



This issue of the Newsletter is devoted to the 2018 Korea-China Social Contribution Forum, which took place in Seoul, Republic of Korea, on September 5th 2018. This event was aimed at exploring what contributions to the improvement of the social welfare and living conditions of people various stakeholders from the private and public sectors could make in the world of today, and how to strengthen their cooperation for the benefit of all.

Sergei Zelenev, ICSW Executive Director and Editor of the Newsletter

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Forum in Seoul



Dr. Sang-Mok Suh, President of Korea National Council on Social Welfare

The 2018 Korea-China Social Contribution Forum took place in Seoul, Republic of Korea, on September 5th 2018. Convened by the Korea National Council on Social Welfare (KNCSW) in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Welfare of the country, this conference was aimed at exploring new possibilities in the provision of social services, at strengthening the social welfare introduced by “the Era of the Internet and Big Data”, and at using the contributions of both the public and the private sectors.

The purpose of the Forum — which takes place every two years alternating between the two capitals — is strengthening bilateral cooperation on social welfare and corporate social responsibility issues. Specifically, the 2018 Forum focused on innovations in social policies in the context of the ongoing IT revolution. The nexus between the rapid changes in the IT sector and the social policy issues was discussed throughout.

The president of KNCSW, Dr. Sang-Mok Suh, informed the participants about the Council's recent activities and methods of operations. As an organization, KNCSW plays a pivotal role in the delivery of social welfare services in the Republic of Korea, promoting linkages and cooperation between the public and the private sectors for the benefit of all people in need of social services. Social inclusion is a paramount driver and a goal. To promote various projects in the social welfare field, the Council conducts research and prepares studies on social

welfare, presenting evidence-based policy proposals.

Apart from providing managerial services to the government, the KNCSW facilitates linkages with the private sector. It also facilitates various volunteering activities.

The KNCSW maintains connections with social welfare associations and other stakeholders at various levels from the central to the municipal, provincial and district associations. The purpose is to *create friendly and active regional welfare communities* in the country. To this end, the KNCSW conducts systematic policy research and organizes public hearings on the private provision of welfare in order to engender future-oriented welfare discourse in an effort to “eliminate welfare blind spots”. It also supports innovative education and training, which are indispensable in creating such communities.

The meeting in Seoul was attended by experts from both countries, who shared their experiences, perspectives and views as to how to address new challenges in the social welfare area using the new possibilities provided by the rapid development of IT, which could improve the quality of life and the human condition. Many speakers underscored that the impact of the “fourth industrial revolution”, its significance and its potential implications are expected to exceed those from the preceding transformations in society. Business leaders cannot brush away their obligations and social responsibilities, including greater involvement in the delivery of social services.

At the same time a range of contemporary social issues must be addressed without delay. Among those are worsening inequalities across and within many countries accompanied by polarization and fragmentation in society, which represent a clear social challenge. There are evolving approaches to welfare reforms in both Korea and China with the acknowledged need to re-evaluate some basic axioms upon which they stand. Welfare systems need to be “localized” and made more flexible, transparent and smart.

On the invitation of the hosts of the Forum a key-note presentation was delivered by Dr. Sergei Zelenev, Executive Director of the ICSW

on the theme: "The evolution of social policy discourse: international perspective".

Discussion: some salient points

The presentation of the project called "Silver Friend" conceived by the Korean company SK Hynix as a business response to a huge problem — the loneliness of older persons — drew the attention of the audience to the risks associated with ageing societies, as well as to new possibilities provided by IT to address those risks.



Participants of the Forum

Older persons living alone can benefit from a range of contemporary possibilities in the technological field, starting with the better use of dedicated smartphones to more sophisticated options, such as the wider use of AI (artificial intelligence)-based devices. The pilot project in S. Korea started with an initial targeting of 2000 people and provided free-of-charge supports the establishment of safety monitoring system for people living alone, with possibility of rolling out the project nationwide if its effectiveness is proven. The project envisions both online (use of AI speakers) and offline support, as well as use the help of volunteers.

The representative of the Chinese E-commerce giant JD.com described the targeted efforts of the foundation established by the company to develop innovative solutions aimed at leveraging its technology, logistics infrastructure and relationship with consumers to create programmes beneficial to society and ensure transparency in the donation process. All donated goods are delivered through the JD's own logistics network, enabling millions of the company's customers to donate products directly to non-profit organizations serving

vulnerable and needy groups across China. Its targeted poverty-alleviating efforts aimed at directly sourcing only high-quality products from local specialty producers facilitated the availability of numerous items online, generating substantial revenue for impoverished areas. Those efforts were combined with disaster-relief projects facilitated by the availability of the company's country-wide network of warehouses and delivery stations capable of immediate delivery in case of need. Leveraging its self-operated logistics system, JD.com built a new, simple and easy-to-use donation platform with the motto: "One-click donation and direct delivery", thus facilitating "internet philanthropy" that could benefit millions of people.

Another internet giant from China, Tencent, represented at the Forum by its in-house Tencent Charity Foundation, has been keen to promote philanthropy, adding donation sites to its hugely popular WeChat social platform. Blending conventional philanthropic approaches with possibilities provided by the wide spread of smartphones, the company achieved a high level of funding of the socially important projects that it supports. In the wake of the Wenchuan earthquake, a major recent disaster, the Tencent Charity Foundation facilitated 20 million online donations. The cell-phone-based donation platform presents various options, differentiating the amounts and project aims according to the preferences of the users. Even very small but regularly-made donations are encouraged. Approaching the act of donation as a product of a kind, the company is keen to provide information on the public benefits of the projects that it supports. The act of donation is made technically simple for users, and the information can easily be transmitted to a wider circle of friends, creating a virtuous circle of trust in donation activities. Individual cases could be also made known through the online platform.

Preventing global epidemics through the wider and more effective use of IT technologies was the focus of the statement made by a representative of Korea Telecom (KT). A potential global epidemic outbreak could be very costly to any country and the world at large, and this aspect could be seen as a neglected part of global security. To address

this challenge the KT in collaboration with the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention launched a system based on monitoring roaming and big data to identify individuals traveling to countries prone to infectious diseases. Upon their return to Korea the subscribers receive an SMS notice that they are required to report for potential quarantine control in accordance with existing regulations. This fills a loophole in the quarantine system when visitors return home via third country free of diseases and are difficult to trace. Also, citizens are informed of symptoms and measures to be taken in case symptoms appear. This health-related travel information is also sent to healthcare facilities for reference when individuals with symptoms visit the facilities. Fostering behavioral changes through customized and prompt alerts, the information-sharing system has been well received by the Korean public, as well as by the Government, improving the awareness of epidemic risk and risk-management governance. These measures have been supplemented by some bilateral agreements (such as between KT and Safaricom in Kenya) for preventing the spread of infectious diseases using roaming data, seen as a first step for reducing epidemic risks.

Describing the peculiarities of fundraising for grass-roots NGOs, a representative of the Shanghai United Foundation (SUF) emphasized that one of its key goals on that front is building trust among the general public regarding donations and charity work. Being a public grant-making foundation, the SUF aims at bridging funding gaps in the operation of grass-roots NGOs by bringing donors on board and overcoming the lack of funds that jeopardizes the activities of such organizations. The lack of professional fundraising skills often leads to a disproportionate amount of time being spent on these activities; as a result, such NGOs have neither the energy nor the money to conduct large-scale fundraising activities or focus on improving the impact of their programmes. The SUF sees its mission as empowering donors efforts to support grass-roots NGOs, working in such fields as children and older persons. The Foundation ensures the linkages within donor community and between that community and project beneficiaries. The mobilization of funds through the Internet has proven its

effectiveness, and such projects have been widely used.

Summing up some key points of the discussion, Yeonhee Lee (Senior Researcher, Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs) noted multiple changes in the social environment, particularly risks associated with ageing, changes in the family structure, growing economic polarization and the evolution of the labour market. The rapid development in information and communication technologies undermine the walls between various areas, creating a "hyper-connected" society that facilitates innovations in public services and the social welfare model. Customized welfare administration and service takes place in the context of "welfare informatization", with such new features as consumer-centered welfare technology, the pursuit of personalized welfare service, efforts to ensure privacy protection, multidisciplinary networking and the widest-possible spread of information technologies. Some examples of ICT-based innovations in the provision of welfare in the Republic of Korea include the Welfare Blind-Spot Finding and Managing System, the Emergency Notification Service and the Welfare Guidance Mapping System.



Key-note presentation

The first model was established by the Ministry of Health. In the past, only one-way welfare services were provided, based on the data submitted by welfare service beneficiaries. In contrast, the system described above provides indicators through which it is possible to find households in crisis, prevent people from dying alone, and help such households overcome a crisis, all of which is based on comprehensive public big data. For households with sick

members, elderly people living alone and those seriously ill, sensors measuring temperature and humidity, as well as motion and fire detectors, are installed. Detecting a problem, the responsible monitoring center or the social welfare worker visits the household on short notice for emergency treatment. In the case of the emergency notification service, sensors and electronic devices are installed in households of older persons living alone. The data collected through sensors and then sent to the wireless network enables system managers and the local government officials, nurses, and guardians to evaluate the level of the emergency situation. The Welfare Guidance Mapping System makes it possible to visualize the location of households in crisis situations and catalog the services to be provided. Depending on the crisis level, it can make use of various colors to convey the message, which facilitates a decision on the number of visits required to households in crisis situations.

Designed to promote cooperation between the two countries on social welfare issues, the biennial forum became an important platform in the quest for answers to new questions brought by the IT revolution, encouraging active exchanges between scholars and practitioners.

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