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Development Cooperation Policy Program

**SPONSORS**  
**DESIGN**

POSCO, Open Society Foundations  
Kate Small



2022 INTERNATIONAL CARE CONFERENCE:

# AGING SOCIETIES AND CARE ECONOMY: GENDER, TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION, AND DEVELOPMENT

## INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the experience of the high-level international care conference promoting the agenda of the current challenges on the topics of gender, development, young generation and care, convened by the Center for Transnational Migration and Social Inclusion (CTMS) of Seoul National University, co-hosted by SNU-GSIS KOICA Development Cooperation Policy Program (DCPP) and Korean Association of Women's Studies (KAWS), and sponsored by POSCO and Open Society Foundation in Seoul, Republic of Korea on November 16-17, 2022.

### Background and rationale

The “care crisis” exacerbated by declining fertility rates and an increasing aging population has emerged as a serious problem within the global society. This conference brought together international experts from academia, civil society, the government, and the private sector to discuss the future of care economy through the lenses of gender, transnational migration and development.

### Conference objectives

The objectives of the conference were:

- To dive and learn from innovative and groundbreaking research on care economies in context and exchange knowledge on the specific situations of selected countries to generate ideas on how to improve research and policy making.
- To provide a platform for discussion about the ways the current ongoing care crisis in East Asia and its consequences on the region's demographic changes exacerbated by declining fertility rates and increasing aging population.



## INTRODUCTION

### Participation

The conference brought together around 150 participants from across the globe, representing government agencies, civil society, academia, and the private sector.

### Outcomes and results

This conference was the first of its kind to take place in Korea at an international level with a core focus on discussing ways of improving care economy and help those populations that have been impacted by COVID-19. The ultimate objectives of the conference were to share experiences, inspire people, build networks and take action on creating the foundations for functional care economies that can eventually help reducing the gender gap and lead to sustainable development.

The conference served as a platform for sharing experiences of care economy at

different levels, from high-level political debates to academia and civil society. Government representatives, members of academia, private corporations and multilateral institutions presented examples of good practice and lessons learned on care economy and economic growth. The main outcome of the conference was a “joint call for action”, which covers the main recommendations emerging from presentations, and discussions. This call reinforces a clear pathway for governments, civil society, and the private sector to work together for a better and more inclusive future.

## DAY 2 | OPENING REMARKS

The conference was opened by **Tae-Gyun Park, Professor of Korean Studies & Former Dean at Seoul National University Graduate School of International Studies**, who welcomed the conference's participants and thanked the Center for Transnational Migration and Social Inclusion at Seoul National University for hosting the event.

He shared personal experiences of how close people's perspectives on work conditions, gender, and development had changed since COVID-19. He continued by outlining the difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and bringing attention to the obstacles that many Korean women are currently facing as a result of an increase in domestic duties, unemployment, and childcare.

He underlined the pandemic's impact on care and how governmental policies are changing to respond to new needs to care demands and demographic changes happening not only in Korea, but around the world.

Prof. Park also emphasized the importance of gathering renown experts in the topic to come up with tangible and evidence-based solutions that could potentially expediate the improvement of care delivery services and care laws. He concluded his speech by thanking the organizers of the conference and hoping that the conference's results could be translated into policy making measures.



**Hyun-Jae Lee, Vice President of the Korean Association of Women's Studies**, delivered powerful message highlighting feminism as a core value in collective social movements targeting the betterment of societies. She urged for a feminist response to address the care crisis but at the same time, worried about the reaction of the younger generations during upcoming societal transitions.

She celebrated this conference as care has become a priority in policy making by linking all areas of development.

On behalf of the Korean Association of Women's Studies, she expressed thanks Center for Transnational Migration and Social Inclusion for their cooperation in making this conference a reality and enabling a space for deep discussion and assessment of the issues of gender, care and the care crisis in Korea.

Following this, the official opening of the 2022 International Care Conference "Aging Societies and Care Economy: Gender, Transnational Migration, and Development and Towards a Sustainable Caring Society" was declared.

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## DAY 2 | CONGRATULATORY REMARKS

**Seong Hyun Cheon, Head of the Corporate Citizenship Office at POSCO**, joined this conference to celebrate the continuation of POSCO's support and sponsorship to this event that represents a topic in which POSCO is deeply invested.

He shared with the audience the private sector's perspective on the issues of care. He recalled reading a report from United Nations celebrating the World's Population Day stating the Korea had the lowest fertility rate amongst all OECD members, with an abysmal rate compared to other countries and the average global standard. This same report concluded that women's labor force participation rate and total fertility rate were correlated, and exemplified countries such as Norway and the United States, where women's active labor participation rate was high, but so do the fertility rates. The study showed that creating a culture where working mothers can balance work and childcare activities, impacts positively fertility rates.

On another hand, he noted how Korean women were amongst the most educated women in the world, having achieved great educational attainment and independence yet having contrasting results in fertility rates. This is due to



women having a hard time reconciling their work and childcare duties, leading to women avoiding marriage and childbirth.

Thus, POSCO has joined this issue to better the lives of their employees by creating programs that allow flexibility at work to take care of their children. This program is extended to both male and female employees for parents to be able to take care of their careers while also fulfilling their roles as parents.

Mr. Cheon expressed POSCO's commitment to improving work conditions for care matters, not only for direct POSCO employees, but also workers at SMEs under the company's care, as well offering scholarships to POSCO's suppliers and vendors who have young children. Together with experts and academia, POSCO is striving to contribute to building social consensus and raising migrant's care status not only at an internal level, but at a societal level as well to ultimately reach national policies.

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## DAY 2 | SESSION 1: GENDER, DEVELOPMENT, YOUNG GENERATION AND CARE

### KEY SPEAKERS

#### KEYNOTE SPEECH MODERATOR

**Marina Durano**, Adviser on Care Economy and Partnership Engagement, UNI Global Union  
**Seung-Eun Cha**, Professor of Child & Family Welfare, Suwon University

#### PRESENTERS

**Hyuna Moon**, Senior Research Fellow, CTMS  
**Dilani Gunewardena**, Professor of Economics, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka  
**Otgontugs Banzragch**, Professor of Economics, National University of Mongolia, Mongolia

#### DISCUSSION PANELISTS

**Emiko Ochiai**, Professor of Sociology, Kyoto University, Japan  
**Maria Floro**, Professor Emerita of Economics, American University, US  
**Taekyoon Kim**, Professor of International Development, Seoul National University Graduate School of International Studies  
**Kyung-hee Moon**, Professor of International Relations, Changwon National University

This session focused on the significance of Care, specifically Care Economy, amid response efforts to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19.

**Marina Durano, Adviser on Care Economy and Partnership Engagement at UNI Global Union** opened the session by highlighting the introduction of a feminist development policy announced by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, to illustrate the commitment of countries in the intersection of gender, development and economy. Nonetheless, work in this area is still lacking due to different issues including feminism being undefined, vague or narrowly defined, lack of understanding for intersectionality in foreign policy, ignorance of militarization and colonization in context,

disconnection with domestic policies on gender equality within countries, absence of gender concept in systemic issues resulting in feminist alternatives untested and unexplored in the realm of macroeconomics. On the other side, she pointed out the increasing role of gender in multilateral institutions and how they are influencing the development agenda to shift the idea of gender in economy. In this sense, care economies represent a great merge between these sectors and, while it is deemed as an institutionally radical concept, care economies bring uncharted benefits to the future of economics and social development. She ended her speech by questioning how to ensure sustainability in the funding and exploration of care economy all around the world.

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## DAY 2 | SESSION 1: GENDER, DEVELOPMENT, YOUNG GENERATION AND CARE



**Hyuna Moon, Senior Research Fellow at CTMS** presented her research on “*Young People’s Attitudes Toward Care in South Korea and Its Social Implications*”, where explained the importance of care throughout the course of life. The study focuses on in-depth interviews carried in youth people ages 20-39 with different backgrounds all around. The results showed a glimpse into the thoughts of young Koreans on the topics of care, marriage and fertility. These young adults called for a shift in care policies and improvement of capacities in order to accommodate labor and social changes that do not equate with current policies. Moving forward, Dr. Moon stressed the importance of listening in detail to the concerns and opinions of the young generation as these upcoming generations are the ones who fall under the pressures of generational changes.

**Dilani Gunewardena, Professor of Economics, University of Peradeniya in Sri Lanka**, explained Sri Lanka’s current conundrum, having achieved high levels of educational achievement and health access but failing to offer labor opportunities and political stance to Sri Lankan women. Women in Sri Lanka are responsible of most care work, dominating the paid care work area, as well as being providers of care to households in other countries when

migrating overseas to work as domestic workers, most of them in a temporary contract base. This leads to informal employment accounting for nearly two-thirds of economic activity as well as creating a large domestic care vacuum. Hence, a neat delineation between work and care roles based on the assumption of mutual exclusivity renders much of the work performed by Sri Lankan women -paid or unpaid, productive or reproductive- largely invisible. Moreover, working outside the home does not reduce the care burden for women. Sri Lanka still places traditional gender norms onto women in its society as bearers of national culture centered around the roles of women deemed ‘respectable’ wives and mothers. The dominance of unpaid caregiving keeps women out of productive economic labor, limits their career advancement and leadership potential. Household surveys on time use in Sri Lanka point to strong gender gaps in care work and support Prof. Gunewardena’s concerns to economic and social challenges to improve women’s standing in Sri Lanka. Nonetheless, she regards care economy as an engine of growth for potential opportunities.

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DAY 2 | SESSION 1:  
GENDER, DEVELOPMENT,  
YOUNG GENERATION AND CARE



**Otgontugs Banzragch, Professor of Economics at the National University of Mongolia** introduced Mongolia's increasing care demand due to upcoming demographic shifts, rapid urbanization and better educational attainment by women. The country's fertility rate, in line with other Asian countries, is also declining, which has prompted policy makers to review data on care economy. In Mongolia's case, unpaid care for the elderly, women tend to spend more time caring for them, this is also true for the care of people with disabilities, especially in rural areas. Childcare has also become a fundamental issue in policy making due to the rise of paid work in this area. As such, the significance of care economy has risen in the country, leading to more budget allocation for care services and activities, as well as labor policies for unpaid and paid care.



After the opening presentation, **Seung-Eun Cha, Professor of Child & Family Welfare at Suwon University**, moderated and opened the session by stressing the importance of Care Economy in current times and asked the panelists to provide sector insights into women's situation in care roles, care provision and how to incorporate the value of care work into the economy.

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DAY 2 | SESSION 1:  
GENDER, DEVELOPMENT,  
YOUNG GENERATION AND CARE



**Prof. Emiko Ochiai, Professor of Sociology at Kyoto University,** opened the floor by highlighting the importance of gathering ideas for the future of care. She complemented Ms. Durano's stance on feminist economy as part of the care economy and how this sets the stage for a more comprehensive approach on this issue. She also emphasized Prof. Moon's research on young people's data as this audience is not sufficiently explored and pointed out the difference of opinion regarding to marriage and childbearing between young people in Japan and Korea. Prof. Ochiai rescued the role of 'sacrifice' for care in Sri Lanka and explained how the value of care needs to be reintroduced into society and economy in order to lessen care's invisibility. To do so, there needs to be a 'de-familiarization' of care

or socialization of care into markets, state activities and communities. In this context, she praised Mongolia's direction in investing in care economy.

Following the presentations, **Kyoung-hee Moon, Professor of International Relations at Changwon National University,** highlighted Ms. Durano's approach on feminist economics and ask for her opinion on how can we use ODA to help eliminate gender gaps? She continued by applauding Dr. Moon's innovative approach in research methodology and pointed her surprise to the answers given by young Korean young adults and their struggle with achieving work-life balance and wondering how much of this aspect affects young people's perspectives on marriage and childbearing.





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## DAY 2 | SESSION 2: ECONOMIC VALUE OF CARE WORK AND CONTRIBUTION OF MIGRANT WORKERS

### KEY SPEAKERS

#### KEYNOTE SPEECH MODERATOR

**Ito Peng**, Professor of Sociology and Public Policy, University of Toronto, Canada  
**Kyungmin Kim**, Professor of Child Development & Family Studies, Seoul National University  
College of Human Ecology

#### PRESENTERS

**Jooyeoun Suh**, Research Associate, Centre for Time Use Research, University College London, UK  
**Jiweon Jun**, Senior Research Fellow, CTMS

#### DISCUSSION PANELISTS

**Elizabeth King**, Nonresident Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution, US  
**Hyun Mee Kim**, Professor of Cultural Anthropology, Yonsei University  
**Seori Choi**, Research Fellow, IOM Migration Research and Training Centre  
**Young Sug Heo**, Representative, Women Migrants Human Rights Center of Korea

This session deep dived into the nature of the care crisis in Korea and how this crisis intersects with migrant issues including migrant care workers and labor laws.

**Kyungmin Kim, Professor of Child Development & Family Studies from Seoul National University College of Human Ecology**, moderated this session and opened the floor by highlighting the care issue giving the rapidly changing care context in Korea. She proceeded to extend her welcome to the presenters and panelists and started the session with the first presentation.

First, **Prof. Ito Peng, from University of Toronto**, provided an overview of the current ongoing situation of transnational and global migration of care workers, followed by the impact of COVID-19 in care work and care

migration, continued with presenting the social and economic perspectives of these topics and concluded with some final thoughts on how to achieve a fairer and more sustainable care migration. She explained that there is a huge and growing demand for care due to a worldwide ageing population but a parallel shortage of care workers. Across the globe, 70% of the care workforce are women, with overrepresentation of immigrant and racialized women. COVID-19 has exposed the importance of care and care work, pushing the need to import care workers. However, the impact of care work and migration for migrant care workers has been hard. While foreign care workers do benefit from the global service supply chain, more often than not, they are prone to a series of difficulties including the

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invisibility and ignorance of their own struggles. Moving forward, there must be a balance between the state, market, family and community in order to apply the principles of 5 Rs of the care economy to ensure fairness and sustainability: Recognize, Reduce, Redistribute, Reward and Representation.

**Dr. Jooyeoun Suh, Research Associate at the Centre for Time Use Research in the University College London,** explored the economic significance of migrant care workers. She aimed to demonstrate the quantitative significance of migrant care workers and help motivate a more unified framework and vision of priorities for the development of care policies. For context, she explained the reasons why care is undervalued, and how women constitute much of the global workforce.

Feminization of care and migration is increasing due to the high demands of care, and this was exemplified by evidence presented by other studies. As for Korea, data collection for migrant workers, specifically migrant care workers, is still lacking as informal labor is hard to measure without proper investigation.

**Dr. Jiweon Jun, Senior Research Fellow at CTMS** presented her work on Korean people's perspectives on Migrant Care Workers and what do families with care responsibilities want. The survey inquired care preferences, living arrangements for migrant care workers, labor costs and other questions. The results showed that Koreans value understanding of language and culture when thinking of hiring foreign care workers. Answers between elderly care and childcare slightly varied in terms of

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days of work and payment. Introducing the topic of migrant care workers needs to be readdressed by the Korean government and media. As Korea becomes a super aging nation, the urge to supply labor force for the upcoming health demands is fundamental to keep society running. Dr. Jun proposed prioritizing the securing of elderly care labor force, focusing on good quality care work, and changing the perspective of foreign labor as a trustful one to build a sustainable system that is not only reliable but also meets the expectations of Korean families.

Following the presentations, **Young Sug Heo, Representative at the Women Migrants Human Rights Center of Korea**, readdressed the main question of migrant female care workers' fair payment and working hours. She explained how trying to create a market with female migrant worker with extra low wages to address the demand is unfair

and lacks the foundations to truly solve the issue of care demand and supply. She talked about the current contradicting laws regarding migration, labor and care, and how these laws impose a threat to the economic development and independence of migrant women in Korea.

**Elizabeth King, Nonresident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution** summarized bottom line: In order to think about migrant care workers as an important part of the supply of care, we must think of care policies in a coherent way, that is not just domestic as local. The question then changes to: how do we come up with a coherent care policy that has a migration policy that might open the global supply chain of migrant care workers? It is important to understand the process and economics of migration to design, implement and evaluate migrant care policy. Some aspects to take into consideration when designing these policies are the following: transnational migration can be voluntary or involuntary, permanent or transitory, work oriented towards the sector or not. These trends ought to be carefully analyzed migration behavior and redirect the supply and demand of care services.

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Next, **Seori Choi, Research Fellow at IOM Migration Research and Training Centre**, shared her concerns over the possible job loss of middle-aged Korean women workers over foreign care workers. However, Dr. Choi reflected on Prof. Ito's presentation regarding the many different types of cares needed and the diverse profiles of care workers, and concluded that given these reasons, foreign female care workers would not pose as a direct threat to local care workers as the demand for care is too strong and too varied. She applauded Dr. Jun's research as results showed Korean people's attitudes and thoughts on care migration, introducing much needed data in this field. Furthermore, she noted Korea's openness to new care policies, and finally called for more action to restructure inclusive systems for care work.



To finalize the discussion panel, **Hyun Mee Kim, Professor of Cultural Anthropology at Yonsei University**, took a different approach when talking about care economy; she stated that the main goal of care should be to achieve gender equality in order to provide better care work throughout all structures of societies, from families to companies and society overall. The democratization of care work within families is crucial to eliminate gender norms and alleviate pressure to provide care demanded only from women. She advocated for care to be distributed equally, so that the supply of care is not forced upon women only. It is important to give care enough visibility to readjust its costs, not only in terms of financial responses, but also to realign the reallocation of care. This should be the root origin to start the care revolution in Korea, as to avoid furthering gender gaps.

Following a rich discussion and closing remarks from all presenters, Prof. Kim thanked all participants and underlined the importance of this discussion session to understand the implications of migrant care work in Korean society and how the country should prepare to face the incoming challenges.

## CLOSING REMARKS



**Prof. Ki-soo Eun, Professor and Director of CTMS, GSIS, Seoul National University**, took the stage to thank all participants for enabling the space to discuss more practical and necessary care economy policy alternatives to attendees from academia, government, corporations, advocacy groups, and civil society in general.

He called for trust to care giver and care takers to build a mutual trusting relationship that allows all members of society to provide and receive care in the best of capacities.

In order to truly address the significant demographic issues of declining fertility and accelerated aging, and secure the sustainability of our society, all presentations and debates at this care economy conference should be taking into serious consideration to create better, more sustainable and more inclusive care policies.

He concluded his remarks by thanking all the renown experts, moderators, presenters and discussants that participated in the sessions, the sponsors and supporters for their generous support and great interest in the topic, as well as the efforts of his CTMS team for making this conference happen.

## 2022 CTMS REPORT



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