

THE 15TH EAST ASIA CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM

Promoting the Engagement of Civil Society Organizations with the SDGs

*Four Opening Addresses, Three Keynotes and Six Case Reports
from China, Japan and Korea*

ENGLISH SUMMARY EDITION

Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, China

October 17–18, 2024

Japan Association of Charitable Organizations

The 15th East Asia Civil Society Forum — Proceedings

English Summary Edition

An abridged English edition of the Japanese-language proceedings published in December 2024 by the Japan Association of Charitable Organizations.

Original edition

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About This English Summary Edition

This volume is an abridged English edition of the Japanese-language proceedings of the **15th East Asia Civil Society Forum**, held in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, China, on October 17 and 18, 2024 under the theme **“Promoting the Engagement of Civil Society Organizations with the SDGs.”** The original runs to 224 pages and was published in December 2024 by the Japan Association of Charitable Organizations. It is a transcript, taken from the video record produced by the Japanese Executive Committee, of four opening addresses, three keynote addresses, six case reports and two closing addresses, together with the presentation materials submitted by each speaker.

What has been kept, and what has been condensed

- **All fifteen substantive contributions are represented**, in the order in which they were given, under the same four-part structure as the original report.
- **Speeches are summarized rather than translated word for word.** The aim is to carry the argument, the evidence and the speaker's own emphasis into English at roughly a quarter of the original length. Sentences in quotation marks are close translations; everything else is summary.
- **A closing synthesis chapter (Part 5) has been added by the editors** of this English edition. It draws together the themes that recurred across the two days. It is not part of the original proceedings.
- **Slides and photographs are reproduced from the original report**, with captions written in English by the editors. Where a slide carries figures that differ from the spoken transcript, the difference is noted.

Conventions

Personal names appear in the romanized form printed in the original Japanese report, surname first and set in small capitals in the running text where a name is introduced. Where the original prints two different forms of the same name, or where no romanization is given at all, the alternative is recorded in Appendix A. Chinese and Korean organization names are given in English with the original characters at first mention. Currency figures are left in the unit used by the speaker; where a conversion appears in the original, it is retained. Dates follow the US convention (October 17, 2024).

The Forum at a Glance

Full title	The 15th East Asia Civil Society Forum
Theme	Promoting the Engagement of Civil Society Organizations with the SDGs
Dates	Thursday and Friday, October 17–18, 2024
Venue	New Century Grand Hotel (Xi'an Tibet Mansion) 333 Youyi East Road, Beilin District, Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, China
Host	China Association for NGO Cooperation
Partner bodies	Japan Association of Charitable Organizations Korea Forum of Volunteerism Shaanxi Provincial Association for International Exchange of Social Organizations
Grant support	The Uehiro Foundation on Ethics and Education
Working languages	Japanese, Chinese and Korean, with simultaneous interpretation in all three
Program	Evening of October 17: opening addresses, awards ceremony, welcome dinner. Morning of October 18: three keynote addresses, six case reports, a question-and-answer session and the closing addresses. Afternoon of October 18: site visits in Shaanxi Province.
Original report	224 pages, published December 2024 by the Japan Association of Charitable Organizations

Program

Day 1 — Thursday, October 17, 2024

Chair: LYU Fei, China Association for NGO Cooperation

Time	Item
18:00–18:10	Chair's opening remarks
18:10–18:20	Opening address (China) — WANG Xiangyi, Deputy Chair and Secretary General, China Association for NGO Cooperation
18:20–18:30	Opening address (Japan) — IINO Yuji, Chair, Akame no Satoyama o Sodateru Kai; Vice-Chair, Japanese Executive Committee
18:30–18:40	Opening address (Korea) — NAM Youngchan, President, Korea Volunteer Forum
18:40–18:50	Welcome address — LI Anjun, President, Shaanxi Provincial Association for International Exchange of Social Organizations
18:50–19:00	Awards ceremony
19:00–20:30	Welcome dinner

Day 2 — Friday, October 18, 2024

Keynote addresses — Chair: LYU Fei, China Association for NGO Cooperation

Time	Item
09:00–09:20	(China) Models of SDG Implementation Across Countries and the Actions of Civil Society Organizations — GUAN Ting, Associate Professor, Beijing Normal University
09:20–09:40	(Japan) The Role of the SDGs in the Age of the “Anthropocene”: The World, East Asia and Japan — FURUSAWA Koyu, Representative Director, Japan Center for a Sustainable Environment and Society; Visiting Professor, Kokugakuin University
09:40–10:00	(Korea) Korea's Progress on the SDGs and the Challenges Ahead — JEONG Jonghwa, Professor, Department of Social Welfare, Sahmyook University
10:00–10:15	Group photograph and break

Case reports — Chair: WANG Conghong, China Association for NGO Cooperation

Time	Item
10:15–10:30	(China) Environmental and Public-Interest Crowdfunding on the Chinese Internet: The “99 Giving Day” Experience — LEE Tien Ming, Professor, School of Ecology, Sun Yat-sen University
10:30–10:45	(China) Connecting the World Through the Empowerment of Women and Children — TANG Wenhua, Chief Supervisor, Shaanxi Youlian Women and Children Exchange Service Center
10:45–11:00	(Japan) Findings from a National Survey of NPOs and Citizens' Groups on Their Engagement with the SDGs (online) — NITTA Eriko, Director and Secretary General, Japan Civil Society Network on SDGs
11:00–11:15	(Japan) Cooperation for Greening the Loess Plateau — TAKAMI Kunio, Vice-Representative, Green Earth Network
11:15–11:30	(Korea) Sustainable Volunteering and Mentoring — PARK Hyunhong, Representative, Lovinghands
11:30–11:45	(Korea) A Project for Everyone's Earth — YANG Jina, Representative, UIK Company

Question and answer session — Chair: WANG Qionghua, China Association for NGO Cooperation

Time	Item
11:45–12:30	Discussion with all nine presenters. .

Time	Item
12:30–12:40	Closing address — WANG Xiangyi, Deputy Chair and Secretary General, China Association for NGO Cooperation
12:40–12:45	Announcement of the 16th Forum — IINO Yuji, Chair, Akame no Satoyama o Sodateru Kai
Afternoon	Site visits in Shaanxi Province, including the Shaanxi Intangible Cultural Heritage Industry Promotion Association and a women's and children's activity center

Part 1 — Opening Addresses

The Forum opened on the evening of October 17, 2024 with four addresses: one from each of the three national partners, and a welcome from the Shaanxi provincial body that hosted the meeting. Between them they set the two frames within which everything else was said — that this is a fifteen-year-old working relationship rather than a one-off conference, and that the SDGs are behind schedule and need civil society if they are to be rescued.

1.1 Opening Address (China)

WANG Xiangyi, Deputy Chair and Secretary General, China Association for NGO Cooperation (CANGO)

WANG Xiangyi welcomed participants to Xi'an — “the starting point of the Silk Road” — in the harvest month of October, and placed the meeting in its own history. Since the first Forum was held in Tokyo in 2009, she said, organizations in the three countries have built working relationships across disaster relief and disaster prevention, the capacity of civil society organizations, corporate social responsibility and volunteering. For more than a decade the Forum has served as a platform for exchange and cooperation among the three civil societies — a place to deepen mutual understanding and to learn from one another's development.



Photograph 1.1 WANG Xiangyi opening the Forum.

She then set the Forum against two very recent intergovernmental commitments. The **Japan–China–Korea Trilateral Summit** held in May 2024 had issued a joint declaration committing the three governments to sustainable development and to the realization of the 2030 Agenda, providing a strategic framework for peace and prosperity and for harmony between people and nature. The **United Nations Summit of the Future**, held the month before the Forum, had adopted a Pact for the Future intended to “lay the foundations of a sustainable, just and peaceful world order,” with fifty-six actions attached to it. Against that, she was blunt about where the goals actually stand: much remains undone and expectations have not been met, but the response must be confidence and active engagement rather than retreat.

The theme of the Forum, she said, was chosen precisely to advance the global agenda through the broad participation of civil society and through cooperation across the region. CANGO's own role is that of a platform: it has supported the participation of social organizations in the East Asia Climate Forum for over a decade, and has worked with Japanese and Korean civil society groups on energy transition and climate education. She undertook that CANGO would go on serving as a bridge among the three civil societies on climate change, youth participation, gender equality and the digital divide.

She closed by noting that the 16th Forum would be held in Japan in 2025, and by thanking the Japanese and Korean partner organizations, the Shaanxi Provincial Association for International Exchange of Social Organizations, and all who had taken part.

1.2 Opening Address (Japan)

IINO Yuji, Chair, Akame no Satoyama o Sodateru Kai (Association for Nurturing the Akame Satoyama); Vice-Chair, Japanese Executive Committee

IINO Yuji spoke as the deputy for **YAMAOKA Yoshinori**, chair of the Japanese Executive Committee, who had decided not to travel out of concern about a sudden change in his condition abroad. He acknowledged how disappointing that would be for those who had looked forward to seeing him.

He explained his own connection to YAMAOKA, which dates to the late 1990s and the debates over Japan's law to support non-profit activity. In that period, he said, the enthusiasm of people working in volunteer organizations

gathered into a sense that Japan was entering a new era; he was invited to meeting after meeting, gave presentations and lectures, and traveled with YAMAOKA to Britain to study NPOs there. “I may be something like Mr. Yamaoka's apprentice in the NPO world,” he said. It was through that connection that he came to be involved in the East Asia Civil Society Forum.

Having met the same colleagues on Jeju Island in Korea the previous year, he said he was glad to be meeting them in Xi'an — standing on the ground of Chang'an, which he had learned about in history textbooks, felt like slipping through time.



Photograph 1.2 IINO Yuji delivering the Japanese opening

He then spoke about himself with unusual directness. He was born on October 17, 1954, and had turned seventy on the opening day of the Forum. He contracted polio at six months, which his late parents grieved over; but, he said, it was as though that illness had absorbed his share of misfortune, because his life since has been a happy one. Alongside chairing his NPO he runs a work-support center for people with disabilities, cooking lunch for about ten people a day, driving the morning and evening rounds, and handling the office work and visitors — and his first task each morning is cleaning the shed of a young goat named Mei. At the Akame satoyama in Nabari City there are also four hundred free-range chickens and a male cat, Miiko.

Turning to the theme, he said his organization works in the *satoyama* — the zone where people and nature meet — on conservation and cultivation, always with the sustainable use of the natural environment in view. That, he said, is a practice of the SDG spirit: “think globally, act locally.” And he recalled a point YAMAOKA makes constantly: that in a civil society, NPOs and volunteers organize themselves and supply flexible, diverse, layered solutions to every kind of social problem, which is what builds a fuller civil society and becomes a force for social change. Seen from that angle, he said, the reports on the SDGs due the next day would be all the more meaningful.

1.3 Opening Address (Korea)

NAM Youngchan, President, Korea Volunteer Forum

NAM Youngchan opened on the history of the city itself: Xi'an, known in its day as Chang'an, capital of the Tang dynasty, a center of culture, trade and diplomacy where many currents of thought and many peoples met. Holding the Forum in a place with that record, he said, carried real meaning.

On behalf of the Korea Volunteer Forum he thanked WANG Xiangyi and her colleagues at CANGO for their work in hosting the meeting, and the chair of the Japanese Executive Committee, YAMAOKA Yoshinori, and his colleagues for their support.



Photograph 1.3 NAM Youngchan delivering the Korean opening

He then restated the theme in the plainest terms. In 2015 the world's leaders agreed seventeen global goals to be achieved by 2030 — the elimination of poverty and inequality, the protection of the planet, and a world in which everyone can enjoy health and a fair life. “The SDGs are goals for changing the world.” They matter, he argued, because they are indispensable to the growth and resilience of communities and because they offer sustainable solutions to the present generation and to those that follow.

Civil society organizations play a critical part in that: they give communities strength, and they work in exactly the fields — livelihoods, environmental protection — where the goals have to be met. Where community participation is built into every stage of a development process, the resulting plans are more relevant, more effective and more sustainable. That participatory approach, he said, is what produces empowerment and lays the groundwork for long-term success.

He ended on the relationship among the three countries. Korea, China and Japan share values and objectives across many fields; and although the international situation keeps changing, the shared vision and the will to cooperate that began with the first Forum in Tokyo in 2009 have strengthened year by year and are now firmer still. He was confident that this meeting would strengthen them further.

1.4 Welcome Address

LI Anjun, President, Shaanxi Provincial Association for International Exchange of Social Organizations, “Shaancuhui”)

LI Anjun welcomed the Japanese, Korean and Chinese participants to “a thousand-year-old capital” on behalf of the provincial association, and thanked the meeting for choosing Shaanxi. He thanked CANGO for its support, citing the proverb that “to recommend a capable person, one need not avoid one's own circle.”

He set out the scale of the province and the reason it was an apt setting. Shaanxi covers 205,600 square kilometers and has a resident population of 39.52 million; it is one of the birthplaces of the Chinese nation and of Huaxia civilization. Its geography made it a hub of China's external exchange more than two thousand years ago, and its capital, Xi'an, was the starting point of the ancient Silk Road and the seat of thirteen dynasties, the Qin, the Han and the Tang among them — a history in which close relations with Japan and Korea were formed.

He quoted the formula the Chinese foreign minister, Wang Yi, uses when introducing Shaanxi to foreign ambassadors: to know China's history, see the Mausoleum of the Yellow Emperor and the Terracotta Army in Shaanxi; to know the Communist Party of China, see the pagoda and the cave dwellings of Yan'an; and to know where China is heading, see the changes now under way in Shaanxi, the starting point of the ancient Silk Road. Copies of a book, *China's Shaanxi*, were given to participants.

On the associations themselves: more than thirty thousand social organizations are active in Shaanxi, and they are keenly interested in international exchange and in cooperation among themselves. Shaancuhui was established against that background and now has more than a hundred member organizations across fourteen fields, among them culture and tourism, education and health, women and youth, green ecology, and public welfare and philanthropy. Through the Forum, he said, the province's civil society organizations hoped to take a new step in a friendship with Japan and Korea that is already millennia old, and to make their own contribution to promoting the engagement of social organizations with the SDGs.

He closed by noting that the following day would be given over to substantive discussion and exchange, and wished the participants an enjoyable stay in Shaanxi and a successful Forum.



Photograph 1.4 LI Anjun welcoming participants to Shaanxi.

Part 2 — Keynote Addresses

Three keynote addresses opened the second morning: a Chinese researcher's comparative typology of how states implement the SDGs and where civil society fits in each type; a Japanese scholar's long-range account of what the Anthropocene demands of the goals, ending in a concrete regional proposal; and a Korean professor's goal-by-goal audit of his country's record. The session was chaired by LYU Fei of CANGO, who noted that the previous evening's speakers had all pointed to the importance of civil society for the SDGs, and that policy was the missing piece.

2.1 Models of SDG Implementation Across Countries and the Actions of Civil Society Organizations

GUAN Ting, Associate Professor of Government Management and Public Services, Beijing Normal University



Photograph 2.1 GUAN Ting delivering the first keynote address.

GUAN Ting organized her address around four questions: how far the SDGs have actually got; what models of implementation exist and how social organizations fit into each; what a survey of Chinese social organizations shows about their awareness and practice; and what follows for policy.

Where the goals stand

The 2030 Agenda adopted at the United Nations in 2015 set seventeen goals and 169 targets as a fifteen-year path for global development. The Forum met at the halfway point, and the position is not good: **only about 17 percent of countries are on track or have achieved their goals**, while many have stalled. On the world map in her slide, deep red marks the regions furthest behind; lighter shades indicate improvement; the pink areas are wholly stalled.

Her own research, conducted with a team at **Utrecht University** in the Netherlands, asked what effect the SDGs have had on institutions and on society — whether the goals are transforming anything now, and whether their effect shows up in institutional and social development. The finding was sobering: the impact of the SDGs on institutions themselves is very limited. The concepts and objectives have not penetrated national policy and institutions deeply enough for their concrete effects to be more than modest.

Global conditions have made this worse. The COVID-19 pandemic absorbed the attention of most governments; the war between Russia and Ukraine broke out; the conflict between Israel and Palestine has intensified; and climate change continues to deteriorate. The combination, she said, makes optimism about the present rate of progress difficult.

What counts as a “social organization,” and why they matter

In China, she noted, the term has a definition in law. The Civil Code defines a social organization as “a non-profit legal person established for public-interest or other non-profit purposes, which does not distribute its profits to its contributors, founders or members,” and the Measures for the Administration of the Names of Social Organizations divide the sector into social groups, foundations and privately run non-enterprise units. Her working definition for the survey also took in private-sector enterprises other than state-owned ones. Getting these definitions right, she

said, is a precondition for understanding either NPOs generally or the Chinese sector in particular.

Her written paper cites the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network to the effect that social organizations and citizens' groups are the key to ensuring that everyone can reach basic rights and resources — health, education, decent work, decent housing, social protection. Social organizations are the sector that complements the participation of government and business in public policy, and they matter greatly both for responding to a violently changing international environment and for moving the SDG process forward.

Four models of implementation

With her co-author she classified the engagement of social organizations in the SDGs into a small number of models. Read the two axes as the degree to which government leads and the degree to which social organizations act on their own initiative, and four cells result:

- **Government-led.** Government sets the action plan and folds social organizations into it in a supplementary, subordinate role.
- **Social-organization-led.** Social organizations act independently and autonomously, and occupy the central role.
- **Co-governance.** Government and social organizations act together, with both engaged at a high level.
- **Mutual disengagement.** Neither side is seriously involved.

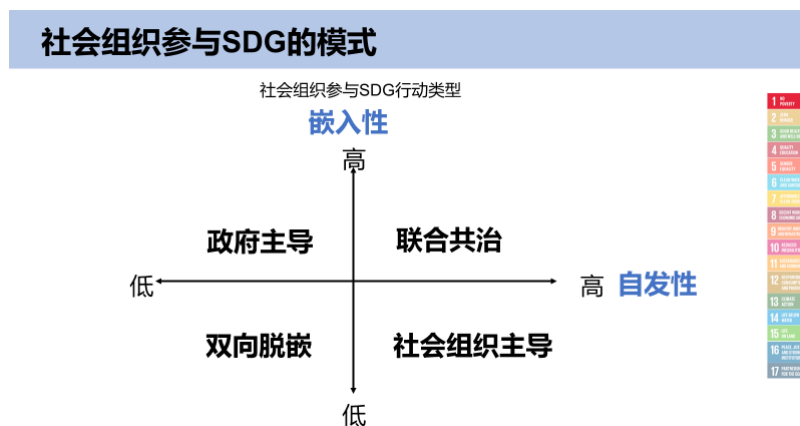


Figure 2.1 The four types of social-organization engagement with the SDGs. The vertical axis is embeddedness, the horizontal axis is spontaneity or self-initiated action. Clockwise from upper left: **government-led**, **co-governance**, **social-organization-led**, and **mutual disengagement**.

To test the typology she analyzed the Voluntary National Reviews presented to the UN High-Level Political Forum. The government side was scored on whether a country has published a concrete action plan, whether it has a national-level strategy, and whether it has an indicator system; the society side on whether a coordinating mechanism among social organizations exists, whether social organizations publish their own reports, and whether there is an expert committee.

Across the **seventy-five countries** that reported to the High-Level Political Forum in 2023 and 2024, **forty-seven fell into the government-led model, eleven into the social-organization-led model, nine into co-governance and eight into mutual disengagement**. That distribution matches her own 2019 study, which found that about 70 percent of countries take a government-led approach. **China is a typical example of the government-led model**; the problem the model brings with it is that particular social organizations are often not written into the government's action plan at all.

已参与 2023-2024年联合国 HLPF国家的社会组织参与SDG模式分类



Figure 2.2 Classification of the seventy-five countries that reported to the UN High-Level Political Forum in 2023–2024. Blue, government-led, 47 countries; green, social-organization-led, 11; orange, co-governance, 9; pale orange, mutual disengagement, 8. The tables on either side record, country by country, the presence or absence of a government action plan, an inter-ministerial coordinating body, an indicator system, a social coordinating body, social-organization reporting and an expert committee.

A survey of 507 Chinese social organizations

At the end of 2023 GUAN's team, supported by CANGO and joined by university researchers, surveyed **507 Chinese social organizations** about their engagement with the SDGs, then sorted the answers into three patterns and followed up with detailed interviews. Three conclusions came out of the awareness questions:

- **Awareness is narrow.** Organizations have basic knowledge of the SDGs, but their grasp of the specific targets beneath each goal, of the background against which those targets are to be met, and of the road map, is not adequate.
- **The importance of the goals is recognized; the depth of understanding is not there.** There is a strong consensus that the SDGs matter, and much less understanding of their detail.
- **There is confusion about implementation.** Given the realities of Chinese society, many organizations are perplexed about the obstacles they face in putting the SDGs into practice.

On practice — whether an organization had been commissioned to run an SDG-related project, or had applied for one, or was engaged with government on the goals — engagement turned out to be limited, and polarized. A minority of organizations are strongly committed and have made concrete commitments; a large number do not understand the goals well enough to know how they would take part.

The forward-looking answers were the encouraging ones. **More than 70 percent said they wanted to be actively involved** in the SDGs and to deepen their knowledge; **71 percent said they would take up SDG-related projects energetically if there were a chance to apply for grants and receive funding.** The team's conclusion was that drawing social organizations into the work is entirely feasible — what is missing is the method, the incentive system and the support platform.

What follows

Her recommendations were three, and she repeated them at the end in the form of what it would take to reach the co-governance pattern:

1. **Mainstream the policy discourse.** Spread discussion of the SDGs among Chinese social organizations until it becomes a mainstream theme, so that the goals attach more easily to concrete action.
2. **Deepen understanding and build incentives.** Establish awards and incentive schemes for the SDGs so that organizations which engage seriously are supported.
3. **Provide platforms for participation,** particularly information platforms carrying domestic and international information on project applications and funding, so that the information imbalance among the parties is reduced.

She drew examples from outside China: the Brazilian civil-society working group that publishes an annual report on

the development of social organizations and works to integrate environmental concerns with the goals; **Junior Achievement Portugal**, which builds citizens' awareness of the SDGs through education programs from primary school to university; the **United Nations Association in Canada**, whose “Global Citizen Award” raises the appetite of citizens to act; and the EU's **SOLIDAR** foundation, which promotes cooperation among social organizations through advocacy, capacity-building and financial support. The experience of Japan and Korea, she said, would be especially useful to Chinese organizations, and she hoped the three countries could learn from each other's strengths.

She closed on China's own framework. The government has tied the SDGs to national action plans and long-range visions — the 14th Five-Year Plan and the 2035 vision, framed by the idea of a community with a shared future for mankind. Since 2018 more than forty ministries and departments have run SDG-related activities, and eleven cities had been designated **innovation demonstration zones for sustainable development** by 2023, linking the goals to local conditions. She also named two institutions built for this purpose — the **Center for International Knowledge on Development** and the **Institute of South-South Cooperation and Development** at Peking University — and reported that China has achieved 55 percent of the SDG targets, well above the 17 percent global figure, with the gains concentrated in poverty reduction, clean production and new renewable energy.

2.2 The Role of the SDGs in the Age of the “Anthropocene”: The World, East Asia and Japan

FURUSAWA Koyu, Representative Director, Japan Center for a Sustainable Environment and Society (JACES); Visiting Professor, Kokugakuin University Research Organization



Photograph 2.2 FURUSAWA Koyu delivering the second keynote address.

FURUSAWA warned at the outset that his address would take a wide and long view — not sustainability over a century or a millennium of world history, but the meaning of the SDGs seen on the scale of tens of thousands of years of human history. He noted that Xi'an, a capital that has flourished for thousands of years, was a fitting place to attempt it.

A life in two roles

He introduced himself briefly. Born in 1950, he has worked in two capacities: as an academic, teaching and researching at university until his retirement in 2020; and in civic movements, particularly the non-profit sector of NGOs, NPOs and cooperatives. The Japan he grew up in went from postwar reconstruction through rapid growth, the bubble and its collapse, into low growth. During the high-growth years the country suffered severe pollution — schoolchildren playing in the yard would collapse in photochemical smog and be carried to the sick room; the *Plan for Remodeling the Japanese Archipelago* was in vogue, and more than half of Japan's natural coastline was artificially altered and destroyed, with development reaching the mountains, the rivers, the villages and the sea.

He entered university at the end of the 1960s, when campuses were barricaded during the student disputes. In the free study spaces that formed there — the self-organized lecture movement, exchanges with the pollution and local residents' movements — he found the occasion to think about what scholarship, and in particular science and technology, is for. That history led to a lifetime of civic activity centered on environmental organizations. When local and national pollution problems became global environmental problems in the 1990s, Japanese civic movements deepened their connections with the wider world; he took part in the NGO Forum at the 1992 **Earth Summit** in Brazil, where he was struck again by the importance of international solidarity, and has attended the major international meetings since.

The Anthropocene, and three crises

Looking at human history on a scale of centuries, he said, the curves for population, energy consumption, transport and information all bend sharply upward. Population roughly quadrupled in the twentieth century alone, which is a heavy burden for the planet; what happens if each indicator multiplies several times again is a matter not just of human history but of Earth history. That is why this is called the age of the **Anthropocene**.

Many kinds of human being have appeared and vanished — the Neanderthals, and here in China, Peking Man. Only *Homo sapiens* survived, prospered and built civilization. The path was full of encounters, conflict, coexistence and adaptation to a changing environment; from farming and herding to cities, through the industrial revolution to the present, modern humans spread across the whole planet, generating many cultures and civilizations, diversifying as they dispersed and then, over the last few centuries since the age of exploration, integrating again — arriving at the great flourishing of the Anthropocene.

At that peak, he said, we face the question of where humanity came from and where it is going, because three great threats now stand against human prosperity.

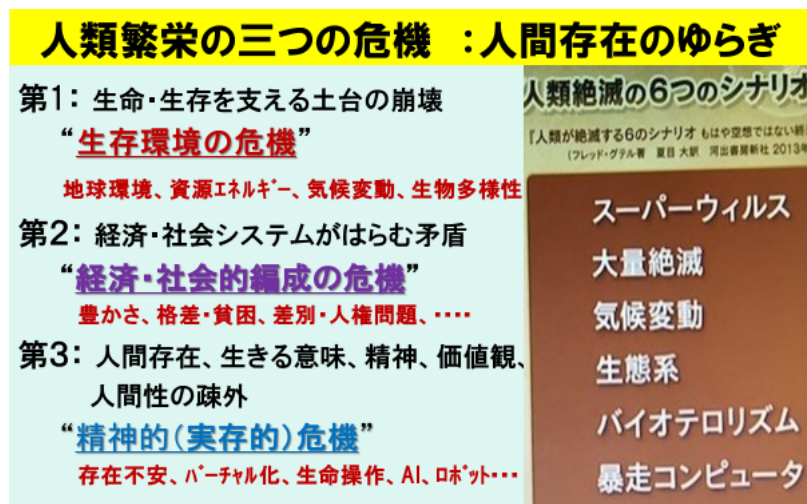


Figure 2.3 “Three crises of human prosperity: the wavering of human existence.” First, the collapse of the foundation that supports life and survival — the crisis of the living environment: the global environment, resources and energy, climate change, biodiversity. Second, the contradictions inherent in the economic and social system — the crisis of social composition: affluence, disparity and poverty, discrimination, human rights. Third, the alienation of human existence, of the meaning of life, of the spirit and of values — the spiritual (existential) crisis: existential insecurity, virtualization, the manipulation of life, AI, robots. The book cover at right lists six scenarios for human extinction: superviruses, mass extinction, climate change, ecosystems, bioterrorism, runaway computers.

The third he set aside for lack of time, though he called it critically important for the future: the question of what our existence, and what affluence, mean, amid rapid advances in artificial intelligence, robotics and biotechnology. The address dealt with the first two.

From hostility to coexistence

World history, he said, is a record of people pursuing wealth and prosperity through repeated conflict and war, and of the search — through grief, anger and unbearable hardship — for ways of coexisting. He put this on a single axis: at the left end **confrontation and hostility**, at the right an ideal state of *kyosei*, symbiosis. Between them, and prior to symbiosis, sits *kyozon*, coexistence: the state in which parties acknowledge one another's existence and negotiate their differences and contradictions. Reaching it requires a process of meta-recognition — a vantage point from which one notices differences and comes to see diversity, and ambiguity, as such.

Hostility and exclusion end in the denial of both parties' existence. The sequence he proposed runs from the acceptance of existence on the premise of difference, to the search for diverse and many-sided relationships (coexistence), to a symbiotic relationship that generates mutual benefit. Biological evolution on Earth, and humanity within it, probably persisted through some such process. Today the recognition extends beyond symbiosis within human society to biodiversity: **how to maintain and develop biological and cultural diversity is the key term** for getting through the crisis.

1992 and the two treaties

The first great turning point was the 1992 Earth Summit, at which the **Framework Convention on Climate Change** and the **Convention on Biological Diversity** were concluded and an international environmental regime was built. The climate convention demands the transformation of a civilization dependent on fossil resources — one that exhausts depletable resources and destabilizes the climate on a foundation of mass production and mass disposal. The biodiversity convention aims, in aspiration, at the construction of a **civilization of life** that honors interdependence and circulation in coexistence with nature. Its significance for diversity extends past endangered species to the rights of indigenous peoples and to traditional culture — things previously ignored and held to be without value, now recognized as carrying great value. The two treaties are the two keys to the future.

Alongside the biodiversity convention he singled out UNESCO's **Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions** (2005), whose origin is the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity adopted at the 31st UNESCO General Conference in November 2001 — immediately after the September 11 attacks in the United States. The declaration holds that “cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature,” as a source of exchange, innovation and creativity. That is to say: the ground on which humanity should stand is the respect of diversity, over and against the clash of civilizations and religious and cultural antagonism.

One current within that stream is the FAO's **Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)** program, running since 2002. Agriculture — *agri-culture*, from *cultivate* — sits at the source of culture and civilization and is the central form of human engagement with nature, which is why the FAO has designated these sites as models embodying the wisdom of coexistence with nature. As of October 2024 there were 89 designated areas in 28 countries, of which **China had 22, Japan 15 and Korea 7 — about half the world's total in these three countries alone.** From the standpoint of biological and cultural diversity, he argued, Northeast Asia should deepen its cooperation as a critical center of gravity; and since migratory birds recognize no borders, the East Asian–Australasian Flyway Partnership offers another reference point for a shared vision of environment, peace and coexistence.

A proposal: an East Asian environmental security framework

Some machinery already exists. The **Northeast Asian Multi-stakeholder Forum on the SDGs** — Japan, China, the DPRK, Mongolia, Korea and Russia — has been convened by UNESCO; before that there were cooperative networks on environmental monitoring. Rebuilding and strengthening those, he said, is what is wanted.

His proposal went further. Just as a politically unstable Europe achieved prosperity through the formation of a community, the time has come for a cooperative structure in this region — provisionally, an **East Asian Environmental Security Framework Agreement**. It could become the foundation on which the relationships now wavering among China, Russia, North Korea, South Korea and Taiwan are tied together under the heading of the environment, and could eventually extend into a wider scheme of coordination taking in the ASEAN countries.

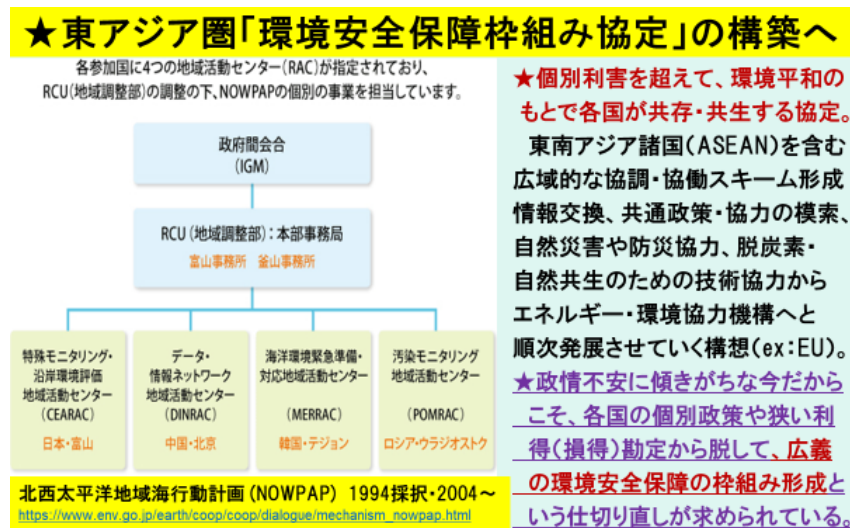


Figure 2.4 “Toward an East Asian Environmental Security Framework Agreement.” The diagram at left is the structure of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP, adopted 1994, operational from 2004): an intergovernmental meeting above a Regional Coordinating Unit with offices in Toyama and Busan, and four Regional Activity Centres — CEARAC (Toyama, Japan), DINRAC (Beijing, China), MERRAC (Daejeon, Korea) and POMRAC (Vladivostok, Russia). The text at right sets out the proposal: an agreement under which countries coexist under environmental peace rather than individual interest; a broad scheme of coordination including the ASEAN countries; information exchange, common policy, cooperation on natural disasters and disaster prevention, technical cooperation for decarbonization and coexistence with nature, developing in sequence into an energy and environment cooperation mechanism (as the EU did). The underlined conclusion: precisely because the political situation is now tilting toward instability, what is required is a reset — a framework of environmental security in the broad sense, escaping from each country's individual policies and narrow calculations of gain and loss.

Concretely, he suggested working from Japan's experience of pollution control, an aging and shrinking population, and rural depopulation — all of which arrived there first — widening information exchange, cooperating on disaster preparedness, and using shared problems such as local and welfare policy as the occasion to build common policy. The vision is of technical cooperation for decarbonization and coexistence with nature, and of energy and environmental cooperation, developing gradually into welfare and regional development.

The economic and social crisis

Turning to the second crisis, he pointed to the World Economic Forum's annual **Global Risks Report**, in which the ten-year and two-year rankings diverge sharply: environmental risks dominate the long list, while the short list is a tangle of economic, social and geopolitical risks — the **polycrisis**. World military expenditure, having fallen in the 1990s as a peace dividend, reversed and began climbing in the 2000s, reaching a record **2.4 trillion dollars in 2023**

— more than ten times total ODA. Confrontation, he said, has come to greatly exceed coexistence.

This is exactly why the SDGs matter and should be brought forward. The achievement rate in the most recent assessments is around 16 percent. In the 2024 *Sustainable Development Report* published by SDSN, Japan ranked 18th, a slight improvement on its downward trend. What stands out about the table, he observed, is that the top ten are all European and mostly small or medium-sized countries, while today's great powers sit around the middle — which suggests that the world as presently arranged is, by an SDG measure, rather behind the times. He noted with concern that Asian countries rank low across the board.

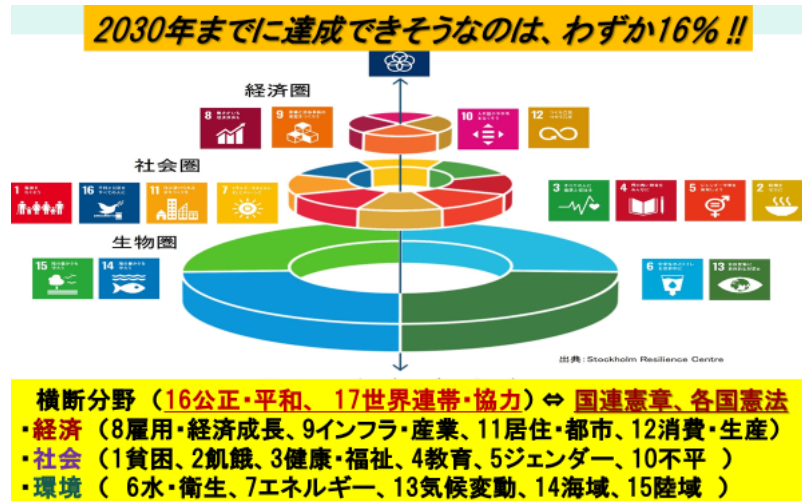


Figure 2.5 “Only about 16 percent looks achievable by 2030!” The wedding-cake diagram (Stockholm Resilience Centre) sets the seventeen goals in three layers — the biosphere at the base (6 water and sanitation, 13 climate, 14 oceans, 15 land), society above it (1 poverty, 2 hunger, 3 health, 4 education, 5 gender, 7 energy, 11 cities, 16 peace), and the economy at the top (8 employment and growth, 9 infrastructure and industry, 10 inequality, 12 consumption and production). The band at the foot names the cross-cutting fields — goal 16, justice and peace, and goal 17, global solidarity and cooperation — and sets them against the UN Charter and national constitutions. The slide’s own footnote assigns goals 10 and 11 differently from its diagram, placing 11 in the economic band and 10 in the social one; the reading above follows the diagram.

The seventeen goals and 169 targets — the transcript says 167 — aim at a sustainable society by harmonizing the environmental, social and economic dimensions; what is required is not only balance among the three but synergy, each goal reinforcing the others. The three-layer reading makes that easier to see. And it is not the individual goals that matter most, he argued, but **the declaration of the 2030 Agenda itself**: its opening message is that we shall transform our world; it declares that no one will be left behind and that those furthest behind will be reached first; and in its later passages, alongside the account of what the UN has built up from the ashes of war, it suggests that ours may be the last generation with a chance to save the planet — a goal that will be reached only through the involvement of everyone, indigenous peoples, civil society, business and the private sector, and not governments alone.

From division to solidarity

He closed on the economic layer. Comparing national government revenues with the turnover of multinational corporations, **more than two-thirds of the top hundred — seventy of them — were corporations** as of 2015. The agent of economic activity has shifted to multinationals larger than national economies.

Oxfam’s report *An Economy for the 1%* documented the deepening concentration of wealth; its 2024 report found that while nearly five billion people worldwide have grown poorer, the assets of billionaires have risen by some three trillion dollars since 2020, and that the five richest have more than doubled their wealth since 2020 — a rate of about fourteen million dollars an hour. Add the vast sums moved into tax havens, and what is under way is a serious crisis of social composition. Cutting into it, he suggested, could open the way to fundamental solutions: the possibility of controlling the mechanism of capital accumulation not only nationally but supranationally, and a reading of the Anthropocene as a “Capitalocene,” from which larger themes emerge — a **global tax** on international finance, and the “democratization of capital.”

Among recent developments he pointed to the **social solidarity economy** as an important vehicle for the SDGs, promoted chiefly by the ILO, and to the UN General Assembly resolution of April 2023 on promoting the social and solidarity economy for sustainable development. He also raised population decline: already under way in Japan and

expected in China and elsewhere. The immediate question is whether the world can get through the present combination of population growth and deepening polycrisis; but even if it does, what a sustainable society looks like in the subsequent phase of population decline is a further problem — the third crisis, still to be addressed.

Humanity has entered the Anthropocene, he concluded. What social institutions and international relations we can build in it is the question, and the SDGs are without doubt an important guide. What is asked of us is how we reorganize and use natural capital, social capital, and physical and informational capital. First, we must get past confrontation and hostility and create a path of coexistence and symbiosis from the standpoint of humanity as a whole rather than of immediate interest. The time has come to take that path together, and it is the highest priority for our future.

2.3 Korea's Progress on the SDGs and the Challenges Ahead

JEONG Jonghwa, Professor, Department of Social Welfare, Sahmyook University



Photograph 2.3 JEONG Jonghwa delivering the third keynote address.

JEONG Jonghwa noted that the Chinese and Japanese speakers had taken a global view, and that his own account would be national: how Korea is implementing the seventeen goals, how the work is progressing and being evaluated, and what challenges civil society faces. He organized it in five parts — an outline of the Korean government's approach to the SDGs, its implementation strategy, progress goal by goal, present problems, and prospects.

The government's framework

Building on the seventeen goals adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015, the Korean government set out a number of categories and established a team for each. The work is led and carried out at government level, with participation from the private sector, government, civil society and the academy; road maps are drawn up by theme and an annual report is produced so that progress and implementation can be assessed.

The strategy dates in its present form from 2019, when the government announced its SDG strategic plan. Since then it has held symposia bringing experts and stakeholders together, run investigations group by group, convened panel discussions on the obstacles to and prospects for achievement, and collected the views of civil society organizations. These have deepened understanding of the goals, strengthened the machinery for monitoring progress, and — by making the role and the difficulties of civil society organizations more concrete — laid the basis for reflecting them in policy.

The demographic problem beneath everything else

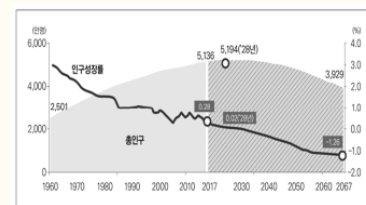
Korea's largest challenge, he said, is its falling birth rate and aging population. **By 2025 20 percent of the population will be elderly** and the country will enter super-aged status: of a total population of fifty million, ten million will be aged sixty-five or over. More serious still is the birth rate — **at 0.7, the lowest in the world**, meaning the average woman does not have even one child. The working-age population is shrinking rapidly, which is a major economic problem in itself.

He set the social inequality that goes with it alongside:

◆ 현재 한국 사회가 직면한 현안 중 지속가능발전 측면에서 사회, 경제, 환경 부문에 미치는 영향력을 분석하면 다음과 같음

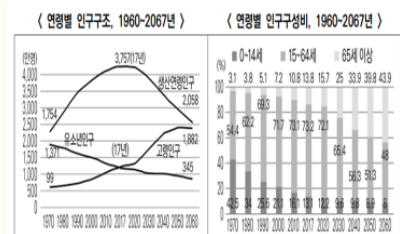
1) 지속가능발전을 위협하는 저출산·고령화

▪ '20년 현재 5,178만 명인 인구규모는, 출산율 하락 등에 따라 감소세로 전환되어 '60년대 후반 4,000만 명 이하로 줄어든 것으로 예상



출처: 통계청(2019), [한국의 총인구 및 인구성장률 변화]

▪ 생산가능인구는 2017년부터 감소하기 시작하였으며, 고령화 역시 급속히 진행 중



출처: 통계청(2019), [한국의 인구구조 및 고령화]

Figure 2.6 “Low fertility and aging, which threaten sustainable development.” Left: total population and population growth rate, 1960–2067. From 51.78 million in 2020 the population is projected to turn downward and fall below 40 million by the late 2060s (5,194 in 2028 at the peak, 3,929 by 2067, in units of 10,000). Right: population structure by age group and its composition, in eleven steps from 1970 to 2060. The working-age population began to decline in 2017 and aging is proceeding rapidly; over that span the 65-and-over share rises from 3.1 percent to 43.9 percent, while the 0–14 share falls from 42.5 percent to 8 percent.

Source: Statistics Korea (2019).

polarization between rich and poor is advancing and pulling down the quality of life across society, and the population structure makes the seriousness of the problem plain.

On climate, Korea's four distinct seasons are being distorted: summer and winter have lengthened and spring and autumn have shortened, so that autumn leaves normally enjoyed in October are not seen until November — a shift of one to two months. Heavy rain, floods and earthquakes are increasing; a country once thought to be outside the earthquake zone now experiences them frequently. These are the visible surface of environmental damage. Meanwhile, according to data from Hankook Research, the economy has stagnated badly since the COVID-19 pandemic, deepening social inequality and pushing the government toward new economic policies of a “New Deal” kind.

Measuring progress

The government has set **ninety-nine quantitative indicators** against which it measures progress. COVID-19 delayed some goals and slowed the pace; looking across the seventeen, several should be achievable within five years, but achieving all of them completely is not realistic on present form.

That makes the institutional side urgent. Building public institutions matters greatly: when government puts the legal framework in place, society and citizens find it easier to act on the goals. Cooperation among ministries has to be strengthened so that the whole apparatus pulls together. And international leadership matters: Korea has set itself the target of implementing the seventeen items by 2040, working with international stakeholders, under the Fourth Basic Plan. As GUAN Ting had said of countries generally, Korea too is an instance of government-led promotion.

Work proceeds by agenda item. A national-level council has been established through a ministerial meeting, with a statistical office for environmental education attached; working groups for each of the seventeen agendas run joint public–private activity. The whole is organized around four themes: **people** — improving people's lives through education, health and poverty reduction; **prosperity** — sustainable prosperity through economic growth and job creation; **environment** — conservation and climate action; and **peace and cooperation** — social justice and stronger security.

Goal by goal

He then went through the items he judged most important.

- **Poverty and the safety net.** Korea's relative poverty rate is very high, and income support and household assistance are needed. The public assistance system has to be strengthened and income compensation built out; new policies including measures for the over-75s are under consideration.
- **Health and welfare.** Chronic disease is widespread and diabetes in particular is rising; disease driven by dietary change is a serious problem. The government is strengthening community-based health services and has built universal health insurance — an advanced case internationally — with cancer treatment now covered, reducing the burden on patients. Health-promotion law has been tightened: smoking in the street and in public places carries heavy penalties, with fines of up to the equivalent of 100,000 yen under the National Health Promotion Act.
- **Education.** COVID-19 spread online education nationwide, which has advanced the 2040 education targets considerably. AI is being introduced across compulsory education from primary to high school, and tuition support at university level is extending access.
- **Gender equality.** Korea has a Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, which frames the policy. On equality of employment between men and women the target of 50 percent or better has already been met.
- **Water.** Active measures to supply safe and healthy water have reduced the incidence of drought, and the indicators for geological and water-quality management are in good condition.
- **Energy.** Over the past decade the share of nuclear power has fallen and coal has returned as an energy source — an unusual pattern, and one that runs against other countries' policy; a shift toward sustainable development is needed.

- **Economic growth.** Korea has worked hard on per-capita GDP and maintains a growth rate of about 2 percent.
- **Industry and innovation.** By 2050 Korea aims at infrastructure for all citizens including the socially vulnerable; road networks and information infrastructure are advancing, and the country is rated highly for digital inclusion.
- **Inequality.** The criteria for family support obligation have recently been relaxed. The traditional expectation that parents look after children and children look after parents has weakened, and relaxing the rule has produced one visible gain against inequality.
- **Cities and housing.** Urban and housing problems are severe: population concentrates in the cities, and the number of older people falling into poverty because they cannot secure housing in old age is rising, while housing for young people is also a serious problem. Large sums are being put into this eleventh agenda item.
- **Production and consumption.** Recycling and plastics are the central themes; plastic is a principal obstacle to a low-carbon society, and government and civil society organizations are working on it together — as the Korean case reports later in the program would show.
- **Climate action.** The frequency of natural disasters attributable to climate change has been falling, about 20 percent lower than twenty years ago. Measures are still required in both urban and rural areas, and the response to climate change caused by energy problems is not yet adequate.
- **Oceans.** Marine debris is a serious problem: waste drifting in from the seas around China and Korea washes up on Korean coasts in large quantities and takes enormous effort to remove. This is a field in which international cooperation is urgently needed.
- **Land ecosystems.** Forest covers 63 percent of Korea; policy aims at sustainable forest management and at expanding forest area further by 2040.
- **Peace and justice.** Violent crime has fallen from its past levels, but robbery, homicide and sexual violence remain problems, and the government is pursuing a range of measures.
- **Partnership.** An online platform is being built to raise the effectiveness of cooperation among municipalities, and will take up energy-saving and nuclear-energy questions.

Results and remaining challenges

The gains have been substantial: wider access to education, expansion of renewable energy, poverty reduction, the spread of solar generation, the establishment of online schooling, improved social infrastructure, and better livelihood-protection, housing and medical services.

Three problems remain. The first is the **energy transition**: renewables are expanding, but the instability of supply that follows from moving away from nuclear power is a difficulty. The second is **social inequality** — the minimum wage has been raised but remains low, and inequality is deep. The third is **climate change**.

Dealing with these, he said, requires not only policy instruments but international cooperation. Realizing a low-carbon society in particular demands that government work with civil society organizations and the private sector, gathering the strength of the whole. His written summary put the challenge in three parts: maintaining the balance between economic growth and environmental conservation, since Korea's CO₂ emissions remain high and substantive climate measures are needed; resolving social inequality, which has deepened in the course of economic development; and strengthening the integration of, and cooperation on, SDG implementation — building the partnership structure among government, business and civil society and drawing in wide participation including local communities.

“The realization of this agenda demands a strong partnership between government and civil society organizations.” Achieving the goals, JEONG concluded, requires continual policy improvement and cooperation with diverse stakeholders, so that Korea can strengthen its role as a global leader for sustainable development.

Part 3 — Case Reports

Six case reports followed the break, two from each country, paired so that each pair set a piece of research or a national picture beside a working organization. WANG Conghong of CANGO, chairing, framed them as an account of what each country is actually doing about the SDGs and of the obstacles encountered on the way.

3.1 Environmental and Public-Interest Crowdfunding on the Chinese Internet: What “99 Giving Day” Shows

LEE Tien Ming, Professor, School of Ecology, Sun Yat-sen University



Photograph 3.1 LEE Tien Ming presenting the first case report.

LEE Tien Ming is an ecologist, and began by explaining why an ecologist was talking about fundraising. His interest is in charitable activity for environmental protection. He attended the 1992 Earth Summit, which is where his engagement with environmental questions began; and his involvement with the SDGs deepened around 2015 when he was a visiting scholar at Columbia University, where Professor Jeffrey Sachs was leading the discussion of the goals as adviser to the UN Secretary-General. Watching that process at first hand, he said, had a large effect on him.

The funding gap

His written paper sets out the scale of the problem. The UN estimates that achieving the goals requires investment of **five to seven trillion US dollars a year**, against which developing countries face an annual shortfall of **2.5 trillion dollars**; total world development assistance in 2017 was 146.6 billion dollars. The gap is most conspicuous on global problems such as climate change and environmental degradation. China has increased its own spending on ecological and environmental protection, and on biodiversity conservation in particular — **more than 260 billion yuan in each of 2017 and 2018** — yet public money still cannot meet the need, and closing the gap with social donations has become urgent.

What 99 Giving Day is

“99 Giving Day” is a major fundraising campaign run by the Tencent Foundation each year on September 9, through which people across China support public-interest programs. It is tied to China's Charity Day on September 5, and calls on the whole country to give during that week. On the WeChat mini-program a “little red flower” marks anything belonging to the campaign, so that users recognize it at once.

LEE and his students have studied the campaign's ten years of data to 2023. Individual giving has grown more than twentyfold from an early figure of 120,000 yuan (about 2.4 million yen), and the number of donors has risen sharply with it; **total donations reached 3.84 billion yuan in 2023**.

Environmental protection has not shared in that growth. It suffers from two handicaps: it started later than other social causes, so that people attend to social problems first and only then to environmental ones; and ecological charity is small in scale with low social engagement. The data bear this out — **funds raised for ecological and environmental projects have stagnated, and in 2023 came to less than 15 million yuan, just 0.4 percent of the total**.

What makes a campaign raise money

Working behaviorally — how people give, and what would make them give more — the team analyzed the 2019 to 2021 data in detail, covering more than ten thousand campaigns a year. What emerged was that the Tencent Foundation adjusts the mechanics of giving every year, and that three factors are decisive:

1. The number of donors taking part in the “give together” campaign — the feature by which a donor's WeChat contacts see the campaign and give alongside them.
2. The size of the matching donation offered by corporate sponsors.
3. Whether a return gift is offered to donors.

On the first: donor numbers are strongly shaped by social relationships, and using social networks and personal ties is therefore central to raising them — a point on which he thought further awareness-raising was needed. On the second: behind campaigns that raise large sums stand corporate donations, in which a company matches an individual's gift, or exceeds it — a million yuan, say. Matching carries a benefit for the company too, in brand image and name recognition, which is why it is used so readily; a large corporate donation also signals that a project is mature and trustworthy. On the third: return gifts worked best of all in **environmental** campaigns. His hypothesis is that a nature-related gift or a soft toy makes the donor feel a relation to nature and warms them to the campaign. In other fields the effect of return gifts was much weaker.

The number of ecological and environmental campaigns illustrates the underlying trend: **325 in 2019, falling to 280 in 2020** — not because environmental problems have diminished, but because the number of charitable campaigns addressing them has. His proposed remedies follow directly from the three factors: raise the number of donors joining “give together,” raise the level of corporate matching, and design return gifts with more care.

His paper adds two findings from the project side. **Smaller environmental projects find it easier to attract public donations**, because a small project usually has a clear purpose and a high probability of success, so ordinary people can see the result and receive feedback. And **projects spanning more than one province attract more giving and more support**, because the resources and management capacity they demonstrate make them more credible to the public.

结果与讨论 Result & Discussion

□ 生态环保公益长期处于弱势地位

- 99公益日整体筹款金额和捐款人数在稳步上升
- 生态环保公益仅在前期发展迅猛，后期发力不足，虽有回温，但后期整体显现衰退的迹象

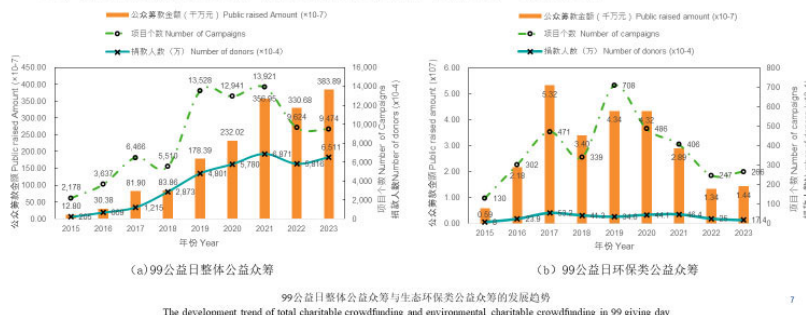


Figure 3.1 “Ecological and environmental public interest has long occupied a weak position.” Left (a): the whole of 99 Giving Day, 2015–2023 — funds raised (orange bars, in units of 10 million yuan; the 2023 bar, 383.89, is the 3.84 billion yuan cited in the text), number of campaigns (the green dashed line, rising from 2,178 in 2015 to a peak of 13,921 in 2021) and number of donors (the teal line, in units of 10,000). Right (b): environmental campaigns only. Both rose steeply in the early years, but the environmental series lost momentum after 2019 and shows clear decline in the later period even after a partial recovery.

Three directions for environmental crowdfunding in China

Platforms should optimize the promotion of ecological and environmental projects and widen public participation — encouraging more environmental organizations to publish projects that need funding, and raising their exposure through themed events.

Fundraising organizations should design more attractive proposals based on the characteristics of the project, with fuller explanation and greater transparency and credibility; platforms should make active use of the social character of the internet, encouraging sharing and forwarding and using gamification to increase exposure.

Raising the digital capacity of civil society and welfare organizations is the key to future development — improving the efficiency of fundraising, the management of and relationship with donors, and the use of funds, and thereby supporting the achievement of the SDGs.

3.2 Connecting the World Through the Empowerment of Women and Children

TANG Wenhua, Chief Supervisor, Shaanxi Youlian Women and Children Exchange Service Center



Photograph 3.2 TANG Wenhua presenting the second case report.

TANG Wenhua introduced a young organization: the Center was established in **July 2020** as a body directly attached to the Shaanxi Women's Federation, with support from the provincial Department of Civil Affairs. Its work is built on supporting women and children, under the keyword *lian*, “to connect” — the character in its name. Its fields are the support of women's entrepreneurship and employment; matchmaking and educational problems; support in relation to problem behavior among women and children; and helping social organizations go abroad. It exploits the advantages of media in international exchange, belongs to the Shaanxi women's public-interest alliance, and is rated in the top class of organizations by the Department of Civil Affairs.

The Center has taken the SDGs as one of its guiding frameworks and built them into its governance and its activity plans. Its written summary states the position: under the guidance of the Shaanxi Women's Federation the Center focuses on the needs of women and children and on providing professional and efficient services that raise their sense of satisfaction, wellbeing and security; and throughout organizational planning, internal governance, project development and implementation it treats the SDGs as an orienting direction, working actively on poverty elimination, gender equality, decent work, social equity and quality education, in concert with the **Belt and Road Initiative**.

Employment and skills

Its first major project was a four-year **Shaanxi Youth Backup Strengthening** program run with the trust of Plan International in the United States. It reached about **1,500 people, of whom 1,260 (80 percent) were women, and 1,200 found work — an employment rate given in the original as 88 percent.** *The three figures as printed do not reconcile: 1,260 of 1,500 is 84 percent and 1,200 of 1,500 is 80 percent. They are reproduced here as they stand in the source.* The program supplied life skills and vocational training to help women into better workplaces, and Plan International's office continues to work with the Center.

Alongside it the Center runs a “better living” workshop for women, which has drawn more than a hundred thousand participants online and offline since it began, and a matchmaking program addressed at the difficulty many women report in meeting a partner. Run with the Shaanxi Women's Federation and aimed at improving women's rights and standing, it has staged **more than fifty matchmaking events, from which 280 couples have formed.**

A regional event for over five hundred women produced a video that won first prize in Shaanxi's public-interest awards; it records eight events shot during the pandemic, in which the Center visited foreign residents in China, made dumplings with them and walked the Xi'an city walls together — a representative example of *youlian*, “women's friends.”

Girls, design and technology

For International Day of the Girl Child the Center produced a project that was broadcast live nationwide by the All-China Women's Federation. It uses recently developed Chinese technology, with high-precision imaging and data, and forms part of the Center's work to help women and children in difficulty recover their confidence.

Its work on gender equality and the equality of girls includes public-service videos encouraging girls to learn technical skills with confidence, and short films and education programs designed to remove gender prejudice from early childhood. It also runs a national **Women's Innovation and Design Competition**, which invites outstanding designs in handicraft and household goods and gives women a place to display their skills, judged by a specialist panel. This year's competition drew **more than eight hundred entries from China and abroad**, including Italy and France, and **thirty-nine prizewinners** have been chosen, with an exhibition and award ceremony.

Other work includes an internet-based program supported by Shaanxi bodies under which women from the province traveled to Shenzhen; overseas placements to raise women's skills and experience; and capacity-building training for Shaanxi women in skills and international exchange. The **Shaanxi Women's Innovation Plan** focuses on fields where technical development and skills are lacking and, working with specialists and universities, provides career guidance to students — work that has been well received by the universities and strongly supported by the students themselves.

China and Africa

The Center also runs joint programs with Africa, under the guidance of the provincial promotion association. In July it carried out a project with an African primary school: children had been studying in dark classrooms, so the school was extended **from seven classrooms to nine** and electrical equipment installed. It has run online exchanges connecting pupils in primary schools in Kenya and Tanzania with children in China, in which the children learned about one another's cultures and wrote New Year greetings in Chinese characters.

Three of the Center's programs were selected as **best programs of the China–Africa civil partnership** at the China–Africa civil forum. In early August, thirty-seven representatives of Chinese civil public-interest organizations visited Kenya and Tanzania, calling at local primary schools and serving free school meals. The Center has opened an office in Kenya and has run a “football world cup” and an arts festival there, as well as convening a China–Africa civil public-interest forum in Kenya attended by the Kenyan presidential office and UNESCO officials, at which civil organizations discussed the rights of girls and children — work the Center regards as a long-term commitment. In Tanzania it surveyed conditions on the ground and found strong local goodwill toward China, with many children speaking Chinese and a cycle forming in which Chinese civil organizations train teachers and promote Chinese-language education.

Exchange, and work at home

Every year on March 4 the Center holds a women's day event with the diplomats of consulates and missions in Shaanxi. It runs a ballet exchange with Russia, in which the Shaanxi youth ballet company and a Russian company perform and exchange continuously — last year alone the Shaanxi company visited Russia twice and the Russian side came to Shaanxi four times, to considerable popularity. A new **gender equality practice project for Shaanxi social organizations**, which works through grants, has been well received. The Center takes part in an Asia-Pacific early childhood development body, where more than five hundred cases were discussed. In July, as a member organization of the All-China Women's Federation, it joined the events marking the anniversary of China–France diplomatic relations, exchanging with twelve overseas Chinese organizations and learning about the position of women and children in France, domestic violence and equal pay.

Current work includes a Shaanxi youth employment program, now being adjusted for its next phase, and an exchange project with Belgium. On the poverty side, the Center has established a **robotics classroom** supporting science education for children in one district, with an investment of 100,000 yuan and teaching delivered by online distance learning as a long-term plan; and it supports women and children left behind in the Shaanxi countryside, delivering bedding and school supplies and visiting child-welfare officers to understand local needs. Televisions, bedding and clothing to a total value of **60,000 yuan** have been donated.

She closed by apologizing for the speed of the tour, and by saying that although the Center is not yet strong, development is a shared human dream and sustainable development a task for everyone; she hoped the Forum would lead to closer cooperation with Japanese and Korean organizations.

3.3 Findings from a National Survey of NPOs and Citizens' Groups on Their Engagement with the SDGs

NITTA Eriko, Director and Secretary General, Japan Civil Society Network on SDGs (SDGs Japan)



Photograph 3.3 NITTA Eriko presenting the third case report, delivered online.

NITTA Eriko, presenting online, opened with a question she is often asked in Japan: what is the biggest obstacle to advancing the SDGs? Her answers were three. First, that it is hard to see how far the work has actually got. Second, that global problems feel remote — a sense of distance that exists in Japan too. Third, that the SDGs are treated as a passing trend, so that many people stop at the surface and feel nothing of substance has been left behind. With six years left to 2030, she said, there is a great deal still to do; the vegan SDG “wedding cake” her organization made with students of a nutrition college for the fifth anniversary of the goals was part of a performance intended to share that sense of urgency.

Her organization is a network of about **140 member organizations** working toward the goals on the principle of leaving no one behind, alongside government and business. Its members include people who took part in the Earth Summit, people who worked on the Millennium Development Goals, and local organizations that support civic activity within Japan. The network is organized into **eleven thematic units** — environment, youth, gender, the creation of a better society and others — and it makes policy proposals into the government's SDGs Promotion Headquarters, which meets with business and private organizations twice a year, and into the G7. When Japan held the G7 presidency in 2023 and the leaders met in Hiroshima, the network campaigned for the goals and delivered paper cranes as its message, making policy proposals to the G7 governments together with civil society members from seventy countries.

The survey

Japanese media report that more than 90 percent of the public knows the term “SDGs.” The goals are taught in compulsory education, companies are widely aware of them, and newspapers and television carry them constantly. **But no survey had ever asked how citizens' groups themselves understand the SDGs and what they are doing about them.** With grant funding, the network carried out the first such survey in 2023.

It gathered **2,000 responses in total and 1,181 valid responses** from citizens' groups in every prefecture but one, and conducted interviews with twenty-four organizations. The report exists only in Japanese; an English edition is under consideration. The survey defines citizens' groups broadly, taking in NPOs and NGOs, unincorporated volunteer groups, some social welfare corporations, neighborhood and other place-based associations, community-contribution bodies led by companies, and labor unions.

The respondents are mostly recent: about **70 percent were founded in the 2000s or later**, while **32.5 percent have more than twenty years of history and legal personality**. **27.3 percent reported an annual budget of 500,000 yen or less** — which she regarded as a valuable result, because it means the voices of small volunteer-run local groups were captured. Their geographical distribution follows the population, concentrating in Tokyo and the other large metropolitan areas, and most work within a defined local area; a small number reported working with institutions abroad.



主な活動・事業対象者

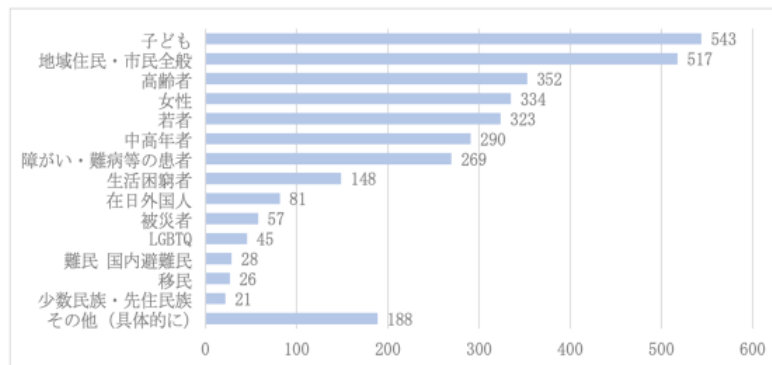


図 8 活動対象者 (受益者) (N=1,054、単位: 団体)

17

Figure 3.2 Whom the respondents' main activities serve (N = 1,054 organizations, multiple responses). Children 543 · local residents and the general public 517 · older people 352 · women 334 · young people 323 · the middle-aged and older 290 · people with disabilities and intractable illness 269 · people in economic hardship 148 · foreign residents of Japan 81 · disaster victims 57 · LGBTQ 45 · refugees and internally displaced people 28 · migrants 26 · ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples 21 · other 188.

Their fields follow from that: most work with children, then with local residents and older people, and the goals they most often relate to are **Goal 3 (good health and wellbeing)** and **Goal 11 (sustainable cities and communities)**. Many work by sharing information — on local poverty, on setting up food banks, on supplying food in partnership with companies. As in China, promotion of the goals in Japan runs through work with the public administration: administrative bodies are the most common partner, with local associations, other NPOs and companies also frequent. Looking at how they work with government, **22 percent are contracted to deliver services** and **20 percent apply for grants** to carry out their own activities.

How far the goals have been taken up

On whether groups have incorporated the SDGs into their own work, **more than half said they had**, while **28 percent had not** and a further group were considering it. The presentation slide gives the exact figures: of 1,052 organizations, **584 (56 percent) are doing so**, **172 (16 percent) are considering it** and **296 (28 percent) are not**. Groups outside the large cities are visibly engaged as well.



SDGsを取り組んでいるか否か

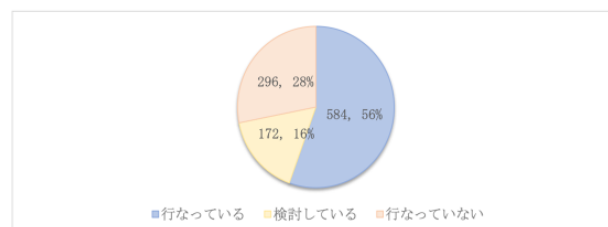


図 20 SDGs 達成に関連した事業の実施実態(N=1,052、単位: 団体)

24

Figure 3.3 “Whether or not they are working on the SDGs” — implementation of activities related to achieving the goals (N = 1,052 organizations). Blue, 584 organizations (56 percent), doing so; cream, 172 (16 percent), considering it; pink, 296 (28 percent), not doing so. In the spoken presentation the middle figure was given as about 8 percent; the slide's 16 percent is followed here.

Looking more closely at what those groups do, the activity is often planning and projects connected to the goals, with cooperation with companies conspicuous, and cooperation with other NPOs — disability support organizations,

children's welfare organizations — also common.

Why did they start? Most say they identify with the philosophy of the SDGs and find it shared with their own mission; and they find that using the goals as a common language with government and other parts of civil society makes their work more effective. The difficulty is that engagement can stay at the surface. Many people know the term; many people and many organizations doubt whether gender equality can really be achieved, or poverty eliminated by 2030.

What would make a difference

Her recommendations were addressed to civil society itself.

- **Break the goals down to the local level.** Many of the seventeen are global, and they need to be disaggregated locally by locality and understood there. Global problems matter, but activity at the local level matters greatly too; breaking the goals down to that scale is how people come to feel that the SDGs concern them and are not a matter for some distant world.
- **Use awards well.** Japan has many SDG-related prizes, and a prize is a model of what a concrete SDG action looks like. She judges several of them herself, and holds to three criteria: the perspective of civil society organizations; the perspective of leaving no one behind; and the perspective that the social, economic and environmental dimensions are indivisible.
- **Gather local voices and carry them into policy.** Civil society organizations have an important part to play here, because the people who bear a problem find it hard to speak. Noticing the problem and speaking for those affected, and working from the needs of the local community, is what makes it easier for each resident to take part in the process of realizing the goals.
- **Strengthen work with companies.** Business supports a sustainable society economically, but it can also support civil society activity more effectively by supplying technology and know-how. Where civil society, business and government work as three parties, the work is strengthened.
- **Do not treat education as only for the young.** That education for young people and children matters is beyond argument, but it is also important that the working generation and older people understand the SDGs more deeply — that they grasp the importance of achieving the goals for the next generation, and refrain from getting in the way of the spaces where young people take the lead.
- **Turn goals into action.** Steady information work and appeals to the public are indispensable; the network holds workshops and study groups regularly so that citizens can learn concretely how the SDGs bear on their own lives.

Her written summary states the hypothesis on which the project continues: that if government and business — the powerful engines of SDG promotion — recognize citizens' groups not merely as partners but as bodies whose own development and growth is worth promoting, achievement of the goals will be accelerated further. And it names the central finding plainly: **half of the citizens' groups surveyed think that they understand the significance and the meaning of the SDGs, but that their own engagement with them has remained superficial.**

Obstacles remain — a shortage of resources, insufficient structures for cooperation. Building a stronger civil society network to work on them, she said, is the important task ahead. And she emphasized that her organization's work does not stop at Japan's borders: the SDGs are a global undertaking and a common problem that countries and regions must work on together.

3.4 Cooperation for Greening the Loess Plateau

TAKAMI Kunio, Vice-Representative, Green Earth Network



Photograph 3.4 TAKAMI Kunio presenting the fourth case report.

Green Earth Network began greening work in the rural districts of Datong, Shanxi Province, in **1992**, on two principles: “the environment has no borders,” and “cooperation among people that crosses borders for the sake of the global environment.” It worked in Datong for twenty-five years and, from **2017**, moved its base to Yu County in Zhangjiakou, Hebei Province, where it continues. When the work began the SDG framework did not exist; looking back, TAKAMI said, he finds that much of what the organization has done matches the goals.

The place

Desertification and dryland extend across the middle latitudes of China. The **Loess Plateau** is part of that belt: 520,000 square kilometers, about 1.4 times the land area of Japan. Green Earth Network works at its northeastern edge.

There is a local saying, from the folk song *Gaoshan Gao*: “**The mountains are close by, but there is no brushwood to cook with. Ten years pass; nine are drought and one is flood.**” Sixteen Chinese characters, TAKAMI said, hold the natural environment and the life of the region — and after more than thirty years of visiting, it matches what he has seen. When the work began there were almost no trees on the mountains, the grass was sparse, and fields were cultivated to the tops of the loess hills. Village houses were the traditional **yaodong**, made of rammed loess. Mountains, fields and villages were all the same ochre — the yellow earth itself.



Figure 3.4 The opening slide of the presentation: a passage from the Datong folk song *Gaoshan Gao* — 靠着山呀，没柴烧。十个年头，九年旱一年涝... — over the terraced loess hills. “The mountains are close by, but there is no brushwood to cook with. Ten years pass; nine are drought and one is flood.”

Annual precipitation at Datong is about **400 millimeters**, and it falls badly. It is seasonally skewed: more than two-thirds arrives in the three months from mid-June, sometimes as intense local downpours — TAKAMI has experienced 70 millimeters in an hour more than once. Where vegetation is thin, rain strikes the ground directly and strips the topsoil from fields and hillsides; erosion gullies form and the water runs into them instead of staying in the land. The Chinese term is **shuitu liushi**, the loss of water and soil. Repeated, it degrades the land and accelerates desertification. Meanwhile the spring rain that plants need is scarce; spring rain, the saying goes, is as precious as oil, and it does not come.

It also varies enormously year to year. In dry years rainfall falls to 200–250 millimeters and severe drought follows. The odd-numbered years of the 1990s were particularly harsh; **1999 brought what was called the worst drought since the founding of the People's Republic** — the maize put out ears but formed no pollen, and almost nothing could be harvested. **2001 was worse still, a “once-in-a-century drought”**; in high villages without irrigation, people gave up sowing and left for migrant work, and even drought-tolerant grasses and shrubs died, leaving the hills brown into summer. The typical flood year was **1995**: after a dry spring, rain began in August and continued to October, soaking the roofs and walls of the earthen *yaodong* until they collapsed one after another. **Sixty thousand households and 240,000 people in Datong were affected**; that year's rainfall reached 650 millimeters.

Planting

The primary aim of the greening work is to stop this loss of soil and water, by building green belts across the loess hills and mid-slopes. The species chosen were pines, which tolerate drought and poor soil — mainly Chinese red pine (*Pinus tabulaeformis*) and Mongolian pine (*Pinus sylvestris* var. *mongolica*). In the early years they planted bare-root seedlings only **10 to 15 centimeters** tall, which visitors from Japan found alarmingly frail; but that turned out to be the method with the best survival rate and the best value. **A seedling cost about 0.05 yuan and a day's labor 8 to 10 yuan; planting 3,300 seedlings to the hectare cost about 1,500 yuan — roughly 20,000 yen.**

The **Cailiangshan project**, begun in 1999, planted **920,000 seedlings over 280 hectares in six years**. Local technicians and Japanese specialists worked together to improve nursery and planting technique, and the result was a success. Growth is slow at first and then accelerates from about the fifth year, at 30 to 40 centimeters a year. The pines planted earliest now stand **over 15 meters** — one photograph taken after twenty-five years shows trees more than 10 meters high — holding the soil, reducing wind-blown sand, and supplying lower branches as household fuel for the villages. Where the same spot was photographed before and after, pines planted in 1993 have covered gullies that rain had cut into the hillside. In the distance lies the Cetian Reservoir on the Sanggan River, one of Beijing's water sources. While TAKAMI was taking that photograph a man on a motorcycle wearing the armband of a forest warden stopped and told him proudly, “Japanese people planted these pines.” That the memory had been passed down moved him.

Orchards attached to primary schools

TAKAMI does not speak Chinese, but from 1992 he spent more than two months each autumn for three years walking through the villages, staying in county guesthouses, township government offices and farmhouses. Children who became friendly would show him the way. He was born into a poor farming family in Tottori Prefecture, and the children of the Chinese countryside remind him of himself.

In a village in Lingqiu County, in the far south of the area, he found a primary school whose windows were papered and full of holes, with **one teacher and one classroom holding the first, second and third grades together**; from the fourth grade children went to a school in the next village, and some dropped out of school altogether. To tell people in that situation to plant trees for the global environment, he said, would be empty talk — but having seen it, he wanted to find something he could do. What he thought of was an **orchard attached to the primary school**.



Figure 3.5 Erosion on the Loess Plateau. Visitors stand at the head of an erosion gully (upper left); the lower image shows a gully wall cut vertically through the loess, with sheep on the plateau surface above. This is *shuitu liushi* — the loss of water and soil that the green belts were built to stop.

It is not a few fruit trees in a corner of the schoolyard. It means planting several thousand apricot and other trees over an area of at least **8 hectares**. Of the income, **70 to 80 percent goes to the farming households that manage the orchard**, and the remainder is gathered by the school and used to keep children in school and for other educational purposes. It is, he said, a concrete embodiment of the education goal of the SDGs.



Figure 3.6 Planting together. Villagers and Japanese volunteers dig planting pits on a bare slope (upper right); below, village children carry a watering can and tools to the planting site. Volunteer tours have brought nearly 4,000 people from Japan to the site over the years.

The children take part in the work on their own orchard, which is a pleasant sight and proved popular with the Japanese volunteer tours. Participants brought family and friends and came again; **nearly 4,000 people have visited over the years, the most frequent of them twenty-two times, with more than ten people having come ten times or more.**

That mattered historically as well. Datong suffered heavily in the Sino-Japanese War, and local feeling toward Japan was not good; early attempts failed for that reason. But sweating together changed things — the expressions on people's faces going out to the worksite and coming back were entirely different — and in time volunteers began staying in farmhouses. **After the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami of 2011, villagers collected relief money for the victims.**

There were failures too. None of the villages had experience of fruit growing, and tens of thousands of apricot trees died. But once one village succeeded, the experience could be shared and successes followed one after another. Apricot roots run deep, so the tree withstands drought and yields income in years when millet, potatoes and maize fail — which stabilized household finances. **In villages where finishing primary school had been an achievement, some now send university students every year.**

The Nantianmen Natural Botanical Garden

With the active participation of Japanese specialists the organization put weight on scientific and technical work and built bases for it. One is the natural botanical garden. Asked to find a site and survey the vegetation, local technicians in Lingqiu County discovered **natural forest in the Taihang mountains near the Hebei border**. In villages at the foot of those mountains, people had planted pines and used the lower branches for fuel, so they no longer needed to walk deep into the hills to cut brushwood — and the forest regenerated on its own, with oak, linden and birch. In valley bottoms that people find hard to reach, trees more than an armspan thick have grown into fine forest.

Not far from there the organization secured use rights over **86 hectares of degraded hill**, named it the **Nantianmen Natural Botanical Garden**, and held the groundbreaking in **April 1999**, after which local people and Japanese volunteers planted pine seedlings together. They would have preferred a wider range of species, but pine was all that could be obtained at the time.

The site had almost no trees, and the grasses and shrubs that did grow were conspicuously poisonous or thorny — a consequence of brushwood cutting by neighboring villages and of continuous sheep and goat grazing. Agreements

were made with the neighboring villages to stop both, and vegetation protection began. Seed was collected first from the nearby natural forest and raised into seedlings for planting on the site; later the range widened to other provinces and the number of species grew. The staff were local farmers, plant enthusiasts and eager learners; given unfamiliar seed, each would try a different method of raising it, so that many cultivation techniques were tested in a single year. They made herbarium specimens of the plants on the site and identified them against the Chinese flora *Zhongguo Gaodeng Zhiwu*; knowing the names increased their affection for the plants and their enthusiasm for the work. A small management hut was built and staff lived there while protecting the vegetation.

Recovery was faster than expected — the toughness of dryland plants is astonishing. On north-facing shaded slopes (*yinpo*) the deciduous broadleaves came back, oak, linden and birch, now more than 15 meters tall; brushwood cutting had removed the above-ground parts repeatedly but the root stocks remained, so regeneration was quick. The south-facing sunny slopes (*yangpo*) were harshly dry, with soil stripped by rain and bedrock exposed, and the vicious circle slowed recovery; but under continued protection grasses and shrubs increased and soil began to form. Unexpectedly, **species diversity is higher on the sunny slopes**, and across the 86 hectares **523 species in 82 families** have been confirmed. Nowhere else in northern China, Chinese specialists say, are so many tree species gathered in one place, and their assessment of the site is high.

The record, and Yu County

Across Datong and Yu County together, working with local people, Green Earth Network has planted **more than 19 million trees over a total of 6,000 hectares**. That a small NGO could do work on this scale, TAKAMI said, is because it found excellent counterparts on the ground. **The success or failure of international cooperation rests on the relationship of trust with the counterpart** — something he says he feels from the bottom of his heart. The early counterparts in Datong were all young then; most have now reached retirement. He regards the whole as a good example of the SDG goal of partnership.

Since 2017 the work has been in **Yu County, Zhangjiakou, Hebei Province**, where volunteers of the Yu County Volunteer Association have joined; during the pandemic, when the Japanese side could not travel, their cooperation carried the work forward strongly. In Yu County the organization has established the **Yu County Native Tree Arboretum** in a corner of the Huli River National Wetland Park, gathering species native to the county and giving visitors a place to get close to nature. Since one of the wetland park's main purposes is the protection of wild birds, especially migratory birds, the organization also helps with bird survey and protection work. **In spring 2024 a pair of red-crowned cranes with their young came to the site.**

He ended by holding up three books — different covers, the same contents, published twenty years ago — recording the planting work up to that point. “The trees we planted through cooperation across borders will go on growing,” he said. “I hope from my heart that this Forum will strengthen those cooperative relationships further and carry us a long way toward solving many problems.”



Figure 3.7 Yu County today. The interpretation board of the Huli River National Wetland Park (upper left); planting work in the Yu County Native Tree Arboretum (upper right); a bird survey in the hills (lower left); and red-crowned cranes, which arrived with their young in spring 2024 (lower right).

3.5 Sustainable Volunteering and Mentoring

PARK Hyunhong, Representative, Lovinghands



Photograph 3.5 PARK Hyunhong presenting the fifth case report.

PARK Hyunhong runs Lovinghands, an NGO specializing in mentoring, now in its eighteenth year. He opened with a remark about the setting: Xi'an, with its historical inheritance and its traces of cultural exchange, seemed to him one of the places best suited to the SDGs, because the elements that symbolize sustainability are present there. But conveying the importance and the value of the goals, he added, takes more than words — and since he speaks only Korean, he was keenly aware of how much depends on saying it in Japanese and Chinese too.

The problem with short-term volunteering

That attention to volunteering is rising is welcome; its importance and its sustainability are another matter. Where the information companies and organizations need in order to sustain volunteering and giving is inadequate, activity tends to end up short-term. What, then, does sustainable volunteering require?

In mentoring — a service of guidance and advice — the relationship is everything. Yet **most mentoring programs run for three to eleven months**, and that brevity is itself what prevents them from succeeding. Lovinghands takes the opposite approach: **its mentoring runs from four to eleven years**.

The key to sustainable mentoring, he said, is the relationship between mentor and mentee. Only where the two respect one another does a good result follow; a one-sided relationship cannot last. So rather than aiming to confer a benefit on many people, Lovinghands values being of use to each individual — treating the other person not as a “beneficiary” but as someone with whom one helps and is helped in turn, approaching a mentee as a friend rather than as someone to be assisted, with mutual respect as the basis.

Fundraising has usually worked by making the person to be supported appear pitiable. **Lovinghands has made it a motto to stop doing that.** Instead of presenting a person as an object of pity, approach them naturally as a friend and do what friends do together. That, PARK argued, is what builds a relationship that lasts.

An adult friend

He showed a film about a well-known Korean actor — the transcript gives her name in katakana only, as **KIM Chison** — who has mentored at a library with Lovinghands for eleven years. Despite a crowded schedule she has kept up volunteer work for children for over a decade — not simply giving money, but building a one-to-one mentor–mentee relationship with the organization and staying close to the children. As she says in the film, what a parent tells a child can sound like nagging; but advice from a respected adult who is not the parent is something a child can hear. She has built one-to-one relationships lasting from the fourth grade of primary school to the end of high school, giving advice and being someone to consult, and supporting the children's growth. Because the library had no space to play, she set aside a monthly play day of her own, reading to the children and playing with them — an occasion for children to open their hearts to an adult. For a child who feels short of parental affection, having even one kind adult who speaks to them is a great help; a few kind words are enough to produce a sense of security.

“Adult friend” is the phrase to hold on to, PARK said. Friendship is usually thought of as something between children;

between an adult and a child it is unusual. He contrasted it with trickle-down — the idea that gains made at the top drip down to those below. A friendship between children, or between an adult and a child, has nothing to do with that economic environment: it is flat and equal.

A friend is someone with whom one need not force anything, who is not rude, and with whom one is not made anxious even in silence. **One can meet a friend without money. That is a real friend.** And a real friend can cheer the other on, support them, trust them and believe in them; it is out of that trust that friendship is made. The *Analects* has it: “Is it not a joy to have a friend come from afar?” Where the person volunteering and the person receiving support can also stand in a relationship of mutual respect as friends, a synergy is produced. He noted that in the legends of Troy, Odysseus entrusts his household to a friend for the ten years of the war — a friendship that lasted more than a decade.

What is a true friend? Someone who can think from the other person's position: not only giving, but asking what the other actually needs and answering that. Where there is no water, giving water saves a life — but forcing someone to drink can take one. Becoming close is how people come to understand and trust one another. A true friend is someone you can meet without money and who will be on your side; and above everything else there is trust. Staying with one person over a long time is what allows them to feel that this person can be relied on, that they are loved. That, he said, is the lesson their experience has taught.

Prevention, and scale

Lovinghands aims to give its child and youth mentees balanced support — emotional, social, inward and intellectual — through a three-dimensional and comprehensive approach. Rather than seeing a child or young person as a “problem child,” it treats them first as a friend, and to build that relationship it asks mentors to continue one-to-one from primary school for four years, and in many cases for eleven.

There is a Korean proverb about mending the barn after the cow has been stolen — shutting the stable door too late. The point, PARK said, is how much prevention matters. Child abuse, running away, delinquency, school violence, dropping out and suicide are all serious problems among young people in Korea. **One mentor for one child is highly effective against them, and where the relationship lasts eleven years the effect on prevention and resolution is beyond question.**

He gave the scale of the need. Children who run away are at high risk of being drawn into crime, sometimes into the sex trade. School violence and dropping out are widespread, with about **300,000 counted at present**. Suicide and social withdrawal are serious, with **530,000 young people estimated to be socially withdrawn**. Households in which children live with grandparents because parents are absent are increasing, and those children need mentoring. **Lovinghands estimates that about 1.8 million children in Korea need mentoring, and that its present reach covers about 0.01 percent of them.** But if everyone in the room mentored one child, he asked, how many children would be reached? “Start by having a relationship with one person” is the organization's message: near your school, near your workplace, near your home, there is certainly someone who needs your help.

He showed photographs of mentoring sessions — mentees' faces hidden to protect their privacy — in which mentor and mentee eat together and talk, building a long relationship. **Continuing for eleven years is the distinguishing feature of Lovinghands.** The work has been recognized with a number of government awards, including a Presidential Award in 2020 and a Minister of Health and Welfare award; the actor has also received a Presidential Award. Awards are not the objective, his written summary says, but they are an encouragement and they help sustain the effort.

He closed by underlining the point once more: **looking after one child to the end** is what works. His written summary adds a further finding: through the lasting, cooperative relationships the mentoring program creates, many of the **mentors** have come to hold a healthier image of themselves and a healthier outlook on life.

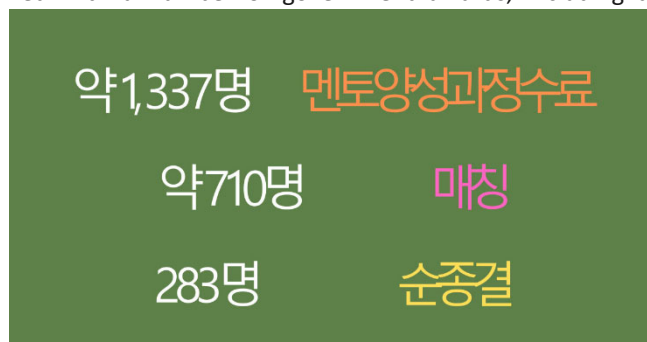


Figure 3.8 Lovinghands by the numbers, from the presentation slides: about 1,337 people have completed the mentor training course; about 710 have been matched with a mentee; 283 relationships have run to their proper conclusion.

3.6 A Project for Everyone's Earth

YANG Jina, Representative, UIK Company



Photograph 3.6 YANG Jina presenting the sixth and final case report.

YANG Jina began as an international development worker in Seoul, where the SDGs were already familiar ground, and then moved with her husband to **Chuncheon** — a city of about 300,000, against Seoul's ten million, which values its ecology and its local culture. There she moved from international development work to realizing a sustainable way of life in one place. Her earlier work centered on **Goal 6 (clean water and sanitation)**; her present projects touch **Goals 12, 14, 15, 16 and 17**.

She started a new business on moving, in the middle of the pandemic, and was glad to see local activity resume once it eased. The experience impressed on her that we live on a single Earth, and the connection between the SDGs and a sustainable lifestyle has become one of her main themes. Her business operates out of a renovated traditional Korean house, from which she runs collaborations with local artisans, craft workshops, recycling activities and recycling events.

Milkroad

The first case is **Milkroad**, a campaign that collects used milk cartons and turns them into paper products. Glass and cans usually have resale value; milk cartons do not, which is why **only about 15 percent of them are collected in Korea** — her written paper gives the figure as **15.8 percent**. Cartons are made of 100 percent natural imported pulp and have high recycling value, but although Koreans understand the need to separate waste, the correct method and the collection system are not in place.

As a parent, she wanted something close at hand, enjoyable and open to anyone. She began in **2017** with the owners of local cafés — her written paper dates the campaign proper from **March 2019** — and no special skill is required to take part. The name comes from the Silk Road; visiting China for the first time and learning that Xi'an was the Silk Road's starting point gave her a sense of connection. The cycle is simple: collect cartons, have them made into toilet paper, and return the product to the community. Asked at the start why she was doing it, she would answer that running the campaign in a café brings publicity, and running it in a school has an educational effect: children join naturally and environmental awareness grows.

About 8 tonnes of milk cartons have been collected, over six years. The campaign began in the provinces and has spread to Seoul. Collecting cartons, she said, preserves trees: the transcript records the equivalence as **twenty trees per kilogram collected**, but her slide and her written paper both give it as **twenty trees per tonne** — which is the figure consistent with the totals she cites, since 8 tonnes is put at **160 twenty-year-old pines** saved. The work connects to Goals 12, 13 and 15: trees absorb carbon dioxide, and the campaign raises environmental awareness.

03. 사례발표 – 밀크로드 몽골 나무심기 프로젝트 추진

▶ 지난 5년 간의 성과를 환산효과로 매칭하여 사막화가 심한 몽골에 나무를 심는 프로젝트 시범 추진 (2023년)



Figure 3.9 The arithmetic of Milkroad, and the Mongolian tree-planting project it led to. Left: 1 kg of paper cartons = 36 one-liter cartons = 200 × 200 ml cartons = 3 rolls of toilet paper; 1 tonne of cartons preserves 20 trees; a thirty-year-old pine absorbs 6.6 kg of CO₂ a year. Collections from 2019 to 2023 came to about 8 tonnes, equivalent to preserving 160 trees. Right, the expected effect if the project target of 5 tonnes is reached: 15,000 rolls of recycled toilet paper (Goal 12), 660 kg of CO₂ absorbed (Goal 13), greater environmental sensitivity through the campaign (Goal 14), and 100 thirty-year-old trees saved (Goal 15).

Moved by TAKAMI's account of planting trees, she said, her group had begun planting in **Mongolia**. The year before, company presidents and interested participants went to Mongolia to plant; species were chosen that could root properly in three or four years, and although the group was small the work was worth doing. **This year they planted a hundred trees in Mongolia.** Doing it herself, she said, brought home the difficulty TAKAMI had described — it is not easy work at all.

Many people take part in Milkroad. Companies send cartons along with their deliveries; families join with their children. Why do so many people take an interest? She does nothing special, she said: she simply asks whether people would like to try. But the name and the activity appeal, and participation rises year by year. She works through the local community and spreads information through social media, and participants are sometimes given free toilet paper as thanks — when the budget allows. But the people who join are not looking for a return: companies, local governments and citizens cooperate broadly.

Protecting the sea

The second case is a project run with companies and NGOs to prevent marine pollution through the collection of plastic — the **Gapeuljiu** campaign (“Bring your plastic, protect our sea”), an eco-platform on which companies, NGOs and public bodies collaborate for a resource-circulation culture through plastic recycling and for marine conservation through cleanup. **Sixteen companies now take part**, well-known Korean firms among them; UIK came in as a partner company in 2022 on the strength of Milkroad. The project was originally centered on Seoul and the capital region and has been extending into the provinces since 2022.

It has three pillars: **collecting plastic waste and turning it into a resource**; **coastal cleanup**, going to the shore and picking up litter, so that participants learn the reality of the problem by seeing it; and **education** to spread awareness of environmental conservation. Collection is carried out online and offline with the cooperation of major Korean companies. The activity expanded explosively in **2022** — plastic waste increased during the pandemic, and from that point interest rose sharply.

The written figures are these: the campaign has contributed **23 tonnes of plastic to resource circulation**, and the coastal cleanup begun in 2022 has run **43 times with 1,710 participants, recovering 12 tonnes of marine debris** — with online and offline education alongside, making it the largest plastic-reduction campaign in Korea. UIK plans and runs the coastal cleanup strand, “The Sea This Month.”

03. 사례발표 – 가골자우

03 [활동1] 플라스틱 수거 _ 성과

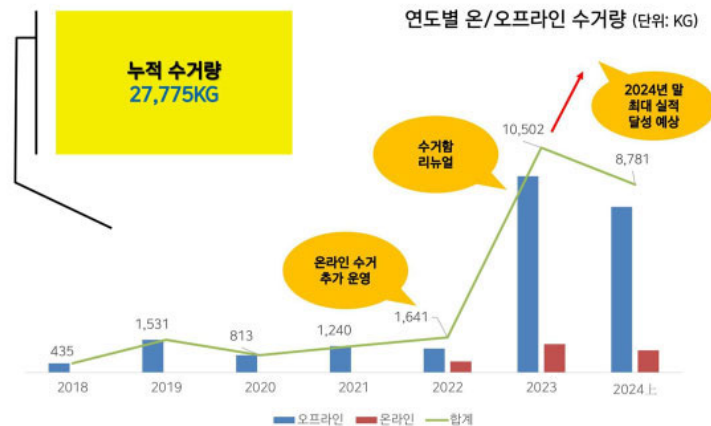


Figure 3.10 Plastic collected under the Gapeuljiu campaign, by year and by channel (kilograms). Blue, offline collection; red, online; green line, the total: 435 (2018), 1,531 (2019), 813 (2020), 1,240 (2021), 1,641 (2022), 10,502 (2023) and 8,781 in the first part of 2024 — against which the slide gives a cumulative 27,775 kg, although the years as printed sum to 24,943 kg. The annotations mark the renewal of the collection bins and the addition of online collection, and note that a record result was expected by the end of 2024.

Publicity work accompanies it. At a cleanup on **Jeju Island**, much of the litter carried Chinese and Japanese logos — from which, she said, it is plain that the sea has no borders, and that solving the problem requires cooperation across countries. The statistics rise year by year, and the need for marine environmental education is evident; but the present provision is not adequate. A range of companies collaborate on that education, conscious that their social contribution is assessed.

Four things to carry away

As the last speaker she was careful about time, but wanted to make four points.

- 1. Global problems need everyone.** A range of actors take part in plastic collection, and companies in particular are being asked to go beyond “profit for us alone” and transform their corporate culture. Nothing of this kind works without everyone's cooperation.
- 2. Glocal.** Where the provinces, the capital region and international networks connect, much wider activity becomes possible; companies too are asked to be rooted locally while working with a global view.
- 3. Everyday participation is the key.** Only when households, neighborhoods and whole towns form an environmentally friendly culture do the goals become real. In Korea the SDGs are a strong motivation for the younger generation. Voluntary participation, and the machinery to make activity sustainable, matter more than anything. When she began the marine collection work she was often asked why she was doing something that made no money; she answered that she would keep it up for thirty years, and her aim is to go on until the results are realized by the time today's children are grown.
- 4. Policy matters.** Institutions in Korea change frequently, which makes sustained environmental protection difficult; stable, long-term environmental policy is important. So is the role of intermediary support organizations, which connect diverse actors and support the work.

Her closing message was the simplest of the Forum: **“Begin with what is not difficult, and what can be done in a short time.”** Milkroad is like that, and so is collecting marine litter. Neither needs special technology or resources, and both mean a great deal to a community. She hoped to pursue this work together with colleagues in Japan and China, since cooperation across regions and across countries produces large synergies. Her group is only at the beginning and there are no visible large results yet, but she is confident the work will be a gain both for the region and for the companies involved.

The last photograph she showed was of trees her group had planted two hours by car from Ulaanbaatar. She works while imagining how they will look in ten and twenty years — probably, she said, a beautiful forest. Hearing TAKAMI speak about his planting work had renewed her resolve to keep going until a forest of that kind exists.

Part 4 — Closing Session

The program allotted forty-five minutes to a discussion with all nine presenters before the closing addresses. The record of the Forum resumes with the closing itself.

4.1 The Question-and-Answer Session

The program lists a **question-and-answer session from 11:45 to 12:30 on October 18**, chaired by **WANG Qionghua** of CANGO, with all nine presenters of the morning on the platform: GUAN Ting, FURUSAWA Koyu, JEONG Jonghwa, LEE Tien Ming, TANG Wenhua, NITTA Eriko, TAKAMI Kunio, PARK Hyunhong and YANG Jina.

The transcript carries the chair opening it — after thanking YANG Jina and closing the case-report session, the master of ceremonies invites participants who want to take the morning's material further to do so, and asks that questions state who they are addressed to and what they concern — and then stops. **No record of the discussion appears in the original report.** In his closing address WANG Xiangyi apologized for the shortage of time given to it. Readers who want to know what was said will need the video record; see Appendix E.

The publisher's note in the original states that the report was transcribed from the video produced by the Chinese hosts, that it therefore preserves spoken style, and that **passages where the recording was unclear have been omitted**. Whether the discussion was omitted for that reason, or was simply not transcribed, the report does not say.

4.2 Closing Address

WANG Xiangyi, Deputy Chair and Secretary General, China Association for NGO Cooperation



Photograph 4.1 WANG Xiangyi delivering the closing address.

It was already past half past twelve, WANG began, and everyone was tired, so she would keep it to a few minutes.

She thanked the Japanese, Chinese and Korean organizers and partner bodies for the work they had put in together. She thanked **YAMAOKA Yoshinori** in particular: he had not been able to attend, but his support had been substantial. She thanked **NAM Youngchan** of the Korean side, and the CANGO team and her own colleagues, along with the Shaanxi friendship association and the intangible cultural heritage promotion association, for their work in preparing and running the meeting.

She had not been able to hear every presentation in person, but offered her impressions of what she had heard. **From the Chinese side** the presentations set out the work being done toward the goals and emphasized the problems facing those of us living in the twenty-first century — climate change, the loss of biodiversity — and the importance of international cooperation; and, with the SDGs meeting difficulties and in places running backward, the significance of Japan, China and Korea cooperating beyond the frame of East Asia.

In the case-study session there had been two presentations from each of the three countries. From China, charitable activity using an internet platform, and the work of the Shaanxi women's federation. From Japan, the work of civil society organizations. These cases were highly suggestive and offered much to learn from. And the Korean contributions on volunteering and mentoring, she said, brought home again the importance of work rooted in a

community.

She apologized that the question-and-answer session had not been given the time it deserved.

In the afternoon the participants would visit sites where the work is actually done — the Shaanxi intangible cultural heritage industry promotion association and a women's and children's activity center among them — which she hoped would be an opportunity to learn about activity in Shaanxi and about work with women and children.

Finally, she said, next year's Forum would be held in Japan; the Japanese side had already begun planning, and she handed the microphone to them to explain. She thanked everyone who had joined, in the room and online.

4.3 Announcement of the 16th Forum

IINO Yuji, Chair, Akame no Satoyama o Sodateru Kai; Vice-Chair, Japanese Executive Committee



Photograph 4.2 IINO Yuji announcing the 16th Forum.

Next year, IINO said, the Forum would be held in Japan — in **Nabari City and Iga City, Mie Prefecture**, where he lives, on **November 13, 14 and 15, 2025**. Preparations to receive the participants had already begun.

He introduced the two places. **Nabari** is the birthplace of **Kan'ami**, the performer who perfected *noh*, said to be the wellspring of Japanese culture, and a range of activities connected with *noh* are carried on there. **Iga** is famous for the Iga *ninja*: visitors put on *ninja* costume, *ninja* appear in the streets, and there is plenty to see, including Iga Ueno Castle and the *ninja* house.

Japan had hosted the Forum five times before, he said, but **this would be the first time the East Asia Civil Society Forum was held outside a major city**. With inbound tourism now attracting attention, many visitors are coming to the regions as well. He invited participants to take the opportunity to come with their families and friends to the 16th East Asia Civil Society Forum, the Nabari and Iga meeting in Japan, and thanked them.

Part 5 — Cross-Cutting Themes

Fifteen contributions given over two days in three languages do not arrange themselves into a single argument. But read together they answer the three questions set out at the front of this edition more completely than any one of them does alone, and five themes recur with enough force to be worth naming.

5.1 The diagnosis was unanimous, and it was not comfortable

Every speaker who addressed the state of the goals said the same thing. GUAN Ting put the share of countries on track or achieving at **17 percent**; FURUSAWA Koyu cited an achievement rate of about **16 percent** and a 2024 assessment in which Japan ranks 18th and the great powers sit in the middle of the table; JEONG Jonghwa reported that of Korea's seventeen goals, several are achievable within five years but complete achievement is not realistic on present form; NITTA Eriko found that half of the Japanese citizens' groups surveyed think their own engagement has stayed superficial; and LEE Tien Ming showed that within a fundraising platform that grew more than twentyfold in ten years, the environmental share **fell to 0.4 percent**.

Nobody at the Forum argued that things were going well, and nobody proposed abandoning the framework. WANG Xiangyi's formulation in the opening address — that expectations have not been met, and that the answer is confidence and active engagement rather than retreat — was the position of the meeting.

5.2 Government-led is the norm, and that is the problem to be worked on

GUAN Ting's typology gave the Forum its analytical spine. Of seventy-five national reviews, **forty-seven were government-led** and only nine reached co-governance. Her point was not that government leadership is wrong but that in the government-led pattern **particular social organizations are often not written into the action plan at all** — the plan exists, the coordinating mechanism among social organizations does not.

The other two keynotes confirmed the diagnosis from inside their own countries. JEONG described Korea's machinery — a ministerial council, working groups for each of the seventeen agendas, ninety-nine quantitative indicators, an annual report — and named it, in GUAN's own terms, an instance of government-led promotion; his conclusion was that achieving the goals “demands a strong partnership between government and civil society organizations.” NITTA's survey showed the Japanese version of the same shape from the other end: administrative bodies are the most common partner of Japanese citizens' groups, **22 percent are contracted to deliver services and 20 percent apply for grants** — a relationship of delivery and funding rather than of joint governance.

Read across the three, the Forum's implicit argument is that the movement from government-led to co-governance is not a matter of goodwill but of specific missing machinery: a coordinating body among social organizations, an independent civil-society report, and an expert committee — the three indicators GUAN used to score the society side.

5.3 What actually unblocks engagement is money, information and a place to stand

Asked what is holding civil society back, the Forum did not answer “commitment.” GUAN's survey found that **more than 70 percent** of Chinese social organizations want to be actively involved and **71 percent** would take up SDG projects if grants were available; what they lack is knowledge of the specific targets, an incentive system and a support platform. Her three recommendations — mainstream the discourse, build incentives, provide information platforms — are about supply, not motivation.

LEE Tien Ming supplied the quantitative version of the same finding for money. His three decisive factors — the number of donors joining a “give together” campaign, the size of corporate matching, and whether a return gift is offered — are all features of platform design, not of donor virtue; and his conclusion that **raising the digital capacity of civil society organizations is the key to future development** is a statement about capability rather than will. NITTA's recommendations run the same way: break the goals down to the local level, use awards as models of concrete action, carry local voices into policy, draw on business for technology and know-how.

The most striking single data point in this line is LEE's finding on **project scale**: small environmental projects find it

easier to attract public donations, because their purpose is clear and their result visible. Set beside YANG Jina's closing message — *begin with what is not difficult, and what can be done in a short time* — it amounts to an argument about design that the Forum reached from two directions at once.

5.4 Long relationships, not long programs

Three of the six case reports were, at bottom, about duration.

- **PARK Hyunhong** made the argument explicitly: most mentoring programs run three to eleven months, and that brevity is what makes them fail; Lovinghands runs **four to eleven years**, and the key is a relationship of mutual respect rather than a one-directional transfer. His motto — stop presenting people as pitiable, approach them as friends — is a statement about what makes a relationship survive.
- **TAKAMI Kunio** made the same argument without stating it. Green Earth Network has worked in the same region since **1992**; pines planted in the early years now stand over 15 meters; the school orchards took years to succeed and failed badly first; the change in local feeling toward Japan came from sweating together, and its measure is that villagers in Datong raised relief money after the 2011 earthquake. His conclusion — that **the success or failure of international cooperation rests on the relationship of trust with the counterpart** — is the same conclusion PARK reached from a completely different field.
- **YANG Jina**, asked why she was doing something that made no money, answered that she would keep it up for **thirty years**, and set her horizon at the point when today's children are grown.

This is the point at which the Forum's practitioners diverge most sharply from the way the SDGs are usually administered, which is in project cycles. It is also the point at which the three countries' contributions were most obviously saying one thing.

5.5 The region as a unit

The third of the Forum's questions — what the three countries can do together that none can do alone — was answered at two very different levels.

At the level of policy architecture, **FURUSAWA Koyu** made the Forum's one large institutional proposal: an **East Asian Environmental Security Framework Agreement**, building on the Northeast Asian Multi-stakeholder Forum on the SDGs and on existing environmental monitoring networks, and modeled on the way a politically unstable Europe reached prosperity through community-building. He grounded it in something concrete: of the world's 89 Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems, **China holds 22, Japan 15 and Korea 7 — about half the world's total in these three countries** — which makes Northeast Asia a genuine center of gravity for biological and cultural diversity rather than merely a convenient grouping. His argument that precisely because the political situation is deteriorating a reset toward environmental security is required is the most ambitious thing said at the Forum.

At the level of practice, the answer came from the case reports without anyone planning it. **JEONG** noted that marine debris drifting in from neighboring seas washes up on Korean coasts in quantities that take enormous effort to remove, and called marine debris a field where international cooperation is urgent. **YANG** reported that at a cleanup on Jeju Island much of the litter carried Chinese and Japanese logos, and drew the same conclusion in almost the same words: the sea has no borders. **TAKAMI's** entire thirty-two-year record is a demonstration of the proposition, and his organization's founding principle — “the environment has no borders” — was stated in 1992.

And the Forum recorded one small instance of exactly the transmission it exists to create. **YANG Jina told the meeting that her group had begun planting trees in Mongolia after being moved by TAKAMI's account of his planting work** — a pilot her slides date to 2023, so the influence had reached her before this Forum did — and, having planted a hundred trees there this year, she said from the platform that hearing him speak that morning had brought home how hard the work is and had renewed her resolve to continue until a forest of that kind exists.

5.6 Two absences worth recording

Two things the Forum did not do are worth noting for the sake of the next meeting.

The first is the **missing discussion**. Forty-five minutes were set aside for nine presenters and an audience, and

nothing of it survives in the record. The presentations were strong enough that the exchange between them would have been the most valuable part of the two days, and its absence is the largest gap in the proceedings.

The second is that the **demographic argument stayed on one side of the table**. JEONG built his address on Korea's fertility rate of 0.7 and a 65-and-over share heading toward 20 percent in 2025; FURUSAWA raised population decline as the phase beyond the present polycrisis — already under way in Japan and expected in China — in which his third crisis, the crisis of the meaning of existence, would still have to be faced. But nothing in the case reports engaged with it, and no Chinese contribution took it up. It is worth recording that the 16th Forum, held in Nabari and Iga the following November, took precisely this question — sustainable local communities in a society of population decline — as its theme.

Appendices

Appendix A — Japanese Executive Committee

	Name	Position
1	AMEMIYA Takako	Chair of the Board, Japan Association of Charitable Organizations
2	IINO Yuji	Vice-Chair. Chair, Akame no Satoyama o Sodateru Kai (NPO)
3	ITO Michio	Representative Director, Asia Community Center 21 (NPO)
4	KUSUDA Kenta	Associate Professor, Tokyo University of the Arts; Director, International Research Society for Volunteer Activity (JIVRI)
5	KURIBAYASHI Chieko	Representative Director, Toshima Kodomo WAKUWAKU Network (certified NPO)
6	SHIRAISHI Kiharu	Chief Researcher, Research Department, Japan Association of Charitable Organizations; Chair, JIVRI
7	SUZUKI Yukio	Director, Foundation for the Establishment of Shiretoko Nature University
8	TADA Masahiro	Adviser, Research Department, Japan Association of Charitable Organizations
9	NAGANUMA Yoshiyuki	Managing Director, Japan Association of Charitable Organizations
10	BANG Jina	Employment support worker and certified care worker, Osaka Network for Employment Support of People with Mental Disabilities (NPO)
11	FUJII Mamoru	Formerly a specialist in welfare for older people and for people with disabilities
12	YAMAOKA Yoshinori	Chair. Representative Director, Civil Society Initiative Fund (NPO); Chair of the Board, Japan Foundation Center; Director, JIVRI

Appendix B — Glossary

Chinese

Term	English rendering and note
<i>shehui zuzhi</i> 社会组织	Social organization — the umbrella term in Chinese law: “a non-profit legal person established for public-interest or other non-profit purposes, which does not distribute its profits to its contributors, founders or members” (Civil Code). Rendered <i>civil society organization</i> where the speaker's sense is clearly that.
社会团体 · 基金会 · 民办非企业单位	Social groups, foundations and privately run non-enterprise units — the three-way division of the sector under the Measures for the Administration of the Names of Social Organizations
<i>zhengfu zhudao</i> 政府主导	Government-led — GUAN Ting's first implementation model: government sets the plan, social organizations are folded in as supplements. 47 of 75 countries reviewed
<i>lianhe gongzhi</i> 联合共治	Co-governance — both government and social organizations engaged at a high level. 9 of 75
<i>shehui zuzhi zhudao</i> 社会组织主导	Social-organization-led — social organizations act independently and occupy the central role. 11 of 75
<i>shuangxiang tuoqian</i> 双向脱嵌	Mutual disengagement — neither side seriously involved. 8 of 75
<i>qianruxing / zifaxing</i> 嵌入性 · 自发性	Embeddedness and spontaneity — the two axes of the typology in Figure 2.1
<i>99 gongyi ri</i> 99 公益日	“99 Giving Day” — the Tencent Foundation's annual campaign on September 9, tied to China's Charity Day on September 5
<i>yiqi juan</i> 一起捐	“Give together” — the feature by which a donor's WeChat contacts see a campaign and give alongside them; the strongest single driver of donor numbers

Term	English rendering and note
<i>xiao honghua</i> 小红花	“Little red flower” — the WeChat mini-program symbol marking a 99 Giving Day campaign
<i>shuitu liushi</i> 水土流失	Loss of water and soil — the erosion of topsoil and runoff that greening on the Loess Plateau is designed to prevent
<i>yaodong</i> 窑洞 · 窑洞	Cave dwelling — the traditional rammed-loess house of the region; vulnerable to prolonged rain
<i>yinpo / yangpo</i> 陰坡 · 陽坡	Shaded (north-facing) and sunny (south-facing) slopes — the distinction that governs vegetation recovery at Nantianmen
Belt and Road Initiative 一帶一路	The framework within which the Shaanxi Youlian Center positions its international work

Japanese

Term	English rendering and note
<i>satoyama</i> 里山	The managed zone between settlement and mountain where people and nature meet; the field of IINO Yuji's organization
<i>jinshinsei</i> 人新世	Anthropocene — the proposed epoch in which human activity is the dominant force on the Earth system; the organizing idea of FURUSAWA Koyu's keynote
<i>shimin katsudō dantai</i> 市民活動団体	Citizens' group — NITTA Eriko's survey population: NPOs and NGOs, unincorporated volunteer groups, some social welfare corporations, neighborhood and place-based associations, company-led community-contribution bodies, and labor unions
<i>nintei tokutei hi-eiri katsudō hōjin</i> 認定特定非営利活動法人	Certified NPO corporation — the tax-privileged category of Japanese NPO; Green Earth Network holds this status
<i>ippan shadan hōjin</i> 一般社団法人	General incorporated association — the legal form of the Japan Civil Society Network on SDGs
<i>kōeki zaidan hōjin</i> 公益財団法人	Public interest incorporated foundation — the legal form of the Japan Association of Charitable Organizations and of the Uehiro Foundation
<i>shakaiteki rentai keizai</i> 社会的連帯経済	Social solidarity economy — promoted chiefly by the ILO; the subject of a UN General Assembly resolution of April 2023
<i>nō</i> 能 · 観阿弥	Noh , and Kan'ami , the performer who perfected it; Nabari City, host of the 16th Forum, is his birthplace

Korean

Term	English rendering and note
<i>jeochulsan · goryeonghwa</i> 저출산·고령화	Low fertility and aging — the pair of trends JEONG Jonghwa treats as the threat to Korea's sustainable development: a total fertility rate of 0.7 and a 65-and-over share reaching 20 percent in 2025
Milkroad 밀크로드	UIK Company's campaign collecting used milk cartons for recycling into paper products, named after the Silk Road; running since 2017 (as a formal campaign from March 2019)
<i>Gapeuljiu</i> 가플지우	“Bring your plastic, protect our sea” — the multi-company eco-platform for plastic recycling and coastal cleanup in which UIK Company is a partner
Mentor / mentee 멘토·멘티	In Lovinghands' usage, not a helper and a beneficiary but two people in a relationship of mutual respect, sustained for four to eleven years
Korean New Deal 한국판 뉴딜	The economic policy program adopted in response to post-pandemic stagnation, cited by JEONG Jonghwa
National Health Promotion Act 국민건강증진법	The statute under which smoking in the street and in public places carries heavy penalties in Korea