



# **WORKING TOGETHER AGAINST DISCRIMINATION**

> European and Korean Perspectives <



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Korea-EU GSO Network

## FOREWORD

Article 21 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights foresees that <<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.>>

While great advances in the protection of human rights and tackling discrimination have been made over the past decades in the Republic of Korea, nevertheless discriminations especially with regard gender, LGBTI communities and against people in vulnerable positions continues to exist in various forms. Discrimination against women remains pervasive, as it is discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people, and racial and ethnic minorities. In concomitance with the global Covid-19 pandemic, issues of discriminations have come to the fore at a worrying pace and level.

One of the fundamental values at the core of the EU is non-discrimination and that it is illegal to discriminate on the grounds of a person's age, disability, gender, race, religion or sexual orientation. Similarly, the South Korean Constitution prohibits discrimination, as do international human rights treaties that South Korea has ratified.

Information on anti-discrimination policies, regulatory frameworks and programmes to help fight discrimination are paramount for combatting and tackling discrimination, for gender equality and equal pay rules, LGBTI equality and for enabling greater societal resilience. This calls for continuous and enhanced understanding of the root causes of discrimination and related issues of intersectionality, as well as of the role and practices of civil society in protecting the most vulnerable population, including migrants, sexual minorities and women.

It is in this spirit that the EU Delegation to the Republic of Korea (RoK) selected the topic of 'anti-discrimination' as one major area of communication and outreach of its EU Policy and Outreach Partnership (EUPOP) project in the RoK and, has over the past years organised a series of webinars and workshops around the overarching theme of human rights. Raising awareness and sharing information on the existence of policies, international regulatory frameworks and on the multilateral and national networks of civil society actively engaged against discrimination is a crucial aspect of what the European Union does to raise awareness against discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, gender or sexual orientation. This commitment goes beyond the EU boundaries and can best express itself through international cooperation with like-minded partners such as the Republic of Korea.

This publication aspires to be a token of appreciation of the (many) CSOs in the EU and the Republic of Korea that daily commit and join forces to act against issues of discrimination, and overcome distance and cultural differences in the pursuit of more equal, cohesive societies free from any form of discrimination. My special appreciation goes to the European and Korean CSOs that have taken part in the EUPOP ROK project, especially the Korea-EU Network (KEN) members, and contributed to this publication. I commend their commitment and work and I wish that the KEN will continue to grow over the years and further contribute to enhancing EU-ROK cooperation among CSOs for the protection of human rights at large and the fight against any form of discrimination.

María CASTILLO FERNÁNDEZ  
Ambassador  
Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Korea



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## INTRODUCTION

This publication is a product of the Korea-EU CSO Network (KEN) that has been established as part of the EU Policy and Outreach Partnership in the Republic of Korea (EUPOP ROK), a project funded by the European Union.

The KEN network has been established for civil society organizations from both regions to communicate and interact on the comprehensive theme of human rights and discrimination. Throughout 2020 and 2021 a number of workshops and webinars have been held focusing particularly on the protection of the disabled, of migrants and on gender equality.

In this publication we aim to share the essence of the activists' insights and we hope to raise awareness of the current challenges. We also aim to prompt more dialogue and interaction amongst civil society organizations from the two regions and set the frame for mutual understanding and learning which will lead to a better and more resilient society for all.



# YOUTH AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: DIVERSITY. INCLUSION. EMPOWERMENT. OWNERSHIP.



*Laura Lasance*

| EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AT HUMANITY IN ACTION THE NETHERLANDS |

The crucial test of a true democracy is how it protects and respects the rights of all. A statement often heard, yet less often realized. The values necessary, such as freedom, humanity, equality, and equity are far from self-evident in our societies. Our democracies are by no means a given. They need to be protected every single day.

Therefore, there is an imminent need to promote active and social citizenship among the younger generations. Civic engagement teaches youth how to live together, appreciating different values and beliefs, within a human rights framework. Their knowledge, confidence and action, their votes, advocacy, and campaigning truly can change the world for the better.

We need to invest in youth to secure inclusive, equitable, just, and sustainable societies, supported by a robust rule of law. Dignified societies in which people with diverse backgrounds and identities can openly challenge their ideas and each other in a respectful way; embracing differences and negotiating boundaries through constructive dialogue and relationships.

Once well informed, youth can get meaningfully engaged in society in many ways. Specifically, they can - and should - be a true force to reckon with in international decision-making processes, as their outcomes have extremely important implications on the day-to-day realities of young people worldwide.

Whether climate change, sexual and reproductive health and rights, peace and security, or access to education, young people are the experts on their own lived experiences from which they draw their

perspectives. The realities, needs and context - specific experiences of young people from diverse backgrounds must be reflected in such agreements if we at all care about them being effective, inclusive and sustainable.

The COVID-19 pandemic has thrown our lives upside down globally. It has exacerbated the pressures on the functioning of the rule of law and democracy. It further emphasizes the importance of the protection and promotion of human rights - and marginalized communities in particular - globally.

We are in need of diverse new thinkers and doers from different disciplines and walks of life, who are committed to protecting democratic values and human rights. Because of this, there is a concrete urgency to strengthen social cohesion and civic engagement among young people.

To all those outstanding, brave, creative, intelligent, and strategic youth advocates and activists out there, peacefully and decisively challenging the status quo to strengthen our societies - I commend you.

HUMANITY  
IN  
ACTION

Humanity in Action The Netherlands  
is an international educational  
non-profit organization informing,  
connecting, and inspiring young  
people to engage in dialogue  
and take action for human rights,  
democracy, and inclusivity.

> [www.humanityinaction.org](http://www.humanityinaction.org)



# DEVELOPMENT OF KOREAN CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE ROLE OF PUBLIC INTEREST LAWYERS



**Takgon Lee**

ASSOCIATE LEGAL OFFICER AT UNHCR KOREA

Civil society organizations in Korea have developed with the uprising of democratization and the great workers' struggle in 1987. The civil society that emerged was formed and led by the urban middle class with an increased level of education, resulting in a rapid expansion of CSOs.

Several laws were enacted to encourage governments to actively recruit and support civil society groups, in particular, those that put public interest on top of their agendas. In addition, as the right to self-determination expanded, several movements led by women, sexual minorities, and disabled people rapidly developed.

Even today, 30 years after democratization, the driving force for civic action is still present. From the candlelight vigil, a unique protest culture in Korea, to the recent #MeToo movement, and the abolition of cyber sexual violence, various demonstrations are continuing.

In this context, a professional group of public interest lawyers has also been established. They are working in areas such as refugees, migrants, people with disabilities, children, gender, human rights violations and vulnerable workers, focusing on the rights of social minorities and expanding access to democracy and justice.

The challenge is now for the CSOs in Korea to avoid serving as sub-partners of the political world and to attract more public trust and support, so that they can have sustainable full-time activities and bring forward the civic agenda.



Founded by the United Nations General Assembly on 3 December 1949, UNHCR is empowered to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee issues. UNHCR's activities are primarily aimed at protecting the rights and welfare of refugees. UNHCR is at the forefront of ensuring that everyone has the right to seek asylum and that they are guaranteed a safe haven in another country by means of voluntary return, local assimilation or resettlement in a third country.

> <https://www.unhcr.or.kr/>

# AGEISM AND COVID-19: DO HUMAN RIGHTS HAVE A BEST-BEFORE DATE?



**Nena Georgantzi**

## POLICY COORDINATOR HUMAN RIGHTS & NON-DISCRIMINATION AT AGE PLATFORM EUROPE

On 1 May 2020, UN Secretary General António Guterres launched a policy brief on COVID-19 and older persons. In his statement he stressed that “Beyond its immediate health impact, the pandemic is putting older people at greater risk of poverty, discrimination and isolation”. The UN Secretary General brief, which was subsequently supported by 146 UN Member States, was a much needed and timely contribution, because older people are among the primary victims of the virus, yet their rights have been largely deprioritized and neglected during the first wave of the pandemic.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 an unprecedented amount of ageist comments was witnessed in the media. The term ‘boomer remover’, a nickname given to coronavirus to refer to the fact that the virus increased fatality for people over the age of 60, was used in twitter thousands of times. Journalists and politicians have referred to coronavirus as a way to ‘cull the elderly’ or free hospitals from ‘bedblockers’.

When resources were scarce, older people have been denied access to intensive treatment simply on account of their age. Whereas some older persons can have comorbidities that impact their chance of surviving intensive medical intervention, age alone should never be a criterion for medical triage.

Care homes were also ‘hotbeds’ of infection, however these institutions were deprioritised in terms of intervention in the beginning of the crisis, which left residents and staff unprotected. In many countries, a ‘no visitor policy’ was implemented for the care homes, causing emotional stress which led to mental and physical decline.

In Europe, several countries enforced confinement measures solely based on chronological age. Similarly, several countries initially announced that while confinement would be lifted for the general population, older persons would be requested to remain at home for longer periods. Such discriminatory measures lumped together people with very diverse capacities and needs and reinforced stereotypical images of older persons being frail, a burden and unable to contribute to society.

COVID-19 has been a huge challenge, but also an important opportunity to change the way we think, feel and act around ageing and older persons. Older people are valuable members of our society, they must be a part of the recovery, consulted and included in the post-COVID-19 solutions. Thanks to the initiatives undertaken by several CSOs, European and international stakeholders begun paying more attention to this group and delivered already concrete guidelines and recommendations about how their rights should be protected in the context of the pandemic.

The world needs also a legal foundation to equally protect our human rights when we are older and avoid the same mistakes experienced with COVID-19. A new UN convention could act as a moral and legal compass to guide better and fairer policies in the future that equally value and protect human rights regardless of age.



AGE Platform Europe is a European network of non-profit organizations of and for people aged 50+, which aims to voice and promote their interests and to raise awareness on the issues that concern them most.

> [www.age-platform.eu](http://www.age-platform.eu)

The background features a vibrant, abstract design of swirling smoke or liquid in shades of red, purple, blue, green, and yellow. Overlaid on this are two concentric circles: a larger, light teal one and a smaller, darker teal one. The text is centered within the smaller circle.

# **DISABILITY RIGHTS**



# THE RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

DISABILITY RIGHTS



**Miyeon Kim**

## UN COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (CRPD) MEMBER

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been ratified by 182 countries, including the Republic of Korea who adopted it already in 2009.

Women with disabilities around the world seriously discussed the fact that the Convention did not initially contain any provision related to women in particular. A clause was drafted (Article 15bis) and disabled women in Korea requested to the government to propose it at the 3rd special committee as a recognition of the fact that women with disabilities are the most marginalized and subject to complex discrimination. In the end, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was passed at the UN General Assembly in December 2006 including a provision on women with disabilities.

Parties that ratify the Convention need to submit their first national report within two years of their accession. Every four

years, a country-specific report is submitted to the review of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Civil society organizations monitor the domestic implementation of the Convention and submit their own report to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In Korea, we aim to improve the rights of persons with disabilities by implementing the concluding observations. To this end, we have established solidarity with the civil society, enhancing the understanding of the rights, monitoring the overall implementation of the Convention and writing the related report. The rights of persons with disabilities in Korea include a human rights-based approach to disability and an effective anti-discrimination law.



The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is a body of the United Nations composed of independent experts in charge of monitoring the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by the States Parties.

> [www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/crpd/](http://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/crpd/)

# SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH **INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES** AND THEIR FAMILIES



DISABILITY  
RIGHTS

**Helen Portal**

ADVOCACY AND POLICY OFFICER AT INCLUSION EUROPE

Europe has witnessed progress in the last decades regarding the rights of people with disabilities. Almost all countries in Europe have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the European Union became the first regional organization to ratify it.

Improvements have been made also in regard to accessibility, non-discrimination and social policies. However, there is still a lot of work ahead. In particular, people with intellectual disabilities in Europe can be deprived of their legal capacity, not being able to make their own decisions, many of them live in institutions, where they do not have control over their lives and may experience violence and abuse, they cannot receive education in mainstream schools, often being segregated and sent to special schools, families and people with disabilities are more at risk of poverty as they have difficulties finding employment and face extra costs related to disability.

The COVID-19 crisis made some of these issues visible to the general public, as tragic consequences happened to people locked in institutions or who faced denial of treatment sometimes. To respond to these challenges, policies need to be improved and people with intellectual disabilities have to be empowered and involved in the decision-making process and recovery plans.

To participate in the society, having access to information is crucial. For this reason, CSOs across Europe develop and publish articles and reports in easy-to-read formats, so people with intellectual disabilities can know more about their rights and current possibilities. Inclusion Europe and its members are committed to work for Europe to become a place where people with intellectual disabilities can equally participate in the society.



Inclusion Europe is a registered non-profit organization fighting for equal rights and full inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities and their families in all aspects of society.

> [www.inclusion-europe.eu](http://www.inclusion-europe.eu)



# DISABILITY RIGHTS

by *Anne Derenne*



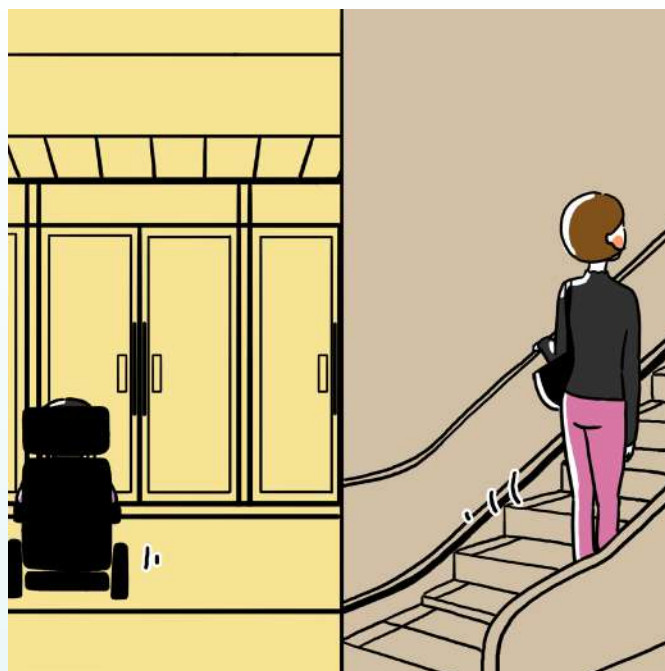
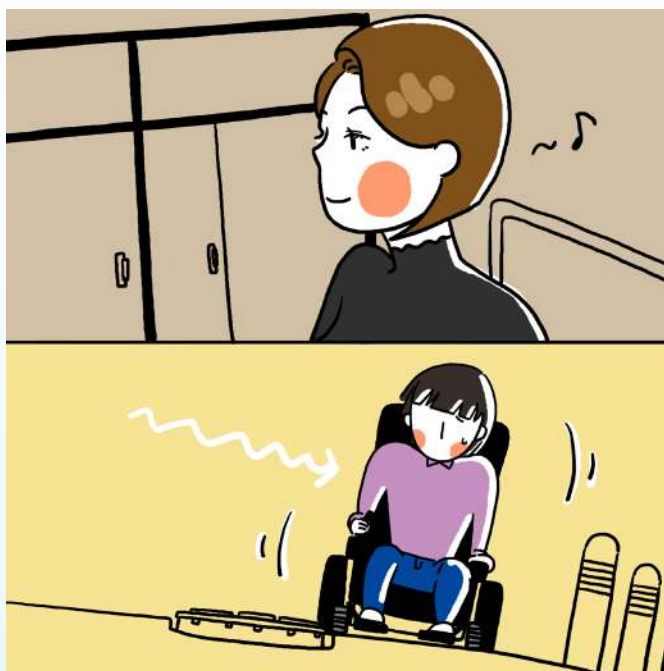
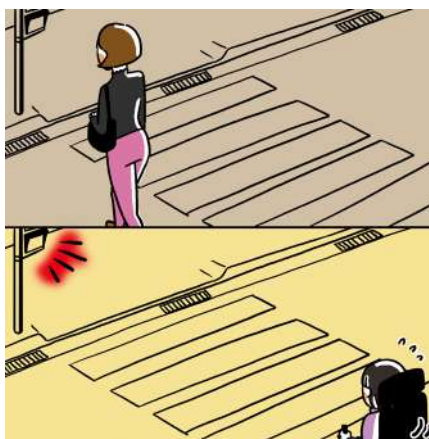
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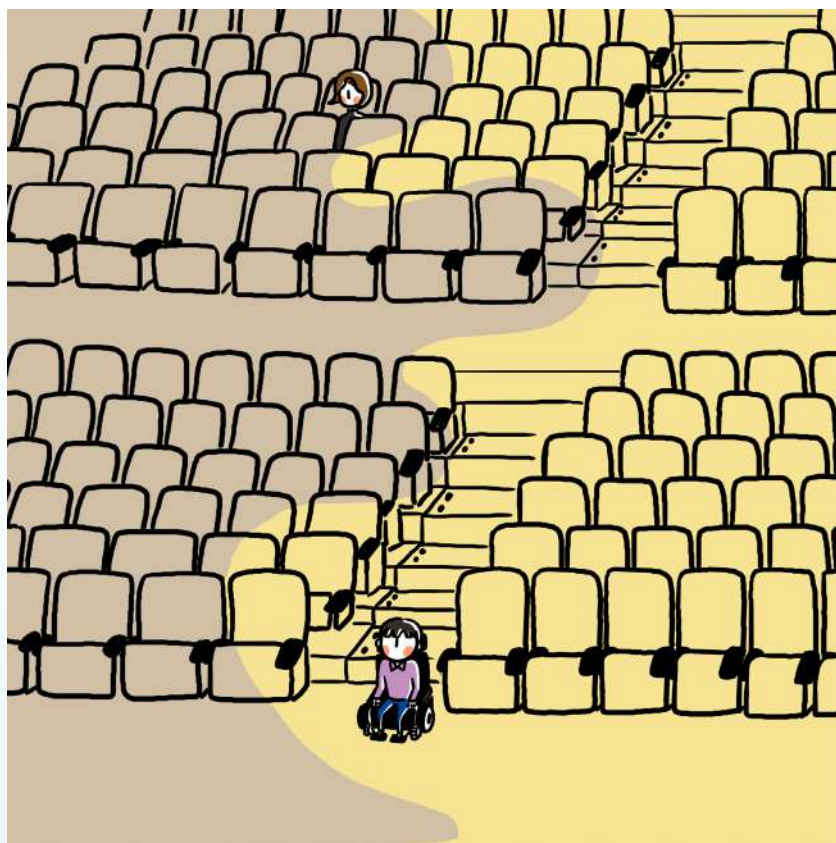
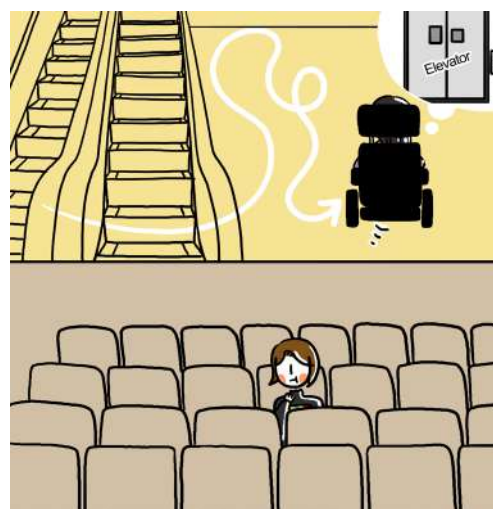
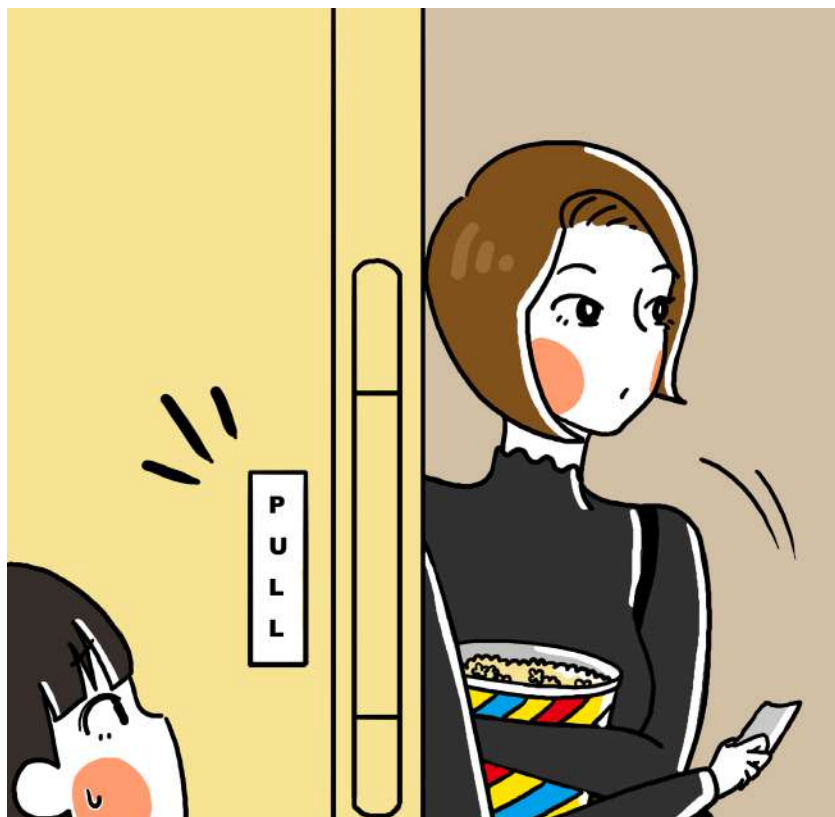
How to go to the movies



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# DISABILITY RIGHTS

by Yerong





The background features a vibrant, abstract design of swirling smoke or liquid in shades of red, purple, blue, green, and yellow. Overlaid on this are two concentric circles: a larger, light teal one and a smaller, darker teal one. In the center of the smaller circle is a white circle containing the text "GENDER EQUALITY".

# **GENDER EQUALITY**



# LEGACY OF WOMEN'S MOVEMENT AND CHOICE OF YOUNG GENERATION



GENDER  
EQUALITY

*Young Sook Cho*

| KOREA'S AMBASSADOR FOR GENDER EQUALITY |

In 2020, we witnessed an increase in gender-based violence such as intimate partner violence and female genital mutilation and the burden of care work transferred to women in an unpaid or undervalued state due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the midst of this, feminists around the world have taken steps to fight against the retreat of gender equality. In particular, the young generation has become the driving force for a gender-equal future with its powerful voice and actions.

The Korean women's movement began in the 1980s when women participated in the social democratization movement, which demanded the resignation of military dictatorship, reunification of the two Koreas, and guaranteeing the survival of the poor people, including workers and farmers. In this process, women began to form a collective awareness that the abolition of patriarchy was also necessary.

As the military dictatorship collapsed and globalization accelerated in the 1990s, Korean society began to accept new social movement agendas such as women, environment, peace, welfare, and anti-corruption as new civil society agendas beyond the existing democratization agenda. In the development of the civil society movement, women's organizations were the first to actively carry out solidarity campaigns to prevent violence against women and improve the legal and institutional system, resulting in many achievements. Examples of success include the enactment of the Sexual Violence Prevention Act in 1994, the enactment of the Domestic Violence Prevention Act in 1997, the enactment of the Prostitution Prevention Act in 2004, and Civil Law amendment to abolish the paternal family surname system in 2005.

Since 2000, Korean society has seemed to be transitioning into a very capable country that has captured both economic growth and democracy. However, such a diagnosis is both sexist and fraudulent in that it overlooks and excludes the reality faced by women who account for half of the population. In the process of unprecedented economic growth, the wage gap between men and women is the largest among

OECD countries. Referring to the progress of democracy, the proportion of female lawmakers does not exceed 17 percent, much lower than the world average of 24.5 percent.

Above all, the anger of feminists calling for a change in the culture of sexual violence after the #MeToo movement is beyond imagination, but the government's measures are still insufficient. In this situation, the recent generation of young women has been increasingly distrustful of the adult generation who is generous to the perpetrators and criticizes the victims of gender-based violence.

While socialization of care and the compatibility of work and family have been suggested as important national policies, unpaid care and reproductive work are still passed on to women. According to the National Statistical Office, women are spending four and a half more hours than men in their home of dual-income couples.

The conclusion of this historical narrative should be hope for the future, through a combined effort of legacy and young feminists.



Korea Women's Associations United (KWAU) is an umbrella organization striving to achieve gender equality, democracy, and peaceful reunification in the Korean peninsula by facilitating solidarity and collective actions among women's groups.

> <http://women21.or.kr>

# FEMINISM WITH AN INTERSECTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

GENDER  
EQUALITY



Gea Meijers

| COORDINATOR AT WIDE+ |

We still have a long road ahead of us to achieve gender equality. The annual global gender gap report of the World Economic Forum for 2020 suggests that it will take at least another century before gender parity is achieved. There are many other reports that come to similar conclusions on how slow the progress towards gender equality is, indicating even regress, especially given the context of COVID-19 and political backlash on women's rights. The European countries are no exception to this development as no country in Europe has achieved gender equality.

Street movements, transnational solidarity and online campaigning have been hugely on the rise in the past years, creating again a new wave of feminism across Europe. Many movements use an intersectional perspective, fighting not only against patriarchy but also colonialism, economic imperialism, exploitation, racism and sexual discrimination.

So how does intersectional feminism look like? What is unique and absolutely a lesson to learn about an intersectional approach is that power structures need to be deconstructed in combination with each other. Our societies are not divided by class, or race or gender alone. All these dimensions divide and unite us, as we carry multiple roles that give case to multiple discrimination. In this sense, the feminist agenda is a vector for transforming dominant economic and political systems into more socially just and sustainable systems.

Another issue that has emerged recently concerns digitalization. The same power asymmetries that exist in the non-digital world are now embedded in the digital world, including the presence of cyber violence. WIDE+ is part of a global working group "[A feminist action framework for the digital economy](#)", analyzing the governance behind

digitalization. The group has developed [recommendations](#) for the European Parliament as regards the protection against cyber violence. One key recommendation is that a working definition of gender-based cyber violence is needed in law, a definition that can capture the scope, extent, types, gender and intersectional nature of this form of violence.

Despite the many challenges ahead, there is optimism. Everyday thinking of the people is changing rapidly towards a more feminist-oriented vision, based on freedom and dignity. This is ultimately the change that will bring new societies forth.



Women In Development Europe+ (WIDE+) is a European network of associations and activists fighting for women's rights, as part of a larger struggle for social justice, sustainable livelihoods and human rights.

> <https://wideplus.org>

# ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN KOREA



GENDER  
EQUALITY

**Myoung Ryeon Hwang Geum** (Pen name Goldie)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE GENDER EQUALITY TRAINING PLATFORM HYOEJA

Korea has achieved rapid economic growth since the Korean War. This growth has also led to rapid progress in the field of women's rights. Beginning with the revision of the Family Act, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act, the Act on Special Cases of Sexual Violence, the Framework Act on Women's Development (which is now replaced by the Framework Act on Gender Equality), the Act on Punishment and Prohibition of Prostitution, the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act, the Prevention of Violence Against Women Act, etc.

Laws and systems that improve gender equality have been enacted. One of the most representative achievements has been the abolition of the family model in which only males could be household heads. After decades of struggle, the system was finally abolished in 2005. This abolition has been a big step forward for women to prove themselves on their own and not as wives or daughters of a man.

Laws and systems have also been enacted to eradicate gender discrimination and violence against women. However, the pace of improvement has been very slow, in particular in the social and cultural spheres. One of the instruments to achieve change has been the training on the prevention of violence which has become compulsory for everyone working in the public sector.

This includes training on many forms of violence such as sexual harassment, sexual violence, prostitution, and domestic violence

Korea is striving to progress towards gender equality through legal and institutional compulsory education. The next step will be to enhance also citizens' responsibility and further eradicate gender-based violence.

젠더교육플랫폼호재  
Gender Equality Training Platform

The Gender Equality Training Platform Hyojea (GET-P) is a non-governmental organisation working towards the development of a gender equal society in Korea, Asia and beyond.

> [www.getp.or.kr](http://www.getp.or.kr)



# FIGHTING AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



GENDER  
EQUALITY

**Nicholas Spetsidis**

COORDINATOR AT THE UNION OF WOMEN ASSOCIATION OF HERAKLION

Violence against women is a phenomenon of clear and straightforward violation of human rights and as such it needs to be challenged by all public and private entities in the society. There is a need to raise further awareness and foster social dialogue with regards to gender-based violence and ensure that proper means are available to report such cases.

Violence can take many forms, from elder abuse to cyber violence. In our efforts to fight gender-based violence, we focus on education in order to shape the future of the next generations. We visit school and discuss topics such as gender stereotypes, healthy relationships and lately cyber violence. The youth need to be able to recognise violence and speak up about any forms of violence they experience. In the cyber space, this can take the form of cyber bullying, unwanted sexualization (revenge porn) or non-consensual photos sharing.

We do not believe in an immediate change, but rather in a mid-term change of attitudes and behaviours within the school

community. Our long-term goal is to facilitate the development of a safety network in schools, comprised of students, teachers and eventually parents, who would collaborate to combat cyber violence and develop a proactive strategy to challenge such kind of incidents.

We advocate for zero tolerance to any form of violence within family and beyond and we believe that women and girls have the utmost right to our support and protection in this respect.

The Union of Women Associations of Heraklion (UWAH) is a non-governmental organization promoting women and children's rights, as well as culture and awareness towards gender equality and against family violence.

> <https://kakopoiisi.gr>



# CYBER SEXUAL VIOLENCE RESPONSE IN KOREA



GENDER  
EQUALITY

*Seung-Hee Seo*

FOUNDER OF THE KOREA CYBER SEXUAL VIOLENCE RESPONSE CENTER

As digital sexual violence emerged as a social problem, the government announced in 2017 comprehensive measures to prevent such crimes with the goal of ensuring “zero digital sex crime, and a safe society for the people”. Measures were taken, such as the repression of illegal filming, investigation and punishment of perpetrators, and support to victims. Not only women but also the society became aware of this form of violence and recognized it as a serious social problem.

In addition, governmental measures were announced in 2019 to prevent hard web cartel and since then the number of such videos decreased drastically.

The efforts of women’s rights movements such as the Korea Cyber Sexual Violence Response Center (Han Sa-seong) and the opening of an independent site ‘Megalia’ which reported against misogyny were instrumental in speeding these governmental responses.

However, online sexual exploitation did not end. In the midst of the Telegram Nth Room case, efforts were made to educate the general public to counteract digital sexual violence. The Telegram sexual exploitation confirmed once again that the problem is rather linked to violence than sex. People should keep in mind that sexual violence is a human right issue, and that it represents violence or exploitation of someone. If the society is composed of actors that work together to solve the problem, then the online space will be completely safe.

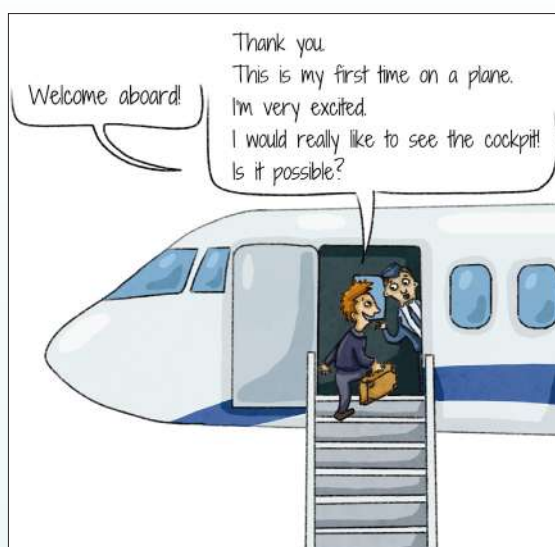
The Korea Cyber Sexual Violence Response Center (KCSVRC) is a nonprofit organization engaged in a variety of activities aimed at addressing sexual violence in the cyber (online) space.

> <http://cyber-lion.com>

한국  
사이버성폭력  
대응센터

# GENDER EQUALITY

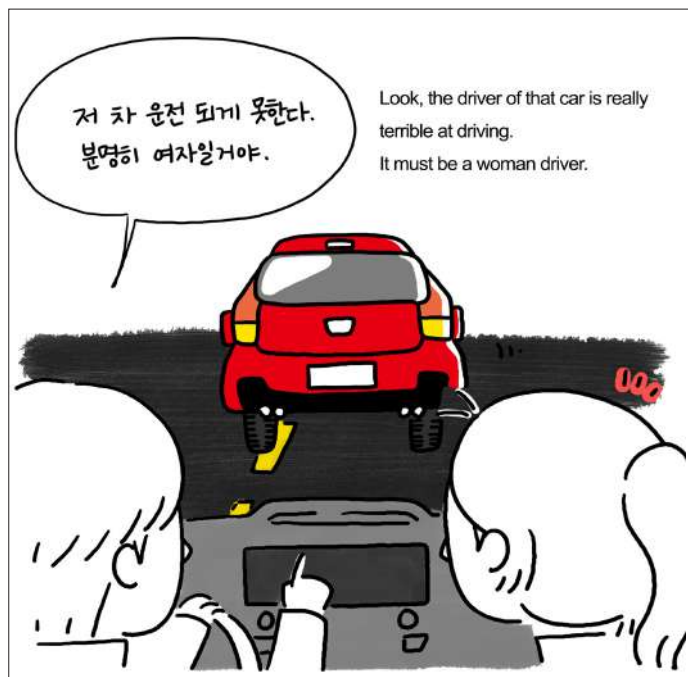
by Anne Derenne





# GENDER EQUALITY

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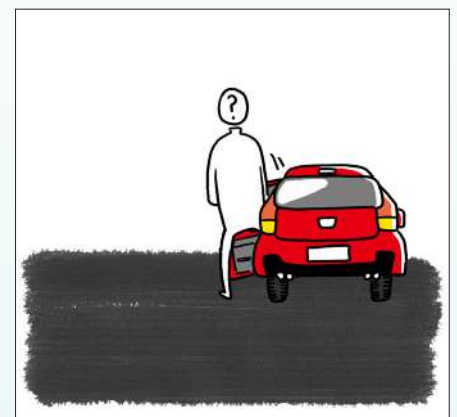
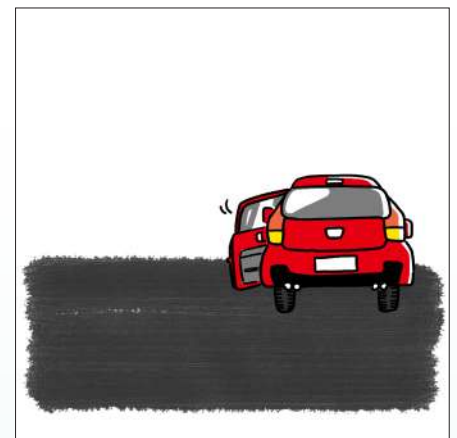
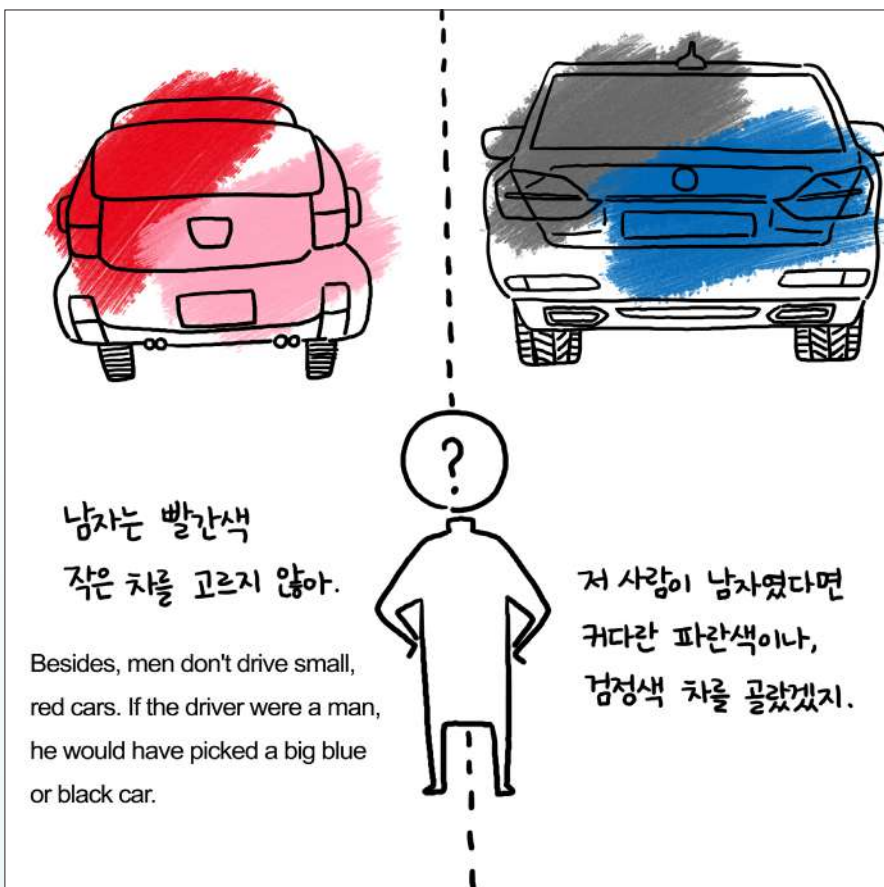
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# GENDER EQUALITY

by Yerong





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# **LGBT RIGHTS**



# COVID-19: HATRED AND STIGMA AGAINST **LGBTI**



LGBT  
RIGHTS

**Hanhee Park**

## LAWYER AT KOREAN LAWYERS FOR PUBLIC INTEREST AND HUMAN RIGHTS

In early May 2020, when Korea started tightening the social distancing measures and COVID-19 was spreading around the world, it became known that a confirmed COVID-19 patient had visited a club in Itaewon. The infection spread.

Itaewon is an area where many foreigners and LGBTI people live, and the club that the confirmed patient went to was often used by LGBTI people. The media referred to it as a “gay club” and started to share provocative reports about the club. Local governments instigated hatred and stigma rather than protecting human rights by overreacting, for instance attempting to draw a list of all LGBTI people.

As a result, the COVID-19 LGBTI Emergency Response Headquarters was formed, and human rights organisations for LGBTI and HIV-infected people discussed joint responses to counter hatred and discrimination. They provided counseling on human rights violations and encouraged cooperation with the authorities. Direct communication with the media was established.

Meanwhile, the Human Rights Response Network was also set up to respond to human rights violations that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemics. The “Social Guidelines for Human Dignity and Equality” were published, and the main contents translated and delivered to the United Nations. These guidelines include the need to establish a message against stigma and hatred against LGBTI and create policies to prevent discrimination and provide LGBTI human rights education for medical personnel.

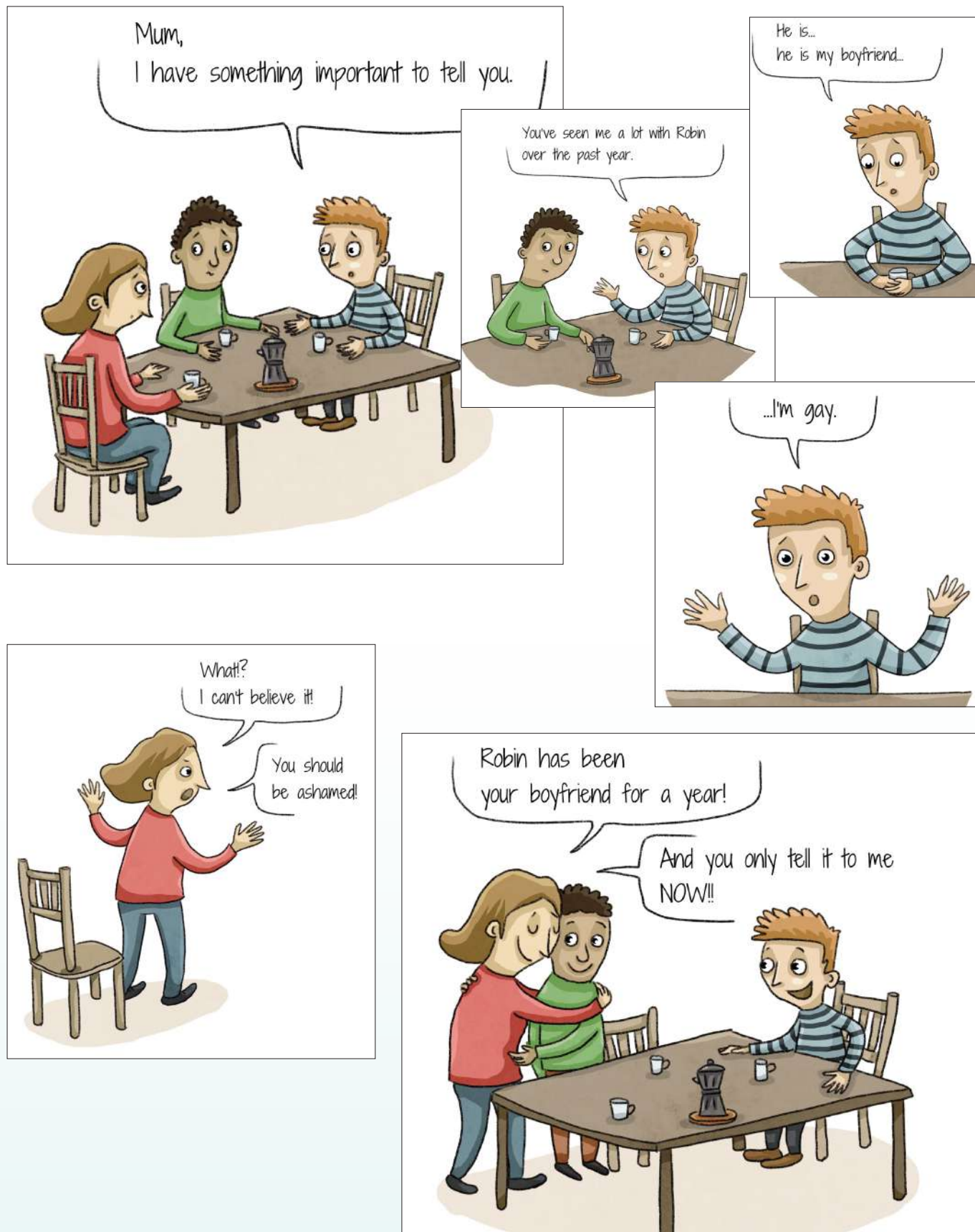
Korean Lawyers for Public Interest and Human Rights (KLPH) is a non-governmental, non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring human rights, including disability, sexual orientation and gender identity, through the law.

> [www.hopeandlaw.org](http://www.hopeandlaw.org)

희망을  
만드는 법  
공익인권변호사모임



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살아가면서 가장 중요한 것이 무엇이라고 생각하시나요?

What do you think is the most important thing in your life?



사랑이요.  
Love.



사랑이요.  
Love.



사랑이요.  
Love.



사랑이죠.  
Love.



사랑이요!  
Love!



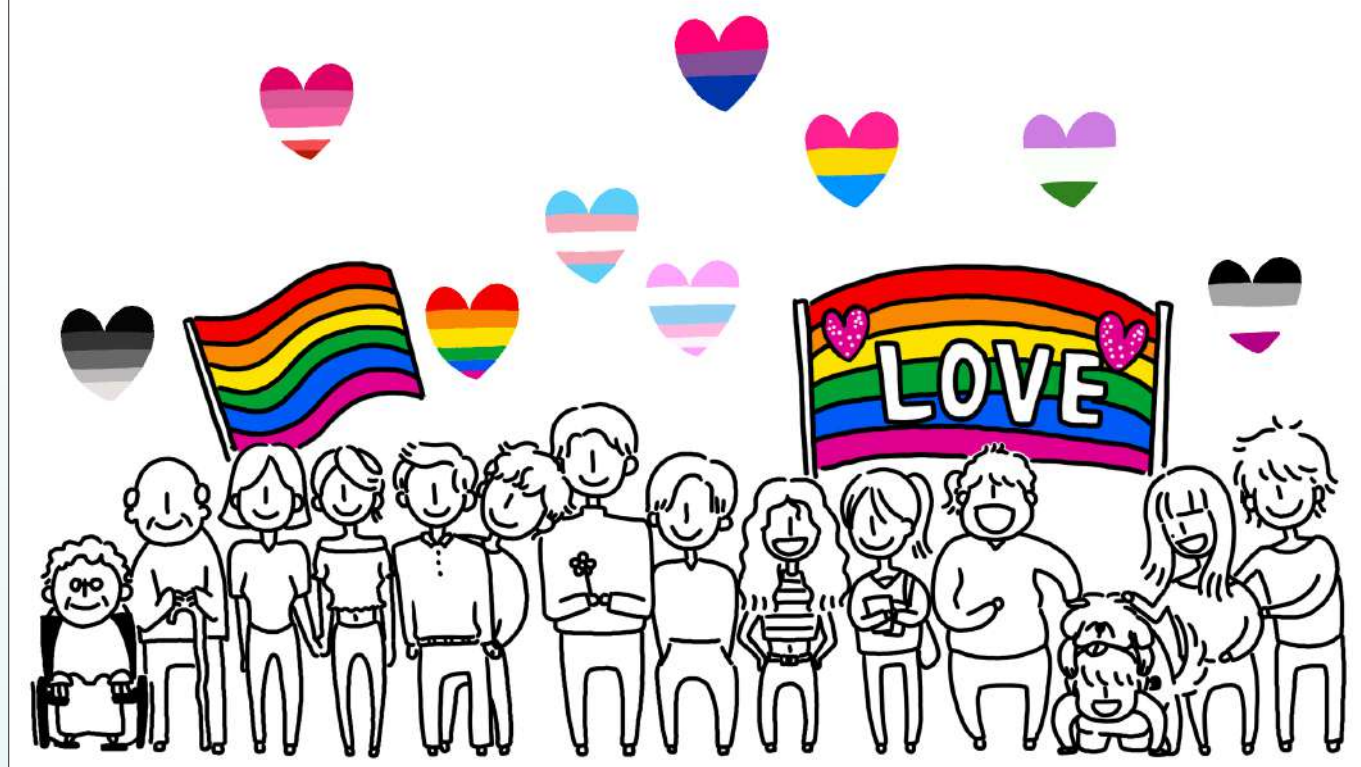
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사랑은 혐오를 이겨낼 수 있어요.

Love can overcome hatred.



The background features a large, light blue circle. Inside this circle, there are two smaller concentric circles. The space between these circles is filled with vibrant, swirling smoke or ink in shades of red, orange, yellow, green, and blue. The smoke is most concentrated on the left side, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall effect is a dynamic and artistic composition.

## **MIGRANT & REFUGEE RIGHTS**

# VULNERABILITY OF MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES DURING COVID-19



**Young-ah Kim**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MIGRATION TO ASIA PEACE**



Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the central and local governments in South Korea implemented policies such as mask distribution, social distancing, and economic support for living expenses for the public. But were migrants and refugees properly embraced by such policies and who are their members in the Korean society?

As of March 2020, there were about 1.26 million long-term residents out of approximately 2.2 million foreigners residing in South Korea. This includes some 280,000 non-skilled foreign workers, about 3,000 refugees and humanitarian status holders, and more than 30,000 asylum seekers. In addition, there were some 380,000 undocumented migrants. Refugee recognition screening began in 1994, however, by 2019 the recognition rate was still low, less than 4%.

After the COVID-19 outbreak, the government took measures specifically for the foreigners such as providing foreign language counseling through public institutions and the immigration call center. Undocumented foreigners were offered the possibility to go to public community health centers and receive free checkup if they suspected COVID-19 infection, however, very few people used this possibility. In the process of distributing masks, those who did not have an alien registration card or who did not have national health insurance were however excluded, same as for the economic support measures.

CSOs responded by putting in place three different actions. Firstly, increasing access to information and monitoring and responding to hate and discrimination against foreigners. Secondly, providing support for collecting and distributing quarantine and aid supplies. Thirdly, responding to local governments' support measures for economic support which excluded migrants and refugees. With the increasing support ahead of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, campaigns were carried out under the slogan 'No to COVID-19 Racism'. A joint statement was delivered through a press conference, a letter of protest was sent to the Blue House as

well as to the municipalities, and a complaint was filed to the National Human Rights Commission of Korea regarding the discriminatory emergency economic relief funds schemes.

Just as disaster is universal, basic human rights should also be universal during a pandemic. Discrimination was structurally ingrained in the society, and vulnerability intensified after the COVID-19 outbreak. The lack of an official channel for CSOs and migrants and refugees to discuss and negotiate with the central or local governments turned out to be an important bottleneck. The COVID-19 crisis revealed how vulnerable social security is for migrants and refugees.

**MIGRATION  
TO  
ASIA PEACE**  
아시아평화를향한이주

Migration to Asia Peace (MAP) is a non-profit organization raising awareness about the issue of involuntary migration in the Asian region and advocating for concrete solutions at the grass-roots level.

> <http://mapcast.org>





# THE IMPACT OF **COVID-19** ON REFUGEE AND MIGRANT COMMUNITIES

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**Reshad Jalali**

## POLICY OFFICER AT EUROPEAN COUNCIL ON REFUGEES AND EXILES

No countries or communities have been spared by the COVID-19 pandemic, be it on health or economic matters. Sadly, the pandemic has hit vulnerable people, including refugees and migrants around the world the hardest, as refugees are often living in densely populated camps, informal settlements or crowded accommodation and are relying on daily wages to survive. Government measures to prevent the transmission of the virus such as hygiene measures or social distancing are impossible to comply with in refugee camps – and the lack of access to a proper healthcare exacerbates these challenges.

The outbreak of COVID-19 in Europe resulted in several policy changes and the introduction of various measures in the area of asylum and migration. Following the outbreak, many European countries closed their borders for all non-essential travel, including denying entry to those requesting international protection. The temporary suspension of asylum procedures was also reported in few countries and the resettlement process was temporarily suspended in 2020.

Positive responses have been documented however in several EU Member States, who undertook the regularisation of undocumented migrants, granting them a secure legal status, access to healthcare and social services, others eased the detention measures or adopted a less punitive approach to undocumented persons seeking to access healthcare.

The pandemic showed also the important role of people with refugee and migrant background in the society, from working as doctors and nurses in hospitals to working as shopkeepers and food deliverers in restaurants. Their contribution and their work should be recognised and valued. A number of great initiatives from refugee communities were launched in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. For example,

an information desk which provided COVID-19 related information in several languages and a crowdfunding call-in support for the most vulnerable people facing lockdown.

The pandemic did not create a new challenge but has rather illustrated the weaknesses and shortcomings of the current policies. Countries should invest in protecting refugees and asylum seekers in their territories and should ensure that they have adequate access to healthcare and hygiene products. It is widely believed that no one is safe until everyone is safe.



European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) is a European network of non-governmental organizations protecting and advancing the rights of refugees, asylum seekers, and displaced persons.

> <https://ecre.org>



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by *Anne Derenne*



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# MIGRANT & REFUGEE RIGHTS

by Yerong



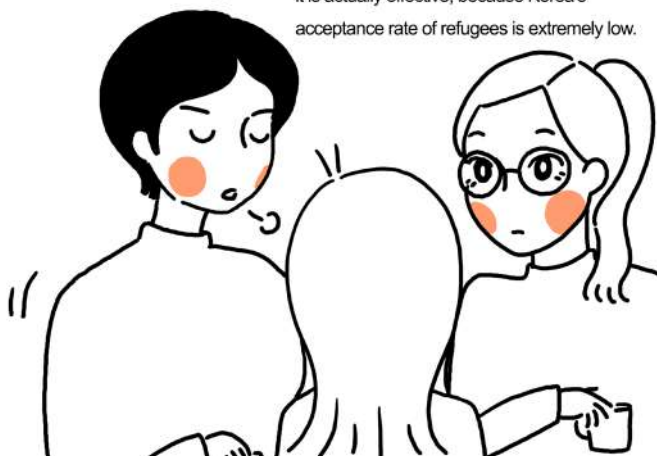
대한민국이 난민협약 가입국으로서 아시아 최초로 난민법을 제정한 나라는 것, 알고 계세요?

Did you know that South Korea was the first country in Asia to establish a refugee law among the countries that signed the Refugee Convention?



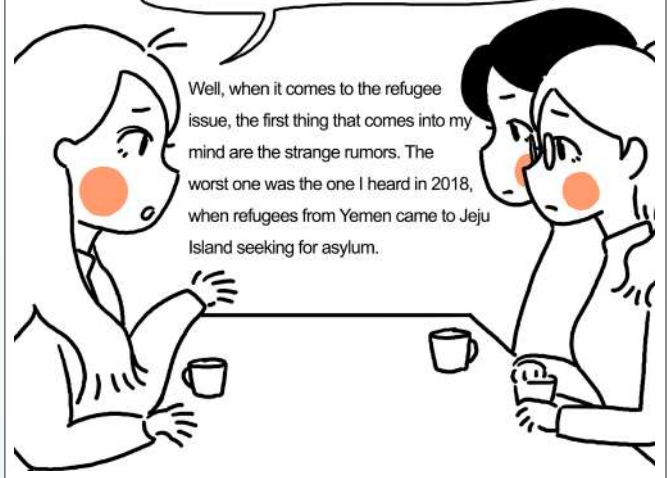
그럼에도 불구하고 난민 인정률이 지나치게 낮아서 실효성이 의심된다는 문제제기도 있지만요...

But there are people who question whether it is actually effective, because Korea's acceptance rate of refugees is extremely low.

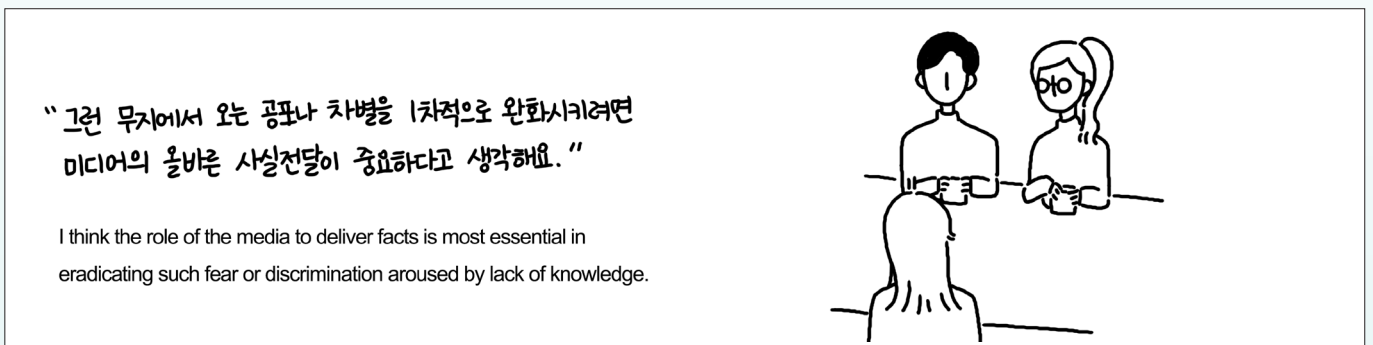
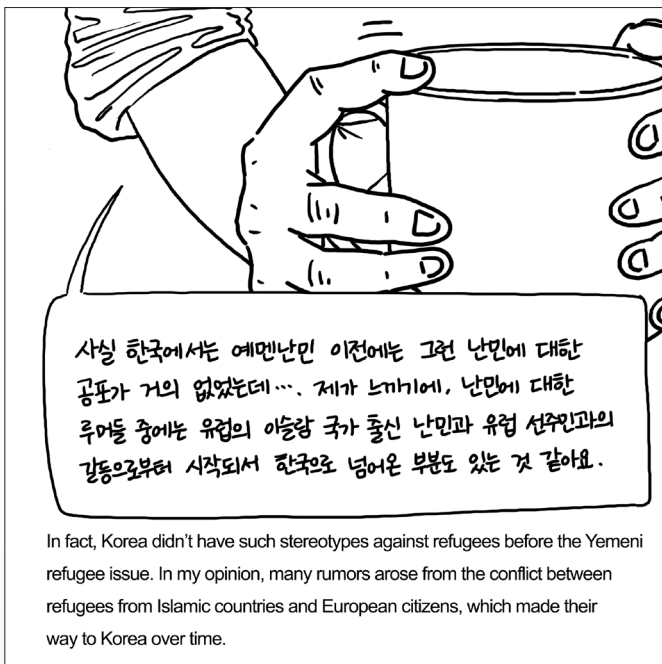
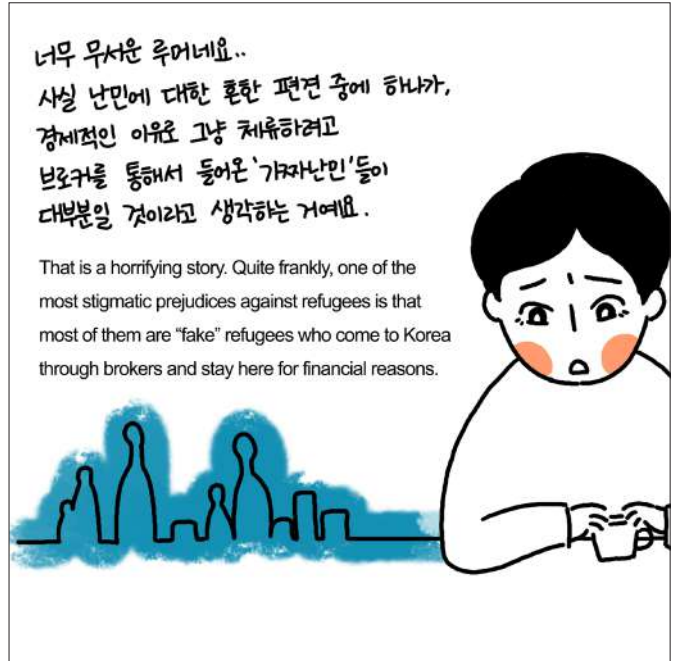


그렇구나.. 난민문제 하면, 저는 이상한 루머들이 먼저 떠올라요. 가장 충격적이었던 건 2018년 예멘 난민들이 제주도 입국해서 난민신청을 했을 때였는데,

Well, when it comes to the refugee issue, the first thing that comes into my mind are the strange rumors. The worst one was the one I heard in 2018, when refugees from Yemen came to Jeju Island seeking for asylum.



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