

TOWARDS MORE RESILIENT & INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES

European and Korean Perspectives



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DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
TO THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

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Foreword

Embracing diversity and tolerance is pivotal in cultivating true inclusion, a cornerstone of human rights. At the same time, the pursuit of more inclusive, equal, fair and resilient societies is a collective endeavour requiring an unwavering commitment to human rights and non-discrimination.

The European Union is founded on values such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights. All forms of hatred and intolerance are incompatible with these fundamental rights and values. Non-discrimination is one of the EU's fundamental values and a main strand of EU policies. Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited (*Article 21 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, Title III: Equality -Non-discrimination*).

Current ongoing conflicts and some socio-economic dynamics across the world are testing these principles. Similarly, episodes of discrimination, intolerance and violence towards minority groups we witness around the world, in Europe and the Republic of Korea, bring to the fore the issue of multiple discrimination.

The theme of this publication "*TOWARDS MORE RESILIENT & INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES*" is thus very timely. It is a collection of perspectives by social and human rights activists and representatives of civil society organisations in Korea and Europe who have cooperated with the Korea-EU CSO Network (KEN) and are engaged in fighting discrimination be it based on gender, sexual orientation, disability, social and economic background or identity. Their testimonials remind us that civil society has a crucial role to play in raising the topic of inclusivity high on the social agenda and in broadening the discussion.

I hope you will find these testimonials interesting and informative for further reflections on how citizens and communities can be part of the global action to upholding universal human rights and contributing to more resilient and inclusive societies.

With the highest regard and respect for all,

María CASTILLO FERNÁNDEZ
EU Ambassador to the Republic of Korea



Gea Meijers
Coordinator



INTERSECTIONAL FEMINISM: A new kind of feminism for Europe?

“If it isn’t intersectional, it isn’t feminism”, says one of the placards during the annual womxn march in 2020 in the Netherlands. In the same year, the European Union’s Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 introduced intersectionality in its approach to eradicate gendered discrimination. In our own network, we have embraced the term as a key concept in our approach to foster more equal and just societies in Europe and in the Global South, or more appropriately termed the ‘majority world’.

How come that this abstract sounding term, that was coined less than 35 years ago by the American scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw, is embraced by feminists in all kinds of contexts: institutionally, at grassroots level and within a European feminist network? The power of the concept lies in the fact that it enables to systematically approach intuitive notions about the complexity behind inequality and discrimination. Equality is not a binary experience between two opposing groups of people but a relative one, depending on each individual context.

One can illustrate this complexity with an older and more popular feminist slogan: “the personal is political”. Unequal power dynamics are all around us, and within us. An intersectional perspective allows people to connect unequal patterns of power connected to gender with other kinds of societal inequalities in our structure and culture, like race, class, age, nation, sexuality, disability, and so forth. An intersectional approach gives us a framework to see that each person is unique, interacting with different kinds of privileges and discrimination. One cannot quantify inequality as a mere sum of one’s characteristics, like all older women are more privileged than younger ones. Each personal journey is unique. However, connecting patterns of inequality can be discerned, in which multiple intersection of inequality leads to an increased discrimination and exclusion.

Why is an intersectional perspective important for feminists? There remain established strands of activism and policy making in the EU that in effect promote changes that will mostly benefit white women that are economically better situated. It is the effect resulting from the perspectives of the kind of women or people that have the most power in these spaces. Nurturing an intersectional approach for a feminist as a personal and a collective goal can make these biases explicitly visible in order to improve our action.

To work with an intersectional approach in a network means that we consciously keep asking ourselves if the power in our own asso-

ciation is distributed over a diversity of people, and if the changes we promote help those that are most marginalized, in the EU and elsewhere.

An intersectional approach has helped our network to keep evolving. It led to a very active working group for migrant women organisations and groups (one of the few spaces at European level) that we have established in 2016. It has resulted in our ongoing focus on the backlashes - most recently in the context of war-faces by women, LGBTQI* groups and feminists in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. And in 2023 we started piloting a working group with young feminists.

An intersectional approach informs our feminist views as well. The previous version of WIDE+ came to life around the same time as Crenshaw coined the term intersectionality. WIDE(+) was a Women In Development (based in) Europe network, which realised from its inception that a truly transformative feminism changes our macro-economic ordering by analysing what women have in common and what sets them apart. Women in general provide the bulk of the (unpaid) care work, which is undervalued in dominant economic metrics and policies. At the same time, the majority of women in countries like the Netherlands benefit in their consumption from the extractive dynamics in our international trading systems, in which a large group of women in the majority world are treated like citizens who are expendable in terms of their very cheap labour or land rights.

An intersectional feminist approach should be used to acknowledge differences in our struggles for more equality and rights, but also for finding out commonalities, even global ones. It is therefore a potent tool to promote international solidarity among feminists and likeminded. No one is the same, but we are all connected.

WIDE+

WIDE+ is a European network of associations and activists that fights for women’s rights, as part of a larger struggle for social justice, sustainable livelihoods and human rights. They advocate changing European policies that affect people in and outside of Europe. WIDE+ promotes inclusive and intersectional feminist movement building in Europe, in solidarity with feminists in the global South.

> <https://wideplus.org>



Goldie Kim
Executive Director

한국 젠더교육
플랫폼호재
Gender Equality
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KEEPING HOPE IN THE FACE OF DEATH

Another femicide case: a man killed a woman whom he never met, he had no intimate relationship with, nor any conflict whatsoever. On 17 August 2023, at 11:44 a.m., on a hiking trail of Gwanaksan Mountain in Sillim-dong, Seoul, a man in his 30s assaulted a woman in her 30s, an elementary school teacher, and attempted to rape her, ultimately killing her.

As I read this news article, I get a sense of déjà vu. On 17 May 2023, in Gangnam, Seoul, a man killed a woman simply because “she ignored me.” Since then, questions such as “Why are women killed just because they are women?” reverberate throughout the Korean society, prompting young women to delve into feminism. Since 2016, feminism book sales soared, cruising to the top of social science bestsellers. Meanwhile, a backlash culture asserting that “gender equality has already been achieved” has also gained traction.

The victim of the Gangnam Station Exit 10 murder was 23 years old at the time, and had she survived, she would be 30 now. However, during all this time, while our society hesitates to label “unprovoked attacks, sexual assaults, and murders against women” as gender-based violence, incidents of gender-based violence against women, such as the attempted murder and sexual assault of a woman (known as the roundhouse kick case) in Busan (May 2022), the sexual assault and murder at Inha University (July 2022), the stalking murder at Sindang Station (September 2022), the dating murder in Siheung-dong (May 2023), and the dating murder by a maritime police officer (August 2023), have become increasingly apparent.

Of course, gender-based violence is not unique to South Korea. Countries worldwide are making efforts to change the gender hierarchy ecosystem. As part of these efforts, NGOs from the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom developed and published the “Inspiring Male Action on Gender Equality in Europe Toolkit”, or IMAGINE Toolkit, which clearly and resolutely states the reasons why men should be involved in addressing gender-based violence.

“Most men are not perpetrators, but it is clear that most perpetrators of gender-based violence are men. It is time for more men to take responsibility and stand up to tackle the issue of gender-based violence and participate in the prevention of violence, as men need to be a significant part of the solution to gender-based violence. When addressing racial discrimination, who should step forward to resolve the issue? In essence, it should be white people because it is oc-

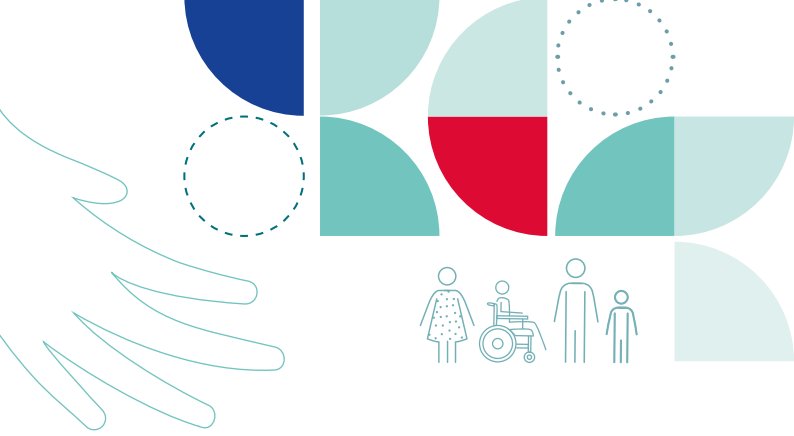
curing in the world under their domination. For the same reason, it is self-evident that men should come forward in addressing gender discrimination and sexual violence.”

It is evident that “transforming masculinity” is considered one way to resolve gender-based violence. Fixed ideas of so-called “masculinity” and “manhood,” the qualities of being “a real man,” are not unrelated to the perpetration of gender-based violence. Under these notions, men are expected to be enthusiastic in all matters, active not passive, adventurous, more assertive and persuasive than empathetic, capable of leading others, suppressing their emotions such as sadness or pain and never cry, sexually generous or sexually driven, and always ready to initiate sex. Men who do not meet these expectations are ridiculed by others as “losers” and pressured to conform to manly ideals, even through violent means under the pretext of masculine behavior. To transform such “harmful masculinity” into “beneficial masculinity,” we must now speak of “men’s liberation.”

The Gender Equality Training Platform Hyojae is collaborating with the Dutch NGO Emancipator to introduce the IMAGINE Toolkit to Korean society and train IMAGINE specialists. As of August 2023, 162 specialized trainers nationwide have completed the course and are working in their respective communities to help men become agents of gender equality through various education and training programs. It has been said that one thing to remember in the darkest times is that it is always darkest before the dawn. A strong backlash may indicate that steps and dynamics towards gender equality are continuing vigorously. Thus, even in the face of the scream of death, let us not lose hope. We must understand that our desire for and awareness of gender equality will liberate men and foster male comrades who will roll up their sleeves and stand with us. Let us build real hope alongside men who sincerely wish for a world where women can live safely.

GENDER EQUALITY TRAINING PLATFORM

Gender Equality Training Platform (GET-P) was established in 1992 as a specialized education platform in which gender equality education activists work for a gender-equal society without discrimination. It is also an NGO that spreads gender equality culture by exchanging and cooperating globally.



Barbara de Micheli
Gender mainstreaming
senior expert and
facilitator



HOW TO REACH A MORE INCLUSIVE SOCIETY THROUGH THE PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY - THE IMPORTANCE OF GENDER DISAGGREGATED DATA AND THE ROLE OF CSOS

The European Union is committed to promoting gender equality since its very early years. From mid 70s to nowadays the focus of intervention, initially concentrated on removing legal barriers and fighting discrimination in the economic field and empowering women's participation in the labour market, has been widened to other sectors, developing a more holistic approach towards inclusive societies. The Gender Equality Index¹ (GEI) elaborated by EIGE² offers a comprehensive view of gender equality role in inclusive societies. GEI is a complex and synthetic indicator assessing EU member states performances on Gender Equality looking at the intersection of several dimensions including *work, health, access to money, access to power, gender-based violence, use of time and access to knowledge*. GEI also offers an intersectional approach, examining how elements such as disability, age, level of education, country of birth and family type can intersect with gender and create many different kinds of pathways in people's lives.

In 2022 GEI registered a value of less than 70 at EU level, with still 30 points needed to reach gender equality at European level.

Showing the efforts still needed in the pathway to gender equality, the GEI itself can be considered a powerful asset in the strategy of gender mainstreaming since it offers European institutions and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) a tool to monitor and communicate the dimensions of inequality and to detect the fields where improvements are more needed.

The GEI also shows how different aspects in daily life – like for instance access to resources (money as well as time and space) and the unbalanced share of care responsibilities between women and men – have a deep impact in determining gender inequalities.

Using quantitative and qualitative data to raise awareness on gender discrimination is an emerging approach, adopted with success by CSOs and activists in Europe to contrast the resistances about the need to fight against gender discrimination to create more in-

clusive societies. CSOs can play a key role in *disseminating existing data* but also in *building data, questioning* statistics from a gender perspective and *designing* additional data needed to be collected and analysed to reach an intersectional view of discrimination in societies.

In the last years several *bottom up initiatives* have contributed to bringing up new perspectives in the debate around gender equality, rising attention on the need of monitoring and collecting *gender disaggregated* information and data around emerging challenges such, for instance, *unpaid care work, gender differences in the use of transports, gender differences in safety in the cities, gender differences in security issues in social media, gender differences in medicine and access to health services*.

CSOs in cooperation with research centres and Universities can contribute in sharing existing data and in demanding the collection of *gender disaggregated data* in an increasing number of domains³ as way to build more inclusive societies.

FONDAZIONE GIACOMO BRODOLINI SRL SB

FGB is a research centre inspired by the principles of labour and social inclusion, welfare promotion, territorial cohesion, feminisms, sustainability, social innovation and cultural diversity, respect for fundamental human rights, and local development. It provides evaluation of public policies, planning of actions, communication, education and training at national and international level, and with a strong commitment to women's rights and gender equality.

> www.fondazionebrodolini.it/en

1 See <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/about>

2 EIGE is the the European Agency dedicated to mainstreaming and monitoring gender equality in Europe. www.EIGE.europa.eu

3 Caroline Criado Perez in her "Invisible Women" <https://www.penguin.co.uk/books/435554/invisible-women-by-caroline-criado-perez/9781784706289> shows clearly the number of bias in data collection women face in their everyday life



Park Chul-gyoon
Activist



THE DIFFICULT PATH TOWARDS INCLUSIVENESS FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

For many years, the 2.6 million individuals with disabilities in Korea found themselves unable to fully exercise their rights. Everyday rights that are often taken for granted by those without disabilities, such as the right to mobility, the right to work, the right to education, and the right to live as active members of their communities, remained out of reach due to societal attitude and barriers. Consequently, for decades, many Koreans who have disabilities were confined to their homes or disability-specific facilities.

Korean society, which had long favored those without disabilities, began to transform when individuals with disabilities took matters into their own hands, demanding their rights and taking action. In 2001, the struggle for mobility rights gained momentum following the tragic fall and subsequent death of an elderly couple with disabilities. It happened while they were using a vertical wheelchair lift at Oido Subway Station. This incident shed light on the dangers associated with the existing wheelchair lifts in subway stations, which were prone to frequent accidents due to the absence of elevators. Furthermore, few city buses were accessible to individuals with disabilities, even in Seoul. Frustrated and determined, people with disabilities raised their voices, declaring they could no longer tolerate this exclusion and danger.

This struggle to challenge the able-centric society early in the 21st century struck a chord with the wider audience, although it initially faced resistance and criticism from some. The movement boldly asserted that individuals with disabilities are also human beings and deserve the right to move around with the rest of the population. It echoed a powerful message that, in a Korean society marked by discrimination and exclusion, people with disabilities should be allowed to inclusively coexist with others. This direct action brought tangible results, including the introduction of low-floor buses and the gradual installation of elevators at subway stations.

The success achieved through the early 21st century mobility rights movement prompted the formation of Solidarity Against Disability Discrimination (SADD), an advocacy organization committed to advancing the rights of people with disabilities. Since its establishment, SADD has been working to secure additional rights for people with disabilities in their daily lives. This includes advocating for the introduction of support personnel to assist people with disabilities in their daily routines. As of 2023, SADD is advocating for the creation of "right-based public jobs for the most severely disabled," in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

(CRPD). It is urging local governments to establish these jobs to build a society where people with the most severe disabilities can work alongside others.

Creating a resilient and inclusive society where all members, including those with disabilities, can thrive requires everyone to listen to the stories and perspectives of minority groups, understand their unique needs, and actively work to ensure their rights. For many years, Korean society has, at times, resorted to condemnation and disdain toward the actions and struggles of marginalized groups, including people with disabilities, often citing minor inconveniences as reasons. This tendency has intensified since the Yoon Suk Yeol administration took office. The present government and the ruling party have criticized the advocacy of persons with disabilities who call for coexistence between people with and without disabilities, actively fueling hatred and division. Consequently, the Korean disability rights movement is currently facing severe repression, with many rights that were hard-won through years of struggles being threatened or diminished. However, SADD remains resolute, advocating for disability rights every morning and evening at subway stations and on buses. In a society where hatred, divide and rule, and discrimination are ingrained, no one, including persons with disabilities, can secure their rights properly.

Human rights have been crafted through action and resistance from below throughout history. Likewise, disability rights are being shaped in Korea through the fierce struggle by persons with disabilities against a harsh society.

Let us stand together with the dynamic Korean disability rights movement, which is challenging the yoke of discrimination and exclusion embedded in Korean society. Join their call for disabled labor rights, deinstitutionalization, mobility rights, education rights, and other fundamental rights to be properly realized in everyday life.

SOLIDARITY AGAINST DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION

Solidarity Against Disability Discrimination, an organization committed to advancing disability rights in the Republic of Korea, was founded on September 5, 2007. Since its inception, SADD has unwaveringly dedicated itself to the pursuit of its core mission: the eradication of discrimination against individuals with disabilities, enabling them to embrace dignified lives as valued and equal contributors to their communities.



Rita Crespo Fernandez
Human Rights Officer



Florian Sanden
Policy Coordinator

AMBITIOUS DISABILITY SERVICES FOR A MORE INCLUSIVE AND RESILIENT EUROPE

Disabled people have a right to full self-determination and participation for which many require support services. Personal assistance and peer support are key services for disabled people. Personal assistance is a service controlled by the beneficiary, entailing support by one or several assistants in any area of life needed, thereby enabling independent living.¹ Peer support refers to people with a common experience supporting each other on an equal basis.² A survey conducted by the European Network on Independent Living (ENIL) indicates that personal assistance and peer support need to be expanded significantly in the European Union (EU) if disabled people are to be fully included in society.³ We know that disabled women are more strongly affected by exclusion from work than disabled men.⁴ When in institutions their reproductive rights are very often violated due to forced sterilisation.⁵ Personal assistance and peer support are very effective in improving access to employment and preventing institutionalisation, thereby enhancing gender equality. Only societies with free citizens, pursuing jobs they feel passionate about, are resilient societies.

Personal assistance services are the most effective if there are user cooperatives or centres for Independent Living (CIL), organisations owned and run by disabled people themselves. Examples of such organisations are Stiftarna av Independent Living i Sverige⁶ (STIL)⁷ from Sweden and Uloba - Independent Living Norge SA⁸, from Norway. User cooperatives and CILs are forms of peer support which help users in administrating their personal assistance. The EU has not yet recognised the importance of personal assistance. The European Strategy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities⁹ mentions it, yet without clear recommendations to member states to invest in this service. The Strategy presents two flagship initiatives: the adoption of Guidelines on independent living and inclusion in the community by the EU, and a Framework of Excellence for services.

These initiatives could have an impact across the EU and beyond, potentially strengthening personal assistance and other services. ENIL has published its own proposal for the Guidelines on independent living,¹⁰ where we call on the EU to ensure sufficient funding and access for all disabled people. To build this proposal, we followed the method of co-production and set up a task force with disabled people and allies, to gather the expertise of people with lived experience.

European policy makers have not yet understood the importance of personal assistance. National authorities still allocate resources to the funding of institutions, instead of expanding this transformative service. Many disabled people in Europe cannot access personal assistance in their countries, as it is still unavailable or unaffordable. Few countries offer personal budgets or allow all disabled people, including people with psychosocial and intellectual disabilities, to request personal assistance services.

We have examples that prove that personal assistance can have an impact on disabled people's lives, and that it is possible to put it in practice. These practices should inspire action and lead change in Europe and beyond. Personal assistance is a key to unlock independent living, and we must work together to ensure it is not a privilege, but a right.

EUROPEAN NETWORK ON INDEPENDENT LIVING

The European Network on Independent Living (ENIL) is a Europe-wide network of disabled people, with organizational and individual members throughout Europe, and beyond. ENIL is a forum for all disabled people, Independent Living organizations and their non-disabled allies on the issues of Independent Living.

> <https://enil.eu/>

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6 The Founders of Independent Living in Sweden

7 <https://www.stil.se/om-oss>

8 <https://www.uloba.no/>

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10 European Network on Independent Living (2023). Proposal for the European Commission Guidance on Independent Living, available at <https://enil.eu/proposal-of-the-european-network-on-independent-living-for-the-european-commission-guidance-on-independent-living-and-being-included-in-the-community/>



Youngsook Heo-oh
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Women Migrants Human Rights Center of Korea



THE SITUATION OF MARRIAGE MIGRANT WOMEN IN THE KOREAN SOCIETY

The surge of marriages between Korean men and non-Korean Asian women has become a phenomenon in the Korean society since the 2000s. This surge is explained by several factors. The most straightforward one is the existence of commercial brokers who exploit the situation of Korean men and foreign Asian women to broker marriages. According to a 2021 nationwide survey on multicultural households, nearly half of migrant women from Vietnam (48.8%) and Cambodia (48%) married with the assistance of marriage brokers. Such marriages are more common in rural areas (*eup, myeon*) than in urban areas (*dong*).

There are two concerning aspects as regards these marriages: they can take less than a week to arrange and there is often a significant age gap between the spouses. The marriages are arranged in a short period of time and the spouses cannot communicate and have no time to get to know each other. According to a 2020 survey conducted by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, the average time between the spouses' first meeting and their wedding is just 5.7 days. The survey also found that there is often a significant age gap between the spouses. While only 3.4% of husbands are more than 10 years older than their wives in the marriages between Koreans, the figure is 10 times higher, 34.2%, when it comes to marriages between Koreans and foreigners.

Most marriage migrant women come from underdeveloped Asian countries which are less developed than Korea. However, while in Korea, these women do not experience economic prosperity, as most Korean men who choose international marriage through brokers tend to have a low economic status. In 2018, the average monthly household income of urban workers was about KRW 4.76 million, while the average household income of 50% of multicultural families was under KRW 3 million in 2021. There is a difference between the economic level of the country and the individual's own status. Most brokered marriages occur between women from poor and underdeveloped countries and poor men from rich countries. Thus, such international marriages create upward

mobility at country level but downward mobility at individual level, as women enter a lower social class.

Although marriage migration shares some characteristics with bride-buying, the migrant women are not passive victims. They adapted to the Korean society, strived for survival, and grew to become new people. They created voluntary organizations, fighting for their rights and interests and taking advantage of the conditions that allow them to reside in Korea more easily than foreign residents with other visa types. Despite the difficult conditions, organizations run by migrant women have been active and flourishing for more than 10 years. Migrant women also engage in activities to influence the policymaking process to make sure their voices are heard. A variety of migrant women participate in the Seoul City Foreign Presidents Council, a policy advisory committee for foreigners in Seoul, to review and advise on policies that influence their daily lives.

The emergence of migrant women activists is a new trend: while previously most of the activists in the field of migration were Koreans, migrant women activists with bilingual backgrounds have emerged now on the scene. Initially they took roles such as interpreters and translators, but now an increasing number of migrant women identify as activists and conduct independent activities. The strengths of migrant women activists, in addition to their experience living in Korea, include their ability to support others in their native language and utilize their own culture and network. This is because when migrant women speak out for themselves, their voices are much more powerful than when others speak for them.

WOMEN MIGRANTS HUMAN RIGHTS CENTER OF KOREA

It is a non-profit, private organization that works with foreign immigrant women who have immigrated to Korea to ensure that their basic human rights are guaranteed and that they can stand proudly as citizens.



Esther Park
Education Inspector



HOW DO WE ACHIEVE EDUCATION FOR ALL?

According to a recent announcement from the Korean Ministry of Interior and Safety, there are 2.26 million of foreign residents living in Korea, accounting for 4.4% of the country's total population, and 97 districts where "foreign residents are concentrated." Over the last 10 years, the number of students with immigrant backgrounds has increased by 2.7 times, and the number of students with foreign nationality has increased by 8.6 times. In particular, the proportion of foreign students and "mid-immigrant" students (i.e., children from a prior marriage of a marriage migrant) is rapidly increasing in the Seoul Metropolitan Area, where the majority of foreign residents are. The number of schools with more than 50% of students with immigrant backgrounds is rising, however it is difficult to create long-term strategies for them. The number of students who are unable to communicate continues to rise. Meanwhile, students with immigrant backgrounds have a high drop-out rate and a very low university enrolment rate compared to the overall student population. In response, the Ministry of Education announced in September a mid- to long-term plan aimed at enhancing the Korean education system, improving career education that focuses on students' strengths, and expanding infrastructure to improve education conditions in schools with a high proportion of multicultural students.

However, on the ground, the government efforts remain limited. The Ministry of Education respects the right to education of all students living in Korea in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and there is significant diversity in the Korean schools, including children of foreign nationals, refugees, children of North Korean defectors born in third countries, overseas Koreans, children of international marriages, and children of unregistered foreigners. Because these students are all at different levels depending on factors such as when they entered Korea, their home environment, their parents' visa status, and their Korean language ability, they should receive customized support, but the current system cannot keep up.

For example, multicultural family support centers based in each region can only provide support to children of international marriages according to relevant laws and guidelines, and children of

foreign nationals are often excluded from benefits such as medical support and scholarships. "Mid-immigrant" students, children who entered Korea due to their parent's remarriage, often need psychological support as a result of joining a new family after being separated from their parent for a long time during the critical period when attachment is formed. However, it is difficult to provide proper counselling because of language barriers. In addition, the number of students with migrant backgrounds with disabilities is on the rise. However, it is often difficult to get a diagnosis itself, let alone find a specialist who can provide adequate support. What is even more challenging is finding ways to support undocumented students, who have no way to prove their existence, and children of asylum seekers, due to the very low refugee acceptance rates.

In addition, there is a serious lack of consideration of how students who graduate from inclusive schools and enter young adulthood can integrate their communities. The Korean society is pursuing an active immigration policy in response to declining birth rates. However, policies that open the door to immigration solely for the purpose of population growth, without being prepared to embrace the families and the unfamiliar cultures of the immigrants, must be improved as soon as possible. All relevant ministries, local governments, and local communities must work together to create support systems for youth with diverse identities both in and out of school so that they can grow into adults who dream of a great future.

SEOUL MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION SUPPORT CENTER

The center, run by the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education, provides systematic and integrated services so that all students can grow into global talents. Through tailored support for multicultural students, including easing entry into public education, Korean language classes, basic learning support, psychological and emotional counselling, career mentoring, and competency training for parents and teachers of multicultural students, the center is a place where multicultural education is realised for all members of Seoul's education community.



Minhee Ryu
Attorney-at-law



ADVANCING LGBTQ+ RIGHTS IN SOUTH KOREA: An Urgent Call for Equality and Inclusion

Pursuing full democracy and upholding human rights values in South Korea has been a remarkable and evolving experiment, marked by dramatic political, social, and economic transformations, with many milestones and struggles.

However, South Korea continues to grapple with challenges in recognising equality and inclusion for the LGBTQ community. After introducing the first anti-discrimination bill in 2006, there was a long-overdue passage of the legislation. As an activist primarily working on legal advocacy, let me briefly summarize LGBTQ+ rights in law and policy.

The Current State of LGBTQ+ Rights in South Korea

Anti-Gay Sodomy Provision: South Korea still has an anti-gay sodomy provision in the Military Criminal Act article 92-6, criminalizing consensual same-sex sexual activity among soldiers in the military. The provision has historical roots in many Western countries' military justice systems.

Lack of Comprehensive Non-Discrimination Protections: South Korea has not yet passed comprehensive non-discrimination legislation that explicitly protects individuals from discrimination based on their sexual orientation and gender identity. This leaves LGBT individuals vulnerable to discrimination in various aspects of life, such as employment, housing, and healthcare.

Invasive Requirement for Gender Recognition: Transgender persons in South Korea face abusive requirements for gender recognition, including mandatory surgery and hormone therapy. These requirements can be invasive and costly and do not align with international standards for recognizing gender identity.

Non-Recognition of Same-Sex Couples: South Korea does not recognize same-sex couples; therefore, we do not have access to legal protections and rights that heterosexual couples enjoy. This lack of recognition can result in various legal and societal challenges for same-sex couples. In 2021, a same-sex couple filed a lawsuit to recognize their status as dependents under the National Health Insurance Act and won at the appellate level, but the National Health Insurance Service appealed, and the case is pending before the Supreme Court.

To sum up, while South Korea has made some progress in recognizing LGBTQ rights, mainly by the Judiciary and the National Human Rights Commission of Korea, significant legal gaps and challenges remain in achieving full equality and protection for the LGBTQ community.

It's crucial to emphasize that this delay in progress cannot be solely attributed to the general Korean public. And it's important to note that the general public in South Korea can be supportive of LGBTQ rights. The majority of Koreans support comprehensive anti-discrimination law, and 40% of Koreans support same-sex marriage. However, the media landscape sometimes overrepresents vocal minority voices of opposition, leading to the impression that South Korean society may be less accepting than it actually is.

It's time to change the narrative. Let people know that our neighbours in Asia are already moving toward equality. Let's have a more diverse and open dialogue to show that average Koreans are ready to embrace LGBTQ rights once they know the real stories and people.

Let's accelerate this progress. By engaging with South Korean officials, building alliances with local LGBTQ organisations, raising public awareness, advocating for legal reforms, and sharing best practices, we can collectively pave a sustainable pathway toward a more resilient and inclusive South Korean society.

KOREAN LAWYERS FOR PUBLIC INTEREST AND HUMAN RIGHTS (KLPH)

The Korean Lawyers for Public Interest and Human Rights (KLPH) is a non-governmental organization based in Seoul. Its main goal is to safeguard human rights through legal means. KLPH concentrates on various aspects of human rights law, such as disability, sexual orientation, gender identity (SOGI), business and human rights, and freedom of assembly.



Angeline Green
Facilitator



MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION: a key tool for the future of inclusive societies

New Women Connectors constantly strives to bring together the lived experiences of migrants and refugees, especially women, and policymakers. This entails a blend of approaches, primary among which is our approach to meaningful participation. What this means to us is that individuals have a say in the systems that govern and influence their daily lives.

The meaningful participation approach looks at deconstructing taken-for-granted power relations, and allows further inspection of how organizations interact with the people they provide services for. The bottom rung of the ladder is “doing for” in which these organizations consult or inform the recipients of their services, not allowing them any say in the design or implementation of the system or research, but rather only have a say within a pre-established framework. The middle rung is “doing with”, at which point the organization and the recipients co-create and have an equal relationship. There is more participation at this stage but to a large extent recipients are still functioning within an established framework. The final and top rung of the ladder is “doing together”, similar to “doing with” in that the organization and recipients have an equal relationship, but with the key difference being that at this stage they are equal decision-makers. This is the ideal scenario: meaningful participation is encouraged by organizations and government bodies through the allowance for the individual to have a say in the decision-making process.

We believe that the increased involvement of people in the decision-making process is key to enhancing their feelings of belonging and inclusion, and as such, a necessity in the resilience and sustainable development of inclusive societies. As such, civil society organizations should foreground their flexibility and openness to the ideas of the public, and facilitate spaces for dialogue and participation on equal footing. The human aspect behind the work of civil society organizations allows them to be the perfect arbiters of change in facilitating this increased participation. By moving towards an increased attitude of participation, inclusivity and resilience can be fostered, as there is a normalization and continued conversation around what it means to be a cohesive and democratic society.

NEW WOMEN CONNECTORS

New Women Connectors (NWC) is a social change movement that advocates for feminist ideals and is led by migrant and refugee women from diverse backgrounds. We enable refugees and migrants to connect to each other and decision makers to challenge, shape and transform policies and processes that affect them.»

> <https://www.newwomenconnectors.com/>



Horim Yi
Activist



MARRIAGE FOR ALL, UNTIL LOVE EVENTUALLY WINS EVERYWHERE!

One month ago, my partner and I had a wedding ceremony in Hawaii, after having been together for 11 years. Although our marriage is not legally recognized in South Korea, where we have a life together, the moment we received a marriage certificate with our names as each other's spouse was profoundly heartwarming. Regrettably, it was not issued by the Korean government, but it provided some comfort, knowing that, somewhere in this world, there is an official document recognizing our relationship.

The freedom to choose and shape one's own marriage and family life is a fundamental right that every human being should enjoy. Over the past two decades, a global wave of change has swept through many countries, granting all individuals the universal right to marry regardless of their spouse's gender. This transformation continues to evolve. That is because, denying freedom to marry and depriving people of the rights which are necessary to live together solely based on spouse's gender is unjust. That is because, the daily challenges, future uncertainties, grief, and pain experienced by same-sex couples undermine individual dignity and perpetuate inequality within our communities and society.

Fortunately, change is underway in various countries, including South Korea, which had marginalised and oppressed LGBTQ people. In February 2023, the Seoul High Court ruled that denying health insurance dependent status to same-sex spouses is discriminatory and such discrimination is no longer tolerated in the public sphere. In May 2023, the South Korean National Assembly proposed a marriage equality bill for the first time in Korea's constitutional history. These are important milestones toward realising marriage equality in South Korea. While there is still a long way to go, when various individuals, organisations, and agencies each contribute in their own way, we can create an inclusive society where LGBTQ people can be free from discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and live equally and with dignity. To achieve such a society, diverse members of civil society should also raise their voices louder for equality.

"Remember that marriage is to be entered into reverently, deliberately and joyously, with a sense of firm and abiding commitment not only to each other, but also to friends, to family, to community, and to society."

One month ago, as I heard these words from the marriage officiant during our wedding ceremony, I was reminded that marriage is more than a promise between two individuals. It is a commitment to our extended families, friends, community, and society. Since no one lives in isolation, our individual lives are interconnected, and we are affected by each other's happiness and pain, joy and sorrow. As we recognise this interconnectedness and interdependency, I invite you to join us on the path towards "Marriage for all" – a journey towards marriage equality – for the greater happiness of everyone and for the more inclusive and welcoming society for everyone. Until love eventually wins everywhere, please stay together!

SOLIDARITY FOR LGBT HUMAN RIGHTS OF KOREA

Solidarity for LGBT Human Rights of Korea is a 26-year-old LGBTQ rights organization in South Korea working for the dignity and rights of LGBTQ people. Our main area of activity includes LGBTQ labour rights, marriage equality, transgender rights, and HIV/AIDS human rights.

> <https://lgbtpride.or.kr>



Belinda Dear
Senior Advocacy Officer



THE EXPERIENCES OF LGBTI YOUTH IN EUROPE

A significant number of EU citizens continue to experience discrimination, inequalities and violence based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or sex characteristics.

In 2019, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights conducted the second round of the LGBTI Survey which shows how LGBTI people experience their human and fundamental rights in daily life across Europe. For the first time, this survey included the experiences of LGBTI people under 18 and determined that young people (aged 15-24) experience some of the highest levels of discrimination across all age groups included in this research, in particular hate-motivated violence (including attacks and harassment). The data confirm that for most young people, this violence happens either in schools or is perpetrated by school peers. The rates of violence are especially alarming for trans and intersex children and young people.

A study conducted by IGLYO¹ shows similar rates of violence and states that most learners (58%) never report what happened to them. The study also shows that LGBTQI learners experienced high rates of harassment online (62% respondents had been the target of cyberbullying).

ILGA-Europe and IGLYO consider that EU countries and institutions should implement a number of recommendations in order to protect the youth against discrimination and violence and help create a more inclusive environment for all:

- collect data about LGBTI youth and their experiences and do

targeted analyses on these groups

- prohibit discrimination against LGBTI people, including children and young people, in all areas of life – including in education, healthcare, housing, and social protection
- implement comprehensive responses to violence and discrimination in schools based on international standards.

While most EU Member States (21 countries) have implemented anti-discrimination laws or action plans already, only six of them provide most of the measures of the comprehensive school approach including actions like inclusive curricula, teacher training, or support for victims of school violence. Overall teachers and school staff lack access to adequate training to prevent and address such violence or to include LGBTI content in their lessons. Mandatory teacher training is rarely implemented across EU Member States, which translates into an important barrier to creating an inclusive environment for all learners.

Civil society organisations can support greatly by providing data analysis, pulling out experiences of those experiencing intersectional marginalisation, providing information and guides and overall empowering people to defend human rights.

ILGA-EUROPE

ILGA-Europe are an independent, international non-governmental umbrella organisation uniting over 700 organisations from 54 countries across Europe and Central Asia.

> www.ilga-europe.org

¹ IGLYO (2021) LGBTQI Inclusive Education Survey IGLYO LGBTQI Inclusive Education Study 2021.



Evangelia SAVVIDOU
Coordinator



EMBRACING DIVERSITY IN THE PATHWAY TOWARDS RESILIENT AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES: the need for collaborative actions

In a world shaped by diverse identities and interlinked challenges and uncertainties, societies need to reinvent themselves in resilient, inclusive, and sustainable ways. This pathway requires a holistic approach and should be encompassed by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The concept of 'leaving no one behind' should be the guiding principle of collective action, and the most marginalised and less empowered must be brought to participate fully in this transformative process of society.

The first step towards resilience and inclusivity is recognising the interdependent nature of societies and the intersectionality of the socially constructed identities people carry. Gender, (dis)ability, displacement, and environmental sustainability, among many other issues, are not isolated but are interrelated in our communities. An injustice in one realm often perpetuates inequalities in others. For instance, climate change disproportionately affects marginalised communities, exacerbating existing vulnerabilities. Fostering resilience requires a holistic and SDG-integrated approach to the issues, catalysing progress across all societal pillars and the three axes of sustainable development (social, environmental, and economic), and considering peace and partnership values as well. Addressing, for instance, climate change requires protecting the environment, securing livelihoods, tackling the structural challenges of changing demographics and technologies, and realising human rights protection for all.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) have an important role to play in addressing the intersectionality of these challenges and driving collective action and positive change. They can serve as the driving force behind systemic societal change, advocate for policies and actions that promote equality and justice, and develop synergies to accelerate and amplify their impact. For instance, CSOs can collaboratively work and advocate for empowering refugee women with disabilities or ensuring the protection of LGBTQ+ displaced people in the context of climate

change. Through the intersectional lens, CSOs can identify gaps in existing frameworks, propose innovative solutions that benefit all, and show leadership in the pathway towards resilience and inclusivity.

Countries should have a central role in leading the way to resilient and inclusive societies.

They must cooperate to address the systemic and overlapping inequities in wealth distribution, education, income, indigeneity, or ethnicity, among others. Countries can foster multi-level and multi-stakeholder dialogue, build bridges of understanding and cooperation, and shape visions and action plans through policies. National and local governments should adopt a human rights-based approach, reinforcing existing or advocated policies, strategies, and action plans, and ensuring the integration of equity considerations into overall policy objectives, and the development of inclusive policies that support opportunities for growth.

The path to resilience and inclusivity lies in unity. Let the 60-year milestone of EU-Korea diplomatic relations stand as a reminder that longevity should also be achieved in shared efforts towards a sustainable future where no one is left behind.

DEVELOPMENT SOLUTIONS NETWORK - SDSN YOUTH BLACK SEA

SDSN Youth Black Sea is a regional network, expanding in 12 countries and operating under the auspices of the UN Secretary-General. It envisions to unite the young people of the wide Black Sea region under the goal of sustainable development, by mobilizing youth to shape a sustainable world for future generations.

> <http://sdsn-blacksea.auth.gr/>



Kim Sun Ryul
Vice President



A COURAGEOUS STEP IS NEEDED TO OVERCOME THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Climate change is a reality we have to live with. We must find ways to coexist with it, on what the UN Secretary-General António Guterres recently called the “Boiling Earth”.

So, how can our society build resilience and inclusivity in the era of climate change? The question itself carries a fairly complacent premise, as there is an underlying sense of “What can we do to prevent the imminent damage?” Both South Korea and the EU are aware of the serious consequences of climate change however they are not the ones suffering the worst effects of climate change. While we engage in sharp negotiations and discussions on the topic of “GHG reduction,” countless people have already lost their livelihoods, homes, and even their families or lives due to climate change.

As a result of complacency, society has lost its inclusivity in places we fail to see. Although quantifying the number of climate-induced displacements is difficult, based on the frequency and patterns of severe natural disasters, it has been confirmed that there were approximately 32.6 million climate migrants in 2022. This is the highest number and 41% higher than the annual average in the past decade. Considering the unreported cases, it is estimated that even more people have lost their homes.

To build resilience and inclusivity in our society like never before, we must begin by acknowledging these situations. We need to recognize that the issues are more urgent than we think and then come up with sustainable solutions. Above all, we must never forget that while we discuss climate “adaption” for our future, for some, it is a matter of their very survival tomorrow.

Based on this awareness, we can consider several sustainable approaches. Our society has achieved significant growth using fossil fuels, but as a consequence we have lost much of our resilience and inclusivity. Ultimately, a sustainable approach for addressing this issue will involve changing the existing structures.

The first structural reform I would like to propose is education. Some may find this surprising because many countries, including South Korea, have been gradually increasing the emphasis on environmental education in compulsory education for children and teenagers. However, the generation I propose to focus on is the late teens to early twenties, who will soon become the economic workforce and the backbone of our society. In South Korea, despite the presence of many young people who are making efforts to address climate change, the generation in their twenties appears to have the lowest level of interest and concern about climate change. Nevertheless, considering the rapid effects of climate change, they will be the cornerstone of reform,

leading the way and breaking free from the traditional patterns of life. While they may not take as much action as other activists, providing effective education to make them aware of climate change and foster their concern and enthusiasm for addressing it will be the foundation for our society to build resilience and inclusivity.

Next is changes in policy and legislation, and this may be unique to South Korea. The national actions in terms of policy, legislation, and business are not aligned with the level of awareness of individuals about climate change. This does not necessarily mean imposing strong sanctions on businesses. Instead, we should create an environment in which businesses can yield profits by actively responding to climate change, and let businesses that do not adapt die out. None of this can happen overnight. As we are all aware, the structure and patterns of the society we have built to date cannot be changed at once. Therefore, we should lay the groundwork for change with more progressive policies and legislation.

Lastly, protection of life, which is the most obvious and should be prioritized. If the two aforementioned approaches serve as cornerstones protecting our society amid a rapidly changing world due to climate change, the protection of life is what I believe should be the fundamental practice our society upholds. Even if we recognize the damage caused by climate change now, actively work out adaptation measures, and implement appropriate education, there will still be damage to life, particularly among vulnerable and underprivileged populations. Our society has often too easily dismissed such damage as “unavoidable sacrifices” and “sacrifices for change.” However, no change arising from such sacrifices holds any significance. To truly build resilience and inclusivity in our society, we must devote ourselves to preventing such sacrifices from occurring.

The three approaches above may seem radical and perhaps even absurd. However, the world in the era of the climate crisis is becoming increasingly absurd itself. To overcome this “crisis,” we need audacious and great progression. We must not try to solve current issues with conventional wisdom and rules. I hope that our actions will contribute to building a society with the inclusivity to embrace everyone and the resilience to rise again in the midst of the climate crisis.

GREEN ENVIRONMENT YOUTH KOREA (GEYK)

GEYK is a youth platform in the Republic of Korea, aimed to share knowledge and experience, take action locally and internationally, run projects, and inspire people to care about climate. We aim to have a role in decision-making on climate change policies to make the world sustainable, just, and fair.

