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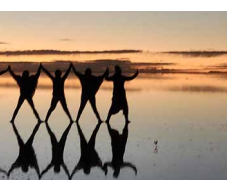
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COVER STORY A sustainable future begins with future generations!

INTERVIEW Kirsi Madi, Deputy Executive Director of UN Women




FUTURE GENERATIONS



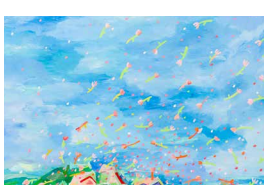
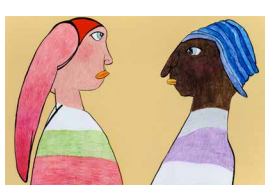
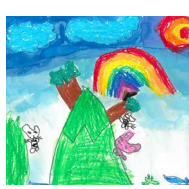









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What's happening in the world now?

Global Trends in Development Cooperation

$134 million in support of Somalia and Iraq to respond to climate change

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) is attracting the attention of the international community with the approval of large-scale funds to strengthen the resilience of rural areas in Somalia and Iraq to climate change. The total amount of the fund is $134 million (approximately 187.332 billion won). The operation, managed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), aims to help farmers protect their livelihoods by improving their ability to respond to increasingly severe climate change, including droughts, floods, and water shortages. In Iraq, where the political situation is unstable, the 'Strengthening Climate Resilience of Vulnerable Agricultural Livelihoods in Iraq's Rural Communities (SRVALI)' project is being implemented to address the serious water shortage problem. In Somalia, a country plagued by conflict, extreme poverty, drought and flooding, the 'Ugbaad' project is underway to improve food security. Ugbaad means 'hope' in Somali.

Successful World Food Forum 2024 "Collaboration needed to solve the food problem"

The fourth annual World Food Forum (WFF) 2024, hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in October, concluded successfully. Held in Rome, Italy, the forum was attended by thousands of people, including officials from international organizations, and featured more than 200 side events on topics such as research, investment, innovation, youth participation, policy, business activities, and local communities addressing food issues. In particular, climate change and inequality emerged as the biggest issues at this forum. FAO Director-General QU Dongyu said at the closing ceremony, "Through this forum, we confirmed the importance of broad cooperation and the willingness to participate across regions, genders, generations, and occupations," adding, "FAO will consistently support the collaboration so that it leads to real change."



On September 20, various events were held around the world to mark the first UN World Cleanup Day.

"Waste without borders" First UN World Cleanup Day

The first UN World Cleanup Day event took place on September 20. World Cleanup Day is one of the agendas adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 8, 2023, and was implemented to raise awareness of the role of cleanup efforts in sustainable development. UN-HABITAT organized the event, and waste and cleaning-related activities were held in countries around the world to celebrate it. In Belgium, the 'Brussels Clean Festival' took place in collaboration with the European Union and the United Nations, featuring cleaning activities and various side events. The World Cleanup Day event will be held annually to raise awareness of the importance of cross-border cooperation and the participation of not only local governments but also local communities in waste collection and disposal.



The WFP predicts that Nigeria will experience a record food crisis in the second half of 2025.



UNICEF has actively supported the victims of the typhoon that struck the Philippines last October and worked to prevent further damage.

'Nigeria's food problem to be serious' UN WFP calls for urgent support

The UN WFP issued a statement calling for urgent life-saving food support in Nigeria. WFP stated, "It is estimated that 25 million people in Nigeria are currently in need of food assistance" and that "Nigeria is experiencing the worst food crisis in its history." WFP cited 15 years of conflict and severe flooding as the causes of the problem. In particular, WFP predicted that a record level of food problems will occur in the northeastern states of Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe in the second half of 2025, with 1,008,000 children and 800,000 pregnant women in the region expected to be the most affected. WFP appealed, "International organizations such as FAO and UNICEF, as well as officials from around the world, must immediately join forces to address Nigeria's nutrition, health, and food supply challenges."



Last October, the UNHCR decided to form a global alliance to address the issue of statelessness.

Alliance formed by UNHCR to address the issue of statelessness

The world's first international alliance to address the issue of statelessness has been formed. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) held an Executive Committee meeting on October 14 in Geneva, Switzerland, and announced the creation of the 'Global Alliance to End Statelessness.' This alliance, formed based on the 'IBelong Campaign' led by UNHCR for over 10 years, has been joined by more than 100 countries, over 50 organizations, and academic institutions from around the world. This Global Alliance is led by 15 Advisory Committees, including UN agencies, governments, international civil society and statelessness organizations, with UNHCR serving as the Secretariat. UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi emphasized, "A world in which no one is left stateless is possible."



The Pan-African Action Plan for Active Mobility will be implemented in more than 10 African countries starting from 2025.

"Transforming Africa into Region for Walking and Cycling" 10 African countries starting next year

The first-ever 'Pan-African Action Plan for Active Mobility (PAAPAM)' was launched by UN agencies.

At the World Urban Forum held in Egypt, UNEP, UN-HABITAT, and WHO announced the Pan-African Action Plan for Active Mobility. Active mobility refers to movement through physical activities such as walking and cycling, which significantly contribute to addressing environmental issues and improving health. Developed with direct engagement from more than 1,300 stakeholders, the Action Plan will guide policy formulation, investment, and infrastructure expansion to create safe and convenient infrastructure for walking and cycling. The plan is scheduled to be implemented starting in 2025 in at least 10 countries, including Ghana, Malawi, and Kenya.

Emergency support for the Philippines to recover from Typhoons Trami and Kongrey

While the damage caused by Typhoons Trami and Kongrey, which struck the Philippines last October, has not yet been fully recovered, UNICEF has actively taken steps to support victims and prevent further damage. More than 4.2 million people in 29 regions of the Philippines were reportedly affected by these typhoons. Of these, approximately 1.3 million were children, most of whom suffered from a lack of basic sanitation and drinking water. Since October 31, UNICEF has provided hygiene and drinking water kits to 2,950 households in the Bicol Region affected by the typhoon. UNICEF also took the lead in restoring schools and community centers in the affected areas to resume education that was interrupted by the typhoon.

Kim Tae-kyoon, Professor, Graduate School of International Studies,
Seoul National University

A sustainable future begins with future generations!



Bulod Health Center in the Philippines established by KOICA and World Vision to provide medical services to migrants affected by Typhoon Haiyan



Kim Tae-kyoon, Professor, Graduate School of International Studies, Seoul National University

On September 22, 2024, the 'Summit of the Future' was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, USA, where the 'Compact for the Future' and the 'Declaration of Future Generations' were unanimously adopted. Through this agreement and declaration, the United Nations has made a commitment that countries must guarantee the participation of future generations, ensuring that their opinions and rights are actively reflected in the national policy-making process. The UN's commitment to future generations marks a significant shift to overcome the harsh realities faced by future generations around the world and to emphasize their role in the sustainable development of global society. The future-oriented expectation that a sustainable future for humanity comes from future generations should lead to systematic support, enabling future generations to actively participate in the implementation process of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and various multilateral cooperation platforms in global society.

Complex crises and the vulnerability of future generations

Future generations are more easily exposed to crisis situations than the older generation, and their vulnerability is bound to be greater. The biggest victims of complex crises, such as the health crisis of COVID-19, the climate crisis of global warming, and the Russia-Ukraine war, are not the older generation but the future generations. Domestic obstacles such as poverty, inequality, and corruption, which arise in conjunction with complex crises, slow down the resilience of society and ultimately increase the burden that future generations must bear alone. Therefore, the independent participation and action of future generations must be ensured in the challenges and responses that occur in the era of complex crises, as well as in the opportunities and threats inherent in the sustainable development of global society. Rather than hiding vulnerabilities that will arise in the future from future generations, the older generation must invite future generations into global society as partners in finding solutions together.

Future generations, the main agents of future social change

According to the 2023 Global Hunger Index published by Concern Worldwide in Ireland, the impact of the current food system on future generations is so great that future generations must take the initiative to transform the current and future food systems. There is a need for interest in the active participation of future generations, such as publicizing the efforts necessary to build a sustainable food system for global society and urging global attention. It is necessary to institutionally ensure that future generations can participate in the implementation of all currently operating sustainable development goals, not only for the issue of food sovereignty but also for the overall change in future society. As a kind of cross-cutting agenda, efforts are needed to emphasize and encourage the participation of future generations for future change.

Present support for future governance reforms

The poor governance system currently experienced by future generations has failed to address the problem of hunger and sustainably provide public goods, resulting in a vicious cycle of learning flawed systems and passing them down to subsequent generations. Governance reform is not a problem that can be solved in the short term, so a mid- to long-term perspective is needed. For this reason, future generations must become key leaders in the policy process, examining the governance cycle from planning to implementation and evaluation of sustainable development at the current stage. To achieve this, investments must be made in developing the capabilities of future generations in accordance with the local social, cultural, and ecological environment. The government must equally provide education and technology to future generations to strengthen their capacity for growth and development, and reflect the opinions of future generations in governance programs and policy-making processes. Yet in vulnerable countries, future generations are not guaranteed even the most basic right to food, let alone the basic right to education. Ultimately, the most urgent efforts needed to transform future governance must begin with global humanitarian support for future generations in vulnerable countries.

Voluntary policy participation of future generations

So what practical support can governments provide to recognize future generations of children and youth as the leaders of tomorrow, and to encourage them to actively participate in shaping the policies that affect their future? As the UN Declaration on Future Generations clearly emphasizes, it is about institutionalizing the meaningful participation of future generations, the future leaders, in the overall policy and decision-making process related to sustainable development. It is essential that governments and public institutions provide a platform to communicate with future generations and listen to their perspectives, concerns and ideas. In many countries, it has already been witnessed that future generations take the lead in tackling climate change, building a sustainable economy, protecting democracy, and demanding social justice and good governance, in order to meet the major challenges of the present and the future. Therefore, it should be a natural step to involve future generations and engage in discussions with them from the very beginning of government policies for sustainable development to increase synergy effects.

Sustainable global development, the importance of supporting future generations

Every year, the 'G20 Summit' is accompanied by the 'Y20 Summit,' organized by the youth of the future generation. The Y20 Summit, attended by the future generations of each member country, concludes with the announcement of the 'Y20 Communique' as the final result. The Y20 Communique provides direction on the efforts needed globally to support future generations and is also used as an important reference for the G20 Summit. The future generation, Y20, presents comprehensive policy recommendations to the older generation, G20, urging them to invest in quality education, including digital literacy, to bridge the digital divide, harness science and strategic foresight, encourage a shift to long-term thinking and evidence-based decision-making, address transnational challenges such as climate change and economic instability, and ensure a safe world for future generations. These recommendations from future generations will ensure that multilateral cooperation at the global level, including the United Nations, integrates policies and actions for future generations in the mid- to long-term, providing an important opportunity to create a future ecosystem where future generations can participate as leading subjects in the sustainable development of global society.



KOICA established an alternative education center in Tacloban. Philippines to help out-of-school girls continue their education.KOICA established an alternative education center in Tacloban. Philippines to help out-of-school girls continue their education.



KOICA President CHANG Won Sam, Second Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Kang Insun, KOICA Vice President Lee Yun-Young, Deputy Secretary General of ASEAN Satvinder Singh, Senior Advisor of Convergence Ritesh Thakkar and other dignitaries pose for a commemorative photo.

The 17th Seoul ODA International Conference

‘Sustainable Development Cooperation for Future Generations’ Looking for a wise path

On September 4, the 17th Seoul ODA International Conference was held at the Lotte Hotel in Jung-gu, Seoul, under the theme ‘Sustainable Development Cooperation for Future Generations’. The international conference, jointly organized by KOICA and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was attended by some 370 participants, including Second Vice Foreign Minister Kang Insun, KOICA President CHANG Won Sam, development agencies from various countries, major international organizations, academia and the diplomatic corps in Korea. They reflected and exchanged views on sustainable development cooperation for future generations who will lead the future in a rapidly changing and diversifying international society. In addition, best cases of development cooperation that were directly promoted or participated in from the perspective of different development cooperation agencies were also shared. As the theme of this conference suggests, future generations from various countries who will lead the future of the world attended the conference as audience members and speakers, attracting attention.

In 2015, the international community adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which focus on building a better future for both current and future generations, with inclusivity and sustainability at their core. Sustainable development refers to ‘meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.’

KOICA President CHANG Won Sam mentioned the Sustainable Development Goals at the beginning of his opening remarks, saying, “It is the promise of the international community to create a global village of solidarity by reducing the development gap through policies so that the present generation can find better ways for the future and future generations can leap forward to become leaders of sustainable development.” “The crisis we are currently facing in the international community is also a challenge for future generations,” he added. “The international community is presenting various alternatives to encourage global cooperation and an inclusive approach, as well as the participation of future generations, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.”

Kang Insun, Second Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, also said, “The future generation is not just a beneficiary of the results of the current generation’s concerns and efforts, but the protagonist who will develop and implement the vision of sustainable development through creativity and innovation,” and emphasized the spirit of solidarity and cooperation, saying, “We must understand development cooperation, think together and build consensus.”

In his keynote speech, OECD Secretary-General Mathias Cormann highlighted the current situation in developing countries, where climate change and socio-economic disparities are increasing insecurity, and the resulting challenges for the international community, and suggested ways to make the most effective use of ODA resources. He reiterated the importance of active cooperation among development partners, including close cooperation among aid donors, financial transparency of ODA in developing countries, reducing barriers to private investment, striking a balance between increasing profits and attracting investment, developing innovative models for sustainable development cooperation, and expanding private investment.



Overview of the venue for the 17th Seoul ODA International Conference

Active cooperation and coordination with the international community

The 17th Seoul ODA International Conference was divided into three sessions. The first session held in the morning was under the theme of ‘Development Cooperation Strategies and Policies for Future Generations.’

UN Assistant Secretary-General Kirsi Madi, who was the first speaker, said, “Gender equality is not only something that must be achieved morally, but also a task for the international community that must be achieved for sustainable development”. She emphasized, “The participation of women and girls is essential to achieving gender equality, which is not an option, but an important part that must be realized”. “Only a few partner countries have concrete budgets for gender equality and women’s empowerment, and nearly a quarter of women and girls still face significant threats to food security, with 110 million girls living in poverty,” she said. She called for active cooperation and coordination from the international community, saying, “Depending on what actions and measures the international community takes in the coming years, this will be a turning point where there may or may not be visible change.”

Satvinder Singh, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN, chose “sustainability” and “digital transformation” as the two keywords that ASEAN, of which he is a member, is working on. To achieve this, he said, “ASEAM expects to create new jobs through the circular economy, blue economy and carbon neutrality plan, and that sustainability and digitalization will be important axes for ASEAN’s development



Second Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Kang Insun giving a welcoming speech



KOICA President CHANG Won Sam giving an opening speech



Conference attendees enjoying the celebratory performance (above) by the Areumdeuri Choir, composed of multicultural children

and growth."

The third speaker, Song Jiseon, Assistant Professor at the Korea National Diplomatic Academy, discussed the role of international development cooperation, including Korea's development cooperation, in overcoming the challenges of the present and future generations, and what activities are being undertaken in the field of development cooperation to encourage the participation of future generations.

Professor Song said, "Now is the time to turn words into action. The ultimate goal of development cooperation can be achieved by involving more diverse participants in development cooperation in the private sector, and by reconciling differences between the private and public sectors to overcome differences." She continued, "The participation of young people, the future generation, in development cooperation can be said to be in its infancy," adding, "There is a need to actively communicate and consult with future generations through a more proactive approach."

Expectations for change through innovation and strong partnerships

The theme of the second session was 'Innovative Models of International Development Cooperation for Future Generations.' Ritesh Thakkar, Senior Advisor and Head of Asia Pacific at Convergence was the first speaker. Convergence is a global blended finance network that brings together an ecosystem of organizations, including ODA providers, various financial institutions, the private sector, and philanthropic organizations. He presented a plan to attract private capital, which is reluctant to invest in development cooperation because of the high risk involved, based on various mixed finance data collected by Convergence. He explained that "blended finance is about reducing risk and having the public sector and philanthropic institutions jointly lead the overall transaction," and talked about strategic financing measures that make the private sector attractive for investment. He expressed his hope, saying, "If more ODA funding is provided through private sector mobilization, I think we will be able to utilize much more blended finance."

Mohamed Abdel-Kader, USAID's Chief Innovation Officer, introduced the innovation tasks currently in progress, emphasizing that "responding to the global food and climate crises, defending democracy and fighting corruption, protecting freedoms and human rights around the world, and promoting global health security are USAID's top priorities." He added that USAID's 10,000 employees work in 82 missions in 100 countries, and that the most



Song Jiseon, Assistant Professor at the Korea National Diplomatic Academy, speaking at the first session entitled 'Development Cooperation Strategies and Policies for Future Generations'

important key to accomplishing various innovation tasks is that "USAID cannot do everything alone, and when it comes to implementing projects, partnerships and networks with partner organizations are important".

Darren Karjama, Lead of Strategic Relations at the Green Climate Fund (GCF), spoke of the reality of the climate crisis. Noting that $1.3 trillion was mobilized in global climate finance in 2021-2022, he said the environment and new business models need to be created through greater investment to spur innovation in climate finance. He then presented ways to mitigate risk through blended finance and further innovate the financial sector through the use of climate-friendly green finance, such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, forest conservation, and climate change adaptation. He added, "A paradigm shift requires a complete change in the way governments, businesses, and society operate."

Looking at future generations as a subject of development cooperation

The third session, under the theme of 'Hopes and Challenges from the Perspective of Future Generations,' was a time to get a glimpse into the perspectives of future generations. The first speaker was Kenneth Mahuni, a graduate student in economics from Mauritius. Beginning his presentation on issues from the perspective of the future generation and the characteristics of the future generation, he said, "Africa is a young continent with a very young and dynamic population with an average age of 15 to 35," adding, "Future generations in partner countries are adept at using new technologies such as IT and AI, and are highly creative and dynamic." Noting that he was also one of the beneficiaries of ODA and had the opportunity to study in Korea and received various assistance, including from the KOICA program, he said, "I have learned that every development story has a starting point," adding with hope, "Above all, the fact that Korea, which received assistance from the international community, became an OECD member and donor country proves that 'nothing is impossible' under any circumstances."

UWISHEMA Aime Vedaste, ICT Education Officer at Rwanda's Ministry of Education, quoted Nelson Mandela's words, "Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world," and presented a vision that the future should be created through the use of new technologies such as ICT. Having worked with various education development partners to improve education in Rwanda, he made a bold statement: "Through collaborative efforts, we must not only solve the challenges we face today, but also ensure that future generations can move forward with resilience."

The last presenter, Park Joon-woo, Field Office Director of the DR Congo Country Office, UNDP, said, "We have implemented a variety of innovative methods, including artificial intelligence, digital transformation, climate, smart technology, and blended finance, but only 15% of the SDG goals have been achieved as planned," expressing his concern, "The remaining challenges to achieve the 2030 vision will remain more difficult for future generations."

Citing the African proverb "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together," he delivered a message to future generations, saying, "It is important to receive investment, but at the same time it is necessary to take care and check for yourself what is happening on the ground. He also stressed that in emphasizing the importance of development cooperation, it is necessary to value not only the final results, but also the progress and achievements made little by little.

After all the presentations were over, Lee Yun-young, Vice President of KOICA, conducted the closing ceremony. In his closing remarks, he said, "Today, we reviewed the direction and implementation status of development cooperation in the international community, with a focus on the SDGs. We also engaged with various development cooperation agencies to discuss the direction of development from the perspectives of future generations." "In the first session, we were able to see the importance of the SDGs in addressing the basic needs of the current generation while ensuring the demands of future generations, and how the SDGs and the lives of future generations are directly linked," he continued. He added, "In the second session, we were able to recognize the direction of innovative development cooperation for future generations and the pivotal role of innovation in achieving the SDGs through business cases that apply innovative financial resources and new technologies to the development sector in the midst of the complex crisis facing the international community." He also expressed his thoughts, saying, "In the last session, participants in international development cooperation projects, including KOICA's country-specific cooperation projects and degree training programs, shared valuable experiences gained in the process of growing into leaders of the future generation through their project participation experiences."

Vice President Lee also said, "In order to effectively respond to the various global challenges we face, it is necessary to explore international development cooperation strategies and measures in which future generations, who are the core of sustainable development, participate as major players rather than simply beneficiaries of development cooperation." He concluded the 17th Seoul ODA International Conference by saying, "In the future, both the government and KOICA will make efforts to listen more to the voices of future generations in the process of promoting international development cooperation strategies".



Ritesh Thakkar, Senior Advisor and Head of Asia Pacific at Convergence, presenting at the second session on 'Innovative Models of International Development Cooperation for Future Generations'



Attendees listening attentively at the 17th Seoul ODA International Conference

Interview with Kirsi Madi, Deputy Executive Director of UN Women

"The partnership with KOICA plays an important role in promoting gender equality"

Q What difficulties are girls and young women around the world currently facing?

We have recently launched the latest edition of Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2023 Report, which monitors gender equality progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals. As we approach 2030, our report found that global progress on gender equality is glaringly lagging behind. Globally, not a single indicator has been met or almost met and only two are close to targets. If current trends continue, it will take 137 years to end extreme poverty for women, and girls will continue to be married off as children until 2092. In addition, climate change could push an additional 158 million women and girls into extreme poverty by 2050. Progress on hunger and food insecurity has stalled, with nearly 48 million more women than men facing food insecurity.

Progress toward gender equality has been too little, too slow. We need scalable solutions to bridge the gap between commitments and actual implementation.

Our partnership with Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) has been crucial to advancing gender equality. For example, in Kenya, the joint UN Women-FAO project funded by KOICA has equipped women with materials and techniques to improve production yields and household nutrition, contributing to a reduction in food insecurity in arid and semi-arid areas. In Bolivia, KOICA is supporting UN Women to drive the economic empowerment of women. 3,500 individuals have completed technical training and business management courses that enabled them to expand their market reach and increase profitability of women-led small businesses.

Q Young women and girls cannot overcome the crisis on their own. The seriousness of this situation lies in the fact that sometimes the adults who are supposed to help and support them are actually the ones who abuse and oppress them. Please say something about this.



Kirsi Madi, Deputy Executive Director of UN Women

Tragically, for many women and girls, home can be a dangerous place.

Latest available data reveals that of the 89,000 women and girls intentionally killed in 2022, 55% died at the hands of intimate partners or other family members. This betrayal not only deepens their vulnerability but also erodes their ability to trust others or seek help.

When trusted adults inflict harm, it can lead to long-lasting psychological trauma, hinder educational opportunities, and perpetuate cycles of violence and discrimination. This environment of abuse undermines their confidence and restricts their ability to participate fully in society.

Addressing this issue requires collective efforts to create safe and supportive environments. Establishing confidential reporting mechanisms and providing access to counseling and legal services can empower young women and girls to speak out. Educational programs that promote gender equality and raise awareness about their rights and protection are also essential.

By holding perpetrators accountable and supporting survivors, society can begin to dismantle the structures that enable oppression. It is crucial that everyone—from governments and organizations to communities and individuals—works together to protect the rights and well-being of young women and girls, ensuring they have the support needed to overcome these challenges.

UN Women is committed to supporting women and girls everywhere. We, for example, collaborate with police forces by providing training and capacity-building programs to enhance law enforcement's ability to support survivors of gender-based violence.

Q What kind of support does the UN pay special attention to for future generations, and most especially young women and girls?

During the 79th session of the United Nations General Assembly this year, world leaders adopted the Pact for the Future that includes a Declaration on Future Generations. This marks the culmination of a years-long process to adapt international cooperation to the realities of today and the challenges of tomorrow.

The first-ever Declaration on Future Generations emphasizes the urgent need to safeguard the interests and needs of future generations, with proposed actions to address structural inequalities, take urgent climate action, leveraging new technologies and science, and ensuring equal access to knowledge and innovation. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is one of the core principles of this Declaration and mainstreamed across the Pact for the Future.

Pact for the Future also includes commitments to integrate the perspectives of young people into global decision making by, for instance, enhancing youth participation, appointing an Envoy for Future generations, and providing platforms for their active involvement.

UN Women looks forward to working with member states, civil society, and youth, as we collectively implement the Pact for the Future and its Declaration on Future Generations.

Q The Korean government and KOICA are also carrying out various support projects related to poverty, education, and gender equality for future generations, focusing on developing countries around the world. How would you evaluate the direction and performance of Korea's aid projects?

The Republic of Korea has been a steadfast supporter of gender equality and youth empowerment. Here are a few examples of what we have achieved through our partnership.

In Indonesia, with the support from KOICA, we are empowering youth to strengthen community resilience and reduce vulnerabilities in emergency and conflict-affected areas. In August last year, we successfully implemented a cross-country learning event. This event brought together youth leaders and experts from 13 countries across the Asia-Pacific region to exchange knowledge and develop country-specific action plans to combat technology-facilitated gender-based violence.

In Mozambique, UN Women has newly launched a KOICA-supported program to promote socioeconomic recovery and resilience of internally displaced and returnee women and girls. This project will provide women and girls with access to safe resettlement housing, vocational education, and support survivors of gender-based violence to access protection, physical and mental health and psychosocial and legal services. 93,400 women and girls are expected to benefit from the project.

In Bolivia, KOICA is supporting UN Women to drive the economic empowerment of women who own small and micro businesses. The support focuses on improving their productivity and business capabilities through customized machinery and equipment. Additionally, 3,500 individuals have received technical training and business management courses to expand market reach. Women beneficiaries have reported increased revenues and operational efficiency because of the project's support.

UN Women looks forward to continuing our strong collaboration with Korea to fulfill our commitments to gender equality for future generations.

Q Why shouldn't we neglect support for future generations?

An estimated 10 billion people are expected to be born this century, predominantly in low- and middle-income countries. Amid evolving global challenges—ranging from climate change and escalating conflicts to crises and food insecurity—the actions we take, or fail to take, as global community will have lasting effects on future generations.

To unlock the full potential of youth, we must ensure they are not only heard but are actively involved in the design and implementation of policies and programs at all levels. By partnering with youth-led and youth-focused organizations, UN Women incorporates the voices of young people and address their specific needs in our initiatives. We continue to advocate for the systematic engagement of youth in intergovernmental processes. For instance, last year, we collaborated with over 8,100 young people worldwide, facilitating the development of their recommendations for the 68th annual Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)—the UN's largest gathering on gender equality and women's empowerment. This year's CSW was attended by nearly 4,000 government delegates and close to 5,000 civil society representatives.

Q Please tell us what you would like to say to the Korean government and KOICA.

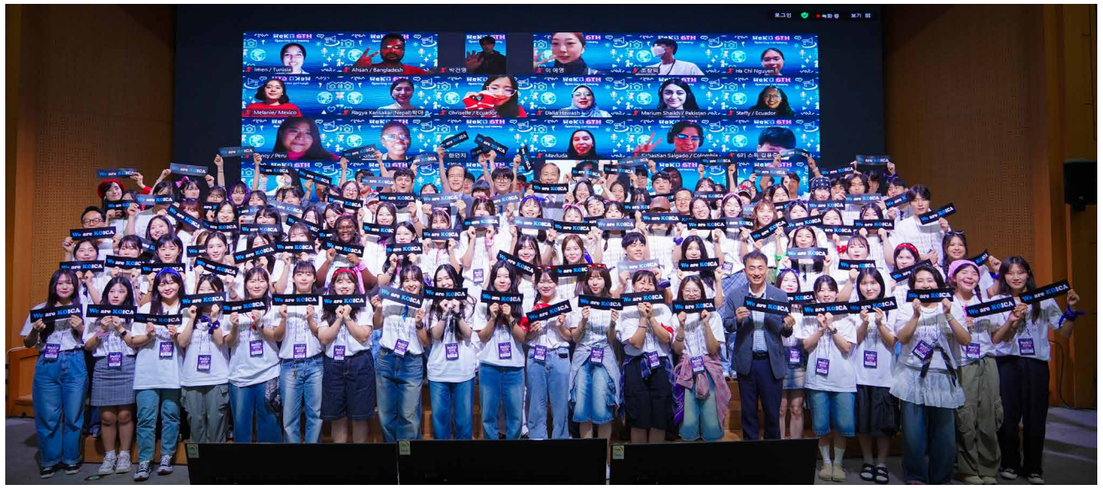
We would like to invite all Korean people to engage in the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action for achieving gender equality, the rights and empowerment of all women and girls in 2025.

Despite the many gains over the past 30 years, gender equality has become an increasingly distant goal. The challenges facing women and girls persist, and new obstacles continue to emerge, making the journey far from complete.

Achieving gender equality is not only the right thing to do but also the smart thing to do. Closing gender employment gaps could boost GDP per capita by 20% across all regions, thereby creating more opportunities for everyone and further expanding the economy. Simply put, everyone benefits from gender equality.

UN Women stands ready to support the global community with accelerated actions, actively engaging young people in meaningful ways. In the lead-up to the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration, UN Women is leading global efforts at global, regional, national, and community levels to involve youth and adolescents in discussions on gender equality, women's rights, and the empowerment of women and girls. This inclusive approach is essential to fully realize our shared ambition, and we hope to count on your support to achieve it.

UN Women looks forward to strengthening our partnership with the Korean government and KOICA to explore new avenues for addressing the challenges facing women and girls.



Group ceremony of the 6th WeKO, highlighting their ambition to address global challenges through creativity and innovative content.

We are KOICA

Five-month journey with KOICA Global Supporters

Inauguration of the 6th WeKO with virtual supporter 'WeKO'

The launch ceremony to announce the start of the 6th WeKO was held on August 9 at KOICA headquarters in Seongnam-si, Gyeonggi-do. WeKO, which stands for 'We are KOICA,' serves as a public relations ambassador to promote the meaning and value of international development cooperation and Official Development Assistance (ODA) alongside KOICA. The 130 members of the 6th WeKO were selected last August with a final competition rate of 7:1, particularly 13:1 in the global category from 25 countries around the world, consisting of 99 individuals in the domestic category (college students and other general public) and 31 in the global category (foreigners residing both domestically and abroad). This year's WeKO supporters were primarily individuals in their 20s and 30s with creative capabilities on trendy platforms, such as short-form content. In particular, creators with strong skills in social media and writing, as well as individuals with experience in international development cooperation, were chosen as WeKO supporters.

The opening ceremony was organized around the concept of a 'time-slip,' a journey back to 1999, a year characterized by a strong sense of the end of the century. The 130 WeKO supporters, selected from 27 countries around the world with a competitive ratio of 7 to 1, including Korea, the Philippines, Morocco, Ecuador, and Uzbekistan, gathered both online and offline to celebrate the joyous occasion. Especially on this day, the virtual supporter 'WeKO,' the first AI virtual character in KOICA's history, made an appearance and attracted attention.

Produced 4,844 pieces of content, taking the lead in promoting ODA

The 6th WeKO took the lead in content production and distribution. From August to December, they produced 4,844 pieces of content, such as short-form videos and card news preferred by young people, sharing with the public the solutions to global challenges such as poverty, inequality, war, and climate change, as well as promoting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*. The content produced by the 6th WeKO received great response and attention, with content created in different languages around the world, recording over 47.59 million cumulative views and 31.05 million responses. In particular, in terms of content, they contributed to raising awareness of global issues by producing short-form videos, familiar to young people, about the challenges facing the world. In addition, the 'ODA Ensemble Project' was successfully carried out, in which people around the world reinterpreted the global sound source 'ODA Song,' produced by the 5th WeKO supporters in 2023, in various forms such as musical instruments, sign language, and dance. The ensemble music video depicting the process also received a positive response, reaching 2.25 million views on YouTube. Additionally, it garnered great attention for its novel and innovative promotional activities, such as directly using AI to produce KOICA's artificial intelligence chatbot, ODA GPT.

* **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):** 17 goals in the economic, social, and environmental fields that the international community committed to achieving by 2030 at the 2015 United Nations General Assembly

Pop-up store 'PeKO GARDEN' opened

Using the KOICA communication character 'PeKO', the 'PeKO GARDEN' pop-up store was operated near Seoul Forest in Seongdong-gu, Seoul, from November 8 to 10. This marked the first time KOICA launched an offline pop-up store using its character and it was designed to provide an opportunity for visitors to reflect on the meaning of peace and happiness with PeKO, while naturally considering the value of ODA.

'PeKO GARDEN' was designed as an experiential healing space in the city, resembling a forest. The 'Finding Seeds of Peace' experience zone allowed participants to search for the seeds that PeKO had planted throughout the garden, filled with flowers and grass, for the peace of the world. The 'Tending a Forest of Peace' game zone emphasized the need for greater interest and participation from people to create a world where everyone lives well, featuring gardening game experiences such as 'Cultivating Land' and 'Making Photosynthesis' to grow seeds. The 'Decorating the Tree of Peace' message zone was set up to allow participants to share positive energy by writing and hanging their own messages on the Tree of Peace, ranging from grand wishes like world peace or environmental protection to personal goals they hope to achieve before the end of the year. In addition, during the pop-up store operation period, KOICA also joined hands with FPP, a plogging (a concept combining physical activity and nature conservation by jogging and collecting roadside litter) volunteer group, through the Junksy Challenge for a Guinness World Records attempt, which FPP is promoting.

The pop-up store 'PeKO GARDEN', which was visited by 2,700 people over 3 days, successfully concluded the event, carrying out meaningful activities to promote KOICA and spread the value of ODA.



At the '2030 Global ODA Awards,' the performance-sharing session of the 6th WeKO Global Supporters, participants pose for a commemorative photo holding the PeKO trophy at the event photo zone.

Goodbye, 6th WeKO! Performance sharing session

The 6th WeKO successfully concluded a performance-sharing session to reflect on the achievements of the past five months on December 6 at the KOICA headquarters in Seongnam-si, Gyeonggi-do. The session was held in the format of the '2030 Global ODA Awards,' tailored to 2030, the year the SDGs are set to be achieved, where the 6th WeKO was invited. The event consisted of a performance-sharing video screening, an award ceremony for outstanding supporters, a closing congratulatory show, and an encouraging speech by the KOICA President. The awards ceremony was divided into domestic (individual/team) and global (individual) categories. Yoon Ye-in and Lee Young-jin won the top prizes in the domestic individual category, and Marie Aude Renee Ngom (Senegal) was selected as the grand prize winner in the global category. Lee Young-jin, who received the grand prize in the domestic individual category, said, "I liked that I got to know many people from around the world and feel like a global citizen through the commonality of WeKO," adding, "It was a very meaningful time where I could feel and learn a lot as an international undergraduate student."Marie Aude Renee Ngom, winner of the grand prize in the global category, expressed her gratitude to KOICA, saying, "I would like to express my appreciation to KOICA for providing a great opportunity for foreigners who do not live in Korea. Thanks to that, we were able to connect with each other so closely."

In his encouraging speech, KOICA President CHANG Won Sam said, "I am grateful for the 6th WeKO's efforts as KOICA global supporters to promote ODA to the world with creative ideas," adding, "I ask for your continued interest and participation in ODA projects to address ongoing global challenges such as the gap between the rich and the poor, climate change, and conflict." At the event, a video showcasing the entire journey of the '고익하(GOIKHA)' public branding campaign, which started with '고익하를 찾습니다(Finding GOIKHA)' last October, was released and received a big round of applause.



Panoramic view of the 'PeKO GARDEN' pop-up store near Seoul Forest in Seongdong-gu, Seoul



At the 'PeKO GARDEN' pop-up store, visitors are engaging in an experiential activity of cultivating a forest of peace.

KOICA's potential directly confirmed in the Philippines

"Yet surprisingly, ODA changes the lives of countless people"

"It's amazing that so many people in our country are working together to help the Philippines." Han Soo-ryeon, a member of the 2nd WeKO group, expressed admiration when she attended the 30th-anniversary ceremony of the KOICA Philippines Office held in Manila, Philippines, on September 26. The event was held to commemorate KOICA's 30-year history of providing grant aid to the Philippines since 1991 and to explore future cooperation plans with key partners. The ceremony was attended by about 180 people, including Lee Sang-hwa, Korean Ambassador to the Philippines; Kim Dong-ho, Director of KOICA; Kim Eun-sub, Country Director of the KOICA Philippines Office; and representatives from donor agencies and international organizations. Ms. Han, who is majoring in sociology in college, was invited as an outstanding member of 'KOICA Global Supporters WeKO,' which promotes KOICA's international development cooperation activities. In addition to Ms Han, five young people from WeKO, including Kim Do-hwi, Park Hye-ryeong, Lee Joo-hee, Im Won-bin and Shin Ji-won, were invited to visit KOICA project sites in the Philippines from 23 to 27 September.

Focus on health and education in the Philippines due to "record damage"

The first area they visited was Tacloban, which suffered the most damage from Super Typhoon Haiyan, which struck the Philippines in August 2013. Tacloban is the main city of Leyte Province in the Central Visayas of the Philippines. More than 10,000 people, or over 5% of its total population, died as a result of Typhoon Haiyan. At the time, many countries and international organizations, including Korea, dispatched emergency relief teams and supported recovery efforts, but it was not enough to create a blueprint for long-term reconstruction. At this time, the project areas that KOICA focused on were health and education. This was because it was essential for the long-term reconstruction of the region to address the high maternal and



Outstanding WeKO members taking a commemorative photo at the Tacloban ALS Education Center



Commemorative Photo for the 30th Anniversary Celebration of the Opening of the KOICA Philippines Office

child mortality rates and poverty issues that had arisen as a result of the typhoon.

First of all, KOICA launched the Maternal and Child Health Promotion Project in the Eastern Visayas Region of the Philippines in 2021, targeting 16 vulnerable areas in the Visayas region, including Leyte and Eastern Samar. In addition to basic medical support, KOICA also facilitated resident participation activities, policy advocacy initiatives, and educational programs. To date, KOICA has provided local health education to 3,539 people and home visit services to 46,205 households in the process. KOICA also offered training for health professionals, resulting in the development of 276 local health workers, and supplied 11 ambulances. During this visit, WeKO members visited a health facility in the Bulod area, where vulnerable residents reside after being relocated to avoid disaster-prone areas affected by floods and landslides after Typhoon Haiyan, and reviewed the project achievements to date.

Supporting women's learning and self-reliance through alternative education projects

A representative educational initiative is the 'Education Project for Out-of-School Girls in the Tacloban Region, UNESCO, Philippines,' conducted in collaboration with UNESCO since 2017. Aiming to support women who lost educational opportunities after Typhoon Haiyan in becoming self-reliant, various initiatives were implemented, including the establishment and operation of the 'Tacloban Alternative Education Center' and the provision of educational and employment opportunities for women. In particular, the ALS (Alternative Learning System) curriculum and teaching materials developed by KOICA were piloted in Tacloban City in 2018 and expanded nationwide in the Philippines by 2023, benefiting more than 400 students and 8,000 teachers. Women who graduated from the ALS Education Center are in their 20s to 40s and have continued their careers through employment after graduation.

Young participants from WeKO, who visited the Bulod District Public Health Branch, the Tacloban ALS Education Center, and attended the 30th-anniversary ceremony of the KOICA Philippines office, said in unison, "We were able to see that our country is collaborating with various stakeholders to address global challenges." Lee Joo-hee said, "I realized the need for international development cooperation projects when I saw children playing energetically despite the poor conditions in damaged areas like Tacloban," adding, "After witnessing KOICA's efforts, I felt that as a citizen of my country, I should continue to be interested in development cooperation projects and seek ways to help." Below is a Q&A with outstanding WeKO activists Han Su-ryeon and Lee Joo-hee.

Interview 1: Han Su-ryeon (23)



Department of Sociology, Ajou University

Q What is the background for your participation in this overseas itinerary?

When participating in WeKO in 2020, my team won the grand prize for its active involvement, which allowed me to accompany this itinerary. I've always been curious about how projects operate locally and their impact on the community, so being a part of this event is truly meaningful to me.

Q Who is the most memorable person from this trip?

One beneficiary student I met during my visit to the ALS Education Center remains the most memorable. She was the mother of three children and was studying at the ALS Education Center. I vividly remember her crying as she told me how, when she was young, her family's financial situation was challenging, and she had to give up her studies to work and support her younger brother's education.

It saddened me to reflect on how the lives of Korean mothers might have been similar when Korea was a recipient of foreign aid like the Philippines, and it broke my heart to realize that there are still people facing similar circumstances today. I felt proud that KOICA was addressing this issue through international development cooperation.



Commemorative group photo with officials from health facilities in the Bulod area alongside KOICA staff and WeKO members

Q Please share your impressions of visiting the ODA project site as a representative of the Korean people.

I lived in Laos for 1 year and 6 months, during which I often had the opportunity to meet KOICA employees and volunteers. Seeing people who left their comfortable lives to serve in challenging and difficult environments made me realize that "a project is accomplished by mobilizing significant amounts of money, time, and manpower for the sake of a country," which sparked my interest in KOICA. As I participated in WeKO activities, my desire to see how things actually work in the field grew, and this valuable opportunity for me to take part in was incredibly meaningful. In particular, I had the opportunity to hear, experience, and learn firsthand how KOICA plans and operates its projects in collaboration with various partners, how these initiatives are tailored to local needs and situations, and what tangible results they are producing. I felt honored to experience this field in person as a representative of the Korean people, and I pledged to maintain my interest in international development cooperation activities in the future.

Q If given the opportunity, would you like to visit the project sites again? If so, what would be the reason?

Yes, if I get the chance, I would like to visit project sites in other countries. Since each country has unique social and cultural contexts, the types and methods of projects needed vary as well, which would provide me with a valuable learning experience. I want to see and learn directly from the field to understand how projects are tailored to meet the specific needs of each country, and I hope to use the feedback from these experiences to consider better ways to promote development cooperation.

Q Any specific direction for development cooperation for the benefit of future generations, including youth?

I believe that development cooperation should move in a direction that increasingly emphasizes sustainability and inclusiveness. In particular, I think that future cooperation led by the youth generation should go beyond merely providing economic support to focus on fostering self-reliance and promoting the long-term growth of local communities. Additionally, as various challenges arise with technological advancements, I believe that projects addressing these issues should be integrated into international development cooperation activities.



Bulod Health Center and an ambulance provided by KOICA



Class scene at the ALS Education Center in Tacloban

Q Please tell us how you felt when you completed the task.

Through KOICA's meaningful opportunity, I was able to explore various sites and gain a new understanding of the significance of development cooperation through in-depth conversations with beneficiaries. For me, who had been concerned about my career prospects before graduation, this event was not just an experience, but an opportunity to redefine the direction of my life. I'd like to express my gratitude to KOICA for providing me with this wonderful opportunity. I will continue to join KOICA on its journey to create a better world. Thank you!

Interview 2: Lee Joo-hee (32)



CEO of the eco-friendly outdoor brand RECORE

Q What is the background for your participation in this overseas itinerary?

I gained experience in international development cooperation through WeKO activities, during which I was deeply impressed by KOICA's initiatives. I participated because I thought it would be an opportunity to see the ODA project firsthand as a representative of the Korean people and to raise awareness about its importance among more people.

Q Please share if there is a particular place or episode from this itinerary that stands out as the most memorable for you.

When I visited the flood damage site in Tacloban, Philippines, I witnessed a region starting anew after overcoming the devastation of the typhoon. I especially remember the young children running around and playing energetically, even in such challenging circumstances. Through my experience there, I was able to feel firsthand the need for development cooperation and realized that KOICA's support was making a tangible difference in the local community.

Q You visited the ODA project site as a representative of the Korean people. Please share your impressions.

I was able to feel how many lives were being transformed by international development cooperation. As I met the local residents who benefited from the project in person, I realized that it was providing them with great hope and strength. Through this visit, I hoped that public interest and participation in ODA would grow further.

Q Who is the most memorable person you encountered during this overseas itinerary?

What I remember most is Kim Eun-sub, the director of the KOICA Philippines Office. Director Kim, whom I met in person at the site, passionately explained KOICA's various initiatives. I was greatly inspired by his passion and dedication for my future endeavors.



Residents of Bulod receiving health care education from officials at the health facility

Q As a young person and a representative of the Korean people, what would you like KOICA to do?

I hope that more young people will have the opportunity to participate in international development cooperation in the future. I expect various content and programs to be created to promote the importance of ODA, along with a platform to make it easier for the public to participate. In particular, I hope that KOICA will provide more opportunities for young people to broaden their global perspectives and grow in their local and international communities.

Q Any direction for future development cooperation you think is necessary for the benefit of future generations, including youth?

I believe that development cooperation for future generations should prioritize sustainable development and environmental protection. Beyond short-term support, I believe that development cooperation should focus on helping local communities become self-reliant, and that it's important to provide young people with opportunities to grow through direct participation and problem-solving experiences. I hope that development cooperation will move toward understanding the essence of collaboration and working together to create a sustainable world.

Q Finally, please share your thoughts.

Through this experience, I was reminded once again of the importance of international development cooperation. I am honored that the relationship that began with WeKO has evolved into my role as a representative of the Korean people, and I will continue to take small actions for environmental protection and sustainability in the future. Through the RECORE brand, I aim to share the value of eco-friendly practices with more people and grow the brand into one that fosters change together.



Writer Jeon I-soo conveys messages of peace, love, and happiness through his writings and paintings. Although he is only a teenager, he is active as a painter, writer, and environmental activist, making the title of 'General Artist' quite fitting.

Writer Jeon I-soo, sharing peace, environment and love through writing and drawing

"I hope everyone continues to strive for peace"

Writer Jeon I-soo held a 'Peace Exhibition' at KOICA headquarters in Seongnam, Gyeonggi-do, last November, on the theme of peace, one of KOICA's core values. Currently 16 years old, he is a teenager, yet it might be more fitting to describe him as a versatile artist. Since the publication of his first children's book in 2015, he has published a total of 16 books to date. He's continued to actively support single mothers in Jeju as well as his African friends, while finding time to draw and paint. He is also known as an environmental activist for his consistent participation in environmental movements. From his perspective as the future generation of Korea, what does our society look like?

Q You've been engaged in a wide variety of activities. Could you please introduce yourself and tell us what you do?

Hello everyone. My name is Jeon I-soo, a painter and writer. My activities are not very special. I write about what I see and feel in my daily life, and sometimes I draw some of it. Before I realized it, they had become a series of books and paintings. And these works are on permanent display at the 'Walking Wolves' exhibition hall located on Hamdeok Beach, Jeju Island. I hope that these works warm people's hearts and that those feelings are shared with one another, making the world a little brighter.

Q In November, you held a 'Peace Exhibition' with KOICA as part of the 2024 KOICA '추(秋)카제' special exhibition. How did this exhibition come about?

Last October, I held a special fundraising exhibition with World Vision in Hyehwa-dong, Seoul. This exhibition was something I planned after visiting Rwanda, Africa, last year, with the goal of building a school for children. KOICA took notice of the exhibition and recommended it, which allowed me to continue with this meaningful exhibition.

Q What do you think 'peace' is?

When we talk about peace, the opposite word, 'war,' always comes to mind. It is said that peace is the absence of war, but war has persisted as long as humans have lived in civilization. Unfortunately, ongoing conflicts, such as the war between Ukraine and Russia, and between Israel and Hamas in the Middle East, continue to affect many lives. What makes me even sadder is the fact that while war continues on one side of the world, people on the other side live as if nothing is happening. 'Peace' is my dream.

Q I am curious about the message you wanted to convey with the works in this exhibition.

All the work I do is based on what I see, hear, and feel in my daily life. Among them, the works in this exhibition contain stories of hope, love, and happiness. I hope that through the stories contained in the work, people can let go of their greed and take a step toward 'peace.'



<Persistence>, Jeon I-soo's favorite among the works exhibited at the 'Peace Exhibition'

Q Which of your works is your favorite and what message does it convey?

I like my work titled '고집(Obstinacy).' The message the work contains is as follows: 'People of different colors living in a world of the same color. The eyes that look at each other, as if their thoughts are all right, are still compromising, showing that we are still together, crying and laughing together...' I believe that even people of different backgrounds living in a world full of diversity can look at each other, cry and laugh together, and live together. To do that, we must keep making efforts.

Q You were born in 2008 and wrote your first children's book at the age of eight. I'm curious why you decided to become an artist at such a young age.

I learned Korean later than other kids my age. As a result, when I was young, I expressed my feelings and opinions through drawing rather than writing. This led me to create many drawings, which I was able to compile and exhibit for the first time when I was seven years old. In fact, I think it was a path I naturally chose without even realizing it. Fortunately, this choice suits me well and I am very happy with it.



Works displayed at the 'Peace Exhibition': From the left, <Mom's Heart>, <Love Printing>, <Windy Day>



Artist Jeon I-soo, immersed in painting

Q As an environmental activist, you are also very interested in the environment. Is your interest in the environment related to Jeju Island, where you currently live?

When I came to Jeju Island at the age of seven, I was shocked to see massive, beautiful trees over 100 years old, standing majestically by the roadside, being cut down with chainsaws to make way for buses. I was heartbroken and upset to see hundreds of trees, which made people happy just by looking at them, being cut down every day. I felt sorry that my younger brother and friends had to grow up in a world that was changing so rapidly for the convenience and benefit of people. I thought that in order to change this, people's consciousness needed to change first, so I began writing and drawing with my own message. That was the starting point, and since then, I have consistently created books about the environment.

Q You are carrying out activities to help Africa. What are the specific activities? What prompted you to start?

Last year, I traveled to Africa with my younger siblings. After seeing and hearing about the hardships of African children's lives, I realized how much I take for granted, which made me feel more grateful. It also made me think more about the imbalance that comes from an unequal world. I thought it would be good to work harder with the skills I have and share them with the friends I met in Africa. So, I plan to hold an exhibition, sell my paintings, and use the profits to build a school in Africa.

Q Who is your role model?

My role model is Michael Jackson. He worked hard to overcome the discrimination he faced for being black and eventually became the best singer in the world. And even after becoming the best in the world, he continued his efforts to make the world a brighter and happier place. This feeling is also well expressed in many of the songs he composed. Like Michael Jackson, I want to become a person who constantly works hard to create a better world for people and the environment.

Q As a future generation, what do you think is the most pressing problem that needs to be solved in this era or by humanity?

I believe that all the problems in the world are caused by excessive greed and competition that have taken root in people's minds without their knowledge. I think excessive greed leads to strife and war, while excessive competition destroys the environment and harms the world. I wish we could live together with others and create a better world together. Along with this, I believe it is important to receive good character education from a young age. I think many of the problems that occur in our country stem from excessive competition that ignored character education from an early age.

Q Please tell us what values you personally consider most important and what your ideal world would look like.

The value I consider most important is love. If you look closely, you'll notice that people, from very young children to fully grown adults, seek attention and love from others. If we don't have love within us, it's no different from lacking life. Even very selfish people love themselves deeply. However, problems arise when this love becomes unbalanced, overly self-centered, or expressed in an improper way or direction. I think the most ideal world would be one where everyone's diverse expressions of love are balanced, and people truly love each other, themselves, and the world as a whole.

Q What are your future plans and ultimate goals?

I hope that the words I write and the pictures I draw will resonate with and provide comfort to more people, helping them heal from their wounds and love each other. My goal is to make the world a brighter and more enjoyable place to live. To that end, I will not only engage in writing and drawing but also in various other activities, such as music and performances.

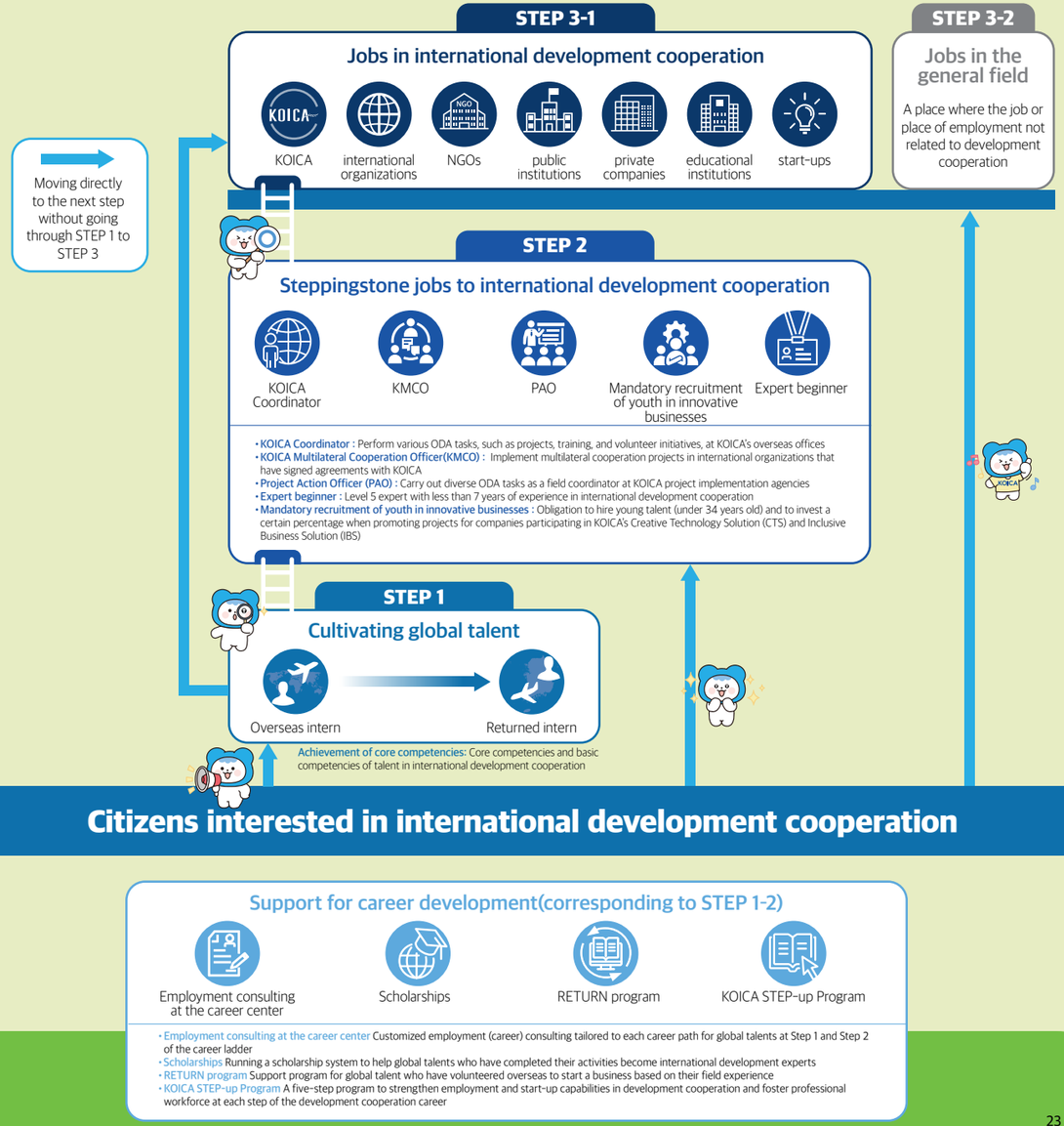


Books by author Jeon I-soo: From the left, <Even If I Can't Remember Everything> <Watermelon>

KOICA Global Talent Development Programs

Shall we climb the ladder together?

KOICA is actively carrying out Global Talent Development Programs. The Global Talent Development Programs are an initiative that supports individuals interested in international development cooperation and helps them grow into experts in domestic and international ODA (Official Development Assistance) by accumulating experience and skills through various activities organized by KOICA. Its representative system is the career ladder. The career ladder is divided into three steps to reach the final goal of finding a job in the field of international development cooperation: Step 1 (overseas volunteer group, young intern at overseas office) → Step 2 (KOICA coordinator, multilateral cooperation expert, project practical expert) → Step 3 (enter public and private sector at home and abroad).





KOICA investigation team, students, faculty, staff, UNICEF and NGO representatives at the Alternative Education Centre in Lempira Department, Honduras

Inclusive and Safe Education for the Most Vulnerable Children and Adolescents in Honduras

Government and local communities rolling up their sleeves to educate children

One in 10 people in Honduras cannot read. According to the Honduran National Institute of Statistics (INE), the illiteracy rate among people aged 15 and older was 13% as of last year. In terms of population, this amounts to 914,000 people, an increase of 1 percentage point compared to the previous year. According to 2019 UNESCO data, Honduras has the second-highest illiteracy rate in Central America for people aged 15 and older, after Guatemala.

Honduras is one of the countries with the lowest learning levels, even in Latin America. Due to financial difficulties, some young people go to work to make a living instead of attending school, while others give up their studies after becoming parents at a young age due to teenage pregnancy. The situation worsened in 2020 due to the pandemic and natural disasters. During the pandemic, academic work was halted, and two strong typhoons struck, damaging many schools and making it difficult to continue classes.

KOICA will carry out a support project covering over 500 schools and local communities in Honduras from this year until 2028. It is a large-scale project with a total budget of 10.4 billion won. First of all, KOICA will provide innovative alternative education to schools in order to increase access to education for underprivileged youth under the age of 17 and to enable them to continue their studies. KOICA will also pursue improvements in drinking water and sanitation services to address community health and climate change.

Improving academic sustainability through locally tailored education

This project will target local communities in four Departments in Honduras: El Paraíso, Francisco Morazán, Intibucá, and Lempira.

Programs conducted in schools are largely divided into the installation of drinking water and sanitation facilities and the implementation of alternative education. Drinking water and sanitation facilities are essential for preventing various diseases, including infectious diseases such as COVID-19, but they are scarce in schools in Honduras. As a result, hygiene education is not properly implemented, and the problem is particularly acute in rural areas.

Lim Da-jeong, coordinator of the KOICA Guatemala Office, said: "Most of the schools lack proper learning spaces, as well as drinking water and sanitation facilities, resulting in very poor conditions. In addition, with so many students per teacher, it is almost impossible to conduct classes according to level". She continued, "KOICA is working to create an education-friendly environment in schools and communities, making it natural for children to attend school, while also introducing alternative education modules tailored to the circumstances of Honduras.

KOICA plans to assess the demand for drinking water and sanitation facilities in each school and implement improvements to toilets, piping systems, sewage treatment facilities, and rainwater harvesting systems. To provide safer and more effective water and sanitation services, KOICA also plans to improve drinking water and sanitation facilities in the community where the school is located.

The alternative education program directly introduces methods that reflect the needs of each school according to its circumstances. Representative examples include the Tutorial Learning System (SAT), which helps students learn various skills necessary for livelihoods; the Educational Bridge, which helps students who have returned after dropping out of school resume basic education; and the Learning Passport, which enables digital education in environments where students cannot attend school.

Innovative alternative education techniques were designed to include youth who cannot access public education due to the absence of schools in their villages, as well as out-of-school children, such as those who attempted to immigrate to the United States and later returned. In particular, the local Ministry of Education is willing to consider the introduction of SAT, an alternative secondary education program for grades 7 to 12, to be implemented in areas where there are no secondary schools.



Students from the Alternative Education Center are explaining the education and activities carried out at the school to visitors, including the KOICA investigation team.



Drinking water and sanitation facilities built at an elementary school in the Francisco Morazán Department of Honduras through a KOICA support project

Places of learning where school and community work together

In addition to improving the physical and systematic environment of the school, the capacity of child protection and health services in the community where the school is located is also strengthened. In particular, KOICA plans to implement a protocol that will enable early identification of victims of violence or students with health problems through coordination between schools, child protection agencies, and health care facilities to ensure that they receive the necessary help within the community.

One of the health-related issues facing local children and youth is adolescent pregnancy. The average adolescent pregnancy rate in Honduras is around 22.9%. In the target areas of the project, all Departments except for Francisco Morazán (12.6%), Intibucá (32.1%), Lempira (28.3%), and El Paraíso (24.2%) exceed the national average. In particular, teenage pregnancy is considered a factor that has long-term negative effects on health, education, and child protection, including increasing the school dropout rate among adolescent females, leading to the birth of premature babies due to early delivery, and increasing poverty rates. In response, KOICA plans to educate child guardians, including adolescent mothers, on proper parenting methods and provide child development education, health services, and childcare services to improve their child-rearing conditions and offer learning opportunities.



Through the first support project, KOICA improved drinking water and sanitation facilities in elementary schools in the Francisco Morazán Department and provided related education. At an elementary school visited by the KOICA investigation team, students are welcoming the team with balloons and picket signs.

UNICEF, a project partner of KOICA, operates a consultative body with related organizations, including the Honduran Presidential Poverty Reduction Program, the Ministry of Social Security, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Children and Youth. KOICA plans to support the development of more effective education policies based on accurate data about the current education environment. Lim Da-jeong, the coordinator, said, "We hope that more children can attend school by transforming schools into true learning centers and safe spaces," adding, "For the impact of this project to extend beyond the beneficiary areas and reach the entire country, full support and collaboration between local communities and the Honduran government are essential."

Collection of winning entries from the overseas volunteer photo contest

Moving forward together with future generations

KOICA is a reliable partner that helps our children dream of a happy tomorrow. KOICA is dedicated to creating a medical environment where everyone can lead a healthy life without getting sick, continues to support projects that ensure equal educational opportunities for all, regardless of gender or region, and fosters a sustainable environment where everyone can achieve economic independence through the right to work. A society where no one is left out and equal opportunities are provided, the future that the children of future generations dream of, will become our real future.


Do Ga-shil <'Our happy time' at Phnom Penh Kindergarten, Cambodia>


Kim On-yu <Let's gather together, Forest of East Timor>


Ham Bo-ram <'Yes!' Playing jegichagi with Tanzania orphanage children>


Yang Min-cheol <Hands held together>


Choi Seon-ha <Rwandan students learning Korean fan dance>


Jung Tae-jeong <A large, happy family of 10 siblings>


Lee Jin-eun <Integrated class 'Round Round' of disabled and non-disabled altogether>


Choi Seon <Sparkling moments of learning>

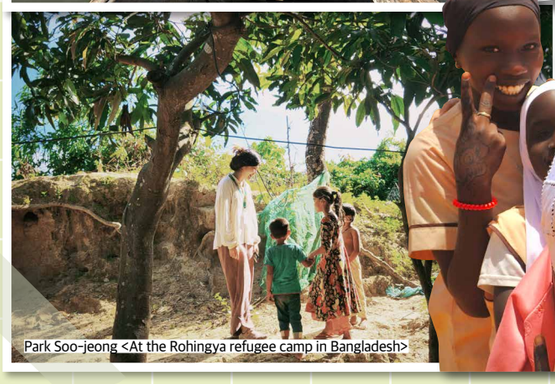

Song Yun-seung <Becoming one over the fence>


Jang Seo-yeon <A Journey into Happiness>


Jung Eun-young <Ethiopian Korean War Veterans Village Kindergarten Graduation Ceremony>


Choi Ha-eun <To all the moments I loved>


Oh Ye-jin <Kar-Karrwanda, the land of happiness>


Park Soo-jeong <At the Rohingya refugee camp in Bangladesh>


Choi Joo-hee <With Senegal's 'Jewels'>

Establishing social enterprises that create mutual benefits for partner countries

KOICA fosters global talent through its ‘Return Program’



Overview of the Return Program Fellow IR Day event held at KOICA headquarters in Seongnam, Gyeonggi-do last November

KOICA is carrying out various projects to discover and support competitive talent. A prime example is the Return Program. The Return Program is one of KOICA's global talent training projects, in which KOICA supports the establishment of social ventures that create mutual benefits for partner countries, based on the experience of global talents who have worked in partner countries as KOICA Overseas Volunteers or Young Professionals (YP).

1. The Return Program, according to KOICA's representative in charge

Q What are the motives and background of the Return Program?

There are many talented individuals who have experienced solving social problems in developing partner countries through KOICA's global talent training projects. Many of them wish to start a business locally or launch ventures related to multiculturalism upon returning to their home country. In response to this, KOICA designed the Return Program to support not only employment at existing development cooperation-related organizations but also to help young talents who have completed their activities turn their startup ideas into reality. Four years later, KOICA is currently supporting Return Program Fellow companies, addressing the needs of early-stage businesses that have successfully launched and are on the path to growth.

Q What kind of training do participating teams receive through the Return Program?

The Return Program provides startup-related training for 8 to 10 weeks to participating teams in collaboration with a professional accelerator. Training on business model establishment is provided to prospective startup teams, while specialized training to attract investment is offered to teams that have already started their business.



Woo Yoo-kyung, Assistant Manager, Department of Evaluation, KOICA

Q What additional support does KOICA provide to participating teams?

New teams in the Return Program receive 5 million won in commercialization support funds, along with business competency enhancement training, expert consulting, opportunities to participate in IR pitching competitions, and networking with KOICA partner companies.

Q Do most of the teams that complete the program actually start businesses?

To date, about 13 teams have successfully started businesses, and there are additional teams continuing their operations as sole proprietorships, even if they have not registered as corporations. Teams that have completed the Return Program pursue a range of careers, including employment at international organizations and participation in ODA projects, in addition to registering corporations.

Q How long is their average preparation period for starting a business?

The preparation period for starting a business varies widely for each team, making it difficult to provide an average. Until 2-3 years ago, the rate of starting a business immediately after completing the Return Program was high. However, recently, more individuals are choosing to gain additional experience as prospective entrepreneurs before registering a corporation.

Preparation	Growth	Take off
Gain insights	Turn ideas into reality	Commercialize ideas
Evolving into a global talent with local expertise and gaining insights into solving social problems both at home and abroad through KOICA's development cooperation experience	Growing into a global leader and social entrepreneur by accumulating experience in idea validation and commercialization through the Return Program	Contributing to creating economic value and realizing social value after growing as a social enterprise through the follow-up management and support provided by the Return Program Fellowship
Field experience in international development cooperation through KOICA (Overseas Volunteer, Young Professional, Coordinator, etc.) ⇩ Solve social problems, Discover ideas	Verify and materialize ideas, strengthen startup capabilities ⇩ Advance ideas	Start a social economy enterprise Strengthen market competitiveness and develop sales channels ⇩ Commercialize ideas

Q Please tell us about the representative results of the Return Program.

We feel most rewarded when participating teams achieve results such as attracting investment or winning contracts from international organizations. Last year, a Return Program company called GREENGOODS received a $500,000 investment from the Asian Development Bank (ADB). This was a notable example of how GREENGOODS' efforts to create both economic and social value truly shined.

Q What is the Return Program Fellowship system?

It provides continuous follow-up management and networking opportunities for teams that have completed the Return Program, as well as for companies that have won the KOICA Sponsorship Award at the Social Venture Contest, helping them maintain their entrepreneurial drive and sense of belonging. In particular, in the fourth quarter of this year, KOICA plans to use this system to hold IR Day to attract investment and support networking, as well as KOICA Solution Day to showcase key achievements of the Return Program, aiming to create and expand program results.

Q Please let us know when to apply for the Return Program, the qualifications required, and how to participate.

Recruitment for new Return Program teams takes place around May each year. To take part in the Return Program, you must form a team of two or more people, including KOICA global talent, and submit a business proposal along with the required documents. Please check the notice posted on KOICA's official website for the exact timing and participation details.

Q What are your future plans for operating the Return Program?

The Return Program, now in its 5th year of operation, will continue to expand and enhance support for global talent startups, serving as a strong stepping stone for many talented Koreans to realize their ambitious dreams on the global stage.

2. Best Practices for the Return Program Fellowship

#1
“Creating participatory cultural and artistic content with Senegalese artists”

Return Program Support Details

Training provided	Training on business models, marketing, IR pitching, and more to strengthen start-up capabilities
Consultation provided	Consultation with experts and senior entrepreneurs through one-on-one matching
Commercialization funding support	5 million won in commercialization funds for each team and various prize support (for outstanding activities, IR pitching, etc.)
Networking drive	Networking with the Return Program senior team and KOICA partner companies
Scale-up support	Scale-up support through proposal consultation and linkage with impact investment firms

Return Program Fellowship Support Details

1. Professional consultation	Consultation tailored to corporate needs, including legal, patent and accounting
2. Proposal consultation	Support for editing proposals when participating in start-up support programs and contests
3. Participation in IR Day	Prize support and impact investment linkage through participation in Return Program Fellowship IR Day
4. Networking	Networking support with KOICA partner companies and invitations to related events
5. Regular provision of information	KOICA Corporate Cooperation Program information mailing provided
6. Training provided	Opportunity to participate in the KOICA Corporate Capacity Building Program



Jeong Ji-eun, CEO of Droitshumains (4th Return Program)

Q Please introduce Droitshumains' main business.

Droitshumains is a social enterprise that contributes to solving social issues through participatory art and cultural content. We collaborate with Senegalese artists to produce coloring books that help alleviate daily stress through art. In this way, we provide Senegalese artists with opportunities to engage in social art projects and receive fair compensation, helping them on their path to self-reliance. In addition, through the 'Social Art Project - Talibés,' we are exhibiting works that feature the dreams and portraits of Senegalese talibés and selling related goods to raise awareness about their stories.

Q I was told you decided to start a business through the Return Program.

As part of the KOICA Overseas Volunteers program, I was dispatched to the National School of Arts in Senegal, where I worked with students to plan various projects aimed at contributing to society through artistic activities. In particular, I tried to raise awareness about the Senegalese talibés and find ways to address the issue through art. At the same time, I planned cultural and artistic content to provide economic support to Senegalese artists, which ultimately led me to decide to start a business.

Q What kind of support and help did you receive through the Return Program?

Thanks to the Return Program funding, I was able to produce promotional materials and prototypes, and fair fees were paid to Senegalese artists who participated in designing the coloring books. Additionally, I was able to strengthen my business strategy through startup competency training and IR pitching training provided by the Return Program. I also had the valuable opportunity to closely review and improve my overall business through mentoring sessions held twice a month by the Return Program mentors.

Q Please tell us about your future business goals.

Droitshumains aims to drive social change through art and cultural content and will continue to expand this vision. I plan to create more job opportunities for artists in developing countries and expand donation activities to help them achieve self-reliance. To this end, I will maximize the value of artistic content, such as coloring books, and focus on sales activities to solidify their position in the global market. Droitshumains will continue its journey to change the world through art.

#2
"Developing green banana flour as a substitute for wheat flour with small farmers in the Philippines"



Cha Hong-sun, CEO of Cornerstone T&M (2nd Return Program)

Q Please introduce Cornerstone T&M's main business.

Cornerstone T&M produces green banana flour raw materials in the Philippines and imports them to Korea to manufacture and sell gluten-free and sugar-free products made from green banana flour. Currently, Cornerstone T&M is developing new low-sugar cookie products.

Q How did you participate in the Return Program?

In 2013, while dispatched to a local NGO in the Philippines through the COPION long-term overseas volunteer program, I met Filipino small-scale banana farmers and was inspired to do something with them. Initially, we produced and sold naturally fermented vinegar made from bananas, along with other natural alternative foods and beverages. However, due to the COVID-19 situation in 2020, I had no choice but to return home. After returning to Korea, I was able to advance my business further by participating in the KOICA Return Program.

Q What kind of support and help did you receive through the Return Program?

With the Return Program support funding, I tested the versatility of green banana flour imported from the Philippines in actual cooking with the help of a chef. As a result, I found that while bread and noodles are challenging to make, cookies, cupcakes, pancakes, financiers, and waffles can be successfully produced. Furthermore, I was able to develop a mix product that can be combined with other ingredients to create various desserts.

Q Please tell us about your future business goals.

I'm confident that my product offers the best quality and price among the green banana flour produced in the Philippines. Currently, we are gradually preparing to enter the Philippine B2B market and expand into overseas markets in Europe. In addition, my goal is to gradually but firmly establish the 'bananaisland' brand in Korea.

Meeting with American Peace Corps volunteers who helped Korea 50 years ago

"Volunteering overseas as a young person, an opportunity to grow into a competitive future generation"



U.S. Peace Corps members who volunteered in Korea in the 1970s, along with volunteers dispatched by the Korean government, gathered at KOICA headquarters in Seongnam, Gyeonggi-do. From the left: Lee Hwa-yeon, KOICA Volunteer Program Management Team Manager, Kim Seon-kee, Administrative Assistant, Gerrard Krzic, FoK President, Roger Higbie, Lawyer, Cha Su-jin, Volunteer Recruitment Team Associate

Discussion participants

USA Gerrard Krzic, Professor at Ohio University and Chairman of FoK;
Roger Higbie, Lawyer

Korea Lee Hwa-yeon, KOICA Volunteer Program Management Team Manager (Chairperson);
Cha Su-jin, Volunteer Recruitment Team Associate (former WFK KOICA-Youth Volunteer);
Kim Seon-kee, Volunteer Program Management Team Administrative Assistant (former UN Youth Volunteer)

U.S. Peace Corps members who had served in Korea in the 1970s met with Korean volunteers dispatched by the Korean government and shared valuable experiences as overseas volunteers. It was at the Friends of Korea* (Peace Corps Alumni Association) meeting held on November 1 at the lounge of the KOICA Training Center in Seongnam, Gyeonggi-do. At the round-table talk, Professor Gerrard Krzic of Ohio University and Lawyer Roger Higbie, who had come to Korea for volunteer work 50 years ago, shared various thoughts on overseas volunteering based on their experiences with Korea's younger generation, including Cha Su-jin, KOICA Volunteer Recruitment Team Associate, and

* **Friends of Korea (FoK):** Established in 2002 to promote cultural exchange and friendly relations between Korea and the United States by U.S. Peace Corps members who had served in Korea from 1966 to 1981.

Kim Seon-kee, Volunteer Program Management Team Administrative Assistant. They also emphasized that volunteering abroad is more than just an act of helping others; it is a valuable experience that helps you grow and has a profound impact on your life.

Chairperson Lee Hwa-yeon, KOICA Volunteer Program Management Team Manager (hereafter, Manager Lee) Thank you for taking the time to join us today. Let's begin a brief but meaningful conversation with two Peace Corps members, now in their 80s, as they recall their time volunteering in impoverished Korea during their 20s, reflecting on their motivation for volunteering, the challenges they faced, and how the experience ultimately impacted their lives.

Kim Seon-kee, Volunteer Program Management Team Administrative Assistant (hereafter, Assistant Kim) Hello! I'm curious about how you two senior volunteers began your journey in overseas volunteer work and why you chose Korea over other countries.

Chairman of FoK, Gerrard Krzic (hereafter, Professor Krzic) I majored in English Education in college and went to Brazil for volunteer work as part of a school program. I stayed with a Brazilian family and taught English at a local international school. I really enjoyed adapting to and embracing the unfamiliar local culture, as well as living with the local people. After graduating from college, I was offered a mission to Korea through the U.S. Peace Corps. I didn't know anything about Korea at the time, but I was even more excited about the opportunity. I arrived in Korea on January 10, 1977, my birthday. Korea felt like a gift to me.



Gerrard Krzic, Professor at Ohio University and Chairman of FoK, who says that his Peace Corps experience in his 20s served as a guide for his life.

Assistant Kim After graduating from college, I went to Thailand to work as a UN Youth Volunteer. I didn't know much about Thailand at the time either, but I was very excited to venture into a world I wasn't familiar with, learn new things, and help others. It sounds like we share similar experiences. At that time, I was working at UNV and was responsible for researching volunteer-related policies in the Asia-Pacific region. It was surprising that so many countries, regardless of their economic size or other circumstances, systematically encourage their citizens to volunteer.

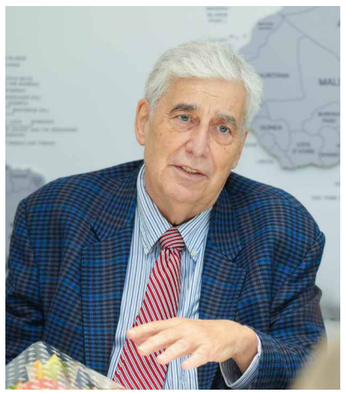
Cha Su-jin, Volunteer Recruitment Team Associate (hereafter, Associate Cha) Before going to Cambodia, I managed projects at an NGO. While working there, I had the opportunity to shed light on the lives of various beneficiaries through projects in Madagascar, Cambodia, and Eswatini. However, I felt there was a limit to understanding their lives by sitting in the office and only seeing them only through reports sent from the local areas. I thought I needed time to visit the site myself, look more deeply into their lives, and think about how I could best help.

Roger Higbie, Lawyer (hereafter, Lawyer Higbie) My motivation was ordinary. I wasn't sure of my career path at the time, and I didn't want to go to graduate school. While working part-time, I received notification of my acceptance into the U.S. Peace Corps. I had never even thought about Korea, but I just wanted to go somewhere and felt really lucky. It turned out to be a fun experience, and it changed my life. I gained confidence that I could live well anywhere, and I developed new interests.

Assistant Kim I think the reason there are so many Peace Corps volunteers in the U.S. is because the country recognizes and rewards the diverse experiences they gain while serving abroad.

Professor Krzic In the United States, the Peace Corps experience is highly regarded. In the 1970s, Peace Corps volunteers received preferential treatment when applying to graduate schools and government jobs. When applying for federal government jobs, former Peace Corps volunteers were given priority consideration. Rather than knowledge about Korea, the experience of volunteering abroad was an important evaluation factor.

Assistant Kim I think this is something that Korean society should learn from. Even if the younger generation in Korea wants to go abroad, they are often hesitant for fear of their careers being set back. Each person may have their own reasons, but especially in the case of college students, there is anxiety and hesitation about long-term volunteering because it often requires taking a long leave of absence from school to participate.



Lawyer Roger Higbie, who explains that volunteers who go overseas and experience local life can become the next generation of State Department or Foreign Service personnel, which in the long run serves the national interest.



Former members of the U.S. Peace Corps and volunteers dispatched by the Korean government shared various opinions on overseas volunteering on November 1 last year.

Manager Lee In the past, volunteering abroad was an attractive opportunity to broaden one's knowledge of the world and gain diverse experiences. However, because there are so many opportunities to go abroad these days, the participation rate of young people in overseas volunteer work is somewhat low. As Assistant Kim mentioned earlier, college students often hesitate to volunteer abroad because they feel the burden of giving up credits, taking a long-term leave of absence, and worrying about finding a job when they return to their home country. Therefore, in order to meet the expectations and demands of young people, KOICA launched the 'Youth Initiative' this year and, based on it, is trying to expand support for young people's overseas volunteer work by introducing a system that recognizes volunteer activities as college credits. In addition, KOICA has reduced the burden of taking a leave of absence by shortening the volunteer period from 1 year to 5 months, and since this year has been running a performance-based project volunteer program designed to build capabilities in planning and implementing projects.

Professor Krzic There is a similar system in the United States, where graduate schools have a system that allows students to receive credits even if they spend one semester on campus and the rest of their time serving in the Peace Corps. You don't have to worry about your career being set back. On the contrary, your volunteer experience will make you more valuable, provide practical experience for your thesis, and help you in many ways after graduation.

Assistant Kim Even though volunteers dispatched overseas do not work for their own citizens, do Americans have any objections to the fact that they receive benefits, such as additional employment points, when they return to their home country?

Lawyer Higbie In the United States, domestic and overseas volunteers are equally compensated and incentivized. Americans believe that the Peace Corps has a significant long-term impact on national interests. This is because volunteers who have gone abroad and experienced local life can become the next generation of personnel at the State Department or Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Because they can develop both national expertise and international relations together. Since there is public consensus on this point, the government also provides benefits.

Professor Krzic In fact, many volunteers have entered the field of diplomacy. A representative figure is former U.S. Ambassador to Korea Kathleen Stephens, who served in the Peace Corps in Korea and became the first female U.S. Ambassador to Korea. Her popularity in Korea was considerable. Spending her 20s in Korea and gaining a deep understanding of the country had a big impact. Such an experience had a great impact on my career too.

Assistant Kim Lawyer Higbie, after returning to the U.S., you got a job in the private sector rather than the public sector. Was your volunteer experience helpful in this regard as well?

Lawyer Higbie I don't know if the younger generation is hesitant, but that experience will never have a negative impact on their career. Rather, they may discover something they want to pursue in a different direction. What you learn abroad helps you in everything, regardless of your career. The experience of going abroad and solving problems on your own at a young age is infinitely more valuable.

Professor Krzic I agree with that. Don't be afraid. It's good to have this experience in your 20s because, as you get older, you take on more responsibilities. In your 20s, you are still figuring out who you are and what you want to do. For me, my Peace Corps experience was a guide to life, and I think I was very lucky to come to Korea. How about you, Su-jin? Do you have any regrets about volunteering?

Associate Cha No, I don't have any. The time I spent as a volunteer had a great influence on my career direction since then. Looking at the beneficiaries in the reports I saw while working at an NGO and the beneficiaries I met in person in the field, I began to think about what I could do in the future to help guide their lives in a more sustainable direction. As a result, I was able to set a career direction by joining KOICA, Korea's leading international development cooperation agency, to do work that would help beneficiaries from a long-term perspective, in addition to providing short-term assistance. I am currently working at KOICA to create sustainable lives for beneficiaries. I think I personally gained a lot because I was able to determine the direction of my life through my volunteer work experience.

Lawyer Higbie Looking back, when I returned home from volunteer work, most of my friends had not entered graduate school. I didn't miss out on anything during those two years.

Professor Krzic Overseas experiences have made me more unique. How many people in the United States in the 1970s went all the way to Korea to volunteer? After returning to the U.S., I felt very special because I had different experiences and capabilities than others. I feel comfortable talking to you because I enjoy sharing those differences with you. Even though we have different cultures and languages, we share something special in common.

Assistant Kim Is there anything you would like to say to young people who are hesitant to volunteer overseas?



Cha Su-jin, Volunteer Recruitment Team Associate (left), and Kim Seon-kee, Volunteer Program Management Team Administrative Assistant, attending the 'U.S. Peace Corps Reunion' roundtable held at KOICA headquarters in Seongnam, Gyeonggi-do last November

Professor Krzic I wanted an environment where I could live with local people, and that was exactly what the Peace Corps provided. That was one of my motivations. This wonderful experience will definitely have a positive influence on you. Even if a difficult situation arises, the growth you achieve over the years will help you handle it well. You will do great.

Associate Cha Life as a volunteer is a great reward that cannot be understood by those who have not experienced it. We have many days ahead of us to give up on that reward. The experience you gain through volunteer work will be an important driving force in your future life. KOICA provides a variety of programs and support measures to help young people develop their careers after returning to Korea. These include the KOICA Career Center, a space for exchanging employment information in the field of international development cooperation, the Return Program that supports business ideas based on volunteer experience, and domestic settlement subsidies for career exploration and employment after homecoming. Everyone can plan their life after returning home by using a program that suits them. I hope that young people will live independent lives rather than following a timeline defined by someone as "what you should do in your 20s."

Manager Lee After listening to these four debaters today, it seems there is no reason to hesitate to volunteer overseas. Despite the age gap between those in their 20s and 80s, it was a time when we became united through the experience of volunteering overseas, and I am grateful that we were able to have honest and warm conversations. Meeting with the members of the U.S. Peace Corps, who have already experienced what Korean youth in their 20s are now concerned about and have successfully pioneered their own lives. I hope that Korean young people will confidently choose to volunteer overseas.

The first Korean chef who opened an Asian restaurant in Tunisia

Land of opportunity for her golden age of life, where she landed on to do volunteer work

When she first set foot in the unfamiliar land of Tunisia, she planned to move to another country after her volunteer work was over and get a job as a chef. But after living in Tunisia for two years, she somehow felt that it was a land of opportunity. Although Asian food is not yet familiar to Tunisians, she envisioned how she could operate and develop a restaurant that locals would genuinely enjoy. That's how 'Le Bambou' was born. LE BAMBOU is the first chapter of the success story of CEO Na Hyun-jeong, the first Korean to register a business in the Tunisian restaurant industry.

Q Could you please introduce the restaurant you are currently running?

The name of the restaurant I run in Tunisia is LE BAMBOU. I opened it in July 2011. I came up with the name while thinking about what images or words would represent Asia. 'LE BAMBOU' means bamboo in French. The menu is based on Asian cuisine, ranging from Northeast Asia to Southeast Asia. The signature dish is a bowl of rice topped with spicy seafood. Every Tunisian likes it, no matter who I recommend it to.

Q Your story as a former KOICA volunteer and now the owner of a restaurant in Tunisia is very interesting. How did you first get involved with the KOICA volunteer program?

While reading a newspaper in 2007, I came across an advertisement for KOICA recruiting overseas volunteers. When I looked closely, I noticed that among the



CEO Na Hyun-jeong who opened the Asian restaurant 'LE BAMBOU' in Tunisia. Her experience as a KOICA volunteer was a great help in starting her own business.



Na Hyun-jeong, CEO of 'LE BAMBOU', with Tunisian staff. She is well aware of the characteristics of Tunisians, which are completely different from Koreans, and utilizes them in running the restaurant.

many fields, there was one for cooking. I thought, 'This is it,' so I applied right away. Ever since I was young, I dreamed of volunteering in a developing country.

Q Do you remember the first time you set foot on Tunisian soil?

I remember it clearly. It was my first time setting foot on the African continent. I remember the exceptionally blue sky, the low-rise buildings, Mediterranean beaches, and friendly people. I was also very impressed by the Roman ruins scattered throughout the city.

Q What did you do as a KOICA volunteer in Tunisia?

Tunisia is a country with a developed tourism industry, with tourism accounting for a significant portion of its GDP. Perhaps that is why the infrastructure related to the tourism industry is quite well-established, and there are high-level tourism education schools run by the government in each major city. I taught Asian food cooking for two years (2009-2010) at a tourism education school in a seaside tourist town called Hammamet.

Q How did you decide to open a restaurant there?

During my stay, I noticed that there were only two Asian restaurants in Tunisia, which I saw as a promising blue ocean opportunity. My original plan was to use the French I learned in Tunisia to find a job in Belgium, Eastern Canada, or France after I finished my volunteer work as a KOICA volunteer. However, I thought that even if I went to work overseas after running a restaurant here for about three years, I would still have many opportunities since I was still in my 20s. So, I turned to starting a business overseas in Tunisia. While preparing the restaurant, I calculated that running a restaurant with an open kitchen, showing myself cooking - something still unfamiliar in Tunisia - would have a ripple effect. My expectation hit the mark, with good word of mouth spreading quickly, and the restaurant has continued to operate stably to this day.

Q Was your experience as a KOICA volunteer helpful in running a restaurant?

My two years of living in Tunisia as a KOICA volunteer laid the foundation for running a restaurant. I gained a lot of valuable experience working with local people and doing volunteer work. First, I learned the language and, as a volunteer, gained knowledge about various aspects that would be helpful for living and doing business in Tunisia, such as its culture, traditions, natural environment, and eating habits.

Q Were there any challenges in running a restaurant in Tunisia?

When I first opened the restaurant, there were no Asian restaurants, so I had no business partners to provide a steady supply of ingredients. Fortunately, many Asian restaurants have opened now, and they are sourcing ingredients through various channels. Another thing that I think people who run businesses overseas can relate to is that I immediately encountered difficulties with the administrative procedures. It was difficult when I first opened the restaurant because the situation was very different from Korea, and all official documents were in Arabic.

But other than that, I'm satisfied with everything else. Actually, there are more pros than cons here. First of all, labor costs are much cheaper than in Korea, and the initial capital required to open a restaurant is also lower than in Korea. Except for the fact that this place is too far from Korea, it is good in all aspects of daily life and business.

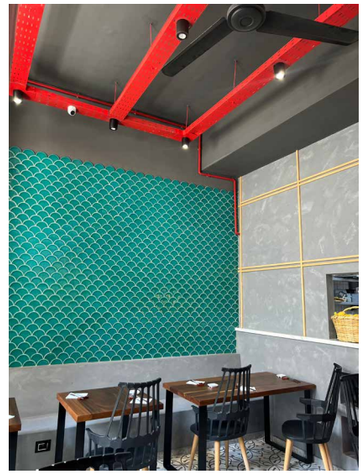
Q Are Tunisian people very different from Koreans?

Since Tunisia is on the opposite side of the globe, everything is different from top to bottom. There's absolutely nothing that's the same - from language and culture to history, appearance, taste, and temperament. If you see these differences as advantages, Tunisia can be a great place to live. However, if you view them as drawbacks, each day may feel stressful. I love the weather here, the natural environment, the Mediterranean Sea just outside the city center, and the Tunisian people as well.

Q Are you the kind of person who likes challenges?

Yes, I crave new things and have no hesitation in choosing a different path from others.





Front and interior views of LE BAMBOU

Q Are there any know-how or tips that can be of practical help to those thinking of starting a business overseas?

Don't think that finding a job or starting a business abroad is too difficult. Prepare as much as possible in advance for what you can do in Korea. However, there will be more problems that need to be solved on the spot, so don't be afraid to tackle them head on.

To give you some know-how on how to start a restaurant business, first select the menu after determining the concept of the restaurant you want to start and the exact target customers. Second, once you have chosen a menu, you need to check whether ingredients can be supplied consistently from the local area throughout the year. It would be nice if it were a country with a well-established distribution system like Korea, but in many cases, that is not the case. So, you need to figure out how to procure food ingredients. Lastly, you need to analyze the commercial area around the restaurant you want to open. In addition to the commercial area within a few kilometers of the restaurant, a comprehensive analysis of the surrounding commercial areas is required.

Nowadays, in the post-COVID era, delivery companies are thriving in almost every country, so it's necessary to explore delivery service areas beyond local commercial zones.



LE BAMBOU's signature menu items: bowl of rice topped with spicy seafood, assorted California rolls, and fried sweet and spicy shrimp (from left)

Q I'm curious about your plans for the future.

In addition to the restaurant I currently run, I would like to open a casual Korean restaurant specializing in Korean food. These days, interest in and preference for Korean food have definitely increased compared to the past. I think there is enough demand. I think this place will become a hub for promoting Korean culture along with Korean food.



On May 20 (local time), KOICA officials visited the Listening and Care Center in Monori, which supports children and women who have been victims of violence, and met with beneficiaries and the center's management.

Supporting Woman and Child Protection Programme in Comoros

Eradicating violence through foster homes and violence recovery support center

Nusra, 16 years old, lives in a foster home on Anjouan Island in the Comoros, East Africa. Nusra left home a year ago when her family decided to marry her off early. It was a marriage without her consent. The problem began when her husband was murdered early in their marriage. Nusra was accused of being an accomplice to the crime and was imprisoned. Fortunately, the culprits who killed her husband were arrested, and the Mutsamudu Court, the first-instance court, sent Nusra to a foster home. Nusra said, "I was able to meet a new family and return to school to continue my studies. Thanks to the support and encouragement to achieve my dream, my self-esteem has also increased significantly."

Comoros is a small island nation with a population of 800,000. It is also a youthful country, with 350,000 people under the age of 18, accounting for 47% of the population. However, due to Islamic culture and the strict interpretation and application of the Quran, women in Comoros often face discrimination in employment and are unable to fully access social welfare services. In particular, the rate of child marriage among females is approximately 26%. Issues such as domestic violence stemming from early marriage and women being forced to abandon their education are emerging one after another. Therefore, there is a significant need for foster homes to protect children, but they face widespread social opposition.

KOICA has implemented a three-year support project, starting in 2021, to protect Comorian women and children from violence and exploitation and to develop a standard system for the protection of human rights. This project has a total budget of $3 million, with 400,000 direct and indirect beneficiaries.

One of KOICA's core initiatives is to increase the number of foster families and raise awareness. Park Geun-seon, Development Cooperation Coordinator at KOICA's Kenya Office, said, "The Comoros government's opposition to the operation of foster homes was a very sensitive issue because it stemmed from the political and diplomatic situation with neighboring countries." She added, "Rather than giving up on the project, KOICA, together with UNICEF, consistently explained the need for the operation of the foster homes, and the Comoros government finally agreed after seeing the children and women who were victims of violence receiving practical support."

The self-reliance support program conducted for women victims of violence is also regarded as a major achievement of this project. KOICA established a violence recovery support center, the Listening and Care Center, and formed a local management team to create a sustainable operational system. The Listening and Care Center receives reports from children and women who have been victims of violence and supports their physical and psychological recovery. This is the first time that a national organization or institution with such a function has been established in the Comoros.

The Comoros government provided land for the establishment of the Center and supported its operational staff. KOICA and the Comoros government mutually agreed that the Center's operation will remain necessary even after the completion of the project, and the Comoros government enacted a law to support the salaries and welfare of the Center's staff at the government level. There are currently five Listening and Care Centers operating throughout the Comoros. UNICEF is working to establish and operate five more centers.

The 'Cash Transfer' program for the economic and social recovery of victims of violence is also popular. This program provides technical training and related equipment to help generate income for women who have been victims of violence. Halima, a program participant, received training in sewing skills that can be directly applied to economic activities and also took part in psychological support and stress management workshops.

She said, "I was able to start a small sewing business and build a two-bedroom house where I can live with my son," adding, "My income has increased, and now I can plan my future in peace." Program participants have learned the skills to make traditional Comorian wedding costumes and are now earning higher incomes than the average in Comoros.

There are more than 100 youth clubs in operation to raise awareness of violence prevention in the local community. The majority of these clubs are affiliated with schools, but there are also about 30 organizations based on local sports clubs. The youth clubs have carried out awareness-raising activities to eradicate sexual violence and Clean Day events. Earlier this year, they also conducted awareness-raising activities to combat cholera, which is prevalent in the region.

"Since the club was established, the children's sociability and self-confidence have improved significantly," said Sayyid Darueche, coordinator of the Patsy Youth Club, adding, "Children who were initially shy and introverted have learned to express themselves more freely and interact with their peers." He continued, "The group activities and workshops hosted by the youth club have helped children develop leadership and teamwork skills, which have had a positive impact on their academic performance and overall well-being."

Satisfaction with local governments in Comoros is high. "Through this program, child marriages have significantly decreased in several local communities, and relevant legal documents have been disseminated," said Sitina Salim, Director of Gender and Public Relations for Anjouan Island, Comoros. "Through education initiatives, awareness campaigns, and community support, we have been able to protect thousands of children and provide them with better opportunities for the future."



On May 24 last year (local time), officials from KOICA's Kenya Office and UNICEF's Comoros Office gathered for a group photo.



A group photo of a youth club operating with the purpose of raising awareness of violence prevention

KOICA Development Cooperation Exhibition Hall drawing contest winners

The sustainable future dreamed of by future generations

The KOICA Development Cooperation Exhibition Hall held a drawing contest for children under the theme ‘The sustainable future we dream of.’ What will the future, drawn by children with cute little hands, look like? Let’s now embark on a journey into a world of pure and ingenious imagination.



Work by **Choi Seo-eun**



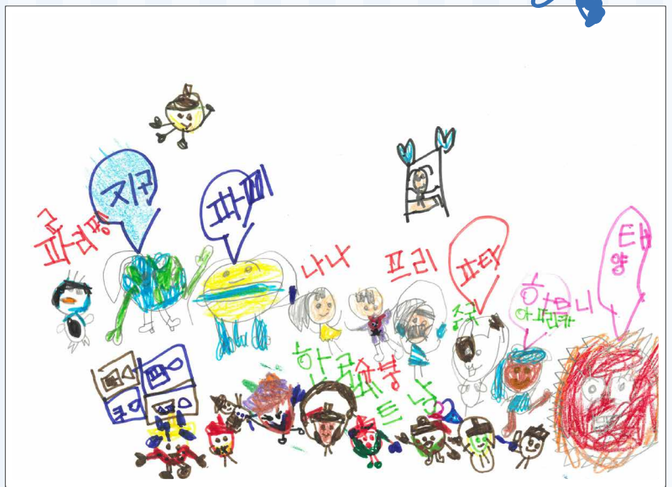
Work by **Park Yu-ju**



Work by **Lee Jae-ah**



Work by **Oh Yeon-seo**



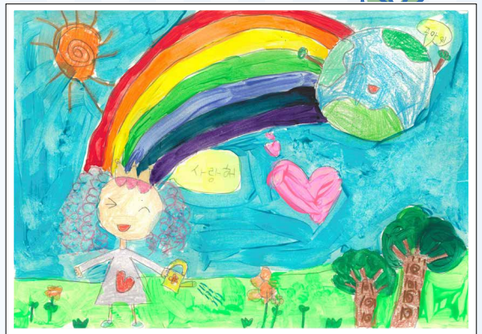
Work by **Ahn So-yoon**



Work by **Oh Yeon-joon**



Work by **Lee Seon-woo**



Work by **Lee Jae-ee**



Work by **Kim Ji-seok**



Work by **Lee Ji-yu**



Work by **Jung I-re**

Meeting with a young expert who achieved her dream by climbing the KOICA Career Ladder

"Dream of working for an international organization? You need to grow into the talent they covet"

Those interested in development cooperation hope to work for an international organization such as the UN. In fact, many young people turn their eyes abroad to realize their dream of joining international organizations. For such individuals, Young expert Yang Da-young is a good example and mentor. She is currently pursuing her dream at the UNICEF Bangladesh Office. How did she get to where she is now? She said that it all started when she met KOICA.



Yang Da-young, young expert at UNICEF Bangladesh Office

Q Please introduce yourself.

Hello. My name is Yang Da-young, and I have been working as an education consultant at the UNICEF Bangladesh Office since June of last year.

Q What kind of work are you currently doing at the UNICEF Bangladesh Office?

I am currently in charge of the Alternative Learning Program (ALP) in the education team of the Bangladesh Office. This program, run by UNICEF's Bangladesh Office, provides vocational training aimed at strengthening the capabilities of out-of-school youth and is an important support project that offers opportunities for job creation and income growth.

I am in charge of the overall monitoring and communication of this program, and I am also developing a system that can monitor various ALPs within the team in real time. This system is currently in pilot testing and will soon be deployed in the field. I feel anticipation and excitement every day as I think about the day approaching when this monitoring system, in which I actively participated in developing, will be used throughout Bangladesh.

Q Please tell us about your most memorable activities while working at the Bangladesh Office.

The most memorable activity was the monitoring experience where I was able to visit the site, meet the beneficiaries in person, listen to their stories, and see how the project we were working on was having a positive impact on their lives. These field experiences have always been an important source of nourishment for me and a driving force to continue doing this work.

Among non-work activities, I particularly remember various staff events, such as the seasonal fruit festival and the Bangladesh New Year celebration, organized by the Bangladesh Office every year. Through these events, foreign employees were able to experience Bangladeshi culture and interact naturally with local colleagues.

Q When did you first realize that you wanted to work for an international organization?

Actually, I didn't always have a clear dream of working for an international organization since childhood. Rather, as I accumulated various experiences, I naturally became interested in the field of international development cooperation. After entering university, I tried to make the most of my vacation each semester by participating in various activities. In the process, I learned more about the field of international development cooperation and developed a dream of working in this field.



Students sharing and discussing the qualifications and start-up process necessary for a successful venture through the vocational training program's start-up expert course

Q I understand that your first connection with an international organization was through the college student volunteer group KOICA-UNV (UN Volunteers)*. Please tell me in detail about the process you went through to reach your current position.

I actively utilized KOICA programs and various support projects to enter international organizations. If I start looking for a job from the beginning on the recruitment website of international organizations, the competition is so fierce that I may get a call from no more than one or two, even if I submit dozens of applications. This is because I thought that if I approached it that way, the barrier to entry would be too high, as it is a stage where people from all over the world are competing. I decided that it would be more effective to actively utilize various Korean government support projects that only Koreans can compete for.

In fact, in the case of the United Nations, even UN volunteer positions such as UNV require a master's degree and relevant experience and activities, so I gained experience through the KOICA Youth Mid-Term Volunteer Corps and the KOICA Young Professional (YP)** program and received a master's degree in international educational development cooperation. In the case of the KOICA-UNV college student volunteer program, at the time I applied, only undergraduate and graduate students with deferred degrees were eligible, so I applied near the end of graduate school and was able to join the Cambodia Office of the UN World Food Programme (WFP) as a KOICA-UNV member immediately after completing my master's degree.

After completing my volunteer work, I actively took advantage of the opportunity provided by KOICA's Preliminary Survey Expert Dispatch Program. With the experience I gained during that time, I was able to apply for my current consultant position at UNICEF Bangladesh.

Q Please tell us how the KOICA program or support project helped you in that process.

My experience working in developing countries through the KOICA program served as a great advantage when applying to become a KOICA-UNV college student volunteer, consultant, and KOICA Multilateral Cooperation Officer (KMCO)***. Since practical experience in developing countries is important when applying to international organizations, my volunteering experience in Cambodia as a KOICA Mid-Term Volunteer, my work in Rwanda through the KOICA Young Professional Program, and my career in Kenya and Tanzania as part of the KOICA Preliminary Survey team may have been important factors in reaching my current position. Recently, thanks to these experiences, I was given the opportunity to become a KMCO, and I will soon be moving to UNICEF's Ghana Office. KOICA, which provided me with the opportunity to gain a variety of overseas work experiences, greatly contributed to my career development.

Q Can you tell us about the merits of working in an international organization?

I think the biggest benefit is the opportunity to bring about real change by directly intervening in influential factors such as policies, curricula, and systems of a country through international organizations. Although it takes time and discussions with many people to accomplish such changes, I feel greatly rewarded and proud to be able to participate in and contribute to the process.

Additionally, the welfare and benefits offered by international organizations are very attractive. The United Nations provides 30 days of leave per year, and you have the flexibility to take more if needed. You can take vacation whenever you want without worrying about what your boss thinks. I also try to take a vacation of at least two weeks to a month to truly rest. On top of that, if you are hired as a full-time UN employee, you will be eligible for excellent welfare benefits, including settlement support fees, spouse and child support allowances, insurance benefits, and pensions.



Celebrating the Bangladeshi New Year called 'Pohela Boishakh' with her teammates in traditional costumes

Q On the other hand, please tell us about the most difficult or challenging experience you had while working in an international organization.

I think one of the biggest challenges is the

* UN Volunteers : Internship system that provides opportunities for work experience in the development cooperation field at UN-affiliated organizations

** Young Professional : A field experience-centered project aimed at cultivating young talent in the field of development cooperation by providing them with field experience while working in overseas offices and international organizations, ultimately developing them into development cooperation experts

*** KMCO : A program for professionals in various fields with a passion for international development cooperation to work in international organizations that have signed agreements with KOICA, such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Program (WFP)

lengthy hiring process and the working environment. In the case of the United Nations, once hired, you cannot continue to work in the same office. Even full-time UN employees must transfer to another country office by reapplying every 3 to 4 years, depending on the country. Additionally, many positions are on a contract basis, and as the end of the contract approaches, it is challenging to go through the endless recruitment process of searching for job postings, applying, and having to pass interviews again. Of course, this process can be an opportunity for continuous self-development, but it is also true that after going through the hiring process several times, you may wonder where to go when this contract ends.

In addition, if you work at a country office other than the UN headquarters, you will mostly be in a developing country, which means you may face poor living conditions and, at times, dangerous situations. There are also many times when it is inconvenient not to be able to obtain essential daily necessities, but if you want to work in this field, you must endure this level of difficulty to some extent.



Examining the pouches delivered by beneficiaries employed at the factory after receiving vocational training at the project site, together with a counselor from the Korean Embassy

Q Please give some advice to juniors who want to work in international organizations.

I am still in the process of finding and pioneering my own path, but what I would like to emphasize is the importance of setting specific and detailed goals rather than having the vague aspiration of "I want to work at an international organization." International organizations do not simply assess administrative capabilities. They seek talent with specialized knowledge and experience in specific fields. That is to say, it is crucial to have the practical ability to enter the field immediately and perform the work.

Additionally, rather than simply obtaining a degree in international development cooperation, it is better to identify a specific field that you are truly interested in, such as nutrition, health, education, or the environment, early on and aim for an international organization that focuses on that area. This approach can significantly increase your chances of success. I recommend that you closely examine the projects and positions offered by the international organizations you are interested in and think specifically about the direction in which you can grow as an expert in that field.

Rather than aiming to 'enter an international organization' from the beginning, I believe it is important to first identify a field that you truly want to pursue and build a career in that area. It is never too late to take on the challenge of working for an international organization after gaining a variety of relevant experiences and building your career, so please seize as many opportunities as possible. There are not many employees of international organizations who started their careers in those organizations from the very beginning. I recommend that, even now, you think specifically about the field you really want to work in and identify the more detailed areas within that field.

Q What do you think you will be doing in 10 years?

In fact, when working in this field, you can foresee only until the end of your current position's contract, and it is very difficult to predict what country, position, or work you will be doing, even in the near future. Nevertheless, what is certain is that even then, I will still be doing what I love, and I will have become a more mature and better person than I am now. My goal and desire are to become a better person than I am today and to continue striving for that.

Q Do you have any message you would like to share with KOICA?

When I list my experience of actively utilizing KOICA programs and support projects to date, I realize there are so many programs I participated in, including the KOICA Youth Mid-Term Volunteer Corps, KOICA Young Professional, KOICA-UNV, KOICA Preliminary Survey, KOICA project-linked expert activities, and KMCO. I feel that I have truly benefited from these diverse opportunities. I am very grateful to KOICA for giving me the opportunity to participate in such a variety of programs, and I will continue to engage in various initiatives if given the opportunity in the future.

LG-KOICA Hope TVET College Project

Youth unemployment in Ethiopia solved by 'Cultivating Technical Talent'

"We can't wait to see what the future holds!" On August 24 (local time), the 10th anniversary and 8th graduation ceremonies of 'LG-KOICA Hope TVET College' (hereinafter referred to as Hope TVET College) were held in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. Hope TVET College is a two-year IT technology education institution established by KOICA and LG Electronics in 2014. It is a free educational facility that provides education, employment, and entrepreneurship opportunities to local youth who wish to pursue a career in the IT field. All 83 graduates of 2024 who gathered that day have already chosen to pursue careers in the IT field through employment or entrepreneurship. The graduates who attended the event expressed their joy, saying, "The future, once daunting, is now beginning to take concrete shape."

Bemenet Tedes (21), a graduate who shared that his goal was to become a software program developer, said, "Graduating from here is something I am very proud of, and I will continue to progress without forgetting the support of my teachers and friends," expressing his love for his alma mater and sharing his determination for the future.



Group photo from the graduation ceremony at LG-KOICA Hope TVET College, celebrating its 8th anniversary

Serious youth unemployment due to lack of technical workforce

The event was attended by 16 key figures, including Solomon Soka, State Minister for Labour and Skills; Thirahun Woku, Head of the Addis Ababa Mayor's Office; Jung Kang, Korean Ambassador to Ethiopia; Kim Yong-woo, President of World Together; and Lee Il-hwan, LG Electronics' Regional Representative for the Middle East and Africa.

The reason Hope TVET College is attracting attention is that the Ethiopian government is addressing the pressing issue of youth unemployment through it. Ethiopia has experienced rapid growth, with an average annual growth rate of 11% over the past 10 years, but faces a contradictory situation with an unemployment rate of 18%. The problem of youth unemployment is particularly serious. For Ethiopia, a 'young country' with the working-age population aged 15 to 64 accounting for 51.5% of the total population, which is one of its biggest growth engines, the issue of youth unemployment is highlighted as a serious risk.

The Ethiopian government identifies the cause of the problem as the 'lack of technical manpower.' As the economy grows, the demand for skilled professionals with IT skills, rather than simple labor, increases. However, most local young people remain unskilled and work as simple laborers. This is because it has been difficult to rapidly develop a technical workforce in Ethiopia, a country that has long struggled with conflict and poverty.

To solve this problem, Ethiopia has set 'Digital Ethiopia 2025' as its national growth strategy starting from 2020 and is making significant efforts to build IT technology infrastructure and nurture human resources. Other vocational schools are also actively working in cooperation with various countries such as China and those in Europe to address the problem of youth unemployment, but not many have achieved significant results.

Hope TVET College has produced a total of 541 graduates so far and boasts a '100% employment rate,' as all graduates have secured jobs, including employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. There have been cases of employment at LG Electronics' local subsidiaries or partner companies, as well as instances of successful employment abroad. Tariku G/Medhin, Dean of LG-KOICA Hope TVET College, said, "Hope TVET College has been recognized by the Ethiopian government as an excellent vocational training school," adding, "Many of the TVET schools have an employment rate of less than 50%."

Achievements of 'Tripartite Cooperation' thanks to the expertise of KOICA-LG-World Together

Hope TVET College began as LG Electronics' commitment to social contribu-



(From left) Cho Han-Deog, Country Director of the KOICA Ethiopia Office; Kim Yong-woo, President of World Together; Jung Kang, Korean Ambassador to Ethiopia; Solomon Soka, State Minister for Labour and Skills; Lee Il-hwan, LG Electronics' Regional Representative for the Middle East and Africa; and Tariku G/Medhin, Dean of LG-KOICA Hope TVET College

tion, aimed at supporting the descendants of Korean War veterans. By aligning with KOICA's IBS (Inclusive Business Solution) to achieve sustainable development cooperation results, this project has started to produce remarkable outcomes. As KOICA used its expertise in international development cooperation to lay the foundation for the business in coordination with the Ethiopian government, LG Electronics provided the latest IT equipment and technical training in line with current trends, training students to become professionals ready to enter the global IT industry upon graduation. In addition, World Together, a non-profit organization specializing in international development cooperation and an incorporated association with extensive experience in assisting the descendants of war veterans in Ethiopia, has managed the project in a stable manner in accordance with the local culture and circumstances.

The true value of the 'fully tailored to local needs' project is also reflected in the details of the school's operation. Over the past 10 years, the school has established itself and implemented completely free education, allowing early graduates to focus on securing stable employment. Shuttle buses and meals were provided so that vulnerable youth could participate without any burden. With 541 graduates working in the IT field both at home and abroad, a strong network has naturally formed among them.

Iyob Digape (21), who graduated from Hope TVET College this year, said, "I knew I could live a better life by learning IT skills, but as a student with no income, transportation and food expenses were burdensome, so I could only dream," adding, "I was able to attend with peace of mind because they provided a shuttle bus to my house and lunch." Currently, he is preparing to start a business in the IT field. Hope TVET College is expanding its role as a startup incubator, providing not only employment support but also technology, networks and funding to graduates who want to start a business. To strengthen the capabilities of teachers, overseas training in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, is provided to learn the latest technology and improve the curriculum. In addition to technical skills, students are also taught business etiquette, document writing, Korean language, and global business manners.



View of LG-KOICA Hope TVET College (top left) and its facilities

Urqu Tadele (24), who is employed at LG Electronics in Dubai after graduating from Hope TVET College, gave a thumbs up, saying, "The biggest advantage of the school is that you can ask any question and challenge anything." He said, "I dropped out while studying electrical engineering at a university in Ethiopia, but I couldn't let go of my regrets. So I looked into several vocational training schools but couldn't find the right one, which caused me a lot of worry," adding, "However, I had no reason to worry at Hope TVET College because I could freely learn the latest technology with the latest equipment."

Hope TVET College's achievements go beyond creating a better life for local youth. It fosters a virtuous cycle by providing quality talent to Korean companies, including LG Electronics. Graduate Neway Silesi (24) said, "After graduation, I worked at Alta Computec, a local IT company in Ethiopia, and recently received an acceptance letter from a company called 'Dragon Electronics' in Mauritius, East Africa. Dragon Electronics is LG's official distributor in Mauritius, and the fact that he understands LG Electronics' technology, operating policies, and even business culture has been helpful in his job change.

The end point of the project is the 'sustainability' of the school. The ultimate goal is to ensure the sustainable operation of the school while producing its own talent, including systematizing the school management system and covering part of the operating budget within the school. KOICA plans to provide technology, administrative support, and networking to help Hope TVET College become self-sustaining. Kim Hye-won, head of KOICA's Corporate Cooperation Business Team, said, "KOICA will help Hope TVET College go beyond the role of a simple educational institution and become a cradle of social innovation that contributes to the long-term development of Ethiopia, where new technologies and challenges begin."

Interview

Yang Seung-hwan, LG Electronics Ethiopia Office Country Director

"Sincere support was rewarded with greater business opportunities"



Q Is there any particular reason why LG Electronics has been actively supporting Korean War veterans in Ethiopia, even before the establishment of Hope TVET College?

The primary purpose of establishing LG Electronics Ethiopia Office was social contribution rather than business. In addition to educational projects, the LG Electronics Ethiopia Office is also engaged in social contribution activities, such as building LG Hope Village and providing vaccines. The former Chairman of LG Corporation established the LG Electronics Ethiopia Office with the message, "Ethiopia is a country that helped us during our most difficult times, so let's find a way to give back." Just as Ethiopia sent its carefully nurtured young people to support Korea during the Korean War, the LG Electronics Ethiopia Office believed that by sharing the advanced technology it had developed over the years, it could help lay a foundation for Ethiopia's self-reliance and sustainable growth. That's why LG Electronics partnered with KOICA, which has expertise in providing grant aid, from the very beginning.

Q As for the technical training, couldn't it have been possible with LG Electronics alone?

LG Electronics wanted to be genuinely helpful, not just convey technology and show off. Money and technology don't solve everything. LG Electronics needed a partner who could work smoothly with the local community, someone who understood what was needed and how to help. This is why it joined hands with KOICA.

Q What skills are taught at Hope TVET College?

The main curriculum includes information and communications technology, as well as electrical and electronic technologies. Hope TVET College also teaches document writing and business etiquette to prepare students for the global business market. There is also a system to help students advance into LG Electronics and affiliated companies around the world through internships, which provide education on the Korean language, Korean culture, and LG Electronics products and technology.

Q They say that Hope TVET College uses the latest equipment for training.

Students can become skilled workers with meaningful expertise by learning the latest technology using the latest equipment. Thankfully, LG Electronics Middle East and Africa regional headquarters has been donating its latest products.

Q Is it true that a 100% employment rate has been achieved?

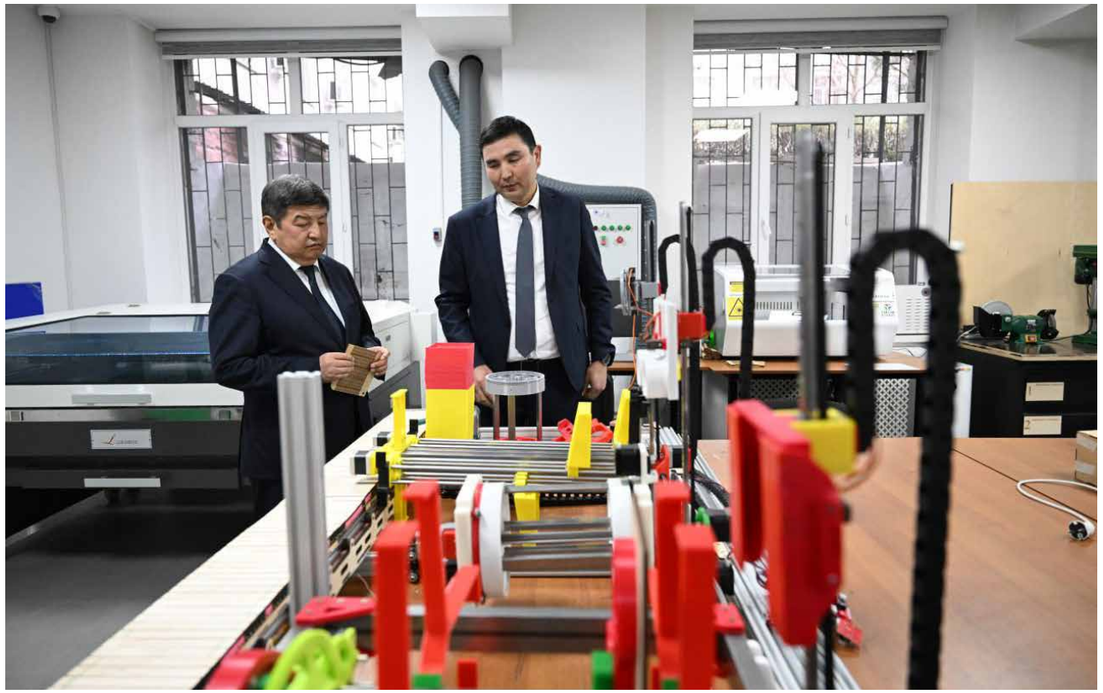
Yes, while focusing on quality education, LG Electronics also paid attention to administrative support. When students reach their graduation year, they are asked to choose their desired career path between employment and starting a business, and a tailored curriculum is provided to suit their choice. For students seeking employment, LG Electronics utilizes its network to provide support, such as internships and job placement, for outstanding students. We also encourage employment abroad, such as in Saudi Arabia and Mauritius. If they want to start a business, we help them learn management skills needed outside of technology, such as law and accounting, and assist them in finding office space at a low cost. We also provide support with necessary tools and supplies. Thanks to this, the companies that hire or collaborate with them are highly satisfied, and we are discovering that there is an unexpected virtuous cycle within LG Electronics.

Q Please explain in detail the 'virtuous cycle' you mentioned.

When global companies, including those from Korea, do business in developing countries such as Africa, they face significant difficulty in recruiting good talent and finding reliable partners. This is not a matter of technical proficiency, but of the differences in manners and culture that prevail in global business. However, Hope TVET College teaches the Korean language, Korean culture, and business manners along with technology, providing a solution to the problem of recruiting quality local talent. In addition, as these students and their families increase their affinity for LG Electronics and Korea, there is even a marketing effect, such as the creation of 'die-hard fans.' LG Electronics has simply tried to return the favor, but it has ended up receiving help from them in business.

Q What is the goal you want to achieve?

The goal is to make Hope TVET College the most prestigious school in Ethiopia, producing talented individuals with outstanding abilities and warm hearts. Another goal is to expand the field to include Korean language education, B2B education, and management and accounting, in addition to technical positions, in the future. With the cooperation of the Ethiopian government, the aim is to transform it into a school that offers formal degrees. Another goal is to expand the field of education to include management and accounting, in addition to Korean language, B2B education, and technologies, in the future, as well as to turn it into a school that offers formal degrees with the cooperation of the Ethiopian government. LG Electronics plans to create a larger trend in which good deeds lead to business opportunities and mutual development.



Prime Minister Akylbek Japarov (left), who visited 'FabLab Bishkek' located at KSTU in May last year, is talking with KSTU Rector Mirlan Chynybaev.

Enhancement of Job opportunities & startups through collaboration of industry and KSTU at Kyrgyzstan Fablab Bishkek

A space where ideas become reality... Start-up ecosystem created by 'FabLab'

In Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia, there is a space where ideas become reality: 'FabLab Bishkek', located at the State Technical University (KSTU). Here, they create prosthetic arms that even hospitals cannot produce and print Kyrgyz Braille books that are difficult to find on the market. FabLab serves as a center for employment and entrepreneurship education, where prototypes are created using 3D printing equipment and exceptional products can evolve into startup ventures.

FabLab is a digital workshop that originated in the United States in the early 2000s. Anyone with an idea can visit and create items using machine tools such as 3D printers and laser cutters, as well as various IT technologies. It has spread worldwide because it can create essential items for the disabled and socially disadvantaged, in addition to offering vocational training.

FabLab Bishkek was established in October 2020 with KOICA's support. The project aims to provide IT education and foster digital manufacturing technology talent to support employment and start-ups, aligning with the Kyrgyz government's IT industry development and promotion policy. Following the first project implemented in 2019, the second project has been underway from 2022 to the present year.

Creation of a historic space that overcomes disabilities

The production of Kyrgyz Braille textbooks is also carried out at the FabLab. Although Russian is an official language in Kyrgyzstan, Kyrgyz is the native language and is commonly used. However, since most Braille books are produced in Russian, it is challenging for visually impaired people to learn their native language, Kyrgyz.

Professor Turdalieva Aizat of KSTU has been leading a project to introduce Kyrgyz Braille books, replacing Russian ones, in schools for the visually impaired. A 3D printer is used to create Braille textbooks on acrylic plates. Unlike Braille books made by hand on thick paper, which can get damaged with frequent use, acrylic Braille books do not suffer from this issue. In 2022 alone, the first year of the project, nearly 200 Braille textbooks were produced, including geometry math books for middle school students, as well as Kyrgyz language textbooks.

FabLab also produces prosthetic arms with movable finger joints using 3D printers. Baspayev Amir (17), who lost his right arm at a coal processing factory when he was 11, received a free, customized prosthetic arm made by FabLab last year. Amir, who can now freely pick up objects with both hands, dreams of becoming a programmer. He said, "My dream is to receive programming education at FabLab and become an IT developer."



Baspayev Amir (right), who lost his right arm in an accident, was presented with a prosthetic arm made using 3D printing equipment at FabLab.

Striving to cultivate talent that will lead the national IT industry

KSTU is focusing on creating an ecosystem for the IT industry through the FabLab project, with a key emphasis on sustainability. To start, a credit recognition class was established at KSTU in collaboration with FabLab. To establish a base for local self-reliance, local educators directly provide training on the use of digital manufacturing equipment. A total of 360 students, with 120 completing the class each year, have undergone the training. A separate expert training course was also held for university professors. In the first half of this year, digital manufacturing training was provided to local residents. To date, more than 500 people have been trained in digital manufacturing technology.

In addition to entrepreneurship education aimed at helping young people find jobs and start businesses, an employment and start-up fair, as well as a start-up incubation program, were also held. In December last year, the 'FabLab Bishkek Make-A-Thon 2023' took place over three days and two nights. Students submitted various prototypes applying IoT technology to agriculture, including smart greenhouse farms, irrigation systems, and solutions for poultry farming and seedling cultivation.

Kyrgyzstan does not yet have a national certification system like Korea's. For this reason, FabLab is preparing to assume the function and role of a national qualification center. Kim Sung-hoon, head of FabLab Bishkek, said, "With the FabLab certification, more graduates will be able to secure good jobs or start their own businesses," adding, "FabLab aims to help foster educators and entrepreneurs who are recognized across many Central Asian countries, beyond Kyrgyzstan."

FabLab Bishkek plans to introduce metal 3D printers capable of producing small industrial items and 3D printer equipment specialized for jewelry production next year, as well as new educational programs in artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics.



Scene from the 'FabLab Bishkek Make-A-Thon 2023,' held at KSTU from December 6 to 8, 2023

Establishment of business incubation system between university and industry in Cambodia

What if young Koreans and Cambodians start a business together?



All the trainees, including the final winner team 'KRATIE,' pose for a commemorative photo at the final presentation of the '2024 Korea-Cambodia ICT Startup Exchange Program' at Hanyang University on November 5 last year.

"Korea and Cambodia have different geographical locations and socio-cultural characteristics, but I am confident that startup ideas that combine concepts from both countries will bring significant benefits to both."

On November 15, six teams made up of Korean and Cambodian students presented their startup items in the lounge on the second floor of the Student Welfare Center at Hanyang University. The startup items they came up with were ▲atmospheric heat management platform ▲health food development (fermented brown rice yogurt) ▲automatic plastic sorting and recycling solution ▲child management solution ▲smart irrigation system ▲product development project using pomelo.

Each team clearly presented the startup ideas they had honed over the course of six months beginning last May. They were unembarrassed and skillfully answered the judges' tough questions. It was the performance of unrivaled 'professionals.'

The presentations of the six teams lasted about 2 hours and 30 minutes, and as a result of the final judging, the team 'KRATIE', which proposed an item that cultivates pomelo, a citrus fruit from Southeast Asia, using a smart farming system and turns it into powder, became the final winner. Sotheavy Thoeun from Cambodia and Hanyang University students Kim Hyo-na, Ha Seo-yeon, and Kim Min-kyung cheered, while other team members applauded in congratulations. They were awarded $1,000 in startup support.



At the final presentation of the '2024 Korea-Cambodia ICT Startup Exchange Program' held at Hanyang University on November 5, six teams made up of Korean and Cambodian students presented startup ideas they had developed over the course of six months.

This event, where students from Korea and Cambodia gathered to share startup ideas, was the final presentation of the '2024 Korea-Cambodia ICT Startup Exchange Program,' which has been held annually since 2023 by KOICA, the Korea Productivity Center, and Hanyang University, in collaboration with the National Incubation Center of Cambodia (NICC).

KOICA creates a technology startup ecosystem in Cambodia

The Korean government presented 'Promotion of Next-Generation Exchanges Leading to Future Prosperity' as a key task of the 'Korea-ASEAN Solidarity Initiative,' a specialized policy for ASEAN, while the Cambodian government emphasized the importance of nurturing young people and supporting startups through the 'Cambodia Digital Economy and Society Policy Framework 2021-2035.'

In response, KOICA, together with the Korea Productivity Center, has been implementing the 'Establishment of Business Incubation System between University and Industry in Cambodia ($7.91 million)' from 2019 to 2024. The goal of this project is to strengthen national competitiveness by creating Cambodia's technology startup ecosystem and achieving industrial diversification.

On March 14, KOICA established the NICC at the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) in the capital of Cambodia and held an opening ceremony. With Korea's support, a 'digital startup mecca' was created where Cambodian youth can develop their dreams of innovative startups. The Cambodian government designated NICC, Cambodia's first business incubation center, as a national institution.

NICC was built as a four-story building measuring approximately 2,300 m². The center is equipped with offices, conference rooms, prototype labs, and digital studios. At this facility, 31 Cambodian startups and prospective ones are provided with an environment where Cambodian youth can turn their innovative ideas into reality. In addition to the facilities, the 31 tenant companies won a competition in Cambodia through mentoring, consulting, and networking events provided by NICC, receiving a prize of $40,000, and are growing rapidly, attracting an investment of $10,000 from a Korean company and 1 million yen from a Japanese company.

Startup ideas created by Korean and Cambodian college students together

KOICA has provided business space, initial funding, management support, and digital technology training to prospective young Cambodian entrepreneurs through NICC. In addition, by implementing the Korea-Cambodia University ICT Startup Exchange Program, KOICA has been supporting opportunities for future generations of both countries to cooperate and pioneer new markets. This is a program in which college students from Korea and Cambodia team up to jointly develop startup ideas and evaluate business possibilities through local market research and exchanges with startups.

The cooperation between Korean and Cambodian youth to develop startup ideas has great significance for the economic development of both countries and for strengthening the global capabilities of future generations. In addition, this cooperation goes beyond simply developing startup ideas and holds greater value in helping young people from both countries understand each other's cultures and build a global network.

Prospective startup teams from Korean universities visit Cambodia to share startup ideas and evaluate the possibility of entering Cambodia through local market research and exchanges with startups. Cambodian startup teams also visit Korea to tour successful startups and have the opportunity to upgrade their startup ideas through expert mentoring and business introductions to Korean investors.

This year, the exchange began in May, and Hanyang University's preliminary startup team visited Cambodia to conduct market research and a mid-term evaluation. In November, the Cambodian startup team visited Korea and worked on their startup ideas. Last year, interns were selected only from young people living in Phnom Penh, but this year, they were selected from all over Cambodia, and interest in the Korea-Cambodia University Startup Exchange Program spread throughout the country. Thanks to the participation of young people from all over the country, startup ideas have become abundant, as seen in the idea of the winning team, KRATIE. Students participating from a province called 'KRATIE' in Cambodia teamed up with students from Korea (KR) and were proud to propose a smart farming project for pomelo, a specialty of Kratie province, naming the team KRATIE, composed of KR and KRATIE.



Prospective entrepreneurs receiving training at a technology entrepreneurship training course (startup camp) run directly by NICC

Consistently strengthening the connection between the startup ecosystems of both countries

In addition to the University ICT Startup Exchange Program, KOICA plans to continue cooperating with NICC to foster startups in the agricultural sector by conducting entrepreneurship education for young people in rural Cambodia, in collaboration with ChildFund Korea and Wonders International. KOICA will also further strengthen the connection between the two countries' startup ecosystems by attracting global investors and facilitating connections with Korean companies looking to enter Cambodia.

Interview with trainees



Jung Seo-jin (Senior, Department of Architecture, Hanyang University)

"I have participated in a variety of activities because I have always been interested in starting a business. Then, I applied to this startup exchange event since I wanted to learn about other countries' startup ecosystems and methods. By going to Cambodia, conducting market research, and talking with local students, I was able to understand the different, yet similar, ways of starting a business and thinking. It was also beneficial to learn how to find market analysis data through mentoring. Above all, the biggest achievement was being able to overcome the language barrier and develop teamwork while collaborating with my Cambodian friends. It was a time when I was able to further upgrade my perspective on starting a business."



Chandarabophavatey Ngan (CamEd Business School, Cambodia)

"I learned how to communicate effectively with Koreans, which I think will be of great help in building an international network in the future. Additionally, during the process of starting a business, I was able to learn practical skills such as market research methods, item implementation, and operation strategies. I can't wait to return to Cambodia and share what I learned in Korea with my local team members. Finally, I hope that these exchange projects will go beyond personal success and have a positive impact on the economies and industries of both countries."



Members of the women's cooperative Asopalmira in Nariño, Colombia

Acceleration of Rural Women's Economic Empowerment in Colombia

"We will save" Colombian women's power that vitalized village farms

Discover women's cooperatives

Since 2021, KOICA has been implementing a project to support increased farm incomes in 12 conflict-affected municipalities in Colombia. One of the key features of this 5-year project, which involves an investment of $6.8 million (approximately 9.1 billion won), is its focus on female farmers. KOICA has selected 26 women's cooperatives that produce marketable goods and supports them with facilities to enhance productivity. Additionally, KOICA provides training to cooperative members in accounting, technology, and digital skills to strengthen their capabilities. Marketing support is also provided to enhance the market competitiveness of the products produced by the women's cooperatives. To ensure the ongoing economic activity of female farmers, efforts are being made to secure stable sales channels and provide technical support for the INVIMA sanitation certification system to enable the distribution of products to large cities.

According to the United Nations SDG Index Score, Colombia's gender equality rate is approximately 68%. This places Colombia at 92nd out of 149 countries, which is relatively low on a global scale. It is significantly below the Latin American regional average of 84%.

Expand public investment

The Colombian central government is implementing various national-level policies to enhance women's economic empowerment. However, budget execution at the local government level is not being properly carried out. To address this issue, KOICA is providing technical support for gender policy development, as well as promoting local government infrastructure development and public investment. Gender training for public officials is also being implemented. This aims to expand a culture of gender equality in the public sector and create an institutional cooperation structure that enables women to participate in local government partnership strategies. KOICA supports collaboration mechanisms for local governments that manage partnerships between civil society, the UN, and businesses to promote women's entrepreneurship. The aim is to drive policies and investments that support women's economic activities. Educational spaces will also be provided to expand fundamental rights related to gender equality. In these spaces, training to improve women's rights will be conducted, gender equality communication strategies will be developed, and gender equality campaigns involving local residents will be planned.

This project also involves participation from UN Women and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). They have agreed to create a cultural environment to address issues such as poverty, gender violence, adolescent pregnancy and childbirth, and the deprivation of employment and training opportunities faced by indigenous and Afro-Colombian women in conflict-affected areas.

Interview

Ingrid Germania Ampudia, president of Asopalmira

"From farmer to entrepreneur… My life has changed"



Ingrid Germania Ampudia, president of Asopalmira

Ingrid Germania Ampudia, who is leading the women's cooperative Asopalmira in Nariño, Colombia, is 30 years old this year. She joined the cooperative as a farmer when she was 15 years old, 15 years ago. Asopalmira was selected as a recipient of KOICA's income improvement project, which provided them with facility support and capacity-building training. Ingrid said, "I am happy every morning when I see the crops growing on the farm," adding, "It is also a moment when I gain the strength to move forward for my two daughters."

Q Please introduce the Asopalmira cooperative.

The cooperative has a total of 45 members, 90% of whom are female heads of household or victims from conflict-affected areas. The cooperative has been producing and processing cocoa for the past 20 years. In the last 5 years, we have focused on producing cocoa products added with pepper as our main product.

Q How did your cooperative's connection with KOICA begin?

Answering this question makes my heart swell with emotion. The first thing I want to say is that KOICA and UN Women are providing incredible support. Our cooperative had been producing cocoa and related products for a long time, but we needed improvements in quality. Fortunately, participating in the KOICA project made that possible. In particular, this KOICA project, unlike those of other organizations, employed a gender approach that went beyond merely involving women in the business process. As a result, the women in the cooperative were able to grow not only as farmers but also as entrepreneurs.

Q What is the biggest change when comparing your current life to the past?

I now see myself not just as a female farmer, but as an entrepreneur. The biggest change was discovering my identity as a free and independent woman.

Q Could you tell us about the main achievements of the Asopalmira cooperative?

Our cooperative has participated in several national marketing events with great results. Through these events, we have met important potential customers, and our products have received recognition both domestically and internationally. These experiences have been instrumental in strengthening our cooperative's competitiveness.

Q The Asopalmira cooperative has also participated in national marketing events and achieved good results, hasn't it?

That's right. The biggest achievement from participating in these events is that the cooperative was able to meet very important potential customers not only locally but also nationally. It has given us hope that we can expand into other markets. Our products have already won awards at both national and international cocoa quality competitions. Highlighting these achievements has helped attract the interest of many customers.

Q Have there been any changes in the lives of cooperative members?

With KOICA's support, the women in our cooperative have improved cocoa quality, and the cooperative has moved to a more advanced stage of industrialization. As a result, production time has been reduced, work has become easier, and time spent with family has increased. These changes have allowed us to nurture dreams of a greater future.

Q What are your goals for the future?

Our goal is to strengthen crop production and product manufacturing lines, improve product quality, and grow into a large enterprise where the women in the cooperative receive fair compensation. We have already achieved many successes and we believe we can accomplish this goal as well.



The '8th Development Cooperation Evaluation Forum' was attended by some 250 officials from national and international development cooperation agencies, including USAID, the World Bank, GGGI and KIPA.

The 8th Development Cooperation Evaluation Forum

A strong evaluation culture maximizes the efficiency of ODA projects

On July 24, the 8th Development Cooperation Evaluation Forum was held at KOICA headquarters in Seongnam-si, Gyeonggi-do. The forum, celebrating its 8th anniversary this year, was centered around the theme 'ODA Project Evaluation Feedback System: Between Evaluation and Performance.' As part of a program to strengthen evaluation capabilities in the field of international development cooperation, the event aimed to select topics such as global trends in development cooperation evaluation and KOICA project evaluation feedback tasks, and to facilitate discussion, learning, and knowledge sharing.

Sharing feedback experiences and know-how from advanced donor organizations

The 8th Development Cooperation Forum, hosted by KOICA, was held to learn from the feedback experiences of advanced donor agencies with a longer history of development cooperation than Korea and to promote a project evaluation culture among various partner organizations involved in international development cooperation projects. 'Feedback of evaluation results' is the same concept as private companies receiving feedback from customers to improve products and services, and engaging in continuous improvement activities through quality control. Some 250 officials from domestic and international development cooperation organizations, including the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Bank, the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), and the Korea Institute of Public Administration, attended the forum, and experts from each organization shared their views on the importance of establishing an evaluation culture within organizations. The event opened with a speech by KOICA President CHANG Won Sam. In his address, CHANG said, "KOICA not only produces excellent evaluation information in terms of quality and quantity, but also goes a step further by paying attention to how this information can be utilized and fed back to improve performance." President CHANG also expressed his intention to work towards increasing awareness of evaluation results feedback and promoting its culture in the future.



Dr Seo Hee-kwon of the World Bank DIME gives a presentation on the World Bank's evaluation feedback system.

Introduction of an internal system for 'real-time evaluation' by USAID and GGGI, which share CLA to strengthen project sustainability

Detailed presentations were given by experts from each organization. The first presenter, Julie Chen, Director of USAID Planning, Learning, and Resource Management, introduced the evaluation feedback system 'Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA),'*, designed to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of USAID's development cooperation projects. She said that USAID has established an evaluation feedback culture within the organization by continuously improving awareness

* CLA : Method to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of conducting projects by ▲ Collaborating: Strengthening cooperation between partners ▲Learning: Continuous project improvement using experience and data ▲Adapting: Responding flexibly to changing situations



Key attendees pose for a commemorative photo at the '8th Development Cooperation Evaluation Forum'



Dr. Han Seung-heon of the KIPA is giving a presentation on project-oriented normal feedback and extended scope feedback.



Shin Jae-eun, Director of the Policy Centre of KCOC (left), and Han Seung-heon, Research Fellow at KIPA, at the forum with bright and serious expressions

of CLA for over 10 years. Next, Dr. Seo Heekwon of the World Bank DIME took over the baton. Dr Seo's presentation focused on introducing the types of evaluations conducted by the World Bank, and how to report to management and implement tasks derived from these evaluations.

The third presenter, James Sheppard, Senior Expert at the Global Green Growth Institute, introduced "real-time evaluation," an internal system designed to quickly incorporate evaluation results into project operations. Real-time evaluation refers to a system where evaluation is conducted periodically throughout a project's progression, and the insights gained are applied to the ongoing project. Lastly, Dr. Han Seung-heon of the Korea Institute of Public Administration highlighted the importance of feedback in international development cooperation projects, presented cases of feedback from evaluation results by domestic organizations, and suggested ways to create and institutionalize a culture of feedback. In particular, Dr. Han emphasized the importance of a process perspective that views 'evaluation' as a 'planning stage for feedback of results,' rather than as an end goal in itself.



James Sheppard, Senior Expert at the Global Green Growth Institute, is explaining GGGI's project evaluation feedback system.

The final session of the forum was a panel discussion with presenters and officials from KOICA, the Korea NGO Council for Overseas Development Cooperation (KCOC), and the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy (KIEP). Discussions focused on the direction for establishing the evaluation feedback system at the institutional level, methods for providing information on evaluation results at the level of evaluation information tools, and targets for promoting a culture of welcoming feedback. Attendees also exchanged in-depth opinions on measures to manage project performance and promote feedback, as raised by Dr. Han of KIPA. Experts from each organization attending the forum agreed that "to enhance the performance of international development cooperation projects, we need to create a culture where not only project success stories but also failure experiences are openly shared within the organization."

A joint workshop with USAID... Inspiring improvements in organizational culture based on the CLA framework

The next day, on July 25, a joint workshop with USAID was held under the theme 'Formation of an Evaluation-Friendly Organizational Culture through CLA,' with about 30 KOICA and USAID employees in attendance. KOICA employees had the opportunity to learn about the CLA framework, review the evaluation feedback status of CLA assessment-based organizations, and develop a mock plan to establish a culture of evaluation feedback. KOICA's evaluation office plans to use this joint workshop as an opportunity to conduct an organizational self-assessment to enhance the integrated feedback and communication system for knowledge produced within the organization, including evaluation information. In addition, based on the inspection results, KOICA is willing to support the creation of an action plan for feedback from internal stakeholders and to contribute to improving the organizational culture by sharing this feedback with the entire KOICA organization



Nigerian market crowded with people

Park Hae-song, Assistant Manager at the Department of Development Strategy and Portfolio Management

Resilient Nigerians, even in times of crisis



Park Hae-song, Assistant Manager at the Department of Development Strategy and Portfolio Management

Nigeria is a country with a population of over 200 million, earning it the nickname 'Giant of Africa.' The central country in West Africa has great economic potential, thanks to its large population and abundant resources, but it has recently been plagued by frequent kidnappings and terrorism.

When I told people I was going to Nigeria, they were very concerned. Because when they searched for 'Nigeria' on the Internet, most of the news was about the unstable security and economy, as well as alarming incidents. However, being dispatched to the Nigeria office was my choice. After joining KOICA and working in the Multilateral Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance Office, I became interested in the field of humanitarian assistance and wanted to lend a helping hand to the unfortunate situation in Nigeria, which has suffered significant damage from the Islamic extremist armed group Boko Haram.

It was in February 2022 that I boarded the plane with courage and confidence and arrived in Nigeria. In Nigeria, the period from late November to mid-March of the following year is called the 'Harmattan.' This period is the dry season, when dry winds accompanied by sand blow from the Sahara Desert. Sure enough, my first impression of the capital, Abuja, was that it

was a city full of dust. Days of limited visibility and breathtaking landscapes persisted, reminiscent of times in Korea when yellow dust and fine dust levels were severe. However, thanks to the kindhearted Nigerian people, I managed to overcome my sadness and smile again.

At first, I stayed temporarily in a hotel located inside the art museum. Perhaps because it was not a place frequented by foreigners, the hotel staff was amazed to see a Korean for the first time and eagerly shared detailed information about Nigerian culture and local amenities. Thanks to their help, I was able to spend my first two weeks in an unfamiliar land without any major inconveniences.

The KOICA Nigeria Office was a place where only the country director and deputy country director worked, as it was difficult to dispatch interns due to the unstable security. My position was deputy country director, but since there were only two people, I had to take on all roles, from the youngest to the deputy. I had busy days, as the Nigeria Office also managed the neighboring countries of Sierra Leone and Liberia and had to discover and oversee projects in both countries.

The work I was most passionate about was the 'project for the Improvement of Student Achievements through Multimedia Education Capacity Building and Teacher Incentive Program in Nigerian Public Primary and Junior Secondary Schools.' The capital city of Abuja is home to the Nigeria-Korea Model School, which was established in 2019 through the KOICA project. Students of the model school achieve excellent results in math and creative science competitions every year, and the admission competition rate is very high, making it the best public school in Nigeria. Accordingly, Nigeria's Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), which oversees primary and secondary education in the country, is pursuing a mid- to long-term project to build a total of 37 model schools in six major regions of Nigeria, based on the Nigeria-Korea Model School.

KOICA has finally selected 6 schools out of the 37 pilot schools and is implementing the 'Project for the Improvement of Student Achievements through Multimedia Education Capacity Building and Teacher Incentive Program in Nigerian Public Primary and Junior Secondary Schools.' In this process, KOICA is leading the development of smart education in Nigeria, including strengthening the capacity of teachers to institutionalize smart education, developing digital education content, and organizing digital education competitions. Teachers prepared for classes until dawn, sacrificing sleep, and students attended school as enthusiastically as they persuaded their parents to send them to the model school. As the person in charge, I found it very rewarding to see both teachers and students working hard to teach and learn.

Not only the teachers and students, but also other Nigerians I met were doing their best in their jobs despite the challenging national situation. During the two years I worked there, the Nigerian economy continued to deteriorate due to rising prices, increasing fuel costs, exchange rate fluctuations, and lack of local currency. Gasoline prices have quadrupled in two years, and the exchange rate has more than doubled. Above all, after the Nigerian government declared that it would completely replace the currency with new notes at the end of 2022, it banned the use of old notes and limited the amount of new notes that could be withdrawn, leading to a severe cash shortage. Citizens continued to experience inconvenience as they waited in front of ATM machines for over ten hours to withdraw small amounts of cash.

Nevertheless, Nigerians did not lose courage or hope. Rather than getting frustrated and giving up, they lived faithfully every day, supporting each other for the sake of their families and loved ones. The will and courage to endure dark times and to protect the people who are dear to them, without letting go of their hearts, resonated deeply with me. And thanks to KOICA's project to improve their lives, I was also able to go to work with a sense of duty.

After living in Nigeria for two years, I returned to Korea about six months ago. There were almost no cafes, so I couldn't even drink an iced Americano, and it wasn't easy to get a meal because the delivery system wasn't as well established as in Korea. However, my time in Nigeria was a major turning point in my life.

Observing the Nigerian people, I made up my mind to live a life without surrendering to hardship, and I was able to grow to the next level professionally by managing projects in the local area. Nigeria, a distant country on the other side of the world, still shines brightly in my heart.



Nigerian people, living hard despite difficult circumstances

Latest issues at a glance

KOICA NEWS

July



Renewal of 'International Development Collaboration' MOU with Korea Foundation

On July 3, KOICA and the Korea Foundation signed a business agreement (MOU) for 'collaboration in the field of international development cooperation and public diplomacy' and agreed to strengthen cooperation in international development projects and public diplomacy initiatives in developing countries. This MOU updates the existing agreement signed in 2022, which expires in May. According to the new agreement, the two organizations will jointly identify and undertake various projects, including global training programs for developing countries, as well as the dispatch of experts and World Friends Korea (WFK) overseas volunteers. In addition, they will conduct joint or commissioned research on development cooperation in developing countries and share relevant information with domestic and international development cooperation networks. They also plan to actively promote academic, human, and cultural exchanges to help developing countries gain a better understanding of Korea.



'A' Grade for three consecutive years in the evaluation of subsidiary operations

KOICA earned the highest grade, an A, in the '2023 Public Institution Subsidiary Operation Status Evaluation' hosted by the Ministry of Employment and Labor. This is the third consecutive year. The 'Public Institution Subsidiary Operation Status Evaluation' is conducted annually to ensure the stable operation of subsidiaries established in accordance with the policy of converting non-regular workers to regular workers in the public sector. The evaluation is conducted in four areas, including establishing a stable foundation for subsidiaries and fostering a desirable parent-subsidiary relationship. This year, 91 public institutions were evaluated.KOICA, which launched KOWORKS Co., Ltd. in February 2019, has been committed to the continued growth of the subsidiary and the promotion of win-win cooperation. In this evaluation, KOICA received the highest score (A+ grade) in the areas of professional subsidiary management and the establishment of a desirable parent-subsidiary relationship. This recognition acknowledges its efforts to establish a reasonable personnel and wage system, as well as a capital increase of KRW 300 million without compensation, following the results of workplace innovation consultation provided by the Ministry of Employment and Labor.



Colombia dreams of becoming a shipbuilding powerhouse with KOICA

Colombia has significant geopolitical potential for the shipbuilding and marine industry, as it is the only country in Central and South America that borders both the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. However, the development of the shipbuilding industry has been challenging due to structural issues, such as a lack of relevant policies and technology. Accordingly, KOICA has pushed ahead with the $5 million 'Colombia Shipbuilding Industry Revitalization Foundation Construction Project' from 2021 to 2024 to support Colombia's advancement as a shipbuilding powerhouse. As part of this project, KOICA held a donation ceremony for shipbuilding manufacturing training equipment at the National Vocational Training Institute (SENA) in Cartagena, a port city in northern Colombia, on July 18 (local time). The donated equipment includes 18 types of essential tools (approximately 230 units) needed for welding, machinery, and polishing. This equipment will be installed at SENA in Cartagena, where shipyards are concentrated, and will be used for training to enhance the capabilities of technicians. In addition to providing training equipment and materials, KOICA has carried out projects such as establishing a mid- to long-term development plan for the shipbuilding industry, offering invitational training in Korea for management and technical personnel in the shipbuilding field, and providing consulting for shipyards and related equipment companies.



Participation in the low-carbon diet movement to help protect the Earth

On July 23, KOICA and the Korea Agro-Fisheries & Food Trade Corporation signed an MOU to promote low-carbon eating habits and foster global human resources. The two organizations agreed to actively cooperate in the future to spread carbon neutrality practices by participating in the 'Low Carbon Diet Campaign,'* cooperating in ODA projects and fostering global talent, and promoting social value creation through ESG management innovation.

KOICA has continuously engaged in eco-friendly management practices, including reducing carbon emissions generated during institutional operations, to contribute to achieving the Korean government's '2050 Carbon Neutrality' goal. Last January, KOICA received the Minister of Environment Award for its contribution to reducing greenhouse gases (89 tons, CO2eq-carbon dioxide equivalent), which is equivalent to the amount absorbed by 637 pine trees, by transforming 25 tons of electrical and electronic waste collected through a public campaign and employee participation into circular resources in cooperation with E-Circular Governance**.

* **Low Carbon Diet Campaign :** A campaign by the Korea Agro-Fisheries & Food Trade Corporation since 2021 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions throughout the entire food processing procedure.

** **E-Circular Governance :** A non-profit public interest corporation approved by the Ministry of Environment as Korea's only cooperative for the collection and recycling of electrical and electronic products



New business contest for CTS-IBS, focusing on companies dreaming of overseas expansion

KOICA is recruiting new businesses for 2024-2025 for its flagship corporate cooperation programs, Creative Technology Solution (CTS) and Inclusive Business (IBS). CTS is a program that finds solutions to challenging problems in developing countries by applying innovative ideas and technologies from prospective entrepreneurs and startups to ODA (Official Development Assistance). The CTS contest is divided into three phases: Seed1 (ODA testbed), Seed2 (technology commercialization), and CTS-TIPS linkage (local verification and technology commercialization). Companies participating in Seed1 and Seed2 will receive 300 million won and 500 million won, respectively. IBS is a program that contributes to the revitalization of the social economy in developing countries by integrating sustainable business strategies, such as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Creating Shared Value (CSV), with ODA. The IBS contest is divided into ▲ IBS business (conglomerates, mid-sized enterprises, small and medium-sized companies), ▲ Blended finance business (small and medium-sized companies/investment firms), and ▲ KOICA IBS-ESG Initiative (conglomerates, mid-sized enterprises/investment companies) and will proceed as a multi-year (2 to 5 years) project. Eligible for participation are for-profit corporations and non-profit foundations established by such corporations, and KOICA will share project costs up to KRW 500 million per year for regular projects, up to KRW 700 million for Blended Finance projects, and up to KRW 1 billion for IBS-ESG initiatives. CTS proposals will be accepted until August 12 and IBS proposals until August 19 via the KOICA Partner Information System (KOPIS).

August



'One Team Korea' formed to address Africa's food crisis

On August 21, KOICA held a project partnership signing ceremony for the 'Responsive Actions and Partnership Initiative for Disaster (RAPID)' at its headquarters in Seongnam-si, Gyeonggi-do, with Shinhan Bank, five NGOs (Good Neighbors, Korea Food for the Hungry International, Save the Children, CHILDFUND, and World Vision), and the Korea NGO Council for Overseas Development Cooperation (KCOC). KOICA is promoting under the brand 'RAPID' some humanitarian public-private cooperation projects it has implemented so far. This project involves KOICA, Shinhan Bank, and NGOs establishing a strategic partnership and securing joint financial resources to collaboratively address situations such as overseas disasters and food crises. As the first RAPID pilot project this year, KOICA will respond to the acute food crisis in Africa as part of One Team Korea. The target countries are Angola, Zambia, Malawi, Madagascar, and Burkina Faso, where five NGOs will implement projects with common themes and goals in each country.



Visit to Mongolian ODA Project Site

Lee Yun-young Lee, Director of KOICA Regional Business I Headquarters, made an official visit to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, for four days and three nights from August 20 to 23. On the 21st, Director Lee inspected KOICA's Mongolia office and attended the opening ceremony of the International Conference on Electrical Engineering (ICEF) hosted by the Korean Institute of Electrical Engineers at the National University of Science and Technology in Mongolia, where he delivered an opening speech and presented awards to the winners of the Global Capstone Contest. He also visited the Genghis Khan Museum to review the progress of the project to develop digital content and strengthen operational capacity, and inspected the site of the environmental restoration project in the abandoned mine area of Nalaikh district. He also met with Ambassador to Mongolia Choi Jin-won to discuss the current status of ODA to Mongolia and had in-depth conversations about future cooperation plans. Korea and Mongolia established a strategic partnership following the Korea-Mongolia summit in September 2021.



'Declaration on Integrity and Ethical Management' for international development cooperation projects proclaimed

On August 26, KOICA proclaimed the 'Declaration on Integrity and Ethical Management' at its headquarters in Seongnam-si, Gyeonggi-do, with KOICA President CHANG Won Sam and directors of oversesas offices in attendance. This event was held to combat corruption and promote a culture of integrity in international development cooperation projects. The declaration included commitments to comply with laws and principles and to conduct projects in a fair and transparent manner. Additionally, management emphasized the responsibility for anti-corruption measures and internal control systems.
Starting with the proclamation ceremony, KOICA designated the last week of August (26-30) as Integrity Week and conducted various campaigns to raise awareness of integrity and anti-corruption among all employees. With the goal of achieving 'ZERO occurrence of corruption and misconduct,' KOICA has reinforced its commitment to becoming a trusted international development cooperation organization by establishing an effective anti-corruption infrastructure, preventing ethical risks, and promoting a culture of integrity.

September



KOICA, Ministry of the Interior and Safety, Gyeongsangbuk-do, Reviving the Miracle of the 'Saemaul Movement'

On August 29, KOICA signed an 'MOU on Cooperation for the Implementation of Saemaul Development Projects' with the Ministry of the Interior and Safety and Gyeongsangbuk-do. In the future, the three organizations will work together to create a modernized model for the content and methods of the Korean Saemaul Movement and promote it as a project to overcome the challenges currently facing rural areas in developing countries. Existing rural development projects were supplier-centered, focusing on increasing income through enhanced agricultural productivity. However, the new Saemaul development project strengthens the capabilities of farmers and increases the social capital of the village through trust among residents. Through this project, 300 professional Saemaul education instructors and Saemaul administrative officials from around the world will be trained. It is expected that approximately 20,000 village leaders will be developed through local training.



MOU with the Korean Red Cross for Overseas Humanitarian Support

KOICA and the Korean Red Cross respond quickly to disasters and effectively carry out humanitarian aid projects. On August 30, KOICA signed an MOU with the Korean Red Cross to strengthen collaboration in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. This agreement was signed to respond more quickly and efficiently in the event of an emergency disaster by sharing the information and global networks of KOICA and the Korean Red Cross. In the future, the Korean Red Cross plans to cooperate under the One Team Korea initiative and strengthen the collaboration system with various domestic organizations that promote humanitarian support projects, including NGOs and companies. In particular, KOICA expects that by cooperating with the Korean Red Cross, it will be able to expand the scope of activities of the 'RAPID' project, an overseas disaster response cooperation initiative, and explore more diverse methods of humanitarian support.



Drawing a 'K-Silk Road' with three Central Asian countries

KOICA President CHANG Won Sam visited Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan from September 5 to 12 (local time) to discuss friendly cooperation with high-level government officials and inspect ODA project sites.
President CHANG signed a renewed MOU on development cooperation with the Kazakhstan International Development Agency (KazAID) on the 5th and visited Tajikistan on the next day to discuss expanding ODA cooperation with President Emomali Rahmon. In Uzbekistan, he signed the record of discussion on the National Assembly Broadcasting System construction project and attended the groundbreaking ceremony for a Korean model kindergarten and early childhood experience center. In addition, various areas of cooperation were discussed with Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov, including strengthening youth capabilities through vocational training, smart farms, and water resource management. This visit is evaluated as an important opportunity to strengthen cooperation with Central Asia ahead of next year's 'Korea-Central Asia Summit.'



Assuming the nutrition education in Pakistan

KOICA held a completion ceremony for the Nutrition Education Center at the Agricultural University Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan, on the afternoon of September 19 (local time). The three-story Nutrition Education Center, equipped with a dormitory, conference rooms and laboratories, will serve as a research institute and talent training facility responsible for nutrition education and food analysis throughout Pakistan. Here, master trainers (nutrition teacher training instructors) trained in Korea provide nutrition education to approximately 12,000 people, including school personnel, health workers, and clinical nutritionists, in cooperation with universities in five provinces across Pakistan. The trained personnel then spread education to 120,000 residents, including students and parents, in each village.



Laos flood relief project concludes after 5 years of sweat and tears

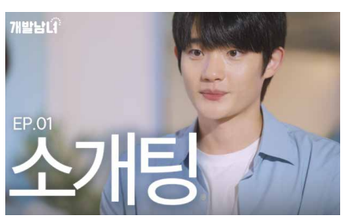
The Korean government's efforts over the past five years have paid off. The Korean government, which has carried out various aid projects to rebuild Attapeu Province, Laos, after it suffered flood damage due to a dam collapse in July 2018 and to respond to climate change, has brought them to a successful conclusion. On September 19 (local time) in Vientiane, the capital of Laos, KOICA held a project closing briefing session for the 'Integrated Program to Strengthen Resilience and Self-Reliance Capacity to Respond to Climate Change in Attapeu Province, Laos.' KOICA has provided integrated support in the areas of health, child protection, disaster management, agricultural development, and vocational training to help residents become self-reliant and make a living by improving their ability to respond to climate change, going beyond simply recovering from damage and building a better future. Kim Myeong-jin, Country Director of KOICA Laos Office, said, "This project has contributed to improving the quality of life of residents beyond damage recovery by providing integrated support in the five sectors." Leepao Yang, Lao Vice Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, expressed gratitude to the Korean government for supporting the early reconstruction of Attapeu Province and the improvement of residents' living conditions.

October



Announcement of the winners of the PeKO Meme Contest

KOICA has announced the winners of the "PeKO Meme Contest," which was held on KOICA's official Instagram from August 26 to September 30, featuring the theme of "PeKO," its Social Network Service (SNS) character. This contest consisted of three sections: 'PeKO Words,' where participants filled in lines in speech bubbles; 'PeKO Jaejjaljaejjal,' which involved creating witty 'jjal' (an internet term for photos, pictures, or short videos); and 'PeKO Friends,' where participants designed friends for PeKO. The best entry in the 'PeKO Jaejjaljaejjal' category was Yoo Hee-won's work, which cleverly utilized the internet buzzword, "People who like PeKO fold one finger! The earth was folded in half that day." The best entry in the 'PeKO Friends' category was created by Kim Jae-hyo, with four characters embodying the values of People, Planet, Prosperity and Partnership, along with Peace, symbolizing KOICA, which represent the 5P core values pursued by KOICA. Additionally, other entries featuring various ideas in speech bubbles, including sympathetic messages and PeKO couplets submitted in the 'PeKO Words' category, garnered significant attention from netizens.



KOICA-produced web drama "Development Man and Woman" - the talk of the town

The web drama 'Development Man and Woman,' produced by KOICA and released on October 11, is generating significant buzz. 'Development Man and Woman' is a two-part romantic comedy that humorously portrays a blind date incident arising from the confusion between 'development' in the context of 'international development cooperation,' referring to ODA projects, and 'development' in the realm of software development at an IT company. The two released episodes are drawing attention, having exceeded 1.75 million views and 2.88 million impressions on social media platforms (YouTube, Instagram) within about a week. 'Development Man and Woman' is gaining attention as a creative approach to engaging the general public by using a relatable theme of 'blind dates' for people in their 20s and 30s and subtly introducing the organization, making it a natural and effective promotional tool rather than directly promoting KOICA. Furthermore, the ending scene of the first episode sparks curiosity about KOICA with the line, "Do you know about KOICA?" The epilogue of the following episode addresses this curiosity with an explanation of KOICA, seamlessly linking it to an introduction of the organization's work. You can watch 'Development Man and Woman' on KOICA's YouTube channel 'Let's KO'.



2024 Global Talent Training Project Integrated Information Session

On October 30, KOICA held an integrated online and offline information session for the 2024 KOICA Global Talent Development Project at the community house 'Masil' in Jung-gu, Seoul. The Global Talent Development Project is KOICA's flagship public participation program designed to provide a career pathway for young people to experience international development cooperation sites around the world and develop into global talents.
This information session, themed "KOICA GI-Ta Unboxing: Prepared Everything, Not Knowing What You Want," provided information on various programs, including the Overseas Volunteer Corps, UNV University Student Volunteer Corps, Multilateral Cooperation Expert (KMCO), and KOICA Overseas Office Youth Intern/Coordinator, along with an opportunity to learn about the participation experiences of seniors, all in one place.
In addition, as pre-events, information display on each global talent development project program, one-on-one customized consulting with KOICA staff, a game booth to find the "country of assignment fit for me", and a photo exhibition of the winners of the World Friends Korea (WFK) Volunteer Group Activity Photo Contest were also held to add to the overall interest and engagement of the participants.



MOU with foreign development cooperation agencies to participate in 'FASA Fund'

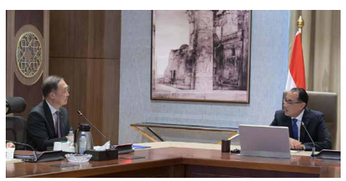
KOICA signed an MOU for participation in the 'FASA Fund' with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) at the Norwegian Embassy in Washington, D.C., on October 24 at 5 p.m. (local time). The FASA Fund is a project jointly announced by the USAID Administrator and the Director General of NORAD at the UN General Assembly in September 2023, created and operated by the two organizations with a total investment of $70 million, $35 million each. With the MOU, KOICA will invest more than $1.25 million over the next five years to help generate additional resources for the FASA Fund, which provides low-interest financial assistance to small and medium-sized agribusinesses in Africa. Through this agreement, KOICA expects to expand its global influence by enhancing its network with global donor agencies, increasing support in the blended finance sector, and retaining decision-making rights in major funds such as the FASA Fund.



'2024 Second Half African Region Overseas Office Meeting' held

KOICA held the '2024 Second Half African Regional Overseas Office Meeting' in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from September 30 to October 1, bringing together headquarters staff and deputy directors from 15 African regional overseas offices. This meeting was held to share project cases and discuss collaboration among practitioners implementing successful projects in the African region. The meeting continued with the exchange of good and problematic project cases in Africa's three main sectors: education, health and agriculture, the discussion of priority issues in the African region and the definition of future strategies. In addition, group discussions and the collection of opinions on the status of project implementation in conflict-prone countries, follow-up measures for the Korea-Africa Summit, and new projects were also conducted. KOICA evaluated that the meeting laid the foundation for effectively supporting project operations in Africa in 2025 by facilitating the exchange of opinions among working-level officials.

November



Seeking to strengthen development cooperation with Egypt ahead of the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations

Korea and Egypt have agreed to strengthen development cooperation to mark the 30th anniversary of their diplomatic relations next year. KOICA President CHANG Won Sam paid an official visit to Egypt from November 20-22 (local time) and met with high-ranking government officials to discuss ODA projects and cooperation plans. Korea has been expanding the scale of development cooperation since designating Egypt as a new priority country for cooperation in 2021. On the 20th, President CHANG, after meeting with Egyptian Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly, attended the signing ceremony of the letter of exchange for the 'Korea-Egypt Technical University Education Capacity Strengthening and Industry-Academia Cooperation Project' and called for attention and support to ensure successful cooperation outcomes. On the 21st, he also attended the completion ceremony for 'The Enhancement of Public e-Procurement in Egypt' project. KOICA carried out the project to transfer the Korean-style electronic procurement system to the Egyptian government and assist in developing the capabilities of public officials.



MOU with UNFCCC

KOICA signed an MOU for the Climate Future Partnership with the Secretariat of the UNFCCC at COP29 held in Baku, Azerbaijan, on October 19. With this agreement, the two organizations will jointly carry out the 'Artificial Intelligence Cooperation Project for Climate Action,' which applies AI technology to climate change response by 2027, and the 'Cooperation Project to Support Climate Resources Demand for Conflict and Vulnerable Countries.' Through the AI Cooperation Project, KOICA plans to support the development of AI solutions for climate change mitigation and adaptation, strengthen the capacity to use the solutions, and conduct knowledge production and dissemination activities. As a start, KOICA will hold the "KOICA Climate AI Forum" for domestic companies and related experts in early December.



KOICA won two categories at the 2024 Korea Business Communication Awards

KOICA was honored with two awards at the '2024 Korea Business Communication Awards,' winning the Minister of Culture, Sports, and Tourism Award in the printed newsletter category and the Grand Prize (Korea Newsletter Association President's Award) in the ESG category. 'Magazine KOICA' won the Grand Prize in the Inaugural Newsletter category in 2022 and the Minister of Employment and Labor Award in the Electronic Newsletter (Webzine) category last year, and this year it won the award for the third consecutive year, once again proving its value and expertise as Korea's only international development cooperation magazine. 'KOICA Promotional Video for Outstanding Projects in Africa' received the Grand Prize (Korea Newsletter Association President's Award) in the ESG category. Filmed on location in Ghana, Ethiopia and Rwanda, the video was praised for vividly capturing the young and dynamic Africa that is rapidly developing not only in basic industries, but also in cutting-edge ICT and digital fields.



'Humanitarian Human' photo exhibition held in Seongsu-dong, Seoul

KOICA held a special photo exhibition featuring vivid scenes from conflict-affected and vulnerable countries under the theme 'Humanitarian Human' for four days, from November 29 to December 3, in Seongsu-dong, Seoul. In this exhibition, 18 partner organizations (8 international organizations and 10 domestic NGOs) that support conflict-affected and vulnerable countries around the world participated alongside KOICA, showcasing photos from 33 countries. Through photos capturing scenes from conflict-affected and vulnerable countries, visitors gained insight into how the Korean government's humanitarian aid efforts are being carried out. They were also able to understand at a glance the vision and goals of the humanitarian aid project that KOICA and partner organizations are working together to achieve. KOICA also delivered a message about sustainable consumption by providing Fairtrade-certified Rwandan coffee and eco-friendly recycling tumblers to visitors during the exhibition period. The exhibition will continue from December 3 to 7, moving to Incheon National University's Songdo Campus.



Rwanda TVET Quality Management Improvement Results Presentation Conference

On November 15 (local time), KOICA held the 'Rwanda Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Annual Conference' to present the project results in commemoration of the completion of the 'Rwanda TVET Quality Management Capacity Building Project' at the Kigali Convention Center in Rwanda. KOICA introduced that through this project, it has established a national system for curriculum development, educational evaluation and quality control, and teacher qualification, which are the foundation of TVET in Rwanda. In addition, KOICA highlighted achievements such as the creation of 34 types of curricula, the certification of some 4,400 teachers, the establishment of 345 TVET schools, and the acquisition of national certification by some 30,000 students in TVET. KOICA also presented a survey showing that more than 60% of Rwandan TVET school graduates in 2024 succeeded in securing a job or entering a top school within three months of graduation.

December



Achieved the 'Highest Grade' in Public Data Quality Certification

KOICA obtained the highest grade, 'Excellent,' in the 'Public Data Quality Certification' conducted by the Ministry of Public Administration and Security in 2024. KOICA received high evaluations in all three assessment areas and achieved a total score of 98, making it one of 28 institutions, including central administration and public organizations, to secure the highest quality certification. KOICA has made various efforts in the field of data quality, including organizing a data quality management organization, establishing a quality management system for the entire database of the institution by introducing and implementing a data management system, and hiring quality management experts. CHANG Won Sam, President of KOICA, emphasized that "Providing high-quality public data and allowing the public to use it freely is the foundation for implementing a digital platform government," and added, "KOICA will continue to do its best to work with the people to create a better world through data."



Performance-sharing event commemorating the 10th anniversary of the KOICA Office in Côte d'Ivoire

On November 28 (local time), KOICA held a performance-sharing session to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the opening of the KOICA Côte d'Ivoire Office at the Ivorian-Korean Sports, Culture, and ICT Center in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. KOICA opened the office in Côte d'Ivoire in 2014 and has been promoting ODA projects. Over the past 10 years, the amount of grant ODA support through KOICA has increased more than sixfold (from USD 2.37 million in 2014 to a provisional USD 13.44 million in 2024), and the number of talented individuals who participated in KOICA training projects has reached a cumulative total of 401. During the same period, Côte d'Ivoire's GDP nearly doubled (from USD 48 billion in 2014 to USD 85 billion in 2024). KOICA has carried out projects for the people of Côte d'Ivoire mainly in the areas of health, water management, and education. At the Performance-Sharing Session, KOICA also presented its project promotion and discovery process to Ivorian government ministries and international organization officials.



KOICA-hosted event 'Leveraging Sustainable Finance for Upscaling Green Impact in Uzbekistan'

KOICA held the performance-sharing event 'Leveraging Sustainable Finance for Upscaling Green Impact in Uzbekistan' in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, on November 27 (local time). At this event, KOICA shared its successful experience in issuing international bonds worth 1.4 trillion won to respond to the climate crisis in Uzbekistan, in collaboration with the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI). In the Autonomous Republic of Karakalpakstan, more than 90% of the Aral Sea has disappeared over the past 50 years due to land reclamation policies, the construction of dams and canals, and large-scale cotton cultivation, forcing fishermen to leave in search of alternative livelihoods and putting the local economy at great risk. Accordingly, KOICA collaborated with GGGI to promote the 'Aral Sea Green Rehabilitation Investment Project through Community-Led Eco-Friendly Reconstruction in the Autonomous Republic of Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan.' GGGI established a foundation for bond issuance and supported the entire bond issuance process for SQB and Agrobank, commercial banks in Uzbekistan. As a result, all bonds issued by SQB and Agrobank were successfully listed on the London Stock Exchange. This achievement is evaluated as an innovative success in which traditional ODA-style policy support and capacity development activities led to the attraction of large-scale private investment.



The 19th Korea Overseas Volunteer Awards ceremony

The 19th Korea Overseas Volunteer Awards Ceremony, hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and organized by KOICA and KCOC, was held on December 5 at KOICA headquarters in Seongnam-si, Gyeonggi-do. At this ceremony, the Presidential Citation was awarded to Hwang Kyung-soon, Sister of The Congregation of Kkottongne Sisters of Jesus, who has run a missionary organization in Uganda for over 17 years and contributed to improving the quality of life of the underprivileged by caring for sick and poor children. Sister Hwang also received the Lee Tae-seok Service Award. The Prime Minister's Citation was awarded to Seo Jeong-ho, a KOICA Global Doctor who has been engaged in various medical volunteer activities in Cambodia. Besides, the Foreign Minister's Citation was awarded to Chung Moon-soo, Miral Welfare Foundation Malawi Branch Manager, and Park Dong-chul, Vietnam Branch Manager of Good Neighbors; the KOICA President's Commendation to Kim Se-hyun, Country Director of Medipeace in Peru, and Seok Dong-yeon, KOICA Overseas Volunteer; and the KCOC Chairman's Commendation to Park Kwang-ho, Nepal Tikapur Region Project Manager, and Lee Kyu-in, MD, Korea Medical Institute.



'KOICA 2024 Climate AI Forum'

KOICA held the 'KOICA 2024 Climate AI Forum' at DoubleTree by Hilton Seoul Pangyo in Seongnam-si, Gyeonggi-do, on December 9. KOICA organized this forum to introduce #AI4ClimateAction, an international community initiative to respond to climate change using AI technology, which KOICA has pledged to cooperate with the Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) until 2027, and to exchange views with domestic businesspeople and experts on how Korea can effectively contribute. The forum was divided into two sessions. Session 1 was titled "Global Climate Action and the Future of AI Technology" and featured speakers Lee Mi-kyung, professor at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, and Kim Hye-won, Director of KOICA's Private Sector Engagement Program Team. In session 2, titled "Global Climate AI Business Participation and Case Studies," Choi Ye-ji, Ph.D., from SIA Artificial Intelligence Research Institute, and Gim Tae-hyoung, Professor at the Graduate School of Environmental Studies at Seoul National University, presented case studies of AI technologies being developed and researched in Korea to respond to climate change. Starting with this forum, KOICA plans to continue carrying out capacity building and knowledge-sharing activities both domestically and internationally to develop AI solutions for climate change response as an official partner organization of the UNFCCC #AI4ClimateAction initiative.

Cooperation for future generations: Creating a sustainable tomorrow together

Dear readers, it is my pleasure to share with you the roles and vision of the future generation, the leaders of the coming era, through this latest issue of MAGAZINE KOICA.

Discussions about future generations have continuously recurred as major agenda within the international community. In particular, this past September, we explored key issues concerning sustainable development cooperation for future generations with diverse actors at the 17th Seoul ODA International Conference co-hosted by KOICA and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, sharing knowledge and experiences. The conference provided a valuable opportunity to reflect on global challenges facing tomorrow's leaders and the importance of cooperation in addressing these issues.

The next generation possesses great capabilities and potential, but faces far more complex and diverse challenges than their predecessors. This is because global complex crises that cannot be resolved through individual efforts, such as climate change, pandemics, geopolitical conflicts, and the resulting economic, energy, and supply chain crises, are deepening by the day. Accordingly, coexistence and mutual cooperation among various entities in the international community, including governments, companies, civil society, and individuals, are more urgent than ever.

Understanding the significance of future generations, KOICA is implementing various projects to help deepen their respect for different cultures and environments, and thereby become confident members of the international community. The projects highlighted in this issue represent KOICA's key achievements to this end: our support for employment and start-ups, alongside support for vocational technical colleges, in Kyrgyzstan and Ethiopia; the educational environment improvement project for children and youth in Honduras; and the project for the protection of women and children in the African island nation of Comoros.

So far, KOICA has consistently supported the growth and independence of future generations. Our flagship program in this area is the "Career Ladder," which allows applicants to gain job experience in the development cooperation field. Following stepping stone jobs such as KOICA project coordinator and multilateral cooperation officer, these young professionals can later grow into experts at related international organizations or private and public institutions. In this edition of MAGAZINE KOICA, we met with Ms. Yang Da-young, a young expert at UNICEF, and CEO Ms. Na Hyun-jeong, who went from KOICA volunteer to the first Korean chef in Tunisia, as exemplary cases of KOICA's global talent development project.

KOICA will steadily expand our support to ensure that more young leaders can access opportunities to participate in development cooperation projects. Since 2024, we have been implementing the KOICA Youth Initiative to foster approximately 30,000 development cooperation talents by 2027. Through our Return Program, we are helping former overseas volunteers start businesses, whereas KOICA's Scholarship Program supports those studying in the field of international development cooperation. Our cooperation with several universities allows students to receive credit for overseas volunteer activities, thereby further nurturing the potential of future generations.

Reflecting on the challenging realities of our time, such as rapid technological development exemplified by artificial intelligence (AI), the polarization of wealth, and climate change, it is regretful that we must pass on such heavy burdens to posterity. Yet the key to solving these difficulties in creative ways rests in the innovative thinking and active engagement of our future generations.

A better tomorrow and sustainable future for humanity lie in the hands of this next wave of pioneers. KOICA will remain a steadfast ally for the future generation, walking alongside them on their promising path.

Thank you.

President of KOICA

장원삼

CHANG, Won Sam

FINDING GOIKHA



KOICA is a Better Tomorrow

KOICA, Korea's representative agency for development cooperation, creates a world where everyone can dream of a happy future through inclusive and win-win partnerships, leaving no one behind, and implements developed-country-style ODA projects.

KOICA

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GENERATIONS FUTURE













Peace





GOLBAL

