in this example, partnership is the key to development cooperation, enabling the resolution of problems that couldn't be addressed alone.

Q Due to large-scale natural disasters and conflicts, cooperation in emergency relief and humanitarian support is also growing increasingly important. What partnerships is KOICA pursuing in this regard?

KOICA has contributed through Korea's disaster response capabilities in various disaster sites by dispatching the Korea Disaster Relief Team (KDRT) to help victims of the Türkiye earthquake in last February and the Canadian forest fire in July. In the future, as natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes due to the climate crisis occur more frequently, requests for KDRT dispatch from the international community are expected to increase.

Dispatching an emergency relief team requires urgent mobilization from various divisions, including medical staff, rescue teams, and transportation. To this end, collaboration based on partnerships with various ministries such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Welfare, National Fire Agency, and Ministry of National Defense is essential. As the KDRT Secretariat, KOICA strives to support logistics and administration related to dispatching relief teams, strengthen disaster response capabilities, and maintain ongoing partnerships with advanced relief teams through participation in international conferences and education and training. In particular, KOICA is seeking ways to cooperate with the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency's (JICA) Japan Disaster Relief(JDR).

KOICA is also carrying out humanitarian aid public-private cooperation projects in collaboration with civil society organizations within the larger framework of humanitarian assistance. Depending on the type of disaster, KOICA promotes various projects divided into areas such as sexual violence in conflict, disaster risk reduction, water and sanitation, protection, and nutrition for refugees/internally displaced persons (IDPs). Recently, we have successfully carried out a project to support the establishment of temporary settlements for victims in cooperation with three NGOs after the earthquake in Türkiye.

Q How is KOICA's partnership with civil society progressing?

KOICA is enhancing the effectiveness of development cooperation projects by leveraging the expert capabilities and experience of partner organizations including non-profit civil society organizations, universities, and social economy organizations. Partnership with civil society is facilitated by KOICA and civil society jointly sharing financial resources through a matching fund, which is established via bidding in six sectors: higher education, education, health, agriculture, forestry and fisheries, multi-sector, and social and solidarity economy. As of 2023, the number of projects by sector is 37 in health, 27 in multi-sector, 23 in education, 17 in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, 8 in higher education, and 7 in social and solidarity economy.

Bidding is divided into three partnership categories based on the size of partner organizations, institutional expertise, and project implementation capabilities: ▲Entry Type (for new institutions and projects), ▲Growth Type (which support local vulnerable groups and people's livelihoods), and ▲Strategic Type (large-scale projects, contribution to government policy). Such categorization aims to enhance project effectiveness by promoting cooperative projects that align with the development stages and demands of each NGO. KOICA plans to continue seeking project improvements in the future to enhance project outcomes while contributing to fostering a healthy NGO ecosystem in Korea.

Q It seems that KOICA is also cooperating actively with corporations.

Collaboration with private companies is of utmost importance. This is because companies are actors that mobilize development resources for investment in developing countries. Simultaneously, they possess the ability to address various development challenges through their expertise and innovative technologies. In particular, as the demand for development increases rapidly amid the complex global crisis, and as development tasks become more intricate, the importance of collaboration with private companies is growing day by day.

KOICA collaborates with various corporate partners to address development challenges in developing countries and establish sustainable project models through three programs: Creative Technology Solution (CTS), which supports the innovative technologies of startups and social ventures; Inclusive Business Solution (IBS), which supports companies' inclusive business activities in developing countries; and Innovative Partnership Solution (IPS), which seeks to strategically cooperate with overseas private partners.

KOICA has recently introduced the 'KOICA Platform ESG Initiative' as a sub-project model for its IBS program. This initiative explores the correlation between corporate ESG management and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in developing countries, responding to the escalating interest in environment, society, and governance (ESG). KOICA has signed MOUs with six companies to identify and promote projects collaboratively.

* CTS: Creative Technology Solution / IBS: Inclusive Business Solution / IPS: Innovative Partnership Solution



Q What are the implications of partnerships with other donor agencies?

As Korea's representative development cooperation agency, and now to leap forward as a leading global development cooperation organization, it is pivotal to form partnerships with overseas donor agencies that have accumulated lengthy development cooperation experiences, thereby strengthening our capacities and establishing networks.

Especially, in light of the recently evolving international environment, partnerships with advanced donor countries are essential. Global development challenges, including climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the rise in conflicts and refugees, have become more complex and intensified than in the past, demanding an integrated response. According to the 'Human Development Report 2021-2022' published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the crises we face have accelerated and intensified, leading to complex polarization in multiple fields, including politics, the economy, society, and the environment. As these development problems cannot be resolved through the efforts of any one single country, it is crucial to foster strong global solidarity and cooperation among development stakeholders in the international community, including developed countries, emerging donor countries, developing nations, international organizations, civil society, and corporations.

Since joining the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC), a group of advanced donor countries, in 2010, Korea has been expanding its internal and external influence. As founding members, the United States, Japan, the United Kingdom, and Germany possess more than 60 years of experience and know-how in promoting development cooperation, and these advanced donors strategically implement ODA based on their accumulated experience, leading global and regional issues. This partnership is crucial as it allows us to learn from the experience of advanced donor countries and apply it to our unique circumstances. In addition, by expanding partnerships with countries that share universal values, Korea can contribute to the promotion of principles such as freedom, peace, prosperity, and the rule of law.

Q How can KOICA contribute in its partnerships with other donor agencies? What are KOICA's unique strengths?

According to partner countries that are transitioning from developing to developed countries, Korea is a unique model of reference. Korea thus serves as a model for developing countries, having achieved political development and economic growth in recent decades.

While the path of modernization and industrialization may differ from country to country, developing countries can, at the very least, analyze their reality and choose to apply relevant aspects of Korea's development experience. In particular, Korea being a global leader in the digital sector, the foundation of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, we can collaborate with major members of the international community to formulate creative and appropriate approaches for the development of developing countries.

Unlike in the past, today's global problems do not only affect specific countries. Given the divergent interests of each country in responding to the global crisis, the prospects for achieving the SDGs through ODA, the traditional means of support, are bleak. Many stakeholders in development cooperation recognize that addressing this situation requires the international community to collaborate in responding to global problems. Meanwhile, Korea, an advanced country with exemplary economic development and dynamism, is widely recognized by many countries as a trustworthy development cooperation partner.

As Korea's representative ODA agency, KOICA can play a unique bridging role by sharing experiences with developing countries and contributing to narrowing the differences between developed and developing countries. There is substantial demand for KOICA's best practices, knowledge, and ODA project information on occasions of international conferences. International organizations also expect KOICA to play an important role in triangular cooperation, a novel approach to addressing global problems.

Q What are some goals that you seek to achieve during your term as President of KOICA?

As outlined in KOICA's mid to long-term management goals, I aim to establish the foundation for KOICA to emerge as a leading global development cooperation organization. While contributing to Korea's foreign policy goal of Global Pivotal State, KOICA will actively join the discourse for a new development cooperation system established jointly by traditional and emerging donors.

To this end, I have outlined the tasks we need to accomplish. First, KOICA is improving its response capabilities to deal with constant crises facing humanity, transcending borders and regions. As boundaries between existing donors and recipients become blurry, it is also crucial to diversify cooperation with partners across various fields. KOICA also seeks to expand jobs in development cooperation to create an environment where skilled professionals can join the development cooperation ecosystem, while aiming to enhance efficiency and productivity within the agency through management innovation.

Q Could you please share any memorable episodes related to KOICA during your tenure as ambassador?

As the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Sri Lanka, KOICA was the most popular Korean organization among locals. It was truly impressive to witness KOICA providing practical assistance to the local community in diverse fields such as forensic investigation, waste disposal, and vocational training. The activities of the KOICA Country Office staff, and other various experts and volunteer groups dispatched from Korea left a positive impression on the local people, and I received greetings of gratitude and welcome on behalf of Korea wherever I visited. It was a period during which I could genuinely feel firsthand the significant contribution of KOICA to developing countries and to elevating Korea's stature.K



PART 1 Overseas partnership business

The world is currently facing crises in various areas, including climate change, education, gender equality, and food. Unlike the past, today's crises cannot be overcome solely by the power of a specific country or region. As a leading global development cooperation organization, KOICA collaborates with governments and donor agencies worldwide in various fields. The aim is to proactively identify potential crisis situations, seeking sustainable solutions to prevent and overcome them.



A resident in a dry corridor area harvesting lettuce

Project to enhance facility horticulture technology in dry corridor area of three Central American countries through triangular cooperation in Costa Rica

Sustainable agricultural production in three Central American countries achieved through triangular cooperation

The 'Dry Corridor (Corredor Seco),' stretching approximately 1,000 km along the Pacific coast of Central America, is a highly arid region with an average annual rainfall of less than 500 mm. As per the 2021 announcement from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), 7.5% of the Dry Corridor consists of areas severely affected by drought, with drought-high risk areas encompassing 50.5% of the total. The issue lies in the fact that this region, prone to frequent droughts, is ▶▶

especially susceptible to the impacts of climate change. The Central American countries of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua, located in the dry corridor zone, heavily depend on agriculture. They are grappling with food shortages and poverty as crops deteriorate due to extreme and abnormal climates. To make matters worse, El Niño, which causes water temperatures to rise near the equator, occurred this year, deepening the worries of local residents.
In response, KOICA is collaborating with Costa Rica to implement a capacity-building project to address climate change and enhance agricultural productivity in three Central American countries: El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

Farmers abandon homes due to climate change

Approximately 10 million people inhabit the dry corridor zone, with the majority engaged in agriculture. Family farms in Central America primarily cultivate food crops like corn, red beans, and fruits and vegetables, intending to achieve self-sufficiency. However, due to the ecological characteristics of the region, horticultural crops like fruits and vegetables are primarily cultivated in the highlands. Consequently, the lowlands along the dry corridor yield poor crops.
In particular, droughts in the lowlands of the dry corridor in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras sometimes extend for more than four months. Governments in each country are distributing quality seeds resistant to dry climates to enhance the agricultural productivity of horticultural crops. However, technological development is deficient, specifically for horticultural crops. As a result, family farms have encountered economic hardships in recent years due to the escalating impacts of climate change. Statistics reveal that 80% of local small-scale farmers are grappling with poverty.
Nutrition deficiency is also a significant problem. According to the 2019 report on the state of the world's children by UNICEF, the rate of chronically malnourished children under five years of age was 51% in Guatemala. This represents the highest rate among the 18 Latin American countries in the survey. Honduras ranked 3rd with a rate of 28%, while El Salvador 9th with 21%. The proportion of chronically malnourished children in all three countries surpassed the regional average of 17%. Chronic nutritional deficiencies stem from a lack of essential micronutrients such as vitamins and minerals. Due to tight budgets, accessing quality food is challenging for local residents. Consequently, farmers in these Central American countries are forced to leave their homes, grappling with both livelihood difficulties and nutritional deficiencies.

Establishing sustainable agricultural environment through partnerships

It is essential to develop and distribute fundamental facility horticultural technology to cultivate horticultural crops capable of thriving in abnormal climates. In response, KOICA initiated plans to develop and demonstrate facility horticulture technology suitable for low-lying areas along the dry corridor, intending to subsequently distribute this technology to local farmers. KOICA forged a partnership with the Costa Rican government to facilitate this endeavor.
Costa Rica joined the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development in May 2021 and has efficiently resolved regional problems through triangular cooperation with other Central American countries. Costa Rica, classified as an emerging donor country in Latin America, shares a similar natural environment and socioeconomic structure with El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Notably, Costa Rica has previously succeeded in institutional horticulture within the dry corridor area. Costa Rica's National Institute of Innovation and Transfer in Agricultural Technology (INTA) and the Foundation for the Promotion of Agricultural Research and Technology Transfer (FITTACORI) are the organizations that will carry out this project. Under Costa Rica's Ministry of Agriculture, INTA is an organization that focuses on agricultural research and education for farmers and has technical, human, and financial capabilities. FITTACORI, which is in charge of project cost execution, has experience in project cost management and accounting reporting because it manages the Costa Rica government's international cooperation resources. KOICA assumes the responsibility for ▲Costa Rica invitation training and local workshops for the three Central American countries ▲construction of pilot farms and pilot farming lands ▲dispatch of facility horticulture technology advisory groups, etc.

Support for crop cultivation education, demonstration technology distribution, and electricity provision

Through this project, KOICA and Costa Rica will provide three Central American countries with a capacity-building program that combines theory and practice in growing vegetables, a non-traditional agricultural crop. The program includes education on the production and consumption of six types of vegetables, including leafy greens with folic acid and iron and fruits and vegetables rich in vitamins A and C. The goal is to increase income and improve nutrition by diversifying the production of family farms in the dry corridor areas. In addition, facility horticulture that can produce all year round will be introduced. This is to continue farming even in the dry corridor ▶▶



Training completion ceremony hosted by Costa Rica for three Central American countries

lowlands where the dry season is prolonged.
There are 2,100 beneficiaries of this project. Beneficiaries are divided into direct beneficiaries who receive capacity building and technology transfer support from INTA in Costa Rica, and indirect beneficiaries who receive training provided through direct beneficiaries. There are 450 direct beneficiaries, of whom 30% are women. Direct beneficiaries can participate in ▲invitational training for union leaders, ▲installation and operation of pilot farmlands at the union level, and ▲operation of local workshops. KOICA plans to actively provide support so the beneficiary associations created through this project can freely form networking and participate in the business plan development process.
1,650 indirect beneficiaries gain knowledge and experience in facility horticulture in the dry corridor zone through the educated direct beneficiaries. They also collaboratively operate and manage pilot facilities.

Aiming for both efficiency and effectiveness

First of all, this project will help Central and South American countries accelerate their achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As of 2021, the average SDGs index in Latin America was 68.6 points. However, the scores of three countries, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, were 59.9 points, 67.9 points, and 62.8 points, respectively, below the average. As a result, the project is expected to contribute to the second index of SDGs, "ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition, as well as strengthening sustainable agriculture." and the 13th index, "implementing urgent actions to prevent climate change and its effects."
This project is even more meaningful because it is a project that combines supply and demand from the main axis and recipient countries in response to the need to strengthen facility horticultural technology capabilities in the dry corridor area. It is anticipated that there will be smooth communication between agricultural officials and researchers dispatched from INTA, FITTACORI, etc., and farmer organizations in the beneficiary countries.
Given the characteristics of the project's target area, which is hot and dry, the project is predicted to achieve both efficiency and effectiveness by emphasizing facilities that enhance insect prevention and shading efficiency and by making good use of materials readily available in the region. K



Signing ceremony for a business cooperation agreement between KOICA, USAID, and JICA

Trilateral cooperation to achieve the Ghanaian government's 2030 universal health coverage goal and global health security

Korea, U.S., Japan cooperate to promote large-scale health projects in Ghana

Korea's ODA (Official Development Assistance) budget for next year is 6.8432 trillion won. This is the highest amount ever, increased by 2.065 trillion won (approximately 43.2%) compared to this year. Since joining the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in 2010, the growth rate is also the highest ever. Korea, the only country that has transformed from an aid recipient to a donor country, plans to share its experience worldwide through ODA projects. Accordingly, the government intends to actively seek out large-scale cooperation projects as it substantially increases the size of ODA.

There are various forms of ODA cooperation projects. In addition to cooperation between countries, public-private cooperation projects involving companies and non-profit organizations (NPOs) are also active. Recently, donor agencies from Korea, the United States, and Japan decided to join hands to promote a healthcare system improvement project worth 200 billion won in Ghana. This is the first case of cooperation between Korea, the United States, and Japan in the field of ODA.

Opening the era of ODA cooperation between Korea, the United States, and Japan

On July 25, in Accra, the capital of Ghana, KOICA, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) signed a Memorandum of Cooperation(MOC) with the aim of achieving the 'Ghanaian government's 2030 universal health coverage goal and fostering trilateral cooperation for global health security'. The total support committed is $160 million (approximately 200 billion won).

The Ghanaian government has implemented a system called the 'Improvement of Essential Healthcare Access and Medical Services for All the People' to work towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including the goal of 'universal health security.' However, the UHC service coverage index, a related indicator announced by the World Health Organization (WHO), only increased slightly to 45 points in 2017, 46 points in 2019, and 48 points in 2021. The UHC service coverage index is an indicator that assesses the extent of coverage and equity in delivering 16 essential medical services, as well as in the four areas of ▲childbirth, ▲infectious diseases, ▲non-infectious diseases, and ▲service provision capacity and accessibility. As of 2021, Korea has scored 89 on this index.

Donor organizations from Korea, the United States, and Japan plan to collaborate on a project to enhance the primary healthcare system, which is crucial for ensuring health security, in the northern region of Ghana. Specifically, projects such as ▲expanding access to medical care for residents in underdeveloped areas in northern Ghana ▲ improving the administrative capacity of officials in Ghana's Ministry of Health and supporting data-based decision-making ▲strengthening information exchange in the health field among donor organizations will be promoted.

KOICA said, "We plan to support people in receiving essential healthcare services, including maternal and child health, family planning, nutrition, social protection, and infectious disease management, regardless of income."

Jung-taek Lim, the Korean ambassador to Ghana, said, "The Korean government actively supports the Ghanaian government's goal of achieving universal health security and global health security, and will do its best to establish a primary health care system with high quality and accessibility through cooperation between Korea, the U.S. and Japan." On the other hand, Virginia Palmer, the U.S. ambassador to Ghana, said, "The COVID-19 crisis has made humanity keenly aware of the importance of strategic partnerships. We look forward to the establishment of Ghana's sound and equitable primary health care system and are proud to participate in historical partnerships with Korea and Japan."

Maximizing efficiency by reducing duplicate support

The three-way partnership began with KOICA's proposal. In January, KOICA proposed to USAID the signing of a trilateral agreement aimed at enhancing Ghana's primary healthcare system. Two months later, officials from the three countries, including USAID and JICA, convened for the first time at the KOICA Ghana Office. The goal was to eliminate redundancy and foster synergy in cooperation by sharing information about the projects each country supports. KOICA has been implementing a primary healthcare system strengthening project in two northern provinces of Ghana since last year, with a budget of $12 million (approximately KRW 16 billion). As a result of the impact of this project, KOICA also intends to launch a new infectious disease response project, valued at $10.85 million (approximately KRW 14.5 billion), across Ghana starting this year, in collaboration with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In addition to enhancing the health information system, USAID is carrying out a support project valued at USD 92 million (approximately KRW 120 billion) for the 'Integrated Primary Health Care System Strengthening Project,' which is being advanced as a key policy initiative by the Ghana Health Service. JICA is also actively involved in various initiatives in Ghana, including the distribution of maternal handbooks, medical quality control measures, and the reconstruction of Tamale Central Hospital (https://vy-maps.com/GH/Tamale-Central-Hospital-23767/), a key healthcare facility in the northern region.

The effects of multilateral cooperation lead to budget savings by preventing duplicate support and capacity building through mutual learning. USAID primarily provided software support focused on capacity building in Ghana. In light of this, KOICA and JICA discussed strategies to prevent aid fragmentation, streamline budgets, and prioritize support for medical devices. Three-party cooperation can also significantly reduce administrative costs for Ghanaian health authorities.

This agreement results from the first partnership between donor agencies from Korea, the United States, and Japan since the establishment of KOICA. KOICA inaugurated its Ghana office in 2010. Conversely, USAID began offering support right after Ghana gained independence in 1957, and JICA has been assisting since 1976. As of 2019, the level of support from the United States is roughly 11 times that of Korea, while Japan's support level is approximately 2.5 times that of Korea. Seung Min Oh, acting head of the KOICA Ghana Office, highly evaluated the value of this agreement, saying, " The fact that a global donor agency has selected KOICA as a business partner symbolizes Korea's elevated ODA status in the international community." He also said, "By signing this agreement, we expect to minimize fragmentation of aid in the health sector between donor agencies in Ghana, maximize mutual learning effects, and raise awareness of Korean aid efforts in the international community." K



The two columns, known as "Bagana," stand equally at the centre of the Ger, the traditional nomadic home of Mongolia

Lee Myeong-shin, Communications Analyst at UNDP Mongolia Country Office

Mongolia's journey towards gender equality in decision-making

In the vast landscape of Mongolia, the traditional nomadic lifestyle is deeply rooted in the fabric of its culture. Gers, the round white felt tents, have served as the traditional homes of the Mongolian people. They have supported their nomadic way of life and culture since before the time of Chinggis Khan.

In the heart of these nomadic homes, two columns, known as "Bagana," stand equally in their position. But these are not mere architectural elements supporting the Gers; they are like quiet messengers with a powerful story to tell. These columns serve as symbols of gender equality, with each one representing men and women, beautifully embodying the core principles of harmony and balance in Mongolian culture.

Despite this rich culture, gender inequality still prevails in Mongolia; men and women have not been equally seen in decision-making processes. The country currently ranks 133rd in terms of women's representation in decision-making, with only 17.1 percent of parliamentary seats held by women, falling below the global average of 26.5 percent. Today, Mongolian women continue facing insufficient support during their pregnancy and child-rearing while battling against deeply ingrained gender stereotypes. The recent UNDP Gender Social Norms Index report confirms this sobering reality. It shows that 97% of Mongolians hold biases against women, often believing men are better political leaders. These biases, rooted in patriarchal values, create systematic barriers for women in politics and public decision-making.

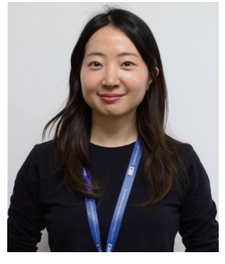
Empowering Mongolian Women in Decision-Making

Through the support of KOICA, UNDP has spearheaded the establishment and operation of the Women's Leadership Network (WLN), a nationwide grassroots women's network with over 1,800 members since 2021. This network serves as a nurturing ground for women aspiring to enter the domains of politics and leadership. It equips them with essential skills and knowledge, and, most importantly, fosters a community where mutual support and understanding flourish.

"Joining this network was a real turning point for me. I'll be honest, I was a bit skeptical at first because we came from different political parties. But it didn't take long for us to click. I've learned so much, and what really touched me was the support I received from them. When I faced online bullying last time, my network friends were like, 'Don't worry, we've been there too. Don't give up.' It really helped me get through it," says Enkhchimeg Namsraijav, a first-time elected local politician.

Last June, Enkhchimeg and WLN members from diverse backgrounds and political affiliations stood together to advocate for a higher gender quota in the legislation.

"We collected over 3,000 letters from men and women in every province, and it was really amazing!… When the parliament meeting was held to re-consider the gender quota issue, it felt like witnessing a brand-new history unfolding. I honestly believe all the work we put in made a difference." says Enkhchimeg with a glint of confidence in her eyes.



Lee Myeong-shin
Communications Analyst at UNDP Mongolia Country Office

She earned a master's degree in social and cultural psychology from the London School of Economics and Political Science, and has developed effective communication strategies and conducted campaigns in several countries based on psychology and behavioral science. She was also in charge of behavior change communication and risk communication in response to COVID-19 at the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office.



The Women's Leadership Network (WLN) members gathered to raise their collective voice about the gender quota issue in front of the Government House



Local party members take a project campaign pose to express their support for gender equality in decision-making

Gender Champions Leading the Way in Promoting Gender Equality in Decision-Making

Efforts to promote gender equality continue across public, private, and media fields, driven by the initiatives of Gender Champions, a dynamic force within the project. Particularly in political parties, Gender Champions are at the forefront, working tirelessly to enhance gender equality awareness and challenge male-dominated internal party culture. Empowered by diverse gender education and training provided through the project, the Gender Champions actively share their knowledge and skills within their respective political parties. "Some people think men don't support women, but that's not true. For me, gender equality isn't about genders; it's about people supporting people. And I'm all in for that," says Erkhembaatar Tumurbaatar, the local party member. In Mongolia, recent legal reforms have increased the quota for women among party candidates from 20 percent to 30 percent in the 2024 parliamentary election and aim to increase it to 40 percent for the following election.

"Our ancestors understood this for generations — that we're all equal. Just like two columns in a Ger, it's not about having more and more in one column; it's about balance. Think about it — what if you asked for 30% height in just one column? That wouldn't make a perfect Ger. The same goes for the parliament and the society," as articulated by Enkhchimeg, expectations are set on witnessing a future in Mongolian public decision-making where men and women participate on equal footing. K

Enhancing national response capacity against new infectious diseases

Robust health sector partnerships in response to rising antimicrobial resistance (AMR)



Jordan, situated in West Asia, is currently grappling with a health crisis primarily attributed to the enduring Syrian civil war that commenced in 2011. As a consequence of the protracted war, refugees persistently arrive in Jordan, given its geographical proximity to Syria. To date, the number of refugees entering Jordan has reached 1.4 million. The sudden population influx has further strained Jordan's fragile healthcare infrastructure. In particular, the emergence of bacterial infections resistant to antibiotics among those injured in war has contributed to the escalating issue of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in infectious diseases.

Accordingly, KOICA has identified the disease situation in Jordan, recognizing the threat to public health posed by antibiotic resistance. In Jordan, the mortality rate attributed to non-communicable diseases such as cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory diseases has surged to 76%. Additionally, over 80% of the adult population aged 25 and above is grappling with issues such as obesity or diabetes, 50% with hyperlipidemia, and 30% with high blood pressure. In particular, the prevalent infectious diseases included diarrhea, acute respiratory infections, and hepatitis. Recognizing the absence of standardization in AMR-related testing, sample collection, and equipment in Jordan, KOICA decided to collaborate on healthcare initiatives in the country.

KOICA's international organizational cooperation project aimed at eradicating the disease was implemented in four countries: Jordan, Peru, Laos, and Mali, all facing challenges in addressing the AMR problem. The project commenced in 2017 and extended over seven years, concluding in 2023. KOICA analyzed the current status, issues, and beneficiaries in the four target regions, formulating improvement tasks tailored to each country. Subsequently, initiatives were undertaken to establish an AMR surveillance system and enhance the capacity to operate a sustainable national surveillance system.

AMR infectious diseases affect low-income countries first

AMR, recognized as one of the 'top 10 public health threats facing humanity' by the World Health Organization (WHO), is often referred to as a 'second cancer.' This term stems from the ability of bacteria to persist without succumbing, even when subjected to drugs intended to suppress or eliminate them. Bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites that no longer respond to drugs pose a significant challenge as infections become increasingly difficult to treat. In severe cases, there is a heightened risk of issues such as the spread of disease and a surge in fatalities.

To address the AMR problem promptly, the health system must be systematically prepared. However, in low-income countries, responding to this issue proves challenging due to the frailty of the medical environment. It has specifically delayed health responses to AMR, resulting in exponentially increasing social costs. This perpetuates a vicious cycle, pushing low-income countries further into poverty. According to the World Bank, the estimated global GDP impact due to AMR is between 1.1% and 3.8%. The resulting increase in poverty and health costs is projected to range from $300 billion to $1 trillion annually (approximately 300 trillion to 1,000 trillion won). In particular, there is a warning that livestock production in low-income countries, where agriculture and the livestock industry are primary sectors, could decline by up to 7.5% per year. This underscores the importance of the international community's attention and collaboration in supporting low-income countries to address the challenges posed by AMR.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has introduced the concept of 'One Health' as a solution to tackle AMR. One Health acknowledges the interconnectedness of human health with animals, plants, and the environment, advocating for regional, national, and global cooperative strategies to sustain overall health. The WHO has declared the Global Action Plan on AMR (GAP-AMR) integral to the One Health initiative. This program involves collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), and the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH). They committed to addressing the AMR problem through the declaration and acknowledged its connection to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). KOICA's international organizational cooperation project for disease eradication also aligns with GAP-AMR.

Key to addressing AMR: Establishing strategy through partnership

KOICA's international disease eradication cooperation project with international organizations aimed to establish a system to enable active responses to AMR in the four countries where the project was implemented. KOICA formulated two major strategies, seven performance goals, and nine output goals in detail to achieve this.

KOICA initially assisted the four countries involved in the project in joining the global AMR surveillance system. Consequently, these four countries became participants in the Global Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance and Use System (GLASS), establishing the groundwork for systematically constructing, managing and monitoring information. To ensure the normal operation of the AMR surveillance system, KOICA established GLASS-linked National Reference Laboratories (NRLs) in each country and installed equipment that adheres to WHO certification standards. In particular, the 'GLASS-IT platform' was established to secure crucial data pivotal for responding to AMR. Additionally, KOICA ensured data integrity by selecting at least three surveillance sites in each country with capabilities in experimental, clinical, and infectious disease aspects for AMR surveillance. Simultaneously, efforts were made to enhance the reliability of the data. KOICA secured over 30% of the data from tertiary hospitals to generate AMR sample data.

After the four countries where the project was implemented enrolled in GLASS, KOICA established an AMR national surveillance system linked to GLASS. Notably, considering the close relationship of the initiative with the environment, animals, and plants, a strategy was developed, taking into account the agricultural and environmental sectors. Partnerships among stakeholders were crucial due to the need for an integrated perspective from multiple fields, including food, plants, animals, and the environment. Recognizing the necessity of an inclusive approach, KOICA initially encouraged the participation of government agencies in recipient countries. In addition, information was shared quarterly with the National Coordination Center of each country and WHO, which reviewed the implementation status to ensure no disruptions to the project.

KOICA's international disease eradication cooperation project with international organizations concluded in March 2023. The project successfully accomplished 49 out of the 55 planned performance and output indicators across each country. Each country met five out of the seven specified performance goals.

KOICA's international disease eradication cooperation project with international organizations, conducted in collaboration with stakeholders across various fields, garnered significant external recognition. WHO headquarters introduced the progress of projects in the region by issuing two reports, including the 'Global Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance System (GLASS) Report 2022.' In particular, WHO produced a 'Thank You KOICA' promotional video expressing gratitude for KOICA's significant assistance in preparing and distributing the report through social media channels.

Finding an immediate solution to end the threat of AMR infectious diseases, which affects humanity irrespective of country, income, environment, etc., is challenging. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that a collaborative effort involving multidisciplinary stakeholders, uniting their expertise in international cooperation, could contribute to addressing the AMR issue faced by relatively more vulnerable countries. KOICA remains committed to spearheading global disease eradication through ongoing stakeholder partnerships. K



Impact Assessment Workshop with KOICA and World Bank

Workshop for impact assessment

KOICA-World Bank: Perspectives on project evaluation

"If you can't measure it, you can't manage it. If you can't manage it, you can't improve it."
These words were left by management scholar Peter Drucker (1909-2005). This is because measuring performance, or evaluation, is essential for the enhancement of any type of project. The field of Official Development Assistance (ODA) is no exception. The quality of a project can be significantly improved through evaluation and applying lessons extracted to similar projects. KOICA began evaluating ODA projects in 1996, and the domestic evaluation system of ODA evolved under KOICA's leadership, in line with global trends.

Recently, KOICA has taken its evaluation system to the next level by strengthening partnerships with other donors and international organizations, such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Strengthening evaluation capabilities alongside global institutions

KOICA has partnered with the World Bank to co-host the Impact Assessment Workshop in Bangkok, Thailand on July 5-12. The event aimed to strengthen the capabilities of KOICA employees. Thirty of KOICA's staff in charge of internal project evaluation participated in the workshop. From the World Bank, analysts and researchers from the Department of Development Impact Assessment (DIME) gave lectures.
The 'internal evaluator' system is a program in which KOICA staff officers are directly involved in verifying the effectiveness of KOICA projects after completing the evaluation training course. It is being implemented to enhance the understanding of various projects and strengthen staff expertise as evaluators, as they directly participate in the evaluation process.
At the workshop, participants learned to design an impact assessment to ▶▶

analyze a project based on the World Bank's case. "As a leading institution in the field of grant aid, KOICA is leading the development cooperation ecosystem by accumulating a lot of experience in international development cooperation project evaluation," said Kim Ji-yoon, Director-General of KOICA's Department of Evaluation. "Based on the tools and capacities learned through this workshop, we will be able to prove the effectiveness of KOICA projects and improve the quality of project performance management and evaluation."

Securing objectivity in evaluation

Project evaluation emerged as a significant issue in the international community in the 1990s. As it became increasingly important to assess the performance of an ODA project and its impact on partner countries, the need for systematic evaluation rose. In line with this international trend, KOICA established the 'Project Evaluation Team' in 1996 dedicated to project evaluation. In 1998, for the first time, post-project evaluations of the 'Korea-Sri Lanka Vocational Training Center Support Project' and 'Vietnam Hospital Construction Project' were conducted.
As the importance of evaluation increased, the scope of work of the evaluation department gradually expanded. In the 1990s, efforts were made to establish the basis for evaluation. In 1999, the 'KOICA Project Evaluation Guidelines,' which contained evaluation criteria, procedures, and feedback methods, were published. Within KOICA, the presence of the department in charge of evaluation has grown. In 2006, the Project Evaluation Team was reorganized into the Project Evaluation Office. The subject of evaluation has expanded from individual projects to policies and strategies.
In 2010, when the Korean government joined the OECD Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC), the evaluation program took a step forward. In just 60 years, Korea has developed from a country that received aid to a country that provides assistance. The government declared 2010 as the 'First Year of ODA Advancement' and started the evaluation advancement process. As part of this work, the Project Evaluation Office was upgraded to a department directly under the President of KOICA.
In 2011, for the first time as a domestic ODA institution, KOICA developed the 'Development Cooperation Project Performance Index Pool,' which stipulates elements that should be measured when evaluating development cooperation projects. In 2018, a team for project quality management was newly established to manage outcomes and quality according to strategies and goals for each sector. The following year, in 2019, the 'Independent Evaluation Panel Quality Review Committee System' was introduced. It was an attempt to increase the reliability and objectivity of evaluation. Each evaluation must go through the quality review committee before finalization. The committee members are all external experts.

Increasing ODA budget accountability by securing transparency

KOICA also provided support to strengthen the evaluation capacity of the domestic ODA sector ecosystem. The 'Evaluation and Performance-oriented Management Key Term Dictionary' (2010) is a resource that allows professionals in the industry to immediately check whenever unfamiliar words appear. In 2012, 'Evaluation Guidelines' were published. The evaluation steps, how to write a budget, and how to prepare for an evaluation briefing are explained in detail so that anyone can easily prepare for a project evaluation and receive a proper evaluation.
The KOICA ODA Education Center opened a separate training course on evaluation to help relevant stakeholders strengthen their evaluation capabilities. Since 2014, project evaluation training has been conducted for staff in charge of central ministries, local governments, and public institutions participating in ODA projects. More than 40 Korean ministries or agencies are implementing ODA; the educational programs offer knowledge for effective management and operation of the ODA projects. In addition, development cooperation evaluation forums, seminars, and briefings are held occasionally to share evaluation information and create opportunities to discuss effective evaluation methods in accordance with the rapidly changing international situation.
A website has also opened to provide information on project evaluation. Anyone can access the country's project evaluation information on the KOICA Project Evaluation disclosure platform; about 350 evaluations conducted over the past ten years are posted along with the original reports. The website provides domestic and international project evaluation trends and systems, evaluation bidding and public offering information, project evaluation reports, and evaluation yearbooks.
In recognition of these efforts, KOICA has earned the 'Good' rating for consecutive years in 2020 and 2022 in the 'Aid Transparency Index (ATI) Evaluation' announced by 'Publish What You Fund,' a U.K. aid transparency verification agency. In terms of donor countries, excluding international organizations, Korea ranked in the top 3 after the United States and Germany.
KOICA hopes that more stakeholders can check the information disclosed on the website and actively exchange feedback, thus contributing to strengthening ODA budget accountability. K



National Children's Hospital in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Capacity building for medical staff in children's hospital

Enhancing medical care for children in Uzbekistan

In Tashkent, Uzbekistan, there is a National Children's Hospital equipped with state-of-the-art facilities. Despite having been in operation for only three years, it is recognized as the highest-level children's hospital in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). The institution is renowned for its cardiology department, being the first in Uzbekistan to successfully perform surgery for rare diseases in newborns, and conducting 1,000 heart surgeries a year.

The National Children's Hospital was constructed in 2020 with support in the form of grant and concessional loan ODA from the Korean government. KOICA, the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF), and the Korea Foundation for International Healthcare (KOFIH) collaborated to assist in equipping the hospital with facilities and systems. Even during the pandemic, the hospital received various forms of support and played a crucial role in responding to infectious diseases.

Team Korea's medical support to Uzbekistan

Data shows that, as of 2020, the population of Uzbekistan under the age of 14 is 7.088 million, constituting 23% of the total population (Source: CIA). Nevertheless, the mortality rate for children under five years old is alarmingly high at 24.1%. Until the 2010s, Uzbek hospitals faced challenges in offering adequate treatment to children requiring advanced care due to outdated medical equipment and technology. In response, the Uzbek government decided to construct an international-level, advanced children's hospital (level 4) and sought support from the Korean government.

To bolster medical facilities and technology through diverse means, the government endorsed a comprehensive support approach, incorporating both grant and concessional loan ODA with participation from various affiliated organizations. KOICA under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, EDCF of the Export-Import Bank of Korea under the Ministry of Economy and Finance, and KOFIH under the Ministry of Health and Welfare collaborated to form a "development cooperation package." KOICA contributed by supporting education and training to enhance the capabilities of medical personnel. EDCF signed a loan contract valued at $102.84 million (approximately KRW 138.6 billion) to construct an internationally standardized children's hospital with 275 beds. KOFIH decided to offer consultancy on establishing a hospital operation and management system, as well as overall hospital operations. This approach facilitated the development of an efficient project plan, clearly delineating roles and tasks for each organization to prevent overlapping support.

The hospital was officially inaugurated on October 19, 2020, generating significant interest, even within Uzbekistan. In May 2020, President Mirziyoyev personally visited the construction site of the children's hospital. The opening ceremony garnered substantial attention from major local media outlets, including Uzbek state broadcaster O'zbekistan24.

The Uzbek government granted the National Children's Hospital a leading role in overseeing 13 regional children's hospitals nationwide.

Developing capabilities at state-of-the-art education and training center

Through this project, KOICA executed the following initiatives: building an education and training center equipped with state-of-the-art medical simulation equipment ▲establishing a master plan to strengthen pediatric clinical capabilities inviting medical staff to Korea for training ▲dispatching Korean pediatric specialists locally for training. The total amount of support for the project amounts to $7 million (approximately 9.4 billion won). Support continued steadily even during the COVID-19 period.

The education and training center, inaugurated in December 2020, primarily operated through online education due to the spread of COVID-19. During this period, the number of critically ill children was rapidly increasing, but treatment was difficult due to the lack of capabilities of local medical staff. Enhancing medical staff's capabilities at children's hospitals emerged as an urgent need. After close consultation with Seoul National University Hospital, one of the project executing agencies, KOICA dispatched Korean medical staff to the site for training three times in 2021. Professional medical staff from various fields were dispatched, including pediatric emergency surgery, pediatric cardiology, and pediatric thoracic surgery, including Professor Kim Hyun-young in pediatric surgery. Utilizing the state-of-the-art medical simulation equipment at the education and training center, advanced clinical techniques were taught, and collaborative surgeries were performed on low-income, severely ill child patients. Several domestic and foreign organizations provided financial support, including the local NGO Zamin Foundation and the JW LEE Center for Global Medicine at Seoul National University College of Medicine. The education and training center was officially transferred to the National Children's Hospital in December 2021. Since then, the center has also served as a venue for practical training for medical students at Uzbek medical schools, and the number of trainees has increased approximately threefold.

Uzbek medical staff visit Seoul National University Children's Hospital

A mobile-based medical personnel capacity-building project was also initiated. A remote medical environment was established by integrating the medical information system (HIS) developed through the EDCF project. One hundred and thirty tablet PCs and wristbands were provided to medical staff. A capacity-building project to respond to infectious diseases for medical staff at local children's hospitals was also implemented. For a total of 13 hospitals under the National Children's Hospital, projects such as ▲establishing a mobile infection control team ▲promoting infection control training and consulting ▲delivering supplies to respond to infectious diseases were carried out. This project benefited 214 medical staff at local children's hospitals and 616 local patients.

After the pandemic subsided, Uzbek medical staff visited Korea in person. From March to June last year, eight doctors and nurses received invitational training at Seoul National University Children's Hospital. Through special lectures and practical training over three months, they acquired knowledge and skills applicable to pediatric anesthesiology, pediatric neurosurgery, and pediatric intensive care units. On behalf of the trainees, Acrobek Alimob, head of the intensive care unit at the Uzbek National Children's Hospital, expressed gratitude, saying, "I would like to convey my appreciation to all the educators who took the time to educate the trainees, even though they were busy with their work." He added, "The invitational training at Seoul National University Hospital will greatly help the development of Uzbek medical care." Meanwhile, Kim Han-suk, Vice Director of Pediatrics at Seoul National University Children's Hospital, visited the Uzbek National Children's Hospital in person for four days and three nights immediately after the graduation ceremony to confirm future business plans and discuss ways to continue cooperation between the two institutions.

First treatment for newborn's rare disease in Uzbekistan

About 5,000 people were hospitalized, and 60,000 people visited the National Children's Hospital in 2021 alone. The scale of hospital utilization is expected to increase gradually, and many challenging surgeries have been successfully completed. Surgery on rare and incurable patients, including cardiac surgery and neurosurgery, which had not been performed in Uzbekistan until now, was successfully conducted.

The first case of recovery from a rare heart disease in a 20-day-old newborn was reported. Previously, in cases of rare diseases, only families with financial means could receive treatment at foreign hospitals. Patients from ordinary families often had to forgo treatment in the early stages due to the lack of access to surgery. Yet, the newborn who underwent surgery at the National Children's Hospital through support for this project was discharged healthy without complications. KOICA stated, "It is also a significant achievement that local medical staff gained confidence by accumulating clinical experience and knowledge in each field."

Through this project, most of the building materials and medical equipment required for the hospital were supplied from Korea. Additionally, Korean engineers participated in consulting services and played a crucial role in transferring technology from Korean companies. KOICA said, "In the long term, we hope to further cooperate through Korea's health and medical services and technology, and strengthen cooperation between Korea and Uzbekistan."K



Michele Sumilas, USAID, Assistant to the Administrator for Planning, Learning, and Resource Management

A pivotal moment for partnership

The world today faces a cascade of challenges that is testing all countries and communities like never before. In the last few years, we have been battered by the economic, social, and health consequences of the pandemic and shattered by rising poverty and deepening inequalities. We have been devastated by food insecurity, high energy prices, and climate shocks. And they are confronting us at a time amid an erosion of international rules and norms — amid questions on whether democratic institutions can address the most pressing issues of our generation and deliver for communities around the world.

Partnership between USAID and KOICA

The United States remains committed to working with our partners to confront today's shared challenges and advance achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. For the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), this means our collaboration with partner countries — like the Republic of Korea — is more critical than ever.

In September 2022, I joined Director General Won Doyeon in Seoul to sign a three-year development cooperation memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Republic of Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Through this MOU, the United States and the Republic of Korea strive to identify the best ways to capitalize on each other's strengths, solidifying our global development and humanitarian assistance partnership to address the world's most challenging problems. This broad agreement was complemented by a multi-year work plan for USAID and KOICA, which includes more than 20 proposed activities for collaboration.

But of course, this partnership is not new. Our countries have a long history of friendship. In 1980, after 30 years of development assistance from the United States and others, the Republic of Korea showed the world what it means to invest in people, establish a functioning democratic system, and create exponential economic growth. Today, Korea stands on the global stage as a major donor partner that invests billions of dollars a year in humanitarian and development work globally. This history makes the Republic of Korea an especially strong partner because it leverages both its insights as a former aid recipient as well as its current global standing as a leading democracy and top ten economy.

The evolution of USAID's relationship with the Republic of Korea serves as a testament to the power of international collaboration in the pursuit of development goals. Today, our nations work together on a wide range of issues — combating climate change in the Pacific Islands, enhancing cybersecurity in Southeast Asia, improving water management across the Mekong River Basin, and strengthening access to energy through Power Africa. And all over the world, we partner to promote the rights of women and girls, elevate the voices of local leaders in the countries where we work, collaborate on humanitarian assistance, and more.

In one of our most critical partnerships, the Republic of Korea was the first country to join USAID to support Ukrainian farmers and their role in maintaining global food security through USAID's Agriculture Resilience Initiative-Ukraine (AGRI-Ukraine). Our nations share a commitment not only to fight food insecurity, but also to help Ukraine emerge from Russia's war as a strong, sovereign, democratic, and prosperous society that is free to choose its own future.

Historic trilateral cooperation

At the end of October 2023, I met again with Director General Won, this time alongside Director General Kazuya Endo of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in Honolulu, Hawai'i, for the first U.S.-Japan-Republic of Korea Trilateral Development and Humanitarian Assistance Policy Dialogue. Not only has the strength of our partnership with the Republic of Korea driven our shared efforts to new heights, it has also galvanized broader cooperation with Japan.

Signaling a new chapter in our development partnership, this trilateral dialogue, announced at President Biden's Trilateral Leaders' Summit in August 2023, advanced concrete discussions to coordinate assistance to countries around the world.

One example of this budding trilateral cooperation is reflected through the historic trilateral Memorandum of Cooperation we signed in July to support efforts to increase access to primary health care in Ghana. Through this partnership, USAID, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), and the Ghanaian Ministry of Health are better positioned to leverage competencies, expertise, and resources to strengthen Ghana's primary health care system.



Michele Sumilas
AtA Michele Sumilas of USAID

At the signing event, U.S. Ambassador to Ghana Virginia Palmer said: "The pandemic showed us the power of strategic partnership with our allies to build a healthier, more equitable, and more prosperous world. We are proud to join the Republic of Korea and Japan in this partnership to achieve Universal [Health] Coverage in Ghana."

Through partnerships like these, we can take on the challenges of the moment — and help communities build the prosperity and resilience to meet, head on, the global challenges we will face in the future.

We find ourselves at a pivotal moment to build on the momentum of the Trilateral Development Dialogue to drive better development outcomes for all communities in the world. I am reminded that in the lobby of KOICA headquarters in Seoul, there is a decades-old bag of flour on display — one that bears the words "From the American People." What a powerful reminder of the difference that development assistance and collaboration can make as countries chart new courses for themselves. K



Ms. Hai Kyung Jun, Representative of UNHCR Korea

Interview with Ms. Hai Kyung Jun, Representative of UNHCR Korea

"Worsening refugee issue: International community must work together"

The refugee issue is increasingly emerging as a serious crisis in the international community. How should we view the current refugee problem, given that Korea also receives approximately 12,000 refugee applications per year? KOICA met with Ms. Hai Kyung Jun, who celebrated her first anniversary as the Representative of UNHCR Korea. With Ms. Jun, we shared an in-depth conversation about the reality of the refugee issue, efforts among the international community, and partnership with KOICA regarding the refugee problem.

Q Congratulations on your one-year anniversary in Korea. Could you share your reflections of the past year?

Thank you. I feel honored to be given the opportunity to speak to the readers of KOICA Magazine. Support from our long-time partners such as KOICA is essential in our work to protect refugees around the world.

I recall being delighted at the prospect of coming home to Korea after many years abroad when I was appointed the Representative of UNHCR Korea. I started with a feeling of extra responsibility as I was the first Korean national to represent the organization in Korea.

Globally, so many new crises took place during the past year, adding plight to the displaced families — earthquakes in Syria-Türkiye and Afghanistan, conflicts in Sudan and Armenia to name a few. We made efforts to let the Government and the people of the Republic of Korea be aware of these added plights for the forcibly displaced persons.

Q Could you share your work experiences prior to your appointment as the Representative of UNHCR Korea?

I had a personal interest in refugee, migration and minority issues since I was a student. Perhaps that interest led me to the work in the United Nations. I first joined UNHCR as a Junior Professional Officer (JPO) sponsored by the Government of the Republic of Korea. Throughout the 20 something years, I had the opportunity to work in different locations including Afghanistan, Chile, Japan and Myanmar, as well as in the headquarters of UNHCR and UNICEF, in Switzerland and New York. As I worked in these places, I could learn at first hand the different but also common needs of the people we serve around the globe. I also saw the impact policy making has on the ground, and the criticality of partnerships to collectively better serve the people under our mandates.

Q We have been told that you will soon be taking up a new position as the Director of UNHCR's Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific. The appointment must have been a surprise to you as well since it came just one year after your appointment as the chief of the Seoul office.

The news indeed came as a surprise to me! While I am sorry to be leaving Korea, I feel a great sense of responsibility to be entrusted with leadership of UNHCR's Asia Bureau in these important times. I am excited to benefit from my experiences in various countries in Asia — Myanmar, Afghanistan, Japan and Korea. As the Director of the Asia and the Pacific region, I will strive to serve as a constructive bridge to bring together different countries in the region, including Korea, to strengthen partnership and share responsibility in protecting refugees and others forced to flee their homes.

Q Despite continued efforts, it seems that many people are still unaware or ignorant of the refugee issue. How serious is the refugee situation today and how is UNHCR responding?

The situation is extremely serious and has gotten worse in the past several years. The number of people forced to flee due to war, conflict, persecution, or human rights violations today stands at 114 million, almost double the number in 2013. The challenges faced by displaced persons are increasingly complex and protracted. While existing crises continue with no end in sight, new conflicts are occurring, bringing the number of refugees to a new record every year since 2011.

In Asia alone, the situations in Myanmar and Afghanistan have displaced more than 13 million people, with many unable to return home for decades.

Most refugees' ultimate wish is simply to return home safely and begin to rebuild their lives. The average refugee does not travel far from their home country, but stays in a neighboring country, waiting for the moment she can go home. The countries that host the highest numbers of refugees are mainly low- and middle-income countries, often without the resources needed to address refugee needs.

It is in situations like these that assistance and support from partners such as KOICA is so essential — UNHCR and other frontline organizations are on the ground delivering assistance to people who left everything behind in search of protection, but we can only do so with the political, moral and financial support of nations like Korea with a strong humanitarian commitment. Together, we can meet the most pressing needs and look for longer-term solutions to problems. In this regard, we welcome Korea's renewed focus on the humanitarian, development, and peace nexus.

Q As you mention, international cooperation is essential to the issue of global displacement. How can the international community better cooperate?

The ultimate solution to forced displacement requires political commitment from the international community. Unless conflicts, persecution and violence are brought to an end, people will continue to be forced to flee their homes. While solutions are sought — peace agreements, the ability to return in safety, a renewal of development - the international community must work together to provide assistance so that refugees are able to enjoy their basic human rights and be protected from violence and harm.

Today's world is connected like never before. If your neighbor's house is on fire, your house will not be safe by simply closing the door. All countries must work together with shared responsibility to solve forced displacement situations. When all countries do their part, we can ensure that every refugee is safe until the day they return home. One thing that has become clear to me through my work with refugees is that any of us can become a refugee.

Q Raising public awareness on refugees could be a way of addressing forced displacement. In this regard, what kind of efforts is UNHCR making?

Raising public awareness is so important to the refugee issue! In Korea, I am encouraged to see that many Koreans have a sense of empathy and solidarity for refugees. In a recent survey we conducted in Korea, more than 75 precent of Koreans re-



Representative Hai Kyung Jun attending the event and speaking with the audience

sponded that they feel sympathy towards refugees in Korea — that's a tremendous level of goodwill and compassion.
At the same time, misinformation and negative perceptions about refugees are also common. UNHCR does its best to offer true stories and facts about refugees, here in Korea and globally, by offering public events, films, workshops and social media information that help to illuminate refugee issues. In this, we work closely with many facets of Korean society — whether that may be government offices, students, professors, civil society, influencers. Opportunities such as today's interview with KOICA Magazine play an important role in raising awareness about refugees. Thank you!

Q Currently, UNHCR is working with KOICA to support refugees in Pakistan, Ecuador, and Kenya. Could you share with us the challenges and achievements of some of these projects?

With multi-year support from KOICA, UNHCR has strengthened its assistance programming for refugees and the host communities in each of these country — we are very grateful for the support to help people begin to put their lives back together, to feel safe, to live healthier lives. As a result of KOICA's support children can now go school - an investment in the future; mothers delivered their babies in healthy conditions with appropriate medical care available; families regained their dignity by being able to meet their basic needs through cash assistance. In Pakistan, KOICA and UNHCR facilitated access to education and improved the health safety net, constructing five schools fully equipped with water and sanitation infrastructure and rehabilitating 10 mother-child health centers in refugee camps. In Ecuador, UNHCR provided support to some 129,000 people in need, including more than 48,000 refugees and host community members who received cash assistance and 30,000 individuals who received legal assistance.
In Burundi, KOICA's support for the voluntary return and peaceful reintegration of Burundian refugees provided a great momentum as the best solution for refugees would be returning home. The return of these people, who had been displaced for many years, met the objective of the Global Compact for Refugees, one of which is to find a sustainable solution for refugees. To date, UNHCR supported longer-term reintegration and local development needs including assisting 207,500 returns.

Q How can KOICA better support UNHCR?

Partnership between KOICA and UNHCR began in 2014 with a program that helped displaced Colombians to improve their quality of life and to enjoy greater respect for their rights. From this initial collaboration on finding solutions to displacement in Colombia, the relationship with KOICA has grown into ten years of cooperation. Together, we have implemented projects worth a cumulative $54 million to improve education, health, self-reliance and peaceful coexistence between communities across continents.
We greatly value the partnership with KOICA and hope to strengthen our relationship. We rely on KOICA's expertise in development cooperation, and stand ready to provide our expertise in refugee protection!

Q Any final words?

I would like to stress that refugees are ordinary people, like you and me — every refugee is someone's mother, father, daughter or son. Koreans, with the history of war in the not-so-distant past can understand what it means to be forced from one's home or to see one's country damaged by conflict.
Having served in the field, I know that many countries look up to Korea as an example of astounding development, vibrant democracy and respect for human rights — Korea is an inspiration to many! Korea has that much larger responsibility to respond to the expectations by playing a leading role in all aspects, including humanitarian assistance and refugee protection. Thank you.K

The 3rd High-Level Meeting of MIKTA Development Cooperation Network

Exploring avenues for collaboration: MIKTA Development Cooperation Institutions Network

The MIKTA Development Cooperation Institutions Network brings together development cooperation agencies from around the world. Here, discussions are held on measures for the strengthening of multilateral cooperation. It is a forum where countries forecast the future and plan strategies in the field of international development cooperation.
KOICA attended the '3rd High-Level Meeting of MIKTA Development Cooperation Network' held in Bali, Indonesia in May 2023. The meeting involved discussions on multilateral cooperation measures and international development cooperation, leading to the adoption of a joint statement.
MIKTA is a consultative body comprising five countries - Mexico, Indonesia, Korea, Turkey, and Australia — that have the willingness and capacity to contribute to the public good of the international community. The body was launched at the 68th United Nations General Assembly in September 2013. Member countries selected 'sustainable development' as one of the seven major areas of cooperation in 2016 and decided to enhance collaboration in the field of development cooperation.
KOICA's initiative prompted the formation of a separate consultative body. When Korea assumed the chairmanship of MIKTA in 2020, it proposed 'development cooperation' as a key area of cooperation. The following year, the 'MIKTA Development Cooperation Network' was launched under the leadership of KOICA. Over the past two years, it has served as a platform for discussing specific implementation plans among development cooperation agencies.
Vice President of KOICA Hong Seok-hwa attended this third meeting and participated in discussions of topics including ▲innovative multilateral cooperation measures in the post-pandemic era ▲outlook for the future international development cooperation landscape ▲2023 joint cooperation projects, etc. The joint statement adopted at this meeting emphasized the role of the consultative body and the strengthening of partnerships, including specifying the need for the MIKTA Development Cooperation Network as a consultation channel to address shared global challenges. At this meeting, KOICA emphasized the importance of multilateral partnerships and introduced the Development Innovation Program (DIP). DIP is a new type of ODA project that enhances the effectiveness of projects in developing countries and nurtures domestic venture companies by establishing a collaborative network with large corporations, startups, social ventures, and NGOs. KOICA's triangular cooperation for future collaboration with emerging donor countries has also garnered attention. Triangular cooperation refers to two or more donor countries jointly implementing development cooperation projects in a developing country. The expansion of Korea's ODA budget and the government's contribution plan were also shared. The government has set next year's ODA budget at 6.5 trillion won, which is approximately 2 trillion won more than this year. KOICA emphasized, "Health security, climate change response, and digital transformation are expected to be essential in the ODA field in the future," adding, "Cooperation between development cooperation agencies is necessary."
This meeting is the first in-person high-level meeting held since the launch of the council. KOICA made public its plans to actively participate in the MIKTA Development Cooperation Network and strengthen its position as a leading global development cooperation agency in line with changes in the development cooperation landscape.K



MIKTA online workshop on joint cooperation projects for five African countries

PART 2 Domestic partnership business

KOICA is actively engaged in pursuing domestic partnership projects. KOICA collaborates with local communities, civil society, government ministries, and private companies to contribute to the revitalization of the local economy and engage in social contribution activities. Additionally, it identifies promising Korean companies through KOICA's Creative Technology Solution (CTS). KOICA is receiving a positive response by promoting Korean companies' technologies overseas through partnerships with government agencies such as the Public Procurement Service.



Indian children using DoBrain's programs

Model case of Creative Technology Solution : DoBrain

Treating 600,000 children through brain development program

"Children with slow development" is a term that encompasses children with developmental disabilities and children with developmental delays. An estimated one in six people worldwide experience slow development. Early intervention for children at the so-called 'borderline' rate of development can alleviate the challenges they might face throughout their lives. The challenge lies in the shortage of professional medical staff and the high treatment costs.

This universal concern affects countries worldwide, from developed to developing nations. Furthermore, the number of children with slow development is increasing annually. The proportion of children recommended for in-depth evaluation due to suspected developmental disabilities or delays in the national infant health checkup rose from 1.68% in 2016 to 2.38% in 2020.

Regarding cognitive development, the earlier the intervention, the higher the chances of recovery. However, in developing countries, the challenge lies in obtaining appropriate diagnosis and treatment due to low income, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of awareness regarding the importance of cognitive development.

The digital healthcare startup DoBrain offers a mobile platform that enhances the potential for early screening and treatment of children with slow development. DoBrain's primary solution is the 'D-kit,' a cognitive development treatment program. This program delivers animations and fairy tales via smartphones and tablet PCs, stimulating the brain by incorporating questions into the content. In December 2022, the Ministry of Food and Drug Safety designated it as an innovative medical device, with its effectiveness ▶▶

▶ and safety duly verified.

Launch of Cambodia's inaugural cognitive development education program

DoBrain is a startup founded in 2017 by CEO Choi Ye-jin while she was a student at Seoul National University's business school. While working as an educational volunteer, CEO Choi learned about the prevalence of slow development among children in low-income families. Motivated by this insight, she earned a cognitive therapist's license and began developing digital teaching materials, eventually establishing her own business.

In 2018, DoBrain entered Cambodia through KOICA's Creative Technology Solution (CTS). CTS is a global entry program that utilizes innovative technologies in Official Development Assistance (ODA) to address challenges in developing countries that were difficult to solve using traditional methods. DoBrain pioneered the launch of the first cognitive development application in Cambodia. A DoBrain official noted, "The approach of CTS and DoBrain toward social problems and solutions is quite similar," emphasizing, "The innovative approach of CTS in addressing issues in developing countries using creative ideas and technologies aligns well with DoBrain's ideology."

DoBrain was selected as CTS Seed 1 and operated Cambodia's first cognitive learning therapy program in five schools, including local special schools and pediatric psychiatry professors. This was something that even the Cambodia National Children's Hospital, the best pediatric medical institution in Cambodia, could not do.

That year, Cambodia's first Khmer cognitive development education application was released. It was a program that localized 104 episodes of animation and 52 episodes of games. The number of new users in Cambodia reached 175,711. Two clinical studies were conducted to verify the effectiveness of the software, targeting a total of 456 students at three schools, including 'Hands of Hope Cambodia (HHC),' Cambodia's only special school for intellectual disabilities. Choi Ye-jin, CEO of DoBrain, explained, "Nothing can change society as quickly as changing the lives of children," and added, "I want to create a program where people can receive cognitive education with just a cell phone."

To facilitate universal access to treatment using digital technology

This year, DoBrain initiated providing cognitive development education to approximately 400 students in 9 schools in Bengaluru, India, as it had been selected as CTS Seed 2. According to India's National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO), 1.8% of the Indian population has a disability, with the prevalence of intellectual disability ranging from 1.0% to 3.2%. Notably, the number of children with developmental delays has quadrupled in the past five years.

The earlier cognitive rehabilitation is initiated, the more effective it becomes. However, India lacks proper infrastructure for the diagnosis and treatment of children with intellectual disabilities and developmental delays. In particular, most cognitive education and development programs targeting preschool children are held as offline sessions that require centers or specialized personnel. Online programs are designed for learning purposes such as math or English.

A DoBrain staff member mentioned, "It is crucial to provide access to an appropriate program that transcends distance, physical, and economic barriers, especially when education is highly effective for children under six." He added, "Utilizing a digital platform accessible to everyone allows us to address the polarization of screening and intervention among children with developmental delays."

It is also crucial to secure local partners in India. DoBrain, in collaboration with Rogpa, a local child protection NGO, implemented the 'Grow Together' project, wherein the DoBrain program is gifted to one Indian child for every user. Rogpa, which oversees education at 40 to 50 childcare facilities in India, established a collaborative model with DoBrain while searching for digital teaching materials required for remote classes amid the coronavirus pandemic.

In July 2023, DoBrain was chosen for the Ministry of Health and Welfare's 'Medical Institution-based Digital Healthcare Demonstration and Introduction' project. Over three years, the company plans to conduct multi-center clinical demonstrations with 15 domestic hospitals, including Korea University's Industry-Academic Cooperation Foundation, aiming to provide integrated management of pediatric developmental diseases.

Recently, DoBrain announced that it has completed attracting Series B investment (investment at the stage where technology is commercialized in earnest) worth 21 billion won. Domestic venture capital (VC) Intervest led the investment with 15 billion won, and a domestic insurance company, along with the existing investment company KB Investment, also participated in this funding round. Previously, in 2020, DoBrain raised 6.5 billion won by attracting Series A investment (seed money investment, which represents the first round of funding.) DoBrain plans to utilize this investment to develop services addressing challenges for children and families with diverse developmental needs. A staff member said, "DoBrain aims to create a world where children can more easily receive the help they need for development."K



Scooter and batteries from VERYWORDS Co., Ltd.

Model case of Inclusive Business Solution

VERYWORDS leads e-mobility ecosystem construction in Cambodia

'Carbon neutrality' means reducing the net amount of greenhouse gases emitted by humans to zero. Achieving it requires a significant change in the way business is conducted. VERYWORDS, a climate change consulting company founded in 2017, participated in KOICA's Inclusive Business Solution Program (hereinafter referred to as the IBS Program) to promote carbon neutrality through a new business ecosystem and culture.

Supporting carbon neutrality in developing countries

In December 2015, the 'Paris Agreement on Climate Change' (Paris Agreement) was signed during the 21st Session of the Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). After the unanimous agreement of 195 countries, the Cambodian government established and announced a 'long-term strategy for carbon neutrality' to reduce greenhouse gases by up to 42% by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050. In Cambodia, where the economy is growing rapidly, greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector are increasing swiftly due to the rising number of individuals owning personal vehicles. The prevalence of motorcycle users is particularly significant.

"Even if developing countries declare carbon neutrality at the government level, they often lack the financial resources to implement it, necessitating assistance from developed countries. Even with the assistance of developed countries in implementing greenhouse gas reduction projects, these initiatives frequently lack sustainability because the lives or perceptions of people in developing countries do not undergo significant changes."

These words are attributed to Kim Sung-woo, the CEO of VERYWORDS Co., Ltd. (hereinafter referred to as VERYWORDS). Established in 2017, VERYWORDS is a climate change consulting company encompassing the e-mobility value chain, including e-mobility production, related services, and recycling. Kim emphasizes the 'distribution of electric motorcycles to developing countries' as a pressing task acknowledged by international organizations, including the United Nations. This urgency arises due to conventional motorcycles' significant greenhouse gas emissions.

"Motorcycles are an integral part of everyday life for Cambodians. Suppose Cambodians were to replace their conventional motorcycles with electric ones, receiving points equivalent to the reduced greenhouse gases and enjoying discounts on charging fees. Wouldn't it naturally encourage them to incorporate greenhouse gas reduction into their daily routines? This shift in perception is poised to impact the promotion of other greenhouse gas reduction projects positively."

IBS Program, initial step in establishing e-mobility ecosystem

The primary objective that VERYWORDS set upon entering Cambodia was 'building an e-mobility ecosystem.' It was based on the belief that when culture changes, the ecosystem ▶▶

▶ changes and the world can change with the transformation of the ecosystem. However, cultural change projects are time-consuming and challenging to pursue in companies that prioritize economic logic.

"To attain carbon neutrality by 2050, Cambodia must achieve a 45% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030. In order to accomplish it, the launch of a new business that fosters a novel culture should be initiated as soon as possible. However, many investors and companies tend to focus solely on specific technologies. Additionally, the Cambodian government lacks sufficient financial resources to invest in cultivating a culture or ecosystem that contradicts the immediate economic feasibility logic.

KOICA's IBS Program paved the way for a new direction in this situation. IBS is a program designed to enhance the economic growth of targeted countries and elevate the quality of life for local residents. It achieves this by collaboratively mobilizing financial resources between KOICA and private companies to execute projects in developing countries, leveraging the expertise of private companies. During the promotion of an e-mobility pilot project in Cambodia in 2019 and the development of an eco-industrial complex in 2021, the concept of an 'e-mobility ecosystem' emerged. However, managing this project alone posed a significant challenge for the startup VERYWORDS. Given Cambodia's status as a developing country, the business proposal faced reluctance from potential stakeholders. However, KODAC, a consulting agency specializing in international development cooperation, introduced KOICA's IBS Program. The concept of establishing an e-mobility ecosystem in developing countries aligned with the objectives of the IBS Program and presented a fitting business model.

Successful mass production and sales of e-mobility with both competitive performance and pricing

VERYWORDS promoted the 'Building a Sustainable e-Mobility Ecosystem for Carbon Reduction in Cambodia' project through KOICA's IBS Program. VERYWORDS assumed overall responsibility for organizing this project, initiated the e-mobility mass production stage in Cambodia, and innovated the SHS (Solar Home ESS System), enabling the repurposing of batteries after use. Currently, VERYWORDS is in the process of constructing a factory to recycle waste batteries.

"The KOICA Cambodia Office remains dedicated to monitoring and supporting this project, exerting continuous efforts to provide assistance at every stage as required. An integral aspect of constructing an e-mobility ecosystem involves establishing systems. Thanks to KOICA's proactive support in persuading the Cambodian government and identifying aid projects, VERYWORDS successfully obtained approval from the Cambodian government."

Through this project, VERYWORDS accomplished the local production of 100 e-scooters. As of August 2023, 86 units have been sold, with an enthusiastic response from local users opting for e-scooters over traditional motorcycles.

"Our company's e-scooters are high-quality products that separate the battery and e-mobility body for sale. However, the pricing remains competitive and comparable to competitors' products. Furthermore, it has achieved performance levels comparable to existing gasoline motorcycles. Even users who previously rode gasoline motorcycles can now use it without inconvenience."

Dreaming of sustainable development in Cambodia

In the meantime, VERYWORDS collaborated with banks and gas stations to install charging stations in convenient locations for users, improving the accessibility of battery replacement. The remaining tasks include establishing a recycling center and implementing a waste battery collection system.

"During the establishment of the e-mobility ecosystem, the question 'Can a startup truly accomplish this?' frequently arose. Despite the challenges encountered along the way, with KOICA's support, the resounding answer emerged that it is indeed 'entirely feasible.' As I advance through the IBS program, I find gratification in the external validation of the significance of building a carbon-neutral culture. This stands as the most significant achievement."

Ultimately, to finalize the e-mobility ecosystem, it is imperative to broaden the local distribution of e-mobility. Achieving this necessitates the establishment of an adequate charging infrastructure. To achieve this goal, VERYWORDS is in the process of developing a new project tied to Korea's international greenhouse gas reduction initiative. This illustrates that the completion of Cambodia's e-mobility eco-platform is contingent upon the practical utilization of greenhouse gas reductions.

As of 2020, Cambodia's registered number of motorcycles stands at approximately 5.2 million. Given this figure, the scale of the local motorcycle market is estimated to be roughly twice that of Korea. If local motorcycles are replaced by e-mobility, the potential impact is likely to be significantly greater. The ultimate goal of VERYWORDS, having taken a meaningful first step in cultivating a carbon-neutral culture by establishing an e-mobility ecosystem via the IBS program, is the 'sustainable development of Cambodia.' In pursuit of this goal, KOICA envisions the integration of electric motorcycles into the daily lives of more Cambodian people.K



Women from dairy cooperative in Rumuruti, Kenya, who participated in dairy education

Civil Society Cooperation Program

Boosting income, disaster recovery: ODA through civil society partnerships

The public-private partnership projects initiated by KOICA have a significant and extensive history. Since 1995, KOICA has been implementing ODA projects with the aim of addressing poverty in developing countries through collaboration with private partners possessing expertise, including civil society organizations (CSOs), universities, research institutes, and social economy organizations. Among them, the civil society cooperation program is categorized into three types: an 'entry type,' which identifies cooperative projects with small and medium-sized partners and supports the growth of the partner's organization or business capacity; a 'growth type,' which involves private-led grassroots development cooperation projects with the active participation of local residents; and a 'strategic type,' fostering a complementary partnership between CSOs and KOICA to contribute to the achievement of SDGs in developing countries.

Rapid growth of Kenyan dairy cooperatives through linkage between NGOs and startups

According to the World Economic Forum (WEF), Kenya's Gender Gap Index (GGI) as of 2020 ranks 109th out of 153 countries worldwide. Many women face obstacles to economic participation while some face harmful practices such as child marriage or circumcision. Due to this social atmosphere, women often find themselves taking for granted the necessity to walk several kilometers to collect water or gather firewood, all while managing household responsibilities and caring for children.

The government of Kenya is seeking to address such issues. Article 27 of the country's Constitution, amended in 2010, affirms that women and men have the right to equal treatment and are guaranteed equal opportunities for political, economic, cultural, and social rights. The challenge lies in the overall societal atmosphere remaining unchanged despite the amendment.

To alter the longstanding entrenched social atmosphere, real change must be instigated. Since 2021, KOICA, in collaboration with the international development cooperation NGO Uniworld International, has established the 'MARU Dairy Farmers Co-operative Society Limited' in the Rumuruti province of Kenya, aiming at generating employment opportunities for women and fostering their economic freedom and independence. With 100 members, the union achieved an average annual sales volume of $79,797. Per capita income increased from $462.1 in the second year of full-scale business to $776.4 in the third year.

The cooperative's primary source of revenue is milk sales. They placed a milk vending machine in downtown Rumuruti, taking advantage of its sizeable floating population and high accessibility while maximizing profits through individual customer sales. The key to stable profits lies in partnerships with startups. 'Bodit,' a dairy farming ICT startup selected for the KOICA CTS project, offered the cooperative a solution for early detection of calf diseases and precision breeding. Furthermore, a synergy effect was achieved by enhancing the capabilities of farmers through educational initiatives.

Students and teachers grow together

The role of NGOs that work with local residents is essential to identify on-site needs and connect them to international development cooperation projects. The Korea International Volunteer Organization, an international development cooperation NGO, has been implementing an elementary education support project since 2017, with a focus on five public schools in Bishoftu, Oromia region, Ethiopia. Following the first phase (2017-2019) of the project, the second phase (2021-2023) was seamlessly executed, resulting in a 25.2% increase in the number of students, an upper school advancement rate of 97.2%, and an 8th-grade graduation rate of 95.1%.

Gender inequality is a prevalent issue in Ethiopian schools, to the extent that women's restrooms are non-existent. Consequently, the academic completion rate for female students is low, standing at 52.5%. KOICA and the Korea International Volunteer Organization enhanced school facilities and significantly increased the female student attendance rate to 96.1% as of 2021. This was achieved through meal programs for children in poverty, support for sanitary products, and awareness-raising education. In the current year, virtually all attendance was recorded at 99.1%, and female students' 8th-grade academic completion rate rose to 92.8%.

Additionally, a program to enhance teachers' capabilities was implemented. This initiative aimed at boosting teachers' self-esteem and motivation as educators through comprehensive capacity-building training, including workshops on student management, teaching strategies, and school management. Teachers formed a learning community called 'BTG (BEEKUMSA Teachers Group),' where they shared educational content with their colleagues and teachers nearby.


Training on alternative sanitary napkin production provided for female students of childbearing age in Ethiopia

Strategic partnership for large-scale, long-term projects

World Vision, an international relief and development NGO, has been addressing health issues among vulnerable groups through a maternal and child health project in the Eastern Visayas region of the Philippines since 2021. This initiative is part of a large-scale project established in collaboration with KOICA, with a duration of 5 years and a total cost exceeding 10 billion won.

The essence of the project lies in its community-led approach. World Vision devised a maternal and child health home visit consultation service module, implementing a system wherein local health workers (Barangay Health Workers) conduct home visits. It is not merely a health project involving house calls; instead, it focuses on identifying practices within families, promoting family participation, and encouraging a

shift in gender roles within the home—all aimed at enhancing the health and growth of children. World Vision has conducted maternal and child health home visit counseling service training for 1,865 local health workers, enabling them to impart essential maternal and child health knowledge to mothers and caregivers. In particular, the organization has intensified home visits this year, covering a total of 351 households up to the present moment.

In addition, World Vision has established 'Citizen Voice and Action (CVA)' and is offering capacity-building training to empower local residents to voice their opinions.

The goal is to ensure that residents' perspectives are considered in the policies of the Philippine Department of Health (DoH) and Local Government Units (LGUs). In each of the 16 counties targeted by the project, a resident-led advocacy group consisting of local residents was formed, and a 'scorecard' system was established to allow local residents to evaluate government policies directly. Consequently, residents are actively engaging in identifying and addressing gaps between confirmed problems, government policies, and the actual delivery of services.



An adolescent mother receiving home visit counseling services from World Vision



Panoramic view of the temporary residential district 'Korea-Türkiye Friendship Village'

Public-private joint project for temporary settlement of earthquake victims in Türkiye

The project aimed at recovery from the earthquake that struck Türkiye in March 2023 can also be regarded as a noteworthy example of joint public-private emergency relief activities. In October, the opening ceremony for the 'Korea-Türkiye Friendship Village,' a temporary settlement aimed at aiding earthquake victims in their recovery, took place in the Antakya region of Türkiye's Hatay Province. This temporary residential village project is a public-private joint project carried out by KOICA and civil society organizations including Save the Children Korea, Good Neighbors International, and Korea Food for the Hungry International. Full-fledged discussions commenced when the Korea Disaster Relief Team (KDRT), dispatched to Türkiye last March for early recovery from the earthquake, signed a record of discussion (R/D) with the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) of Türkiye for the temporary settlement project.

The Korea-Türkiye Friendship Village is a temporary settlement spanning approximately 40,000m^2, capable of accommodating 500 households. In addition to the container houses, this location is equipped with various public spaces and essential facilities, including a kindergarten, school, child and women-friendly space, communal laundry room, and community center, so victims may stay without major inconvenience until their homes are restored. Various programs will also be implemented there to aid in the mental and psychological recovery of the victims.

Concerning this, Jung Yoo-ah, General Director of KOICA's Multilateral Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance Dept., stated, "To enhance the resilience of the victims in Türkiye, KOICA is providing support through close collaboration with project partner NGOs and relevant government ministries, such as AFAD." K

Korea Disaster Relief Team (KDRT) deployed to forest fire sites in Canada

Joint response to Canada forest fire, transnational cooperation, Greater role of KDRT



KDRT returned after being dispatched to Canada

This year, wildfires occurred across Canada on an unprecedented and catastrophic scale. According to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), between June 3 and October 1, 18.4 million hectares of forest were engulfed in flames. It is 1.8 times the size of Korea. Foreign media outlets, including Reuters, reported the news and referred to it as "the worst forest fire in Canadian history."

Korea was the first country in Asia to dispatch a relief team - the Korea Disaster Relief Team (KDRT) - to Canada. Comprising a total of 152 people, the KDRT worked diligently to extinguish forest fires in Quebec, Canada, from July 2 to August 3. The KDRT activities were warmly welcomed by local residents. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau visited the transport plane returning to Korea and expressed his gratitude in person. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said, "This year marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Korea and Canada" and added, "This KDRT activity provided an opportunity to take the relationship between the two countries to the next level."

Operating in Quebec, 12 hours a day, during hot summer season

KDRT completed the launch ceremony on the morning of July 2, Korean time, and departed for Canada on a Korean military transport plane. Ambassador Kweon Ki-hwan from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Headquarters served as the head of the emergency relief team. KDRT members consisted of personnel from KOICA (3 people), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (6 people), Korea Forest Service (70 people), National Fire Agency (70 people), and medical personnel (3 people).

KDRT members arrived in Ottawa, Canada at 1:15 pm (local time) on July 2 and moved to the Maniwaki region in Quebec for training. After completing training there until the next day, they ▶▶



KDRT arrived in Canada on July 2nd to help extinguish forest fires

headed to the scene of the forest fire in Lebel-sur-Quevillon, Quebec on the following day. Lebel-sur-Quevillon is one of the areas in Quebec where forest fires were severe, leading to residents being evacuated twice. As of the end of July, when KDRT was in full swing, approximately 630,000 hectares were damaged, which is about 1,400 times the size of Yeouido.

KDRT members commenced full-scale forest fire extinguishing activities on the 5th, with the work primarily conducted in collaboration with American firefighters.

The schedule started at 5 am every day. After a local breakfast, they attended an ICP(Incident Command Post) briefing meeting at a nearby ice hockey stadium at 7 a.m. to discuss operations. After the meeting, KDRT members moved to an operational area 100 to 200 km away to extinguish the fire. They worked from 4:30 to 5 p.m. and then returned to camp around 7 p.m. At 8 p.m., another ICP briefing meeting was held. They followed this schedule for 14 days, took a two-day break, and then resumed work for another 14 days.

In its role as the KDRT secretariat, KOICA dispatched a total of 6 people, with 3 each from the advance and follow-up teams, to fulfill various roles such as logistics transportation, medical support, and daily life assistance. KDRT member Park Young-shin said, “The secretariat’s primary task was to foster unity and morale within the emergency rescue team in an unfamiliar and challenging environment.” He continued, “For the KDRT members who lost stamina due to the arduous firefighting work, we negotiated with the Canadian side to airlift 150 servings of pork belly, which is hard to find in the area. We roasted it ourselves and served it to the members,” and added, “Such support served as a valuable opportunity to foster unity and solidarity as one team.”

KOICA crews also secured supplies to prevent and exterminate mosquitoes and black flies, which posed a significant threat at the site. Additionally, KOICA members were responsible for transporting the injured to the hospital and providing first aid. They helped enhance the living conditions of KDRT members, who stayed in tents for a month, by providing amenities such as shower spaces and improving communication infrastructure. Additionally, they supported the transportation of materials, including food, beverages, and firefighting equipment.

Forest fire extinguishment rate reaches 94%… KDRT's performance attracts attention from local media

Local residents enthusiastically cheered on KDRT’s tireless activities even in the hot summer. They expressed their gratitude by delivering food and souvenirs, including homemade muffins. A local resident delivered a handwritten letter of gratitude in Korean to the members, expressing, “Thank you for everything. You worked very hard for us.”

Canadian media also highlighted KDRT’s activities. Local broadcaster CBC reported on July 29 about the challenges faced by Korean crews working to extinguish the fire. It was also broadcast that the crew returned to the base camp after extinguishing the fire and enjoyed ramen, canned kimchi, and Korean snacks sent by local residents to alleviate their fatigue. CBC introduced the cooperation between Korean and American crews, saying, “Korean War allies reunited after 70 years to fight forest fires.”

KDRT achieved a forest fire extinguishment rate of 94% and returned home. Before their departure, the members visited the War Memorial in Ottawa and paid tribute to Canada’s noble sacrifice in sending troops to the Korean War. An official from Canada’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed gratitude, saying, “Canada helped Korea by sending troops during the Korean War, when Korea was in trouble, and this time, when Canada was in trouble, Korea helped by dispatching an emergency relief force.” Canada dispatched 26,791 troops to the Korean War, making it the third-largest troop-sending country after the United States and the United Kingdom.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau made a surprise visit to the transport aircraft to express his gratitude to the KDRT members returning to Korea. Prime Minister Trudeau said, “Thank you again for leaving your family and coming to the other side of the world to help our people. I hope you return home safely.” When Prime Minister Trudeau said “Thank you” in Korean, the plane erupted in cheers and applause.

KDRT crews arrived at Seoul Airport at 6:45 pm on August 2, Korean time. second Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Oh Young-ju commended the efforts of crew members in effectively extinguishing forest fires in dangerous field conditions. “In a situation where international demand for emergency relief is increasing due to the rise in natural disasters such as forest fires, desertification, heatwaves, and heavy rain following climate change, our government is committed to realizing a Global Pivotal State and making an active contribution accordingly.”

On September 12, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs held a meeting to encourage relief workers. Minister of Foreign Affairs Park Jin said, “This KDRT dispatch is the first and largest-scale case in which our government has dispatched personnel overseas to support forest fire extinguishment. It has become an important opportunity to expand the scope of emergency relief activities,” encouraging KDRT members for their hard work over an extended period. Canadian Ambassador to Korea Tamara Mawhinney also participated in the event and expressed her gratitude.

Cho Hyun-gyu, a member who is in charge of the KDRT secretariat, said, “At the site, I felt that climate change is a reality that we all face equally, regardless of developed or developing countries” adding, “Given that Korea and the entire world are currently grappling with extreme climate phenomena like floods and heatwaves, transnational cooperation and the role of KDRT will become increasingly crucial in the future”.K



Encouragement meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs Park Jin for KDRT upon their return from deployment



Jung Min-kyu, talking with colleagues from the KDRT medical team

Jung Min-kyu, member of the National Medical Center's Overseas Medical Support Team

Understanding the roles of the KDRT medical team

There was one disaster that imprinted the word "tsunami" in our minds - the 2004 Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunami, also known as the 2004 South Asian Earthquake. The massive undersea earthquake, which occurred 40 kilometers off the western coast of Sumatra Island, Indonesia, on December 26, 2004, had a moment magnitude of 9.1-9.3, making it the largest earthquake in the 21st century and the natural disaster with the highest number of deaths in history. At that time, more than 300,000 people lost their lives, more than 50,000 went missing, and over 1.69 million people became refugees. The outbreak occurred during the Christmas season, on Boxing Day, and approximately 9,000 foreign tourists from around the world died or went missing. The tsunami, which surged to 100 meters, caused the greatest damage in Indonesia. It also struck neighboring countries such as Myanmar, Bangladesh, Thailand, and Sri Lanka, and even affected Africa.

Launch of KDRT

The international community provided extensive aid and support to the areas affected by the tsunami in Indonesia. Korea also contributed aid funds and dispatched relief teams. This disaster raised awareness of natural disasters in the international community. It served as an opportunity for Korea, as a member of the international community, to recognize the need to establish an emergency relief system capable of responding swiftly to overseas disasters.

Less than three years after the disaster occurred, the "Act on Overseas Emergency Relief" was enacted in March 2007, and the "Enforcement Decree on Overseas Emergency Relief" was enacted in October of the same year. Korea also established a legal framework for implementing an overseas emergency relief system. The following year, in 2008, under Article 6 of the Act, the ▶▶

▶ 'First Overseas Emergency Relief Basic Measures' were established, which outlined the work, operation, and international cooperation of the Korean Disaster Relief Team (KDRT). The basic measures contain detailed and intricate content pertaining to the operation of KDRT, addressing legal and enforcement ordinance aspects. They also include information on strengthening cooperation with relevant domestic ministries, agencies, and international organizations. (Currently, the '6th Overseas Emergency Relief Measures in 2022' are in place.) All related organizations engaged in KDRT-related activities operate in accordance with the relevant laws and basic measures.

Top relief team made up of Korean experts

The Korea Disaster Relief Team (KDRT) is an emergency response team swiftly deployed by the government to aid in damage reduction, recovery, life-saving efforts, and medical relief in countries affected by disasters. KDRT is comprised of KOICA, which functions as the secretariat; the KDRT Rescue Team from the National 119 Rescue Headquarters under the National Fire Agency, responsible for supporting search and rescue activities, the National Medical Center under the Ministry of Health and Welfare, and the KDRT Medical Team operated by the Korea Foundation for International Healthcare. Additionally, it involves the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, responsible for crucial matters such as deployment decisions, and the Air Force of the Ministry of National Defense, facilitating the transfer of personnel and logistics to ensure the swift movement of overseas emergency relief teams to disaster-stricken countries. KDRT is the sole overseas relief team in Korea, where diverse organizations with expertise collaborate and showcase their capabilities at disaster sites, following a predetermined framework in the event of a situation (overseas disaster). It is not operated independently by a specific institution.

For KDRT to operate seamlessly, it is crucial to understand each related organization's capabilities and facilitate the sharing of situational information. For instance, if the cargo capacity of one Air Force transport plane is 20 tons, but the rescue or medical team's logistics, meeting international certification standards, amounts to 25 tons, a situation arises where the remaining 5 tons of logistics cannot be transported to the site. During such instances, the approach is to anticipate and prevent issues through prior consultation rather than addressing them on-site (at the airport). Resolving matters that necessitate initial consultation enables relief efforts to be executed more promptly and efficiently.

Excellence of KDRT recognized by international community

Relief teams operating overseas receive international certification from the United Nations (UN) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Overseas relief teams of each country, including KDRT, progressively obtained international certification hosted by UN agencies. Korea's KDRT rescue team achieved the Heavy rating from the UN INSARAG (International Search and Rescue Advisory Group) in 2011 and underwent successful recertification twice, in 2016 and 2023. The KDRT medical team initially obtained the WHO EMT (Emergency Medical Team) Type 1 (Fixed) rating in 2022. The significance of obtaining the WHO EMT Type 1 rating lies, above all, in the international recognition of the capabilities of our rescue and medical teams. Currently, in line with the global trend of overseas relief teams receiving international certification, some disaster-affected countries check whether a rescue team or medical team has obtained the rating. This depends on whether the affected country's government seeks assistance from an international organization or directly solicits support from the governments of individual countries with which the affected country maintains diplomatic relations. When seeking support through an international organization, the rescue and medical teams that have obtained the rating will be the first to assist, and information about the disaster-stricken country will also be shared. If you were to ask me, a practitioner who prepared and conducted the examination certification for the KDRT medical team, to discuss the certification process, I would start by emphasizing the importance of understanding the background from which the certification initiative originated. ▶▶



Jung Min-kyu

Member of the National Medical Center's Overseas Medical Support Team

Jung Min-kyu was in charge of tasks such as infectious disease vector management, ship quarantine, and sanitary inspection at the Ulsan Quarantine Station of the Ministry of Health and Welfare. He moved to the National Medical Center in 2010 and has been working in the overseas medical support team since 2021, also serving as a member of the KDRT medical team. He oversaw the KDRT medical team's World Health Organization (WHO) TYPE 1 level certification.

The catalyst for the WHO EMT certification was the Haiti disaster in 2010 and the epidemic in the South Sudan refugee camp in 2011. The emergency medical team dispatched to provide medical aid unintentionally spread cholera and hepatitis E, resulting in the deaths of over 9,000 people in Haiti and more than 240 in the refugee camp in South Sudan. Following these incidents, discussions on principles, standards, and the standardization of terminology for emergency medical teams were initiated, eventually resulting in the current EMT verification process.

Given that this was the impetus for certification, the examination certification for medical teams doesn't solely assess medical competency levels but encompasses broader considerations. The evaluation in the examination process does not primarily revolve around the presence of specific equipment such as X-ray machines or surgical instruments. Instead, the focus is on logistics operations, waste disposal, consideration for socially disadvantaged groups (such as the disabled, children, pregnant women, etc.), sanitary facilities, health management of dispatched personnel (including residential areas, rest areas, shower facilities, etc.), power supply devices, and the availability of professional manpower, including electrical engineers.

I still remember what the certification team said a year ago during the examination certification evaluation. "We acknowledge that Korea's medical expertise is among the best in the world. However, the certification evaluation aims to assess whether this high-level medical care can be effectively implemented in the challenging conditions of a disaster site."

The KDRT medical team cannot function solely with doctors and nurses. A comprehensive KDRT medical team is only constituted when various experts from fields entirely unrelated to traditional 'medical personnel,' including electricity experts, water supply experts, waste management experts, and quarantine experts, are also part of the team. This is particularly true for humanitarian purposes, to provide practical medical support to disaster-stricken countries, and to ensure the safety of our personnel during deployment.

KDRT ONE TEAM

The KDRT medical team, having successfully obtained the WHO EMT rating, has been integrated into the WHO EMT Western Pacific Branch, with the National Medical Center's Overseas Medical Support Team serving as the primary contact for communication with the EMT Secretariat.

In this way, they are actively facilitating the ongoing development of the KDRT medical team by fostering communication with EMTs from around the world. 'International certification' cannot be acquired solely through budgetary resources; instead, it can only be achieved through the dedicated efforts, hard work, and perseverance of many individuals. Even the rescue team that earned the Heavy rating this year managed to secure 're-certification' by assembling skilled personnel from various regions, forming a specialized task force, and dedicating one year and six months to thorough preparation. In summary, it's a challenging process. The KDRT medical team, for instance, submitted a letter of intent to WHO EMT in 2017 and only achieved certification five years later.

'KDRT ONE TEAM!' This slogan was created spontaneously during a celebration following the attainment of the WHO EMT examination certification. It was not initially targeting a specific organization in mind, nor intended to encompass related ministries and affiliated organizations. It was a rallying cry for team members who ultimately achieved certification by overcoming conflicts between members, occupations, and even within medical and management teams. This success required individuals to sacrifice personal holidays and vacations, navigating through a challenging and demanding process.

I hope the slogan 'KDRT ONE TEAM!' will not be confined to the medical team but will transform into a rallying cry that enhances the sense of belonging and pride for all individuals associated with the name KDRT.K



Jung Min-kyu, who is communicating the status of the KDRT medical team to other KDRT members

KOICA's social contribution activities

Sharing: Cooperation and coexistence with local communities



KOICA Busan Office, which carried out a support project for local vulnerable groups in collaboration with Good Neighbors

This year, KOICA also led community participation and revitalization of the local economy through various sharing activities. Last September, KOICA collaborated with the Consultative Group of Public Institutions (Academy of Korean Studies, Korea Employment Agency for the Disabled, Korea Social Enterprise Promotion Agency, Korea National Petroleum Quality & Distribution Authority, Korea District Heating Corporation, Korea JobWorld, and Korea Foundation of Nuclear Safety) located in Seongnam-si, where KOICA headquarters is also situated, in an effort to provide time to help local vulnerable social groups through the carbon reduction action challenge, 'This Moment to Save the Earth: ESG Challenge.' This challenge operated so that public institutions in the city of Seongnam provided goods to vulnerable groups when challenge participants performed various environmental protection activities, such as using stairs and reusable tumblers through a dedicated application, and reached the target carbon reduction figure. Through this challenge, KOICA provided electric mats worth 7.5 million won to single-person households to prepare for winter for vulnerable groups in the region. In 2020, KOICA also carried out sharing activities by providing electric fans and Chuseok grocery sets for the underprivileged in Seongnam-si.

KOICA Busan Office cooperated with Good Neighbors in June and Skip a Meal Save a Life in September, respectively, to provide a helping hand to the underprivileged in Busan. Last June, KOICA Busan delivered 67 electric fans to the Good Neighbors Busan-Ulsan-Gyeongnam headquarters and 67 elementary school students from low-income families to prepare for the heat. Also, in September, KOICA conducted a nutritional support program for low-income seniors living alone in the region with Skip a Meal Save a Life, a local NGO based in Busan, and received a positive response.

KOICA Global Talent Training Center, located in Yeongwol-gun, Gangwon State, also participated in sharing activities to celebrate Chuseok. The Yeongwol Integrity Cluster formed to spread local integrity culture and share activities, including KOICA Global Talent Education Center, Yeongwol Light Dream Headquarters of Korea Southern Power Co., LTD, Yeongwol County Office, Yeongwol Office of Education, and KOWORKS, shared the warmth of our neighbors by delivering daily necessities and Songpyeon to the elderly living alone and low-income people in Mureungdowon-myeon, Yeongwol-gun last September. Since its establishment in 2020, the Yeongwol Integrity Cluster has been giving a warm helping hand to the underprivileged in Yeongwol-gun every year during the holidays.

The village elders of Mureungdowon-myeon expressed their gratitude, saying, "Every year, they never forget to come to us with armfuls of delicious side dishes, Songpyeon, and gift packages of daily necessities to say hello and warm hearts, so we had a pleased Chuseok holiday."

In addition, since 2016, KOICA Global Talent Education Center has been donating scholarships to the Yeongwol Scholarship Association and local elementary, middle, and high schools to foster future talent in the local community.K



Yoo Ki-jong, Director of Center for Public Communications

Focus group interviews and direct communication channel with customers

FGI (Focus Group Interview) is often conducted as one of the methods of direct communication with customers. KOICA also makes the best use of FGIs. However, FGIs are often undertaken without understanding the exact concept and method. Sometimes, participants also make errors without accurately recognizing FGI.

Focus Group Interview (FGI): Small groups, in-depth

FGI is an in-depth interview research method that seeks information through intensive conversations with a small group of respondents. Small groups of about 6 to 10 people are formed, and data are collected through discussions led by an interviewer (moderator) related to the survey's purpose. Typically, a group of six people is considered appropriate. FGI differs from surveys by not using a structured questionnaire and from individual interview surveys in that it involves multiple participants sharing opinions rather than a one-on-one Q&A between a moderator and a respondent. FGI gathers survey subjects with similar characteristics in one place and listens to their opinions in a discussion led by a moderator. The moderator prepares interview guidelines in advance, which outline the essential questions and their order, discusses them with the researcher, finalizes the content, and then conducts in-depth interviews based on these guidelines. While adhering to the guidelines is not strictly necessary, they can be modified or supplemented as needed. However, it is advisable to have the interview survey following the preliminary questions' guidelines whenever possible. If necessary, recording or videotaping is conducted, and after completing the in-depth interview, the recorded or filmed content is organized and analyzed to produce an investigation report.

Gathering wealth of information in short time period

The survey results can vary significantly based on how the moderator conducts the survey. Therefore, the moderator's role is to facilitate a comfortable conversation environment, encouraging even passive participants to speak on the topic. In practice, when FGI is not accurately understood, people may question the need for a moderator and argue that the moderator is unnecessary. The moderator of FGI must understand that he or she is an interviewer in an interview survey and recognize that the selection and participation of the moderator in a neutral position are essential.

FGI is designed to focus on a specific topic to be studied, so it has the advantage of enabling intensive analysis of the case and quickly obtaining a large amount of information. Additionally, it has the advantage of identifying true information that was previously difficult to grasp due to barriers between groups. On the other hand, since the participation of the survey subjects who are requested to attend does not occur naturally, the scope of control is weaker compared to one-on-one interviews, and the group's perspective may be emphasized over the actual phenomenon.

KOICA's Center for Public Communications has continued to expand FGI-style customer meetings to strengthen direct communication with domestic project partners. In particular, it has increased the number of meetings by 44% for direct communication in which KOICA's President and management take part, from three times with office directors and six times with chief directors/members of the board of directors in 2022 to five and eight times respectively in 2023. Customer opinions from the meetings are compiled into a database and discussed with relevant departments. They are then categorized into short-term measures for immediate action and long-term review items that require ongoing improvement assessments. The details of the measures are posted on the KOICA website and communicated to customers.

In 2022, 43 opinions from direct communication with management have already been improved, and representative improvements among them include switching to a remote technology evaluation method in response to the COVID-19 situation. In fact, by collecting opinions, the technology evaluation team introduced a non-face-to-face method for technology evaluation, allowing bidders to reduce editing and binding costs incurred in the existing face-to-face method, resulting in a total cumulative annual cost reduction of KRW 540 million.

In the case of 2023, 227 customer opinions were raised at management-customer meetings held for about three months, from July to September, and these are currently being reviewed. Separately from this, eight customer FGIs were conducted in October, hosted by the Center for Public Communications Director. Efforts were also made to gather the opinions of all KOICA domestic project partners without omission by conducting FGIs targeting partners in each division who did not have the opportunity to communicate at meetings with management.



Yoo Ki-jong

Director of Center for Public Communications

Yoo Ki-jong was responsible for surveys and customer management at consulting companies such as Bain & Company. He also served as the person in charge of customer satisfaction, customer channel management, and business improvement at a financial company. Since the end of 2018, he has served as the Director of KOICA's Center for Public Communications, overseeing the improvement of KOICA's public service and customer service efficiency. He recently published a book titled "My Own Survey Recipe" for non-specialists in the field.

Improving customer service through communication channels and systems

Thanks to these efforts, KOICA reduced the number of customer complaints received through e-People by about 45% in 2022 compared to the previous year and achieved the target score in 93.6% of all its business sectors in the Ministry of Strategy and Finance's public institution customer satisfaction survey. KOICA aims to achieve 100% coverage of all project sectors in the year's evaluation in 2023.

When conducting FGIs, there are times when customers have many opinions they want to express to KOICA, but there is not enough time on-site. For such cases, KOICA introduces its various communication channels to customers, most notably the Public Suggestion Board and Corporate Growth Response Center, which are suggestion corners in the VOC system.

KOICA has operated excellent communication channels better than any other public institution, serving citizens and customers through the establishment and operation of the integrated VOC system in 2019, the Certificate Issuance System in 2020, the Public Suggestion Room in 2021, the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system in 2023, and the full-scale operation of CRM in 2024. KOICA will continue to strive to facilitate active communication and participation from the public and will do its best to satisfy its customers.K

KOICA-Public Procurement Service cooperation project

Power of shared growth: Combination of ODA projects and innovative products



KOICA attended the Procurement Day seminar

KOICA and the Public Procurement Service have continued their collaboration. Since November 2022, KOICA has been a key participant in the overseas expansion consultative body for innovative products. KOICA and the Public Procurement Service's overseas expansion project for innovative products serves as a crucial stepping-stone for domestic small and medium-sized businesses to commercialize their products, attract additional investment, and establish links with exports.

Win-win for KOICA overseas offices and small and medium-sized businesses

In 2021, KOICA was selected by the Public Procurement Service as an agency to use innovative prototypes, making it the first public institution to participate in the project aimed at promoting an overseas demonstration project for innovative prototypes in 14 countries targeted for overseas office ODA projects. The Public Procurement Service supports the cost of trial purchase products to promote innovative products from excellent domestic small and medium-sized businesses overseas. KOICA, for its part, supports the logistics costs necessary for transporting innovative products and conducting local overseas verification work.

In 2021, the first year of participation in the project, KOICA selected the needle-less 'laser blood collection device' developed by Lameditech, a domestic laser specialist healthcare company, as a trial purchase product and supplied it to 9 countries targeted for ODA projects. A representative example is the demonstration of how to use a laser blood collection device at Laos Hospital, a partner hospital within KOICA's health business region, showcasing the product's excellence, ease of use, and safety. Thanks to the positive local responses to the laser blood collection device, Lameditech accelerated its overseas expansion. It was selected as an innovative company at CES in 2022 and identified as a key company for KOICA's overseas ODA support in 2023.

In 2022, KOICA selected the LED stand lamp equipped with sterilizing and anti-viral functions from Korea Lighting Co., Ltd., an LED lighting specialist company, as a trial purchase product and provided it to overseas offices in 14 countries, including Cambodia and Uzbekistan, to 'support the office environment and improve the COVID-19 environment.' Additional purchasing and logistics support were also provided based on demand. That year, Korea Lighting Co., Ltd. won the gold prize at the Public Procurement Service Innovation Competition, gaining domestic and international recognition.

Innovative products from two companies provided to eight ODA target countries

KOICA selected innovative products from two companies through an internal evaluation system during the Public Procurement Service's '2023 3rd Innovative Product Pilot Purchase Demand Survey' period in June. These included a natural compound pesticide (product name JINTTUK) from 2MBIO Co., Ltd. and a urine chemistry analyzer (product name Licote) from Braintech Co., Ltd.

2MBIO's natural compound pesticide is a pest management material that addresses a pest control spectrum, including feeding, sucking, sporadic insects, and minor pests, using new natural composite materials. Being an eco-friendly product, it received positive reviews for its excellent suitability, applicability to agricultural businesses, and possession of overseas environmental technology certification.

KOICA contributes to food security in developing countries worldwide through various agriculture-related businesses. Accordingly, KOICA ultimately selected a natural compound pesticide as an innovative product for pilot purchase, aiming to enhance the agricultural environment in developing countries by improving crop quality and minimizing damage from pests and diseases that can hinder crop production.

The urine chemistry analyzer, an innovative product developed by Braintech Co., Ltd., is a health monitoring device that enables individuals to effortlessly monitor various adult diseases at home through urine, active oxygen, and urinary tract infection tests. KOICA, pursuing a project worth KRW 135 billion (as of 2021) in the health and medical field, selected a urine chemistry analyzer to improve medical services for people in developing countries. The urinary chemical analyzer was well-received for its capability to manage health checks and non-face-to-face treatment linked to an analyzer and a smartphone. It can conduct ten tests through urine, predict 30 types of diseases early, and has a disease prevention function through self-diagnosis.

KOICA plans to provide 350 units of each product to overseas offices in eight countries (Bolivia, Sri Lanka, Algeria, Ecuador, Uganda, Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, and Thailand), which will serve as testbeds for 2MBIO and Braintech products. Afterward, additional purchases, logistics support, and institutional support will be promoted based on demand. Continuous support will be reviewed through innovative technology programs (CTS) and linkage with overseas ODA company entry programs.

Cooperation in export-leading pilot purchase projects

Last September, KOICA jointly launched an 'export-leading pilot purchase project' within the Public Procurement Service's innovative prototype system. The Public Procurement Service announced that it had established a 'public offering export-leading pilot purchase project' in response to continued requests from the private sector to expand KOICA cooperation-type projects. This project is based on cooperation between KOICA and five domestic power generation companies, including Korea Southern Power Co., LTD., Korea Midland Power Co., LTD., and the Innovation Procurement Support Center. Among the programs, which are divided mainly into joint demand discovery type for power generation companies, development cooperation demand connection type, and self-discovered recipients support type, KOICA is exclusively responsible for the development cooperation demand connection type.

KOICA supports verification projects according to overseas demand to accumulate the necessary performance for the export of innovative companies wishing to expand overseas. As with the innovative prototype purchasing system, product purchasing is supported by the Public Procurement Service. KOICA plans to conduct tasks such as conducting demand surveys for overseas offices for innovative products, creating a pilot use implementation plan, supporting logistics costs for product delivery, and submitting a trial use result report.

KOICA and the Public Procurement Service plan to continue this progressive collaboration to aid the development of excellent domestic small and medium-sized enterprises and to support innovative products needed for overseas ODA projects in project destinations. K

KOICA receives Prime Minister's Award for Innovative Procurement from the Public Procurement Service

KOICA won the Prime Minister's Award for Innovative Procurement from the Public Procurement Service. KOICA, an agency that utilizes innovative prototypes from the Public Procurement Service, has undertaken various initiatives to broaden the scope of innovative procurement, starting with the acquisition of mobile negative pressure carriers in 2020 to address the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by exporting them to nine countries, including Mongolia, Mozambique, and Bolivia. Last September, KOICA received the Prime Minister's Award for Innovative Procurement from the Public Procurement Service in recognition of its contribution to shared growth through developing and expanding overseas markets for small and medium-sized businesses by supporting innovative products of domestic small and medium-sized businesses to overseas office ODA project destinations. KOICA's involvement in the Public Procurement Service's innovative product pilot purchase project is earning positive domestic reviews as it lays the groundwork for promoting and expanding the export of domestic innovative products through the verification of overseas business sites.



Group photo at the 16th Seoul ODA International Conference

The 16th Seoul ODA International Conference

Discussing future of development cooperation: Global solidarity and cross-sectoral approaches in world of challenges

The 16th Seoul ODA International Conference was held under the theme "Future of International Development Cooperation: Global Solidarity and Cross-Sectoral Approaches in a World of Challenges" on September 7 at the Lotte Hotel Seoul. Some 330 guests participated, from international organizations, academic, the diplomatic corps in Korea, and donor agencies. Second Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Oh Youngju and President of KOICA Chang, Won Sam opened the conference, after which panelists discussed the future of development cooperation.

The event provided a meaningful opportunity to revisit our shared Sustainable Development Goals and tasks within the international community, and emphasize solidarity and cooperation at a time when we have reached the halfway point in achieving the SDGs, adopted at the 70th UN General Assembly in 2015, by 2030.

Panelists noted that complex crises - such as the pandemic, rapidly advancing climate change, the Russia-Ukraine War, rise in conflicts and refugees, and the food and supply chain crises - are undoing the progress achieved through development cooperation and posing threats to peace and prosperity. Many remarked on the less than promising prospects for achieving the SDGs at the current pace.

"Global cooperation is being challenged due to the complex crisis which threatens the entire world," said President of KOICA Chang, Won Sam in his opening remarks. He emphasized that the global polycrisis needs to be addressed through a cross-sectoral and comprehensive approach, and solidarity in the international community based on the universal values of freedom, peace, and prosperity; the expansion of development resources; and the inclusion of diverse development cooperation actors.

"Countries that share universal values must engage in solidarity and cooperation for sustainable development that leaves no one behind," said Second Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Oh Youngju in her welcoming speech. The vice minister pledged to "strengthen partnerships with partner countries, donor countries, and diverse development partners while fulfilling the responsibilities and roles assigned to the Korean government."

Carsten Staur, Chairman of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC), who delivered a keynote speech via video, said, "Whether the concepts of global solidarity, fair and responsible partnership, and burden-sharing can be translated into actionable plans will be the most important topic in future development cooperation."

Establishing global governance in response to common challenges

The conference kicked off with the first session on Indo-Pacific Strategy and International Development Cooperation. Professor Kim Tae-gyun of the Graduate School of International Studies at Seoul National University, who served as the moderator, remarked, "The central theme of the first session revolves around the question of whether global governance can be established by addressing common challenges through regional partnerships and collaborative efforts among stakeholders." He added, "Korea, having transitioned from a recipient country to a donor, is anticipated to play a bridging role."



Gareth Weir, Deputy Ambassador of the British Embassy in Korea, as a speaker

The first speaker, Gareth Weir, Deputy Ambassador at the British Embassy in Korea, discussed the strategic significance of the Indo-Pacific region, emphasizing its substantial influence on global economic growth and its central role in key supply chains. He also outlined the four core themes of the UK's international development strategy launched in 2022. They were: honest and reliable investments, realizing women's and children's potential, providing humanitarian aid, and reducing the risk of future health threats. Deputy Ambassador Gareth Weir said, "The UK is shifting towards global multilateralism to address fundamental human challenges," emphasizing, "We require a more inclusive and innovative multilateral system that allows all countries around the world to have a voice."

Heath Cosgrove, the Representative to the Republic of Korea and Japan of USAID and Development Cooperation Counselor, introduced the five principles of the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy (Free & Open, Connected, Prosperous, Resilient, Secure) that were announced in 2021. Heath Cosgrove remarked he is proud to have contributed to laying the foundation for international development cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region through trilateral collaboration between Korea, the United States, and Japan. He added, "Poverty, instability, climate change, and public health crises affect us all and are problems that no single country can address in isolation."

He also emphasized, "To make progress in addressing these issues, we must collectively confront common challenges and work together towards shared goals through partnerships."

Niloy Banerjee, the Resident Representative of UNDP Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei Darussalam, emphasized the necessity of global governance and stated, "It is time to establish a new paradigm for development cooperation." He further underlined, "We must identify shared challenges to redefine ODA and collaborate on solutions together."

Director-General Won Do-yeon of the Development Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said, "Korea is actively pursuing multilateral diplomacy to establish itself as a global pivotal country," and said that Korea continues to invest in UNDP and various international organizations while serving as a member of the



Kang Minah, a professor of public administration at Ewha Woman's University, chairing the second session



Chair of the third session, Rachael Calleja, Research Fellow, Center for Global Development (CGD)

Security Council. He also affirmed, "Korea is committed to safeguarding universal values such as human rights and the rule of law, and intensifying its efforts to collaborate in international development."

Solidarity on a global level

The second session, themed 'Regional Complex Crisis and Innovative Partnership,' was chaired by Kang Minah, professor of the Department of Public Administration at Ewha Woman's University. Presenters discussed how to respond to future crises, defined regional partnerships, and debated how strategic partnerships can be applied to strengthen regional cooperation.

Citing the Human Development Report 2021/2022 (Human Development Report), Pedro Conceição, Director of the UNDP's Human Development Report Office, said, "We could see that people's mental health has worsened since the pandemic," explaining that complex and multiple new uncertainties such as political and social polarization, and unusual global changes such as climate crisis and biodiversity loss are also linked to worsening mental health. Emphasizing solidarity at the global level, he argued that the international community should work together to transform and change the world through innovative approaches.

"Türkiye is a champion country of regional cooperation," said Rahman Noordan, Vice President of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), who began by saying that humanitarian support is being provided through bilateral and multilateral cooperation. In addition, he said, "We are engaging in development cooperation with certain principles, such as not causing harm and responding sensitively to the region," and introduced examples of humanitarian support conducted under strong partnerships with partner countries such as Somalia, Palestine, and Afghanistan.

Peteris Ustubs, director of Middle East, Asia and Pacific at Directorate General for International Partnership of EU Commission, said that "the EU is ready to play a constructive role in the field of international development cooperation" and introduced a 'Team Europe style approach' that creates a sum greater than the parts by pooling each other's expertise, resources, and efforts and carrying out joint relief activities, along with 'Team Europe' including EU member states, various executive agencies, and public development banks. He said, "Innovative solutions are desperately needed to address the explosive demand for humanitarian assistance within limited resources," and added, "The flexibility of partnerships is needed more than ever."

Roslyn Morauta, Chair of the Board of the Global Fund, said, "Since its launch in 2002, the Global Fund has been at the forefront of the fight against infectious diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria, saving more than 50 million lives." She affirmed, "We will strive to make the world safer from health threats by establishing a more inclusive and resilient sustainable health system." When asked how the partnership could contribute to resolving the crisis, she introduced malaria eradication efforts in five countries: Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. She also informed us that malaria incidence and mortality rates have decreased by more than 90% since 2000 through diverse collaborations with governments and NGOs.

The need for inclusive partnerships and a new paradigm

The theme of the third session, chaired by Rachael Calleja, a Research Fellow at the Center for Global Development (CGD), was 'The Future of International Development Cooperation for Coexistence and Prosperity'. The first speaker, Carlos Javier Castillo Pérez, General Director of Planning and Evaluation at the Mexican Agency for International Development and Cooperation (AMEXCID), introduced an example of the 'Conditional Cash Payment Program' that AMEXCID has implemented as a donor country over the past year. The conditional cash payment program was an example of supporting farmers and youth in El Salvador and Honduras. It was carried out by depositing funds directly from Mexican banks into the beneficiaries' accounts rather than through other government agencies. As a result, there was a significant decrease in migration rates, attributed to investments in agricultural and technical education, as well as the development of job infrastructure.

Tormarbulang Lumbantobing, Chief Executive Officer of the Indonesian International Development Agency (Indonesian AID), emphasized, "For international development cooperation aimed at coexistence and prosperity, cooperative and inclusive solutions are not optional but imperative." He added, "To truly foster a partnership, third parties or partners must be able to participate and collaborate in various projects and support programs actively."

He again emphasized the importance of cooperation and solidarity, saying, "Through inclusive partnerships and cooperation, we can achieve many things that will transform the international community."

The final speaker, Mine Yoichi, Executive Director of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Sadako Ogata Peace and Development Research Institute, noted that trends in development cooperation have evolved significantly over the past few decades. He emphasized, "To address challenges with complex chain effects, we need a new paradigm that fosters horizontal cooperation and solidarity among various entities." He discussed 'bottom-up collaboration,' which empowers people in crisis to respond to challenges independently. He explained that the essence of 'human security' lies in securing financial resources based on solidarity, combining protection and rights promotion, and emphasizing community resilience.

"The complex crises and development challenges we face today demand a fresh approach and more actors," said Vice President of KOICA Hong Seok-hwa in his closing remarks. "Cooperation is more urgent than ever. Let's harness collective wisdom to adapt to the evolving situation, and work toward shared prosperity of humanity and world peace."

The 16th Seoul ODA International Conference served as an opportunity to review development cooperation efforts and projects that aim to overcome global crises, while allowing discussions on the direction of development cooperation in the future.

KOICA will continue to promote integrated support, cooperating with actors including the private sector and civil society, and leverage KOICA's unique development experience to expand partnerships. K



Conference hall view



with Afghan Foreign Ministry staff

Kim Seok-berm, Manager, Department of Middle East and North Africa at KOICA

People I Met in Afghanistan

March 2, 2017, was the day I first set foot in Afghanistan. As seen from the air, Afghanistan was a gray country of dirt and rocks without a single blade of grass or a tree.

As I left the crowded airport, I looked around and saw many armed soldiers and armored vehicles. The tension I felt 20 years ago when I was assigned to the 2nd Infantry Division in Yanggu, Gangwon-do, returned to me. As I rode through the crowds of people in a bulletproof car with the staff of KOICA's Afghanistan office who came to meet me, I felt anew that I had arrived in Afghanistan.

Children of Afghanistan

If I looked up from the thickly fenced compound where I lived in Afghanistan, I could easily see kites dotting the sky, as depicted in the book 'The Kite Runner.' At first, I thought it was a sign of terrorism, so I used to enter the dorm with caution. However, soon after learning that kites were the only means of play for the children here, I would watch kite-flying competitions while soaking up the sunlight. Then, it suddenly occurred to me that for the children of Afghanistan, a 'kite' is 'an effort to make their existence known to the world and find hope' in an unstable situation such as terrorism.

The children I met in Afghanistan seemed relatively constrained. At a time when they can enjoy things to their heart's content and experience many activities, 'flying a kite' is the only play available to them. As a father of two children rather than a KOICA employee, I wanted to help the children here enjoy and experience better things.

In this context, the 'Korea-Afghanistan Vocational Training Project' was the project I put the most effort into while working at KOICA's Afghanistan office. The places where young people could work were minimal. Fortunately, young people who graduated from the 'Korea-Afghan Vocational Training Center' established in the capital, Kabul, through a project could relatively easily find jobs related to supporting foreign aid agencies or military units. Many young people came from the countryside to prepare for the entrance exam to vocational training centers while living and lodging in barns. I wanted to benefit more young people, but unfortunately, I could not do so due to resource and time constraints. I hope that projects for youth and children in Afghanistan will be considered a priority in the future.

Women of Afghanistan

The integration of women from Islamic countries into society is steadily increasing. I also had the opportunity to meet a woman who proudly served as a member of the National Assembly in Afghanistan. She is Hazara, and the Hazara people have a distinct appearance that differs slightly from the Pashtun people, the majority ethnic group in Afghanistan. I met her at the KOICA Afghanistan office while promoting the 'Drinking Water Development and Support in Refugee Areas' project. We achieved positive outcomes through discussions on village development and support methods related to the project.

Another woman I recall is one with connections to terrorism.

The terrorist attack that occurred at the German Embassy in Kabul on May 31, 2017, was the biggest one I experienced while working in Afghanistan. At that time, a truck carrying a 1.5-ton bomb exploded, causing many casualties. Unfortunately, most of the victims were local people on their way to work, as the terrorist attack occurred during the morning rush hour.

It is said that the husband of the woman in charge of cleaning the KOICA office also died in the terrorist attack that occurred at this time. The woman lost her husband and raised her children alone, quietly carrying out her role as the head of the household. I want to support her, who may still be living a challenging life while caring for her family in some way.

Men of Afghanistan

Ejadullah was a crucial figure who had guarded the Afghanistan Office for a long time. He had many connections with Afghan business officials and government ministries, and above all, he was a warm and gentle person. I enjoyed drinking tea with Ejadullah every morning and listening to him talk about the situation in Afghanistan, which helped me adapt well to life there.

Bodyguards Sami and Fahad are grateful individuals who kept me safe. Sami was the youngest son of a large family and a very calm friend. He is a person I am grateful to for calming me down and helping me evacuate during the big bombing in front of the German Embassy and the terrorist attack on the vocational training center. Sometimes, we talked about various things as we walked through the compound, especially the flower garden inside Sami's house. Fahad was of Hazara ethnicity and resembled a Korean. Maybe that's why I felt a little more familiar with him. Unlike Sami, Fahad, whose life was somewhat challenging, was a friend with many worries. He often talked about his future and career, and he especially thought a lot about immigration. Fortunately, I heard he is staying with his family in a European country.

People of the U.N.

I had many opportunities to talk with people from UNESCO and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) regarding KOICA's ODA project. UNESCO was active in a wide range of areas, including education, culture, and science, and mainly negotiated with us on educational vocational training projects. We discussed various issues, including the understanding of Afghan youth, risk factors if Afghan youth do not get jobs, concerns about how they will continue their careers if they do get jobs, and a virtuous cycle structure that can continue to create jobs. I found an alternative.

The FAO is an organization within the United Nations that aims to promote agricultural development and enhance living standards in rural areas. Due to its involvement in managing rural areas, it has been successful in maintaining amicable relations with various Afghan communities.

Ethnic groups of Afghanistan

Looking at the three major ethnic groups in Afghanistan, we learn interesting facts. The largest ethnic group, 'Pashtun' has approximately 60 million people living throughout Afghanistan, concentrated in the border areas between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Forty-four million Pashtuns are living in Pakistan. They are an Iranian ethnic group, speak Pashto, which is similar to Persian, and have a stronger Islamic fundamentalist tendency than other ethnic groups.

The second largest ethnic group, group 'Tajik' has a population of 30 million, with 10 million living in Afghanistan, 6 million in Tajikistan, and 10 million in Uzbekistan. The most famous Tajik person is Ahmad Shah Massoud, a national hero. When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979 and advanced without hesitation, he led an armed struggle as a Mujahideen (Arabic word for jihadist warrior) leader. As a figure on the opposite end of the spectrum from the Taliban, he was assassinated in an Al Qaeda suicide bombing in 2001.

Lastly, there is the 'Hazara' ethnic group, but since it accounts for over 9%, it is inappropriate to call it a minority ethnic group, and it would be more correct to view it as the third majority ethnic group. There are 4 million in Afghanistan, 1 million in Pakistan, and 500,000 in Iran, making the total number less than 6 million, categorizing them as a relatively small ethnic group. The Hazara people have a high zeal for education, leading to a significant intellectual class, and they often immigrate to the West.

Afghanistan's geography is particularly intriguing. It is located to the west of Iran, south by Pakistan and India, east by China, and north by Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Each ethnic group is closely connected to neighboring countries. The Pashtuns appear to be close to Pakistan, the Tajiks have ties to Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and the Hazaras, being 99% Shia Muslims, are naturally connected to Iran.

Given Afghanistan's diverse ethnic groups and rich history, I believe it is crucial to delve into a deeper understanding of them so that we can undertake projects that are more practically helpful.K



Kim Seok-berm

Manager of Department of Middle East and North Africa at KOICA

Mr. Kim joined KOICA in 2011 and worked at KOICA's Afghanistan office from 2017 to 2018. After working in the Department of Management Evaluation and the Department of East Africa, he is currently the head of the Department of Middle East and North Africa.



Process of seed development at the National Crops Resources Research Institute (NaCRRI) of Uganda

Project to strengthen the value chain of major vegetable crop seeds

Basis for agricultural production: Quality seeds in Uganda

Uganda is often nicknamed the Pearl of Africa due to its beautiful scenery and abundant resources. The country is rich in rainfall and fertile soil, which yield a suitable environment for farming. As of 2020, agriculture accounts for about 25.4% of the country's total GDP, which amounts to $37.6 million. About 80% of the economically active population works in agriculture.

At the same time, there is room for growth in agricultural productivity. The average annual income of farm households is less than 1 million won ($767). Upon analysis, KOICA identified the quality of seeds as one cause and in August 2022 launched a project to strengthen the value chain of major vegetable crop seeds. This project supports the development of native seeds for crops such as tomato and onion, which bring income to farmers, in addition to the export of produce. A total of $8 million will be invested by 2029. On June 21st, the first construction shovel for creating a seed pilot cultivation complex was dug in the field.

Ugandan farmers faced difficulties in procuring quality seeds

According to a survey conducted by KOICA, 85% of vegetable farmers in Uganda use non-certified seeds because certified seeds are expensive and difficult to obtain. Crop seeds, water, and farmland are considered key resources for agriculture. It is necessary to plant quality seeds that adapt well to the local climate and soil in order to strengthen crop harvest. This is why many countries, including Korea, are managing certified seeds through systems.

In Uganda, farmers buy seeds from local markets or middlemen without knowledge of the specific type of seed. For example, farmers often plant sweet potato seeds without knowing whether the produce will result in pumpkin or chestnut sweet potatoes. Since the farmers do not have access to the characteristics of the crop they are growing, they cannot identify the growth environment suitable for cultivation or pests that cause vulnerability. As a result, crop yields decreased and quality deteriorated, making it difficult to sell the produce at a high price. This resulted in a vicious cycle that does not contribute to actual increase in farm household income.

Difficulties in seed management

A farmer in Uganda who grows tomatoes harvests an average of 2,546 kg annually and earns 2,356,000 Ugandan shillings or about 780,000 won ($600). ▶▶

▶ However, it is difficult to increase income due to poor quality and distribution system. Farmers who grow other crops are facing greater challenges. The average annual income of onion growers is only $285 (about 370,000 won), $265 (about 340,000 won) for cabbage farmers, and $230 (about 300,000 won) for red pepper farmers.

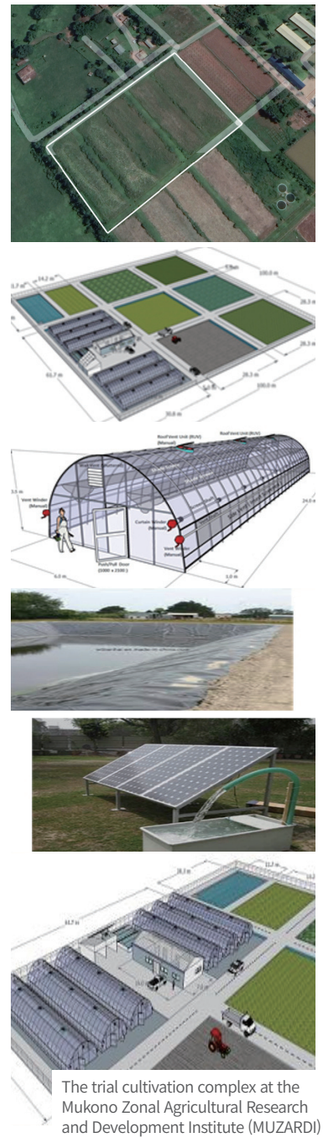
In response, the government of Uganda developed a strategy to establish a certified seed system in 2018, in order to strengthen the state's process in certifying and regulating the quality of seeds distributed in the market. There were challenges to policy implementation due to lack of budget, technology, and infrastructure.

Developing 5 types of vegetable seeds to supply to farms

In 2022, KOICA began a project to develop seeds in Uganda. The project seeks to develop high-quality vegetable seeds and supply them to farmers at reasonable prices. Ultimately, KOICA hopes to increase farm household income, improve national nutritional status, and enhance national food security.

In March 2021, the KOICA research team selected crop seeds that could best contribute to increasing the income of small farmers through interviews with key Ugandan government officials. Five seeds are being developed: tomato, onion, cabbage, red pepper, and nakati, a popular vegetable in Uganda. KOICA expects that this project will increase the productivity of each crop by at least 30%.

KOICA is also supporting infrastructure for seed development. A total of 3,800 square meters of pilot cultivation complexes will be constructed in four locations: the Uganda National Crops Resources Research Institute (NaCRRI), the national seed inspection service of Uganda (NSL), the Mukono Zonal Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MUZARDI), and the Ruwero region. Indigenous seeds will be developed and researched at the complexes, in addition to pilot cultivation. A total of 33 greenhouses, each with a length of 25m and a width of 7m, will be built in the complex. Additional facilities, such as water tanks, warehouses, and reservoirs, will also be constructed. The design and construction methods for the greenhouses will be based on Korea's know-how and comply with Korean Industrial Standards (KIS).



The trial cultivation complex at the Mukono Zonal Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MUZARDI)

Enhancing capacities of local institutions

KOICA also plans to support capacity strengthening for local talent. High-level policy and technology officials will be invited to Korea for training, while Korean experts will also be dispatched to the site to transfer diverse expertise and knowledge. In addition to providing support for seeds, production equipment, and farming materials, cultivation manuals are to be distributed to farms. Farmers will also receive technical training.

Through the project, KOICA is to support Uganda's national seed inspection service in being certified by the International Seed Testing Association (ISTA). Uganda's national seed inspection service is set to play a pivotal role in managing seed certification and variety protection rights. Once certified by ISTA, the inspection service will gain the capability to import foreign varieties and carry out subsequent management processes. Furthermore, seeds produced in Uganda will also be eligible for export to international markets.

The project is set for completion in 2029, when all facilities will be transferred to the government of Uganda. "Securing and supplying quality seeds is the first step and most important factor in increasing farmers' income," said Country Director Ahn Ji-hee of the KOICA Uganda Office. "Korea will do its utmost to develop and distribute Uganda's native vegetable seeds across the country, which will also mark an important milestone in KOICA's rural development cooperation project."K

UNDP project to develop fruit and vegetable value chain in Nepal

Harvesting-transportation-sales: One-stop support for agriculture



Through cooperation between KOICA and UNDP, the profits of farm households in the Nepal business area have improved remarkably

Surrounded by the Himalayas, Nepal is home to a population of 30 million. Nepal is a significantly agricultural country, with over 60% of its population engaged in the industry. However, the share of agriculture in GDP is only about 7% in Nepal, and the country imports major agricultural products from India, such as rice, coriander, onions, and potatoes. As of last year, agricultural product imports were valued at 250 billion Nepalese rupees (approximately 25 trillion won), more than five times the size of agricultural exports.

The problem lies in the supply chain. Approximately 20% of the agricultural products grown and harvested by Nepalese farmers are wasted or discarded without payment. There are insufficient space and storage facilities to store the harvested agricultural products and a lack of means for timely transportation. This results in difficulties in refrigeration facilities to maintain the freshness of the produce. Due to such challenges, a significant amount of produce is lost and is of poor quality before it reaches the consumer's table. Consequently, farmers' incomes do not increase, and rural areas become more impoverished, leading to a vicious cycle.

Value chain inspection from production to sales

It was in 2018 when the winds of change began to blow in Nepal's rural areas. At that time, KOICA joined hands with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to initiate a project to build a value chain system from fruit and vegetable production to harvesting, transportation, distribution, and sales. A total of 5.05 million dollars (approximately 6.4 billion won) was invested in the Bagmati Province, where the capital Kathmandu belongs, and the Gandaki Province in the west.

Through this project, profits from fruits and vegetables in the project site increased by about 15%, and post-harvest losses were reduced by about 6%. A total of 12,596 Nepalese farmers benefited. KOICA supported rural supply chain development activities, such as ▲minimizing post-harvest losses of agricultural products ▲improving the marketability of agricultural products through a minimum price guarantee system ▲strengthening farmers' capacity, with the goal of increasing agricultural productivity, diversifying items, and growing income of small farmers through commercialization.

Specifically, after crops were gathered from each village's agricultural products collection point, they were quickly transported to the market to ensure swift sales to customers. Nine 'Agri-Ambulance' units were provided as vehicles to facilitate this process. In addition, 12 refrigerated warehouses were built to store inventory crops in each region. Thanks to this, it became possible to supply necessary crops on time according to demand without worrying about damage to agricultural products.

KOICA also facilitated the introduction of a 'minimum price guarantee system' at the sales stage in each city after consulting with the Nepalese government. The system covers 26 types of major vegetables and fruits, including suntala (tangerine) and okra. For example, if the market price of cabbage has fallen to 5 rupees (about 500 won) per 1 kg, the city will support the minimum cost of 8 rupees (about 800 won) per 1 kg to ensure that farmers do not incur losses. KOICA installed large price boards to guarantee the lowest prices for agricultural products in each region and also made and distributed paper pamphlets to inform and educate the public about the price guarantee system.

Return of migrant workers

As important as building a supply chain is, strengthening the capacity of farmers is equally crucial. Through this project in cooperation with the UNDP, KOICA supported returning workers who had gone abroad to earn money in resettling as agricultural entrepreneurs. The main support items included agricultural facility support and capacity-building training.

Mr. Sant Bahadur returned home two years ago due to COVID-19 and has decided not to leave his family again. He was a migrant worker who left his hometown and worked at a gas station in Saudi Arabia. He received support from a capacity-building project by chance and is cultivating a farm with his wife. He said, "I grow cabbage, cauliflower, and carrots, and I am earning enough to support my family. Through KOICA's support, I learned how to make organic pesticides and manage the post-harvest loss. I also raise two buffalo in a small barn near the farm and get natural fertilizer." He added, "Without this support project, I would not have learned anywhere how to grow crops that can increase production." So far, about 50 residents have resettled in their hometowns through the support of returned workers and have become successful agricultural entrepreneurs.

"The difference of this project is that it focuses on farmers continuing their agriculture to earn as much profit as they produce. Since the project was designed around activities proposed and directly operated by the Nepalese government, high sustainability can be expected in the future," said KOICA Nepal Office Director Kong Moo-heon.

In this regard, Govinda Prasad Sharma, Vice Minister of Agriculture of Nepal, said, "The reason this successful outcome was possible was the close cooperation between the federal and local governments centered on KOICA and the United Nations Development Programme, and the result of the enthusiasm of cooperatives and farmers." He also revealed his government's policy: "This project is considered the most successful agricultural project case in Nepal, and we will spread the lessons learned from collaborating with Korea to other projects promoted by the Nepalese government." K



A commemorative photo of the project termination report



KOICA implements projects to establish schools to support refugees' right to quality education in Jordan

Project to construct three schools in refugee-concentrated areas in Jordan

Classrooms of joyful coexistence in Jordan

June 20 has been designated by the UN as World Refugee Day. As of May 2022, over 100 million individuals, or more than 1% of the global population, have been forced to leave their countries due to conflicts, violence, and persecution, according to the UNHCR. In particular, as of the end of 2021, 95% of the 11.3 million refugees in the Asia-Pacific region live in developing countries. KOICA has acknowledged the gravity of the refugee crisis and has been actively engaging in finding solutions. The refugee support project in Jordan is among the initiatives KOICA undertook to address this issue.

Jordan opens its doors to refugees

The refugee issue is acknowledged as a challenge that requires cooperation among the international community. In December 2019, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) held the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) in Geneva, where 123 governments and multinational corporations made pledges on plans to protect refugees.

Since 2016, KOICA has been implementing grant aid projects in line with the agency's core values (5Ps: People, Peace, Prosperity, Planet, Partnership) and the principles of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Since 2017, KOICA has been striving to ensure the basic rights of Syrian refugee children in Jordan, a developing country with a per capital national income of $4,270 as of 2020. Sharing borders with Syria, Iraq, and Palestine, countries that have experience prolonged conflicts, Jordan has the second-largest refugee-to-domestic population ratio in the world, coming after Lebanon. Among refugees in Jordan, those from Syria make up the largest portion. UNHCR and the government of Jordan estimate that following the civil war in Syria in 2011, more than 1.3 million (including 320,000 children) of the 6.8 million refugees who fled the country sought refuge in Jordan. This accounts for roughly 12.7% of Jordan's total population.

Providing support for refugees can pose a significant burden on developing countries. As a result, insufficient support often disproportionately affects the most vulnerable groups, particularly women and children, among refugees. In response, KOICA is implementing a 5-year (2019-2023) multilateral cooperation project with a focus on the employment and livelihood of refugees, providing $50 million in support and aiming to safeguard the fundamental rights of refugees.

Building three schools in refugee-concentrated areas of Jordan

Recognizing the need to enhance the educational environment of children in vulnerable situations, KOICA carried out a project to construct three schools from 2017 to 2022 in refugee-concentrated areas in Jordan: Irbid, Zarqa and Mafraq. The rapid population growth in these areas had affected the capacities of schools. In the case of primary education, the number of students per class was 60, more than double the government's recommendation of 27 students. Due to the growing number of pupils, classes were being held in two separate morning/afternoon sessions, resulting in a division between refugee and domestic students. Similar situations occurred in many schools throughout Jordan. In addition to overcrowding, some 45% of schools lacked playgrounds, while 35% lacked adequate toilet facilities.

Accordingly, KOICA embarked on a project to establish schools with top-tier educational environments in Jordan. Computer labs, science labs, art studios, and playgrounds were built into the schools, alongside the provision of educational equipment such as desks, chairs, and science experiment tools. KOICA also conducted a capacity-strengthening program for teachers to support their abilities to deliver quality education to children. In September 2021, two schools built through KOICA's support opened in the Irbid and Mafraq regions, contributing to resolving the issue of overcrowded classrooms in the area. KOICA reset operating standards for the two newly opened schools — instead of dividing students into a two-shift lesson system, the number of students per class was adjusted to 36 to accommodate a larger student body. Through such measures, children of all backgrounds are now able to attend classes at the same time and learn together.

Currently, 2,470 children, including Syrian refugees, are receiving formal education in the two newly opened schools. Upon the opening of the school in Zarqa, the number of beneficiary students is expected to exceed 3,000. In addition, the government of Jordan has reserved 40% of the student body for refugee students at all three KOICA-supported schools.

Support for a healthy life and self-reliance

Many refugee camps are exposed to high transient populations and poor sanitation, leaving children vulnerable to infectious diseases such as respiratory illnesses and diarrhea. Accordingly, seeking to enhance the health of refugees, KOICA, together with UNICEF, carried out a project to improve the health, protection and education of children and adolescents in Jordan (2017-2020), to better the health environment of refugee children across the country. During the project period, a school health program was conducted for 78,000 refugee children in collaboration with the health and education ministries of Jordan. Children attending school were taught handwashing and quarantine rules, and were vaccinated free of charge to prevent contagious diseases such as tetanus, diphtheria, and polio. Regular health check-ups were conducted to assess the health conditions of students. Moreover, water supply facilities in the schools were improved to allow children access to clean water. The project marked the first case of supporting the health of refugee children through schools.

Fruitful partnership with UNHCR

UNHCR is an important partner to KOICA in implementing refugee-related projects. Established in December 1949 by the United Nations General Assembly, UNHCR is an international organization dedicated to protecting refugees and resolving refugee issues. Since 2014, KOICA has been cooperating with UNHCR in resettlement support for refugees and internally displaced persons, contributing to the social integration of refugee-receiving countries and supporting refugee jobs and livelihoods. In 2017, KOICA and UNHCR conducted the "Project to improve access to quality education for refugee children (girls) (2017-2019)" and the "Project to Integrate Somali refugees, internally displaced people, and host communities and strengthen self-reliance (2019-2022)," along with other development cooperation projects. Additionally, in 2021, the "Ecuadorian refugees, vulnerable groups, and host communities' integration and protection projects (2021-2024)" were launched, and the "Afghan refugees and host communities support projects in Pakistan (2022-2025)" were initiated in 2022.

It is meaningful that the refugee support project in Afghanistan was the first case of KOICA-UNHCR cooperation in the Middle East. KOICA and UNHCR also signed an MOU for the exchange of multilateral cooperation experts between the two organizations. By cooperating on the dispatch of multilateral cooperation experts to eight international organizations, countries, and country offices including UNICEF and UNESCO, KOICA will continuously strengthen its multilateral cooperation projects in the future.K



Source: KOICA YouTube

"I want to study to my heart's content at my new school."

Shahed, a 14-year-old Syrian refugee

"My favorite places at Mafraq School are the classrooms and the computer lab. I really like the school, so if I were to rate it, I would give it 1,000 points. The new school is really quiet, and the desks are comfortable, so I can focus more on English and math, which I love. There were so many students in the old school that it was hectic. I dream of studying hard in my new school and becoming a psychiatrist. I know BTS and BLACKPINK from Korea. I know KOICA built schools and health facilities and that it also helps all refugees, not just Syrian refugees."



Nepalese President Ram Chandra Paudel is touring the internal laboratory while attending the completion ceremony of the Nepal Technology Innovation Center.

Supporting infrastructure in Nepal

Strengthening education, health and environment for integrated regional development

Nepal is home to a population of 30 million, but the country currently hosts nine universities. With current university enrollment rates at 26% and many students opting for schools abroad, the higher education sector holds room for potential and improvement. One key issue in local education can be found in the shortage of investment in research and development. Nepalese universities therefore require training and research opportunities to strengthen professors' capabilities.

KOICA established an R&D center at Kathmandu University in Nepal and has been carrying out a project to open a technology development program since 2016. This is a large-scale project that involves $10 million (13 billion won) in support. The goal is to minimize the outflow of Nepal's high-quality human resources in the field of science and technology to foreign countries by building a prestigious research center in Nepal. This center will also be able to contribute to the local economy through technological development and by building a business model for residents in rural and underprivileged areas.

Nurturing experts in science field

On October 11, the completion ceremony for the Nepal Technology Innovation Center (NTIC) was held at Kathmandu University in Nepal. NTIC is equipped with the latest equipment, including freeze dryers and next-generation genetic analyzers. In particular, it is the first facility in Nepal to be certified as a 'Level 2 biosafety facility,' making it possible to conduct virus research for customized tuberculosis treatment.

KOICA established NTIC through the 'R&D Infrastructure Construction Project for Integrated Regional Development' and has been promoting seven programs in the energy, health, and agriculture fields at the center. First, the center's research base was established, and the know-how of the operation program was transferred. Additionally, experts were dispatched to the site to provide customized consulting. Through this consulting, 16 startups were discovered through the business incubation program, and some companies are already generating sales and creating jobs.

Nepalese President Ram Chandra Paudel, who attended the NTIC completion ceremony, said in a congratulatory speech, "The Nepal Technology Innovation Center constitutes a historic opportunity to open a new era of scientific research, innovation, and technological convergence," and added, "This is an important turning point project ahead of the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Korea and Nepal next year."

Renewed medical infrastructure sees tenfold increase in patients

The KOICA Nepal Office is carrying out a project to establish infrastructure in science and technology and thereby strengthen the research capabilities of universities. In addition, the Nepal Office has been unfolding a project to improve medical infrastructure in the Bhaktapur region. Since 2022, KOICA has initiated a project to strengthen capacity and improve medical infrastructure to enhance the health of people in poverty in Bhaktapur's vulnerable areas, and is promoting a $9.5 million project to improve the level of healthcare services in the community and establish medical infrastructure in Bhaktapur by 2027.

The Korea-Nepal Friendship Hospital, considered the first stage of this initiative, opened in 2009 with $1.34 million in support from KOICA. The number of patients visiting the hospital increased nearly tenfold from 16,800 per year at the time of opening to 155,000 this year. This hospital is considered a top-notch hospital in the region, as it is the only one that received support from the local government to procure facilities such as a computed tomography (CT) room, an artificial dialysis room, and a hemodialysis room. Thanks to such developments, in 2017, the hospital was designated as the primary medical institution for medical insurance.

The Bhaktapur medical infrastructure improvement project currently in progress includes: (a) construction of a new hospital building with the latest medical equipment and hospital construction techniques, (b) establishment of a hospital operation master plan, (c) establishment of a hospital infection control manual, and (d) construction of the latest infrastructure for maternal and child health and neonatal intensive care. In particular, the new second hospital will be designed and break ground in the first half of 2024, with construction scheduled to begin in 2027. The second hospital will have four floors above ground and one underground parking garage, with 120 beds. It will focus on providing medical services for maternal and child health centers and neonatal intensive care.



Himalayan Life Plastics, a plastic bottle recycling company works to manage waste in the city of Pokhara. Himalayan Life Plastics will serve as a mentor to the eco-startups involved in KOICA's Pokhara project, and will work with KOICA to raise awareness among citizens. (Photo: Himalayan Life Plastics)

Green ODA: Transforming Pokhara into eco-friendly city

Since June 1995 until 2023, KOICA has provided a total of $188.64 million in support for Nepal. This year, a $9.8 million (13 billion won)-project for green job creation is being carried out in Pokhara, Nepal's representative tourist city.

Pokhara, the gateway to Himalayan climbing, generates an average of 188 tons of solid waste daily. The problem is that recyclable resources such as plastic, paper, and glass are landfilled. The Nepal government adopted the 'Kathmandu Declaration on GRID' with international development cooperation partners in September 2021, presenting environmentally friendly, resilient, and inclusive development as the core agenda of Nepal's development cooperation ecosystem.

By 2029, KOICA will establish a system from waste separation to recycling and upcycling, support the cultivation of eco-friendly startups, and promote environmental education for citizens, encompassing areas such as food, clothing, and housing that minimize waste. Specifically, KOICA plans to build a 'Green Venture Zone' that combines Pokhara's tourism resources and a resource circulation economy to create jobs through eco-friendly startups and improve public awareness among citizens and tourists. In addition, the Green Venture Zone can be expected to emerge as an eco-friendly tourist attraction in Pokhara. KOICA also plans to strengthen the waste management capacity of the Pokhara city government and create an eco-friendly pilot village to provide education on waste separation and recycling.

KOICA said, "In order to contribute to helping Nepal escape from its current situation as a least developed country and become a middle-income country by 2030, we plan to provide support in various fields such as water management, health and sanitation, education, regional development, and energy, as well as green ODA."K

WFP Home Grown School Feeding Programme in Cambodia

Local agricultural products, farmers & students altogether 'satisfied'



Cambodian students eating lunch made with local produce

Food security has become increasingly unstable due to climate crises and conflicts. According to the report 'Impact of Disasters on Agriculture and Food Security' released by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on October 13, disasters over the past 30 years have reduced crop and livestock production worth US$3.8 trillion. These losses were concentrated in developing countries vulnerable to disasters, where agricultural GDP dropped by up to 15 percent. By regions, Asia incurred the most significant losses caused by natural disasters.

Cambodia is a country where agriculture is one of the pillars of the national economy. As of 2022, it makes up 22 percent of GDP, with 2.6 million people in the sector. However, agriculture is still underdeveloped in Cambodia. The government has prioritized agriculture and is actively pursuing projects to enhance competitiveness and sustainability by 2030. KOICA is undertaking different projects to support agricultural development in Cambodia. Celebrating World Food Day (October 16), KOICA introduces the projects being implemented in Cambodia.

Simultaneously increasing farm income and elementary school attendance rate

Cambodia is a country with serious nutritional problems among ASEAN countries. In particular, the nutritional status of children aged 6 to 17 is poor. According to 2015 data from the Foundation for International Development/Relief (FIDR) of Japan, 36 percent of children aged 6 to 17 in local schools suffer from chronic malnutrition.

The World Food Programme (WFP) has conducted ongoing food aid projects in Cambodia from 1979. Since 1999, it has operated a nutritional meal service program for elementary school students. In 2014, the 'Home Grown School Feeding (HGSF)' project was launched, which aims to enhance students' nutritional status and stimulate the local economy in rural areas by providing lunch made of local food. The first year of the project, WFP established operational guidelines in collaboration with the Ministry of Education after conducting a pilot study in two schools, and they have expanded the program by 30 schools each year, reaching 183 schools as of 2019.

KOICA plans to allocate $10 million to the HGSF project over the five years from 2020 to 2024. During the project period, a total of 81.28 million tons of local food will be supplied, and the goal is to facilitate the acquisition of 3,463 tons of these products. As a result, a total of 68,992 students in the provinces of Kampong Chhnang, Pursat, and Kampong Thom are provided with nutritious meals.

The HGSF project has proven more cost-effective and nutritionally beneficial compared with other conventional school meal projects, which rely on food aid from international organizations. It costs about $0.055 less per individual meal. The amount equivalent to providing 20g of canned goods and 10g of peas can instead provide 30g of fish, meat, eggs, and 50g of fresh vegetables. Providing high-quality reduces the ▶▶

number of student absence and enhances their focus on learning. Small-scale local farmers and food materials suppliers can boost their income by establishing reliable business relationships without influence from price fluctuations and natural disasters.

KOICA subsidies are used not only to purchase local food ingredients but also to support meal infrastructure and enhance the capabilities of those involved in project operations. The HGSF project supplies a range of items, from extensive facilities like stoves and storage for pots, spatulas, ladles, and plates, customized to suit the specific needs of each school. Additionally, the project will develop and distribute educational materials covering topics like food hygiene, safety, cooking methods, and IT-related information.

Furthermore, KOICA is implementing a project to facilitate the incorporation of local foods into school lunches and establish a corresponding system.

Participants to be shown 'very positive' about HGSF effects

In May, WFP announced the findings of an interim evaluation assessing the effectiveness of KOICA's support for the HGSF program. Almost all households (99.7 percent) participating in the interviews reported that their children received benefits from the HGSF program, including daily food provision. The benefits of HGSF were distributed equally to all participants, regardless of gender or household income. WFP said, "HGSF is highly relevant to the community's needs for education and nutrition. It provides incentives for families to send their children to school, thereby increasing attendance and reducing dropouts. It was especially effective for children under pressure to earn money for their families."

Furthermore, 98 percent of the farmers reported increased household productivity due to HGSF, and 94.9 percent of the food suppliers expressed their interest in participating in HGSF again. Government and local officials said that HGSF had increased their confidence in their ability to carry out their roles. They also requested training in program monitoring. Meeting their needs, KOICA intends to develop additional training programs in response to these requests.

In September, Cambodian government officials and WFP staff visited Korea to learn knowhows about school meal management. They observed the distribution of eco-friendly agricultural products and received explanations about the collaborative system between ministries. Hang Chuon Naron, Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Youth and Sports said, "This visit will greatly contribute to improving the completeness of Cambodia's school lunch policy and HGSF program." He added, "Thanks to Korea's multifaceted support, Cambodia is creating a brighter future in terms of education, nutrition, and sustainable development."



Farmers participating in the HGSF program

Peace Village Construction Project commenced in the northwest region

KOICA has carried out the 'Building Peace Villages through Integrated Rural Community Development' in the northwest region of Cambodia for five years, started in 2022. The target areas are Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, and Pailin, approximately 350km from the capital Phnom Penh. These northwest regions are among the most underdeveloped regions in Cambodia. As the center of the civil war in the 1970s, these provinces are still socioeconomically underdeveloped and has the largest number of land mines. The number of landmine casualties in the three provinces accounts for 40 percent of all deaths in Cambodia.

KOICA plans to invest $10 million by 2026 to support the revitalization of the rural economy in the region. KOICA conducted a joint in-depth survey with the Ministry of Agriculture and World Vision International and selected 30 villages in the region. KOICA provides support to improve living infrastructure. Rather than providing support unilaterally, KOICA aims to enable local residents to develop self-governing capabilities.

Residents form a 'village development ▶▶

committee', which includes a variety of residents, including women, youth, and people with disabilities. KOICA establishes a village development action plan with residents and provides basic training program on drinking water, sanitation, agriculture and others. Furthermore, education is offered to develop basic administrative skills, financial understanding, digital literacy, and gender equality awareness. Afterward, residents identify needs for residential and agricultural water facilities, restrooms, community center, village signage and others, etc., carry out infrastructure improvement projects themselves, and develop self-governance capabilities. Each town can use approximately $65,000.



Briefing session for the launch of 'Building Peace Villages through Integrated Rural Community Development'


People selecting the village for the project

'Sustainable agriculture' value chain created in project areas

By improving productivity, it also helps increase the income of local residents. Most people in the northwest make a living out of farming. Rice and corn are mainly grown. Battambang Province is an important region that produces the country's third-largest amount of rice (11 percent of the total). However, farmers' income is low compared to the resources and effort they put in, and they are vulnerable to natural disasters. In particular, most areas suffer frequent flood damage due to poor water management. In some villages, farmland is flooded for over three months a year. There are not enough places to train farming skills in the village.

KOICA has organized an committee to establish a system to train farmers by both periodic on-site visits and remote guidance. The committee is comprised of agricultural experts from the Cambodian government and universities. Each project year, 20 farms with high farming potential are designated as pilot farms. Vegetable and fruit farming methods training tailored to the local environment are provided. It provides detailed information on the entire process, including seed selection, seedling cultivation, and harvesting. Nearby farms also visit the demonstrating farms to learn about this process and apply it to their own farming. Furthermore, agricultural facilities such as irrigation pipes, sprinklers, fertilizers, and pesticides are supplied to targeted farms.

Additionally, KOICA offers comprehensive support to ensure the sustainability of the entire agricultural value chain. KOICA develops transportation systems and sales channels for agricultural products, implements the good agricultural products certification system (CamGAP), inspects pesticide residues in agricultural products, and supports the development of processed products. KOICA also supports the development of educational programs and training of instructors at the Basic Technology Training Center and the Vocational Technology Training Center to strengthen farmers' capabilities continuously. In addition, through research support for national universities' agricultural colleges, the plan is to establish a system so that the knowledge and experience of experts can be directly applied to residents' income-increase projects and continue to influence each other as a group of potential supporters. Rho Hyun Jun, former Country Director of KOICA Cambodia Office said, "Rural development is the core of KOICA's national partnership strategy. Through new projects, we will support areas where war was fierce to become communities of peace and prosperity."K

KOICA scholarship program

"Learning every aspect of Korea's development journey"



2023 KOICA Scholarship Program Orientation

The 2023 KOICA Scholarship Program has begun. Starting on August 17, KOICA has held four orientation sessions for 378 students who came from 45 countries and were selected for this year's program, to help them settle in Korea during the course of their studies. KOICA's scholarship program, which is part of our Capacity Improvement & Advancement for Tomorrow (CIAT) program, supports public officials from developing countries in pursuing master's and doctoral degrees at Korean universities. Upon completion, graduates are able to return to their home countries and contribute to economic and social development. The program consists of degree programs that are consistent with the government's policies and the international community's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This year's program consists of 24 courses, including gender leadership in Asia, climate change response, water management, global health security, and digital innovation. Of the 378 students selected, 372 will participate in the master's degree program (17 months), while the other six will engage in the doctoral program (36 months). During the period of training, students will participate in lectures and research at Korean universities, interact with Korean experts, and build a network of contacts here.

The KOICA Degree Program is well known for producing outstanding global talent every year. In fact, Kenneth Mahuni, an economist at the Zimbabwean Ministry of Trade and Industry who was selected for the program in 2015 and completed his master's program at Ajou University, was awarded the 2021 Amartya Sen Prize by the International Economics Association (IEA) for his graduation thesis.

"One of KOICA's strategic tasks is to promote sustainable development by nurturing human resources through academic education and training, to support talented individuals from ▶▶

developing countries," said Vice President of KOICA Hong Seok-hwa, in his welcoming remarks at the orientation. "We hope that during your time in Korea, trainees will engage in academic research and collaborate with a variety of experts, and that the knowledge and experience you gain will have positive impacts in your home countries."

Interviews with three PhD students majoring in global health security in the KOICA Scholarship Program

The Global Health Security Capacity Building Program was launched in 2023 as the first health sector part of KOICA's PhD scholarship program. Based on Korea's successful COVID-19 response, the program aims to strengthen health security professionals to respond to health security threats such as emerging infectious diseases, antibiotic-resistant bacteria, and bioterrorism. The program is a result of collaboration between KOICA and Yonsei University's Graduate School of Public Health.



Name: Kennedy Mensah Osei
Nationality: Ghana
Affiliation: Tamale Teaching Hospital
Education: Doctoral Program in Global Health and Security, Yonsei University

Q What did you do before coming to Korea?

Kennedy Mensah Osei I have served as the Director of the Department of Diagnostic Laboratory Medicine at the Tamale Teaching Hospital in Ghana and as the Acting Director of the Blood Center at the National Blood Institute. I have also served as an adjunct lecturer at the University of Development Studies.

Danik Iga Prasiska I worked as a public health nurse at a district health center, the lowest level of health care in Indonesia. Then, with the support of KOICA, I did my master's degree at Yonsei University in South Korea from 2018 to 2020. Shortly after, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the government saw that I had a master's degree in global health security from South Korea and placed me in the COVID-19 public support team. Before coming to Korea this time, I worked as a public health advisor in Indonesia.

Durga Datta Chapagain Early in my career, I worked in a small community health center providing primary care; I also gave immunizations and looked after the health of pregnant women and the elderly. I then worked as a district health officer, managing the overall system for an area, and moved to the Ministry of Health, where I am now a senior public health officer making health policy and planning programs.

Q What motivated you to apply for the scholarship program?

Kennedy Mensah Osei KOICA is very active in Ghana. When we built the infectious disease treatment center at the hospital where I work, they supported us several times, and they also supported us with water tanks to supply water to the hospital during the dry season when water is scarce. So, I have had a very good impression of KOICA for a long time. I found out about the scholarship program through the program brochure distributed by KOICA. I know it was distributed to all institutions and ministries in Ghana.

Danik Iga Prasiska In Indonesia, KOICA alumni hold regular meetings where they invite prospective students and government officials to attend, and I was encouraged to apply for the program by the alumni I met there. I experienced the high quality of education in Korea during my master's program. I wanted to take on the challenge of studying in Korea again, as highly distinguished professors are here.

Durga Datta Chapagain In my current position, I need to upgrade my knowledge in the policy aspect. I applied for the scholarship program because I thought that learning about Korea's health policy system would help me build the capacity of my country's health system. I am very excited to be able to study at the world-renowned Yonsei University. ▶▶



Name: Danik Iga Prasiska
Nationality: Indonesia
Affiliation: Regional Health Office of Nganjuk
Education: Doctoral Program in Global Health and Security, Yonsei University

Q What are your plans after returning to your home country?

Kennedy Mensah Osei Ghana is a member of the World Health Assembly (WHA). I would like to contribute to shifting Ghana's policies towards complying with international health regulations and strengthening its global health security capabilities. I would also like to use the knowledge I have gained in Korea to train various public health officials in Ghana to help build my country's capacity to prevent and respond to infectious diseases.

Danik Iga Prasiska I have worked in policy as a public health advisor in Indonesia, but during my time in the COVID-19 public outreach team, I realized that I love to do research. Through this PhD program, I hope to get the training to move into the research field. I also love to teach, so when I return home, I would like to work as a researcher and lecturer in a national research institute or public university.

Durga Datta Chapagain I would like to work in the field of policy and planning as I currently do. My country has many health problems, both old ones like tuberculosis and cholera, and new ones like dengue fever. Fifteen years ago, dengue was not a common disease in Nepal. Also, about 71% of the causes of death in Nepal are non-communicable diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, cancer, and other heart diseases, so I want to create sound policies to help Nepalese people manage and prevent these health problems.

Q What do you want to learn while studying in Korea?

Kennedy Mensah Osei Ghana and South Korea have similarities. We both endured colonization by the British and Japanese, respectively, and both have come out of periods of poverty to develop. South Korea is the only country in the world that has gone from a low-income country to a high-income country, so I want to learn all the aspects that have allowed it to develop during my studies.



Name: Durga Datta Chapagain
Nationality: Nepal
Affiliation: Ministry of Health, Bagamati Province, Nepal
Education: Doctoral Program in Global Health and Security, Yonsei University

Danik Iga Prasiska I would like to learn more about laboratory and technical work during my studies, as I don't have much experience in laboratory and technical work. I would like to publish a paper in a high-quality journal. I am very interested in zoonotic diseases and would like to research and write a paper on them. Also, I would like to discuss with my professor if research in this area is possible in the lab I will be joining.

Durga Datta Chapagain I would like to learn about Korean culture and other development issues outside of the classroom. Many countries lose their unique culture during development, but the Korean people have done a great job preserving it. Through the different programs I have participated in, I have felt that the Korean people understand their customs and history well.K

KOICA's Global Training Initiative (CIAT) in figures

Countries that have formed alumni associations (in 2023)

57 countries, 58 alumni associations

▪ Alumni associations maintain continuous exchanges among participants after the program has ended

Academic achievement (2022)

4.76/5.0

▪ Academic Achievement indicator has been above 90 (4.53/5.0) consistently since 2017

Degree attainment rate (2022)

98.27

▪ Positive factors such as higher promotion rate and number of subordinates after degree completion and higher wage bands

Satisfaction of the participants (2022)

95/100 points

▪ Student satisfaction remains high, with an overall score around 95

Cumulative number of trainees (2022)

96,560

▪ Increase from 870 students per year in 1963 to nearly 5,000+ per year today

Branching out to world through Return Program

Entrepreneurs who grew through KOICA

KOICA operates a startup support program that assists those who have served as KOICA Volunteers and Young Professionals (YP), in commercializing the experiences and ideas they have gained while working in partner countries and developing them into social enterprises that can coexist with and benefit partner countries. Here are the stories of two young people growing into future leaders through KOICA's Return Program.



Toward thriving poultry farming business in Laos

Lee Jae-won, CEO of Green Goods

Name of company Green Goods
Principal business Integrated poultry farming solution to boost income for small-scale farms

Q How did you first connect with KOICA?
Through KOICA, I developed an interest in the field of development cooperation. I attended lectures at the Global Talent Training Institute for about a year and interned in Laos in 2015. From my time at university until now, I have received significant support through active participation in KOICA's projects.

Q What did you learn during your internship in Laos in 2015?
Even though I was an intern, I gained various experiences while performing a role almost at the project manager level. As I felt a lot of interest in and affection for the work, I was convinced that I should pursue this path, and through conversations with agricultural experts, I felt the need for specialized studies. Thanks to this experience, upon returning to Korea, I was able to enter graduate school and further develop my capabilities.

Q What support and assistance did you receive through the Return Program?
I learned about this project through the continuous sharing of information by KOICA officials, and, most importantly, thanks to this program, I was able to set the direction for my business. I reviewed the business model and made corrections to address its shortcomings. Thanks to this solid foundation, I could grow the business scale faster than expected. As I communicated with many people, I encountered numerous good opportunities. My mentor connected me with Sopoong Ventures, enabling me to secure seed investment and receive investment from the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Q What is the primary business promoted by Green Goods?
We run our business in collaboration with Good Farmers. Good Farmers entrusts us with the consignment of chickens, and we handle everything from chick management to supply and branding. First, we supply small farmers with chicks that are much more disease-resistant than regular chicks and are highly regarded in the market. During this process, we analyze data and provide feedback if errors occur. If the contract is fulfilled, we purchase the entire amount and carry out branding, making efforts to lead to market sales. It is also our responsibility to maintain and manage chicks at all times and to research and develop suitable feed according to the variety.

Q What is the local response?
The Laos government also appreciates our business. Typically, when approaching the poultry industry, the focus is on making a profit, and there is little interest in developing the basic agricultural industry. The local response has been so great that we have temporarily halted product promotion due to a lack of stock. Using this experience as a stepping stone, we are gradually expanding our business. Normally, we expand our business by setting up a booth at a local traditional market and conducting consultations. Additionally, we offer personal consulting for those interested in this service and visiting Laos.

Q Please explain the goal you are currently focusing on.
The macro goal is to contribute to the development of basic agriculture in Laos, and the micro goal is to provide a stable alternative income for small-scale farmers in Laos. To achieve this, we first aim to secure up to 10,000 egg-laying chickens within two years and hatch 200,000 chicks monthly. The goal is to establish a stable nationwide distribution network in Laos to distribute cheaper and healthier chicken throughout the country and to establish a system so producers can participate anywhere in Laos. Additionally, Laos has the geographical advantage of exporting to many countries, including China, Vietnam, Thailand, and Korea. Taking advantage of these strengths, we would like to commence exporting products within three years.

Q What are Green Goods' plans and goals?
While we focused on proving the company's growth potential until last year, we would like to shift our focus to increasing actual sales. No matter how large the company grows, we hope to maintain our values and services for small-scale farmers. Additionally, our headquarters will be located in the Laos Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, and in line with this, we would like to grow further into a company that is beneficial to the basic agricultural industry in Laos. By working steadily, we aim to become a company that can encompass all areas of the Laos poultry industry, realize our dreams with technology, and become a company loved locally.



Targeting the world through cooking education business

Jang Mi-ji, CEO of Ameality

Name of company Ameality
Principal business A social venture leading the global cooking education and local food business, promoting global cooking education, F&B research and development, and content production.

Q How did you first connect with KOICA?
I majored in nutrition. As a college student, I happened to participate as an assistant manager in a health-related KOICA training project conducted at Paik Hospital. My role was to assist foreign trainees in receiving education in Korea. At that time, I became fascinated with development cooperation projects and decided to join the World Friends volunteer group the year I graduated.



Q You worked in Honduras, South America, for one year and three months. What were your responsibilities during that period?

I was active from April 2016 to July 2017. I carried out various activities to create a 'sustainable nutrition project' with public health centers in the dispatched areas. For example, I taught nutrition-related lectures at elementary schools and other institutions, focusing on creating a healthy diet. I also provided nutrition guidance through special lectures with nearby universities and local diabetes associations.

Q What motivated you to start a business?

After working as an overseas volunteer, I served as an entry-level expert investigating the feasibility of KOICA's overseas business. Initially, I worked in administrative support and later traveled overseas for performance management. At the time, my first business trip was to Cuba and El Salvador, which sparked my interest in performance management. In 2020, I worked as a performance management & evaluation (M&E) researcher for projects in Nepal, Malawi, and Sri Lanka at the International Development Evaluation Center of Sangmyung University. However, there were disruptions in the evaluation project due to the COVID-19 pandemic that year. It was unfortunate, but with the support of the professor, current and former researchers at the center came together to realize the social value in Korea, and by participating in the Return Program together, we dreamed of starting a business.



Q What support and assistance did you receive through the Return Program?

We were able to gauge how customers would receive our idea, that is, whether it would be viable for business. After strengthening the capabilities of internal team members, we planned several cooking classes and conducted a detailed survey for each class to check customer responses (with more than 95% positive responses). To assist in formulating this plan, my return mentors actively provided advice, and I also received additional mentoring from external experts. It was launched as a Return Project in July 2020 and received the grand prize in December, enabling it to be certified as a preliminary social enterprise in December 2021. Preparing to start a business was never easy, but thanks to the early members who laid the foundation and the return program, they strengthened the start-up.

Q What are the main businesses pursued by Ameality?

The three main businesses of Ameality are education, F&B development, and content. The education business focuses on global cooking education and is expanding to include local cooking education. Korean and global instructors from Ameality will serve as educational subjects and provide endless content until you can learn about cuisines worldwide. A recent lecture targeting 220 researchers from a large company was successfully completed with a satisfaction rating of 4.98 out of 5. The F&B development business division conducts local F&B tourism product consulting and consulting to develop local food-related products.

Q What have been the main achievements since starting your business?

Ameality has been busy, being selected as the 4th Social Economy Entrepreneur of Korea Midland Power Company in the year of its founding, chosen through a public contest as the main organizer of the Chungnam Multi-Family Multicultural Festival, selected for the 4th Living Lab Project contest for Cheonan Culture City, and designated as a preliminary social enterprise for 2021 by the Ministry of Employment and Labor. It's been a busy year. In 2022, we implemented the Ameality Meal Kit Zero Waste Shop project, and fortunately, all 1,260 servings were sold out. Currently, we are promoting a consignment project for local food cooking classes in Cheonan. Additionally, we undertook a local food cooking education project involving recipe development and provided consulting services for local tourism product development. Recently, we have been carrying out lunch boxes and catering consulting for the Bucheon International Film Festival.

Q Could you please tell us about Ameality's future plans and goals?

I would like to train cooking instructors from more diverse countries and continue to create fun projects related to cooking together. When we started the business, our goal was to franchise our business in hopes of expanding our social value, but now we are focusing on the process of doing our best at every moment rather than the result. Therefore, we are continuing to create new global cooking education content, and we also plan to continue the local food business as a sustainable enterprise with a sense of responsibility beyond a consignment model.K

KOICA

WORLD FRIENDS KOREA







WFK KOICA overseas volunteer-supported projects in Timor-Leste

Global Encounters
Growing Together

KOICA's overseas volunteers
strive for prosperity together with partner countries.

In the sectors of public administration, education,
technology·environment·energy,
agriculture·fisheries,
we support change and development in partner countries.

Together, let's move forward toward a better future.

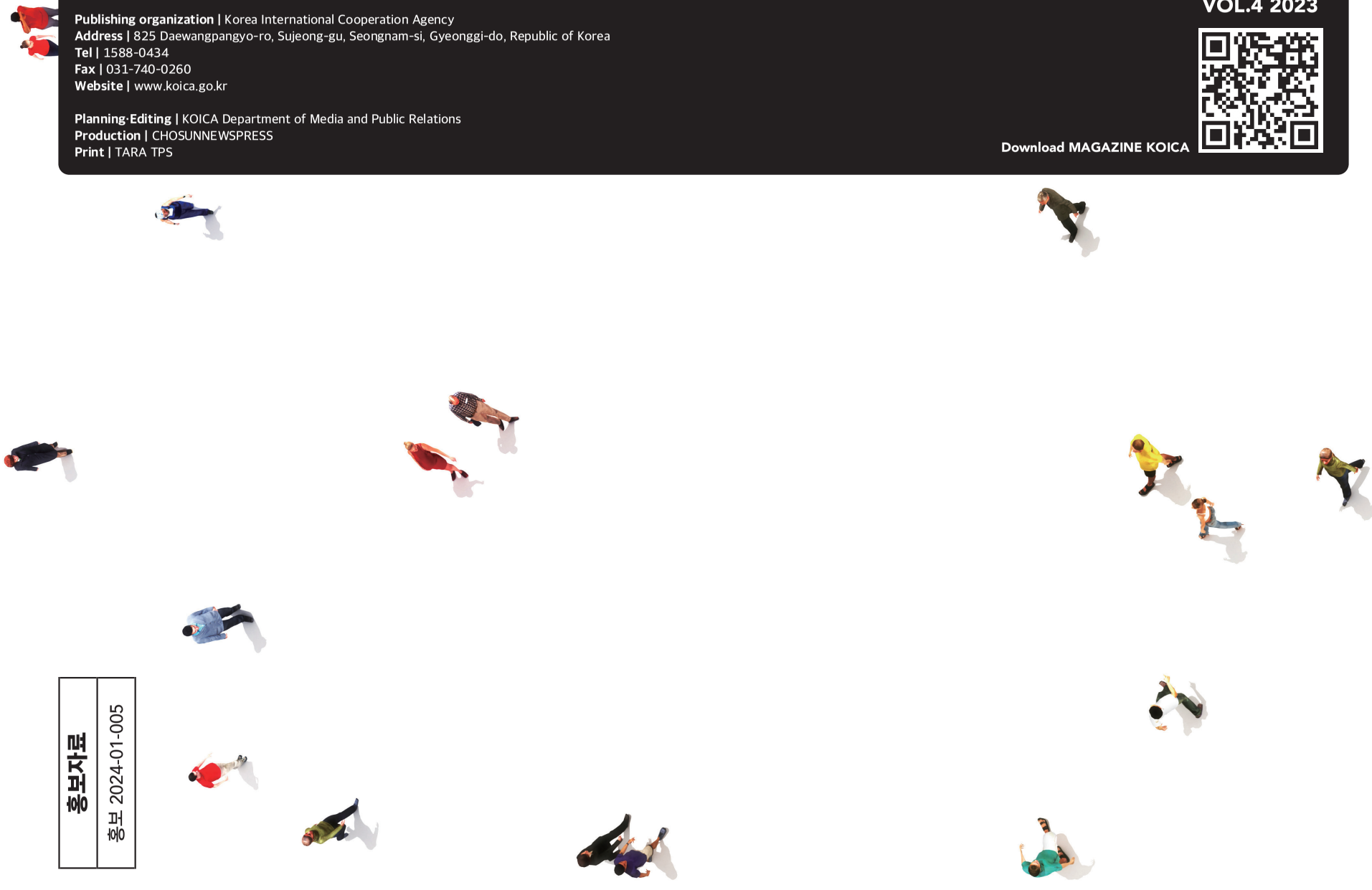
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