

KOICA-KU GSIS SP Alumni News



Table of Contents

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| 1. Letter from the Dean | p. 2 |
| 2. State of Alumni | p. 3 |
| 3. Alumni Spotlight | p. 4 |
| 4. Class of 2019 & 2020 | p. 6 |
| - Class of 2019 | p. 7 |
| - Class of 2020 | p. 15 |
| 5. Program News 2020 & 2021 | p. 27 |



Korea University
Graduate School of
International Studies

Letter from the Dean

Welcome to the Alumni Newsletter!

I truly hope everyone stays safe and healthy during this coronavirus pandemic.

KOICA-KU GSIS Scholarship Program (SP) has been providing quality education and training for future specialists in the field of finance and tax policy since 2017. KU GSIS will be investing its efforts into the development of our program by diversifying lectures and planning various new events including field trips.

COVID-19 pandemic is affecting everyone's daily life and constitutes unprecedented challenges. The global threat has forced us to adapt to new normals in our daily life. Even in such difficult times, the faculty, staff, and partners of KU GSIS such as Korean Institute of Public Finance (KIPF), are committed to overcoming those challenges and successfully implementing our program. All members are struggling to successfully pave a path no one has ever experienced. Courses have been converted to online seminars to provide virtual meetings with SP students and to share their thoughts. Furthermore, various special lectures will be provided online to cultivate practical research skills and knowledge for the invited government officials.

To facilitate networking among the alumni, KU GSIS has requested the overseas alumni association to invite SP alumni to their meetings and activate communication channels such as Facebook and YouTube.

KU GSIS will also make continued efforts to improve this program and foster outstanding individuals to pursue their contributions to the socio-economic development of our partner countries. To achieve the ultimate goals of this program, I also ask you for sincere support. I would appreciate it if you could share your stories and show interests through the KOICA-KU GSIS SP alumni channels.

Korea University as a globally renowned institution for its excellence in research and education is ranked the 74th worldwide and the 11th among Asian universities according to the QS Global University Rankings 2022.

To maintain this reputation, KU GSIS will keep on conducting innovative research and training future leaders to be capable of contributing to sustainable development of the global community.

With best wishes,

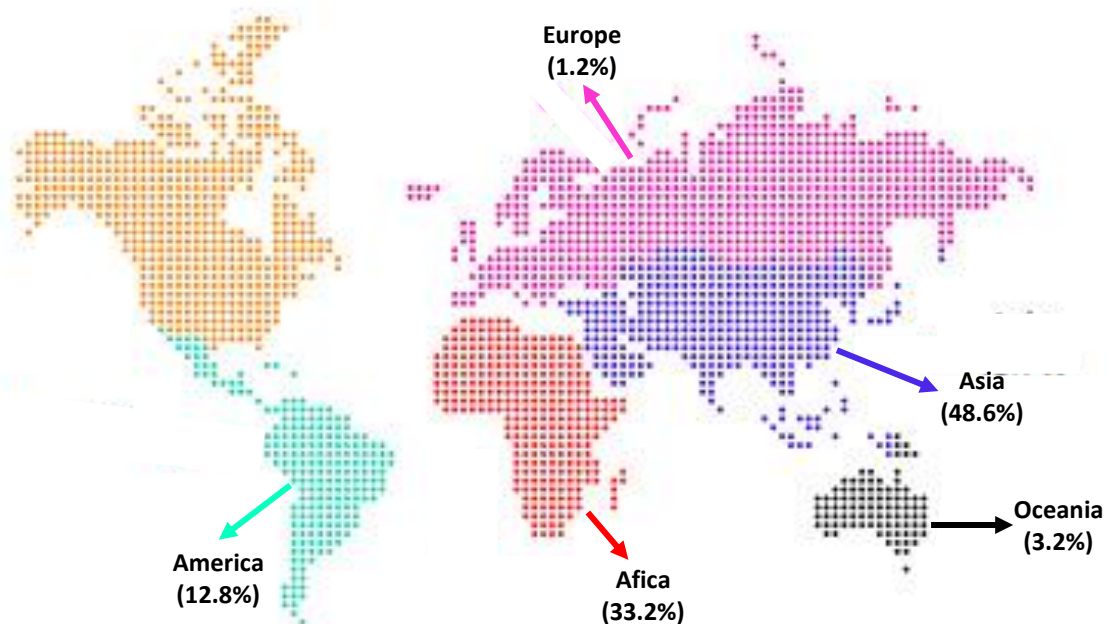


Lee, Jae-Seung, Ph.D.
Dean, Graduate School of International Studies, Korea University

Current State of Alumni

2007~2019

Region	Country	# of Students	Sub-total	Region	Country	# of Students	Sub-total		
Western Asia	Azerbaijan	3	12	Latin America	Colombia	4	32		
	Iraq	1			Dominican Republic	1			
	Palestine	3			Ecuador	12			
	Yemen	5			El Salvador	2			
Eastern Asia	Mongolia	6	6		Guatemala	7			
Central Asia	Kazakhstan	5	17		Honduras	1			
	Kyrgyzstan	4			Nicaragua	2			
	Uzbekistan	8			Paraguay	2			
Southeast Asia	Cambodia	13	56		Northern Africa	Algeria		3	15
	East Timor	7				Egypt		11	
	Indonesia	14				Tunisia		1	
	Laos	7			Middle Africa	Cameroon		1	
	Myanmar	3		DR Congo		2			
	Philippines	4		Western Africa		Ghana	15	18	
Vietnam	8	Nigeria	3						
South Asia	Afghanistan	1	33	Eastern Africa	Ethiopia	5	47		
	Bangladesh	3			Kenya	7			
	Nepal	11			Mozambique	1			
	Pakistan	7			Rwanda	8			
	Sri Lanka	11		Tanzania	15				
Eastern Europe	Belarus	2	3	Uganda	4	Total	250		
	Ukraine	1		Zimbabwe	7				
Oceania	Fiji	6	8						
	Papua New Guinea	2							



Alumni Spotlight

My Blissful Journey in Korea



Som Leakhena (KOICA 2018)
Deputy Head of Division /
Securities and Exchange Regulator of
Cambodia / Cambodia

Studying and Living in Korea is a precious life learn experience for me. One year and six months is just a blink of an eye. Remember back then, I was so worried about how to catch up with lectures, and try some things which are new to me such as different cultures and Korean foods. In my personal opinion, each semester has different intense challenges and difficulties that make me see enormous improvements in everyone. My worries and difficulties have faded away day by day just because of such strong support from my dearest kind people around me and as well as learning environments and entertainments. I would say impressively “Korean education plays hard, work hard game”. This new journey has taught me to enjoy moments to the fullest that is a good motive for me.

KOICA-KU program has prepared for many great courses likewise and extracurricular activities.

Each course beneficiaries me in many different ways which are extremely interesting to other exchange students and some Korean students. Although Putting the theories and practical policy implementation into the lessons is quite hard for everyone to comprehend at first, it is essential if we learn more and compare more into the society. Along with courses, our batch has many great opportunities to attend many conferences, file trips to UNIDO, the Smartium city, UNIDO, and so on. Moreover, KOICA-KU has created Buddy groups which have divided us into a group of 4 or 5 people and lead by voluntary friendly Korean friends. To me, I would call these groups “Stress killers” who help us not only in study matters, yet to spend their valuable time to accompany us around SEOUL. Each of us has many wonderful times with our Korean friends; we have tried many good traditional foods as well as new activities and been to many amazing places.

Indeed, I would say the KOICA-KU master program has been successfully created many human resources in both academic lives likewise social life. I am sincerely thankful to my coordinators and our technical assistant for strongly support to my batch in many ways. After this 18 months' program, it has been a great opportunity to see the new version of myself, to be more self-confident, self-esteem and self-motivation.

Putting into academic life, I have involved and contributed important keys of policy to my working groups. On the behalf of my batch, I do believe KOICA and Korea University cooperation grows stronger each day, and Korea university keeps shining their pride to the world.

“After this 18 months’ program, it has been a great opportunity to see the new version of myself, to be more self-confident, self-esteem and self-motivation.”



Class of 2019 & 2020

Class of 2019

- [Ecuador] Time Flies, but Memories Last Forever p. 7
[Ghana] A Memorable Korean Experience p. 3
[Kenya] My Experience at Korea University p. 11
[Uzbekistan] My Experience at Korea University p. 13

Class of 2020

- [Nigeria] A Refreshing Journey with KOICA-Korea University p. 15
[Cameroon] A Memorable Experience never to forget!!!! p. 17
[Ethiopia] Life during the historical moment of pandemic COVID-19 at KU-GSIS p. 20
[Cambodia] The Rewarding Life Experience: A Journey with KOICA-KU p. 22
[Mongolia] Mistakes, Successes, Failures and Tries Makes you What You Are Today - Keep Moving Forward p. 25



Class of 2019

Time flies, but memories last forever



Marcela Belen Anrrango Licuy
Tax Expert / Internal Revenue Service /
Ecuador

It is incredible to think that two years ago I received the awesome news that I would be part of the KOICA - KU GSIS Master's degree program. I do not deny that I felt a little scared in the first instance since it would be a big challenge both academically and culturally. But as the quote says, "Feel the fear and do it anyway!", I knew that going to South Korea would be worth it.

I remember like it was yesterday the first day I met my colleagues from the program, I never imagined that they would become not only friends but also my family. This makes me think that KOICA, in addition to selecting excellent professionals, with whom to exchange knowledge about politics, also selects excellent human beings who are willing to help you if you need it.

During the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, it was clear that we cared about each other's well-being. We used to go to the supermarket together, we tried to keep our spirits up despite ourselves and do activities that keep us busy. When it was possible to travel, we explored magical towns of Korea where we could also fully appreciate the typical Korean cuisine. In addition, having the buddy program helped us to visit new places and learn interesting facts about Korean culture. At first, I thought that I would have a lonelier life because it seemed to me that it would be difficult to reconcile with different cultures; however, it was the opposite, I never felt alone and for me, it was quite enriching to know part of the culture and tradition of different nationalities.

Studying at one of the most prestigious universities in South Korea, Korea University, has been an unbeatable experience. The campus has a variety of libraries, study rooms, cafes, outdoor spaces that depending on your mood it can help you concentrate and study in a better way.

Regarding classes, from the first day, it is notorious the academic and professional experience of the professors, who fluently transmit their knowledge. It is also interesting that during the subjects received within the program, economic and development situations in various regions of the world are covered: Asia, Europe, Africa, and even Latin America. In addition, we had the opportunity to exchange knowledge and share various policies that our countries manage, this was a very enriching experience.

But all knowledge was not acquired on campus. At the end of the first semester, we had the opportunity to visit the facilities of the DOUZONE company, which provides enterprise resource planning (ERP) software; and they taught us about the electronic tax invoices system. We were also able to visit the KDI where we learned about the economic development of South Korea. Subsequently, UNIDO ITPO Korea invited us to participate in ENVEX 2020 where, as a foreign government official who has an understanding of the country's market, we provide information about the investment environment and relevant government policies. In turn, this was an opportunity to explore some of the products, services, and technologies that Korean companies have to offer.

I am currently in my country, Ecuador, working as a

tax expert in the legal department of the Internal Revenue Service. Being part of the KU-KOICA scholarship recipients has allowed me to broaden my points of view and become more interested in publications made by international organizations such as the OECD and keep me informed about the tax policies of different organizations. As part of the annual training program of the institution where I work (IRS), I have been asked to collaborate with the international finance training. When the invitation arrived, I was happy to collaborate and pass on my knowledge acquired in the Korea University GSIS Master's Degree Program in Finance and Tax Policy.

As I prepared the training material, memories of the classes, case studies, presentations, homework, and even the path we took to get from the dormitory to the GSIS building to receive classes came to my mind. All those memories make me conclude that my experience as part of the KOICA-KU GSIS Scholarship Program 2019 has been very enriching professionally and personally. Living with people of 17 different nationalities and having shared so many moments I know that they will not be repeated and that now they will be memories that will remain in my mind and heart forever. I am grateful to KOICA for this opportunity, and I hope that the new fellows will also have many adventures cause memories last forever.



Class of 2019

A Memorable Korean Experience

I was encouraged by my supervisor to apply for the KOICA Scholarship Programme and after going through the list of programmes, Korea University's Master's Program in Finance and Tax Policy best suited my area of work and career progression. In August 2019, my journey to South Korea became a reality after going through a set of interviews, medical examination and orientation by the KOICA Ghana Office.

It was my first time travelling alone and only God knows how I survived through the crowded Addis Ababa Bole International Airport on that rainy night without missing my flight to Incheon. At Incheon International Airport, the arrival process was quick and smooth. It was easy to find my way around and locate the KOICA desk where I met some participants from other countries.



Naa-Dey Ashie
Budget Officer /
Office of the Head of the Civil Service /
Ghana

A van was arranged to pick us from the airport to KOICA ICC (International Cooperation Center). After a long flight and getting jet lagged, I was almost late for the orientation the next day where I first met all my amazing course mates

After three wonderful days at the ICC, we finally arrived at Korea University (KU) where we were warmly received by our seniors (2018 KOICA-KU Fellows) and TAs, Minkyung Kim and Chaeyun Kim. We checked-in our luggage at the dormitory and headed to the International Students Hall for the KU orientation. This was followed by a welcome ceremony and a campus tour. That was the beginning of the KU life.

The KU life for me was a beautiful combination of intensive academic work and fun times with my course mates whenever we had the opportunity. We had a supportive TA and administrative staff who helped us manage our academic and extracurricular schedules effectively. They gave us constant reminders, so we did not miss important schedules and facilitated the acquisition of all necessary documentation to make our stay and movement in Korea successful. My KOICA course mates, who became family, and other friends were very supportive as well, such that, I did not miss home often.



The diversity of students at KU GSIS was very inspiring as I got the opportunity to meet other non-KOICA course mates, share ideas on our various countries' experience and learn from each other. The location of Korea University, Seoul Campus, also made it easier to move around the city and beyond.

KU provided a conducive and serene learning environment, talking about the modern lecture halls, various library facilities and study rooms, and reliable internet connectivity. This made it easier to continue with academic work through on-line lectures and meetings, especially when COVID-19 tried to disrupt everything including our field trips. During the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus, KOICA and KU ensured our safety and good health by checking on us regularly and providing us with masks, hand wash and thermometer.

In addition to academic lectures delivered by experienced faculty members of KU GSIS, I also had the opportunity to participate in workshops arranged by Korean Development Institute, Global Knowledge Exchange and Development Centre (GKEDC) as well as engage in a field trip to Douzone ICT Centre. These exposures helped me to understand the importance of political will, dedicated human resource and efficient data collection among others in South Korea's

Industrial development. It is difficult to quantify the impact of the vast knowledge I acquired. I believe my expertise will be relevant in the finalization of my Institution's 2022-2025 Medium-Term Development Plan (MTDP) which contributes to the preparation of the National Medium-Term Plan as well as the preparation of the annual budget (linked to the MTDP) which has just begun.

Throughout my stay, I admired how Koreans cherish their traditions and way of life, always striving to become better at what they do. After a few months of living in Korea, I got used to the food and particularly fell in love with dak-galbi, pork bone soup (Gamjatang), tteok-bokki, jjimdak, and Miyeok-guk (seaweed soup). I also learnt some Korean words which I use on my Ghanaian friends occasionally.

Living in South Korea was an amazing experience with beautiful memories I will always cherish. I highly recommend Korea to anyone who wants to have a rich educational/travel experience and I look forward to visiting in the near future.

Class of 2019

My Experience at Korea University



Christine Mutethya Mweu
Senior Investigator /
Ethics and Anti- Corruption Commission / Kenya

My experience in KU was a game changer and a dream come true. This is because I finished my under graduate in 2010 but I could not pursue master's degree due to lack of funds as my earnings were channeled towards supporting the needy students in my community to get access to basic education. It all started when I received a letter from The Ministry of Youth and Public Service requesting the Human Resources Department in my organization to nominate 2 people for consideration into the KOICA KU Special Program in Finance and Tax policy. The organization then nominated 6 officers to be considered for the program and through a competitive process, I was selected.

On arrival at the KOICA ICC, I met 19 other participants from 16 countries with diverse professional backgrounds and our academic journey at the KU began.

We formed a family, explored the country, build networks and learnt a lot from each other. From this program, I have been able build networks with KOICA KU 2018 group as well as KOICA KU 2020 group and this forms a great network where the participants will be able to share knowledge, touching on the issues affecting our countries thereby finding solutions to the problems. This is because all the participants face similar problems because they are all come from developing economies.

During my study in KU, I interacted with professors who had a wealthy of experience and knowledge which impacted my life positively. I learnt about policies like the Korean tax policies, macroeconomic policies like the fiscal, monetary and financial policies just to mention few. I also developed key interest in the areas of environment and climate change. I was a member of the Society for Climate Change and Sustainable Development (SCCSD) at KU which was a great forum for knowledge sharing on issues of climate change and sustainable development.

During the program, I had an opportunity to participate in internships all which were being offered by United Nations Industrial Development Organizations (UNIDO) and the Investment & Technology Promotion Office Korea (ITPO). Through the internships I learnt a lot about emerging technologies which South Korea has leveraged to develop. I also built strong networks with big Korean companies which were interested in venturing into business with Kenyan entrepreneurs.

I was lucky to attend several seminars like KDI GKEDC 2020 summer program which was organized by Korea Development Institute & the Global Knowledge Exchange and Development Centre and also the 2020 capacity building workshop on climate change adaptation which was organized by the Korea Adaptation Centre for Climate Change (KACCC) & the Korea Environment Institute (KEI).

As an investigator working with the Anti-Corruption Agency in Kenya, I gained insights about tax crimes, particularly tax evasion, illicit flows, money laundering and other financial crimes that threaten economic interest of both the development partners and the developing economies. Tax crimes have undermined the citizens' and development partner's confidence on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness through which tax payer's funds are applied. Tax crimes have deprived the governments the revenues needed for sustainable development. Through the lessons learnt in KU on tax crimes, I have been able to contribute greatly on investigation of matters where tax crimes are involved. I have been incorporated in Multi – Agency teams so as to share my expertise in tax policies and tax frauds.

This has led to conviction of the offenders as well as recovery of the illicitly acquired incomes thus deterring the fraudsters from committing the tax crimes.

Returning home with a master's Degree in International Development and Cooperation gave me a competitive edge and as a result I was promoted. The program has greatly contributed on my career progression as well as professional development. I envision that in future I will be a policy maker in Kenya and that will be a great opportunity for me to implement the best practices that I learnt in Korea.

I can't forget to appreciate the presentation skills that I gained in KU as this made me a good presenter who is confident. The buddy program was top notch and it enabled me explore the Korean food and Korean culture which made me a better person. The professional ethics and time management of the Koreans had a great impact on my life and I have been able to apply this in my daily life. I love this quote by Robert Allan which says "*cultural differences should not separate us from each other, but rather cultural diversity brings a collective strength that can benefit all of humanity*".

From the lessons that I learnt in Korea, I have been able to launch a mentorship program by the name Ahadi Initiative which focuses on inspiring young people as well as enabling them access basic education. Lastly, I enjoyed all the four seasons in Korea and for sure, Korea is a beautiful country.

God bless Korea! God bless us all!

Class of 2019

Profoundest Lifechanging Experience

If someone asks me to portray my experience in Korea in two words, I would probably say that it was like trying “KimChi (김치)”. At first it is spicy and bitter that is not quite pleasant then you realize that you love it and this is healthier food than you have ever tried before.

First couple of months were very challenging since it was new lifestyle, new people and new culture. Korean cuisine was conceivably tough challenge that taught me cook my own food to survive since they are not halal. Besides, language barrier also thwarted to fully get into the social life.



Shokhrukh Okhunov

**Head of Division for International Cooperation,
Analytics and Investment /
State Assets Management Agency of Uzbekistan /
Uzbekistan**

During those rigid periods KOICA-KU team, especially technical assistants were very supportive in not only academic life but in social life too. What attracted me most to this program was that I was able to have no-holds-barred discussions with international specialists from different countries who work at the key public ministries of their states which ameliorated my learning process since I could learn different theories from the professors of the university meanwhile I could discuss their applicability in different countries. As a result, I learnt how to make sound judgments while working through the numerous challenges of our time not only as an individual but also as an organization or society. Consequently, I was not constrained by findings from my research and studies, but I further broadened my horizons with the research and education experiences of other intelligent students of this course.

Even though the program was Finance and tax policy we have been learning the essentials of international development and cooperation (IDC). As having economics and finance educational background IDC was a new major for me. Due to the professional approach of the professors to deliver the course I was interested in learning it and at that time I had no sense of idea that these essentials that IDC gave would be the main tool in my career.

After successful completion of my master degree, I have realized that the economy of my country needs to decrease the role of the state in the economy for the acceleration of the development. For this reason, I have decided to continue my career at the State Assets Management Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which is the main institute responsible for the privatization process of the country. I have stated as head of Department for International cooperation to bestow what I have learnt from IDC. Under my supervision two MOUs with ministry of finance of the republic of Germany and Korea Asset Management Corporation have been signed. Moreover, a few international consulting companies like Privcewaterhouse Coopers, Ernst & Young, KPMG and etc. have been attracted to the privatization process as financial adviser or to conduct valuation of the state assets before privatization. Nowadays I am the head of the division responsible for the coordination of the privatization process of the country at the Agency that have several departments including International cooperation department. There does not exist any word to express my gratitude to this program, because now I have enough tools to serve my country's development.

“I further broadened my horizons with the research and education experiences of other intelligent students of this course.”



Class of 2020

A Refreshing Journey with KOICA-Korea University



Simon Afo
Senior Accountant /
Federal Ministry of Education Headquarters /
Nigeria

It all began in February 2020, when the call for applications into the KOICA-Korea University Finance and Tax Policy Program was announced. The rest, as they say, is history; as it was a true joy to see deserving scholars receive awards to study in Korea, and receiving my own award was like icing on the cake. A new world has just opened up in front of me, as I have been accepted to study at one of Korea's most prestigious universities.

With this enthusiasm, I began to plan my trip, but things did not go as planned when the world was turned upside down by a global pandemic, forcing us to study from our home countries. Well, studying online in the fall semester at Korea University was an unforgettable experience. Several students had difficulty adapting to online learning due to poor internet connections or even periodic power cuts accompanied by huge time differences.

In my case, I had to attend classes at the stroke of midnight or very early in the morning. Even with the difficulties and peculiarities of that semester, the program was extremely successful. A significant part of my experience from this semester was influenced by the commitment of the professors to make the syllabus as simple as possible for us to understand. In many cases, they provided recorded lectures so that all of us could learn the materials in detail. Thanks to the KOICA technical assistant, Ms. Jiyeon Kim, our "guardian angel," the first semester ended on a bright note, and our team was happy to travel.

I arrived in South Korea after a sixteen-hour flight from Nigeria. The temperature was minus five degrees (-5⁰). It was the first time I had to deal with such cold weather, so I thought to myself, "this would be an interesting ride indeed". Sooner I was at the airport's arrival halls, waiting to be taken to my quarantine facility. The airport facilities are second to none; everything was spotless, including the restrooms, and KOICA had staff waiting to greet us, making the immigration process a breeze. Koica student assistant checked me into my dormitory after the mandatory two-week quarantine.

We were taken to lunch and her office for an official welcome, where she gave us hand packs. As my first visit to Korea University, I was fascinated. The architecture is also beautiful, and there is a wide variety of well-equipped study halls, such as the SK Future Hall, libraries, cafeterias, and outdoor areas for students to balance academic and social activities. My favourite building, with its modern design, was SK future hall, and it made learning and studying on campus more enjoyable.

The most memorable aspect of studying at Korea University was the friendly and extremely knowledgeable professors. In addition, students were able to share real-world experience and expertise. There was something about their lectures that seemed effortless, as if they had been born to deliver them. Particularly, the Tax Administration class changed my perspective on taxes with useful policy insight. It is precisely the kind Nigeria needs now that it is reforming its tax system. I also found Budgeting to be really interesting because I got a chance to see the conventional way of managing government budgets. In addition, all of my professors have helped me to improve my research skills, especially Professor Kim Jung-Ho. He taught me a new way to make decisions, and I am eager to apply it in my country.



Besides campus life, I have just as much fun off campus in order to balance academics and social lives. On weekends and holidays, I enjoy exploring new places and Korea offers a variety of attractions to choose from be it cultural, historical, or modern attractions. Fortunately, traveling around South Korea is simple and affordable if you have a T-money card. You can take the speed rail, buses, or Kakao taxis to any destination. The school also organized a variety of buddy activities to introduce us to Korean culture and food. I was able to visit a number of interesting places thanks to our buddy Celine Chaeyun Kim's good suggestions. The beauty of the skyscrapers and the bridges in the city makes traveling around it enjoyable. This city is one of my favourite places to ever live. Korea fascinates me most because of the way tradition and technology are interconnected in its daily life. Every day, I am impressed by how far Korea has progressed technologically while preserving its traditions, food, and even music.

As a result of this program, I gained a thorough understanding of various countries' tax and budgetary systems, particularly that of Korea. The KOICA - Korea University administration has given me and all other students the opportunity to progress academically. Additionally, the program has informed me greatly on the mystery of the Korean Miracle. And I have no doubts this knowledge I have gained is exactly what Nigeria needs to make the next steps. Additionally, the program has informed me greatly on the mystery of the Korean Miracle. Indeed, it has taught me that we can make the future what we want it to be. And on this day and all the days that follow, I take confidence in the knowledge this program has given me that development and progress we seek is closer at hand.

Class of 2020

A Memorable Experience Never to Forget!!!!

“Finally, all the necessary arrangements have been concluded, Rita, you and the other eighteen (18) fellows are expected to arrive in South Korea in January 2021...” This message from the KOICA-KU program administration changed my life. What a relief, I was anxious, eager, happy, and seeing myself already in the Korea University. My quest and thirst for more knowledge and the discovery of South Korea will soon begin. Some special guidelines were later given to us on how to protect ourselves from the current Covid 19 virus outbreak. When we landed in the Incheon airport on the 29th of January 2021, we were happily welcomed by a KOICA representative; she was very polite, pacified and she carefully explained how the next fourteen (14) days will be spent (following the quarantine measures).



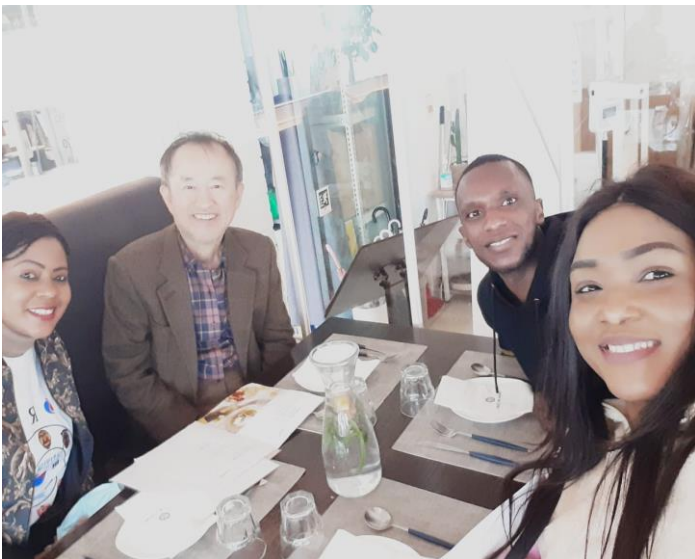
Rita Nim Awambeng
Tax Inspector Manager /
Ministry of Finance / Cameroon

With our bags parked and heading to the “Anam Global House Dormitory” after the quarantine period, who did we meet waiting for us?...Jiyeon Kim. We both forgot about the Covid situation and jumped into each other’s arms. I was so happy. We were then taken into our respective rooms. Once again, thanks to the KOICA-KU team, we found everything well-arranged and organized. I just fitted into the system as if I had been in South Korea for decades. Without unparking my bags, I rushed out and went into the Korea University to see the wonderful architectures I had been eager to see. I immediately fell in love with everything my eyes were seeing; the KU GSIS International Studies Hall, the SK Future Hall, the Incheon Memorial Hall, the Korea University Main Hall, and the University Main Library. Eager to go and get a taste of the “Korean beer”, I later went and grabbed three different bottles beer, “Cass, Terra and Hanmac” respectively; their tastes were unique and delicious.

The Master's event by KOICA-KU GSIS Scholarship Program was indeed an incredible and the most memorable experience in my life. I wholeheartedly thank the South Korean government and the Ministry of Finance Cameroon for giving me such a golden opportunity. For me, studying in the Korea University; the number one private University in Korea is an undeniable honor which I intended not to misuse. I later learned that the crave for most Korean graduates is to get an admission into the Korea University, here am I, with this opportunity which is about to change my life. I was a Tax Inspector Manager before leaving for Korea. I know that obtaining a Master's Degree in International Studies (International Development and Cooperation) in association to "Finance and Tax Policy", my quest for personal capacity building will be completed. Knowledge gained from this prestigious University will not only help me gain experience in global economic development, but it will also enhance my understanding of the "Korean Miracle". The apex of my expectations was met when classes finally started. Amidst the Covid situation, we had the opportunity to visit offline lectures in groups of two. The educational facilities, and classrooms were marvelous.

All the lecturers were experts in their respective field of studies. The method they used in dispatching their lectures was so unique and easy to understand. The course contents were very explicit and straight to the point. I just fell in love with everything. The many assignments, presentations and group work further went to deepen and expand my knowledge on each course. There was nothing more I could ask for, the examinations, quizzes, and method of evaluation were also faultless.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 situation did not permit us to carry out many fieldworks. Nevertheless, KOICA-KU coordinators still went an extra mile to make us assist in a top-level workshop with the UNDP. Again, I had the opportunity to do a presentation. It helped me to improve on my knowledge in International Studies. We also assisted in the Security Exhibition (SECON) Conference held in the Korea Convention Center (KINTEX). There, I was so happy to get the contact of the Korea Energy Industry Company Ltd; we have remained in contact, and they are planning to set up a base in Cameroon. I already spoke with some top government officials in my country about the business plans, and we are all looking forward to its maturity.



“Too much work without play makes Jake a dull boy”. I had the opportunity to visit “Downtown Seoul”. There, I drank, ate, and made amazing friends from all over the world, especially Koreans. We will drink and when its 10 pm for the snacks to close, they will buy more drinks and we will sit at the roadside and drink for longer hours. My impression about the Koreans is filled with positivity. One aspect that drew my attention was “*respect*”, the Koreans have in cultivated their virtue of respect in me. I am more than grateful. I did not feel lonely in my stay in South Korea even though I am miles away from my family.

When I came to South Korea, the meals were totally different from my traditional meals back home. After my interaction with Korean friends, I found the Korean food delicious. I now eat and enjoy the Korean Kongsu, Kongbigi, Don Kim Ttuk, Kong Bbyeo, Sukongsu, Kimchi, and Bibimbap. The most interest thing is that I can use the “*chop sticks*” to eat. With the help of my Korean friend, I participated in the “Korean Dress Cultural Exhibition” where I was opportune to wear the Korean traditional dress and demonstrate in front participants. I even won a trophy!!!!

I visited so many touristic sites during my stay in South Korea. Some of these places include the Jeju Island, there we went up the top of the “Seongsan Ilchulbong”, and “Seopjikoji” mountains. We visited the “Arts Museum”, the “Cheonjiyeon Waterfall”, and so many beautiful places. While in Seoul, I visited the famous Gyeongbokgung Palace, the N Seoul Tower, the Blue House, Everland in Suwon, Cinemas, the Lotte World Tower, and Adventure. The beach city of Busan was not left out from my visiting sites. What a beauty. I had read about Korea and the “*Miracle of the*

Han River”, here was I present, to experience all these beautiful things.

The Master’s Degree Program has not only upgraded my knowledge academically, but it has also permitted me to deepen my insight of the Korean culture (respect), the people, the economy, the infrastructure, and has totally changed my life. I will carry KU experience wherever I go. The knowledge I have gained here will not only help me personally climb up my career ladder back home, but I will also pass it on to my fellow colleagues. I will make a request to my Administration, so that some training seminars be organized which will permit me to pass on some of the skills I achieved during the KOICA-KU Scholarship Program.

I whole heartedly thank the entire KOICA-KU Scholarship Program team, the Lecturers, and my fellow mates. When I think of the millions of won, invested on us, there are no better words of gratitude than to say “gamsahabnida,” thank you”, “merci”. The entire team has been so supportive. These were the best moments I spent in my life. I will continue to miss Korea everywhere I go. Remember of inviting me if there is any opportunity for a Doctorate program in the future.



Class of 2020

Life During the Historical Moment of Pandemic COVID-19 at KU-GSIS

I had a dream to pursue my post graduate study in finance and tax policy when I finished my under graduate study, and I remember I saw a postgraduate scholarship program of Korea in board of Addis Ababa University. Since from that point on ward I used to google about the universities in Korea and couldn't apply due to various reasons. However, the pursuit of my dream surges again after looking at the notice of KOICA scholarship opportunity announced by the organization I am working for in Ethiopia that enabled me to satisfy the dream I was looking for. That is a great honor pursuing my dream in one of the prestigious university in Korea in the field of study that I wished for.



Tesfaye Mekonnen Hailegebrail
Senior Tax Auditor / Ministry of Revenue /
Ethiopia

There had been a well-organized system since the beginning of arrival in the Incheon airport, quarantine facility and finally to the dormitory. This was the longest flight that I have made in my history and after arrival everyone had to spent a 14 days quarantine period due to the pandemic Covid-19, which I found an interesting part of my diary that pave the way for me to familiarize with Korean food and to take time to think about the inner self. Finally when I was confirmed negative with my test result from the pandemic I was set free to join the dormitory of the university.

The livelihood in Korea University and its dormitory was alluring full of peace and attractive to live and study, I love the rules and regulations set by Anam Global house. It is possible to find everything in the university and if someone wants to explore the external market it is not far from the university. I would like to appreciate the way a formal interim period discussion was held by the university and KOICA to discuss the possible problem that students might have encountered and the way quick responses made based on the comments raised. There is a very fast internet speed system, reliable and genuine online shopping access in Korea, well designed transport system; taxi, public bus and timely flying metro system are available from the university to wherever one wants to commute in the city.

I feel like home in many aspect of Life in Korea except experiencing home sick to my families, and I found every Korean was willing to help whenever I have difficulty in the city to find/get something. Fortunately, in the academic arena our TA Jiyeon responds to every problem I face immediately that have simplified the confusion I would have experienced. The extra-curricular activity of the buddy program led by Hyunjeong (AJ) has been noteworthy to mention here, and she was really marvelous and tries to make everyone happy. The buddy program is a great opportunity for every foreigner to explore the cultural and tourist site of Seoul, gives an opportunity to know each other with the team member, the real place where you can get Korean friend to ask and know everything you want to acquaint in Korea.

It is unfortunate to mention here that most of the extra-curricular activities that had been planned to be done were forced to cancel due to the pandemic, but I appreciate Korea University and KOICA's procedure to assure the wellbeing of scholarship participant while the global crisis due to the pandemic has brought unexpected challenges to everyone; the program was set to continue taking all the necessary precautions and responsibilities required. We have learned and still are learning on ways to cope with this new reality, I really don't have a word to appreciate all those remarkable professors who have done an extraordinary job in the online platform in front of the screen to their students and I will never forget them in my life.

The academic life is quite interesting and it is related with my professions, and I like the way the curriculum is designed it broaden the depth of

knowledge that I had in the field. Some of the courses were totally new for me but thanks to the professors they will make it simple and clear through explanation, and for any professional questions through any platform they responded immediately. Though, the way each professor evaluates is different I found their evaluation is fair and if you have any questions they will explain how they did it. I have followed the entire lesson and due to the pandemic I usually use online library facilities for my studies, there are also a good studying spaces in the university besides the main library.

In winding up, I think that I have grasped all the necessary knowledge I require to get from Korea University, I am trying to do something new in my thesis using econometric models that I used to skip before when I saw it. Some of the lessons gave me the power to do that and I hope I will successfully accomplish that mission and get back to home to serve my organization and my nation with the new potential I acquired from the university. In my last statement Seoul will remain in my heart, which I felt like my second home and I would like to thank KOICA, KU and all the professors who have diligently empowered us during this program.



Class of 2020

The Rewarding Life Experience: A Journey with KOICA-KU



Sokhema Neak
Official / National Bank of Cambodia /
Cambodia

Back to the very beginning of this journey, I still remember how shock and excited I was when I received the final announcement from KOICA that I was selected as one of the successful candidates. Being awarded the scholarship to pursue master's degree abroad is already a dream come true to me, yet the fact that I was accepted by Korea University, one of the top three prestigious universities in South Korea, made me even more honored. I would say our batch KOICA-KU SP 2020 is an exceptional one because things didn't go as it used to. Due to Covid-19 pandemic, we were assigned to conduct the first fall semester online in our own country.

At first, everyone found it hard to adjust, there were some constraints like poor internet connection and time differences. Some of our classmates had to attend the class at midnight while some had it at the dawn. It was a bit tiring for some of us but that could not stop us from embarking on our journey and this is what made it memorable. To me, it's a new and fun experience. Despite all the challenges, I would thank to our professors' effort and school's coordination which made the course completed successfully. After completing the first semester, we received a very good news which we were finally allowed to depart.

The first day of my arrival in South Korea was very beautiful as there was snowing and that was also my first time to see snow. Our batch 2020 is like a turning point where a new normal starts, everyone is required to quarantine themselves for two weeks at the hotel before coming to school. After finish the quarantine, I was looking forward to discovering the university campus. Once I arrived the campus, I was in jaw-dropping as the school buildings look like ten times better in reality. I heard some students call Korea University as Hogwarts because its structure is similar to Hongwarts from Harry Potter series. People said Korea University has the most beautiful campus, and I can witness the words. Not only that the school owns a nice campus but the facilities are very well equipped. There are many libraries and different types of study rooms in various buildings which make our self-study so convenient and anticipating.

My most favorite thing about studying in Korea University is that all the professors here are so passionate in teaching and professional in delivering their knowledge. Online class is not just new to students but to professors as well, however; I really admire how they could pull it off so well and made each class so enjoyable. I sincerely thank to prof. Kyuwon Kang, prof. Donggeun Rhee, prof. Innwon Park, prof. John Kim, prof. Jeonghun Oh, prof. Junhyup Kim, prof. Kwak Dowon, prof. Jaejin Kim and the three professors whom we are going to meet in the next fall semester. They are most important contribution throughout our journey. Also thank to our dynamic supporters, Ms. Jiyeon, Ms. Hana and Mr. Jiwook who have always been there for us when we encounter any problems. Referring to academic life, there must some days that we have to deal with a load of school work which make us feel stressed and pressured. Those assignments, presentations and exams may require intensive effort. However, the feeling after completing it is really worthwhile, you will be able to feel the sense of achievement. It is when you see the results from midterm and final, the score from assignment, the feedback from presentation and so on. Imagine if you don't have to deal with those kinds of things, your academic life might be boring and less meaningful, right? I mention this is because I want you all appreciate it while you are having it because you are going to miss it when it comes to an end. Happiness is actually not happening at the end, it is happening during the process.

To have a good time here, I have to balance between academic life and social life. I often explore new places after class or during the weekend. There are plenty places to visit in Korea ranging from historical to natural and modern structural. I like the fact that

even our professors also encourage us to go around and see the development of South Korea. Luckily, travelling around in South Korea is so convenient and affordable. The two applications I always use are Naver map for going around and Kakaometro for checking the subway. The infrastructures around the city always put me in awe and it really motivates me to help my country become this developed. We are fortunate to have the buddy program which the school initiates to ensure that the students can experience the Korean culture while staying here. We are assigned into a small group of five people. Ms. Yunji who is our Korean buddy is always creative in planning the agenda for each monthly meeting. We have been to Geongbukgong palace, tried wearing Hanbok, drinking Korean tea, eating traditional dessert and having food like a local. It's not always about Seoul. During summer break, I got a chance to get out of the city with my classmates. We have been to Jeju Island to have a leisure time after completing our spring semester. Having been there made me recognized how well they developed their tourist sites.

The knowledge I have gained from this program is so precious. As the tax system in my country is in the process of reformation, it is a great opportunity to learn about successful experience from South Korea and acquire how their tax system is being implemented.



I also get to strengthen my research skill while working on my thesis. Before participating in the program, I have known so little about research and it was very limited. Following the program, my knowledge in this field becomes broader and this is really crucial for me to apply at my workplace. The diversity of my classmates has also taught me another lesson which I could not find elsewhere. The differences in term of our expertise, culture and experience are the most significant part of joining this program together. Besides that, the extracurricular activities provided by KUGSIS allow me to learn something I have never had chance in participating before. I have joined Human Right Society where I can discuss about human right issues happening in the current world. I have also participated in Society for Climate Change and Sustainable Development. From that, I was able to gain new ideas on how to maintain our world sustainably.

Lastly, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to KOICA, Korea University and my organization-the National Bank of Cambodia for giving me this golden opportunity. I have been able to both advance my

capacity and gain new life experience. I will try to repay back by bringing the knowledge I have learnt from the program to develop my country and work for the sustainable socio-economic development. I also hope I can take part in strengthening the relationship between my country and the Republic of Korea. Korea always makes me feel welcomed and now it is like a second home. Looking back to those past months, I was having fun along the way and I am so thankful to KOICA and KU for treating us so well. To me, I would call this 18-month journey as a rewarding life experience which has brought many memorable and joyful moments. The program may end, but I will keep supporting all the activities that KOICA have and willing to help as much as I can.

***“I have been able to both
advance my capacity
and gain new life experience.”***



Class of 2020

Mistakes, Successes, Failures and Tries Makes you What You Are Today - Keep Moving Forward

Greetings to all. This is Nomingereel Purev who is student from Mongolia through KOICA KU GSIS Scholarship Program. Today is one of my summer holiday in Sokcho and I would like to greet everyone who is going to read my story of how I attended to the one of the greatest University in the world and writing my story on KU GSIS Alumni News.



Nomingereel Purev
Technical Support Officer / State Bank /
Mongolia

It was one of beautiful sunny day of Mongolia and I woke up early in the morning got ready to go work. Every day I pass by the Mongolian central square to get to my work and when I finished my work I decided to go to my Dads to grab to something to eat while I want to chit chat with my mom and sister. Instead my sister P.Tumengerel surprised me with the KOICA program and informed that there is a factor in my work sector. She already learned what to prepare and how to register and it was for me very fortunate to have her as my mentor to this journey.

I was very delighted to hear that I passed my first level of test and felt frightened evermore very anxious. In my 1st interview there were 3 contestants but felt very lovely calm greeting from the organizer who I greatly thankful and it gave that confidence to be myself to express me. Every time when I had the good news that I nailed my test My feeling grows within the news. I remembered my last interview very well, it was the chance to meet online with a lady PhD who had a very graceful, powerful smile on her face who gave a great confidence and comfort. I felt like I was talking to someone I have known for very long time and my interview went smooth nothing to worry and frightened of. After that, days passed so quick and our National Naadam Celebration started and I had a blessed news along with the Celebrations - I will start my journey of Korea University.

When I stepped through the door of the KOICA Organisation in Mongolia, journey with this beautiful big family started. The Manager of this program, Ms Munkhzul was helping us up until we left Mongolia from how to prepare our documents to how we will be adjusted at the University. We have an army of well wishing ready to hands on family such as PhD Kyuwon Kang, Ms Jiyeon Kim, Mr Jiwook Jang and Celine Chaeyun Kim. This is my second family who is ready to help whether you are in Korea or in North Pole. It is very tough to adjust in new country and in new culture, but everything was well organized and thought through every little problem we face in our everyday student life which led our stay in Korea very easy, smooth and most of all happy.

It was a huge opportunity to learn Korean and KOICA KU GSIS Scholarship Program us that golden chance. It is one of my favorite lesson and the teachers ability to recognize what is your problem or change their approach if I am struggling with their teaching method. You can also practice your Korean language in your everyday life and Korean are very kind, warm polite nation who tried to understand my broken Korean. They are also my outside University teachers who are genuinely the closest to my heart.

World faced the COVID-19, nobody was prepared for this but KU managed to organized our online courses to the top notch and I am deeply grateful to give us this beautiful opportunity to not miss our goals. Personally, I think the COVID 19 emergency was something new for both students and teachers. Depending on the nature of the lesson and the teachers' teaching methods, the lessons can be online or in recorded form. But even if it was a recording or an online lesson, I was impressed by the great professors that they can feel you are in offline class

and standing in front of you. Sometimes, while watching the video, there were a lot of fun moments, such as answering questions involuntarily and laughing alone. Feedback on my questions that I overcome during the course was the best moment of my day, we were never prepared how to learn and interact through the online lessons, but teachers we sending the e-mail to each one of us to answer our questions regardless of their time.

And even I did not meet with my fellow students from all over the world in person firstly through out of the online lessons our connections grew stronger. Once we met in Korea we were very close and felt like we have known each other so long. We are 19 and as I said we are from everywhere and each one of us have a very unique and have very different backgrounds and culture, yet we are very same because of KU GSIS.

In everyone's life everything comes with price, color, and meaning and KU in my life is the one of the brightest memories that i will cherish forever and I am ever grateful to everyone who helped me, guided me and gave me the opportunity to write my story. And to everyone who read my journey, it is never too late to start a new journey and it is you who can change your life experience , memory and take on the chances to see the beautiful world we live in. Last not least stay safe and be happy.



Program News

Conference

2020 & 2021

[Roundtable]

KOICA 2019 and 2020 students shared current circumstances on tax and finance of their home countries via Zoom live meeting.

- Date: 2020.09.25 / 10.16, 23, 30 / 11.06, 13
- Method: Live on Zoom

Topics

1. Indonesian Fiscal Strategy During COVID-19
2. Philippines Budget System: Structure, Issues, and Reforms
3. Governance of State-Owned Enterprises
4. Mining Sector Taxation and Tax Reforms in The United Republic of Tanzania
5. Religious Perspectives of Terrorism
6. Collaboration: The Key to Corruption Free Countries

[KU-UNDP Workshop]

KOICA 2020 students took part in KU-UNDP Workshop to exchange cases about development cooperation of their home countries with the Director of UNDP and Dean of GSIS.

- Date: 2021.05.28
- Venue: International Studies Hall, Korea University

Topic

The Changing Rationale & Context of International Development Cooperation: Implications for the Republic of Korea



Extracurricular Activities

2020 / 2021



[KOICA Buddy Program]

KOICA 2019 and 2020 students formed a group of 1 Korean buddy and 4 KOICA students and enjoyed a monthly tours to attractive landmarks of Korea.

Date: 2020.08-Now
Venue: Anywhere in Korea

[2020 UNIDO Internship]

KOICA 2019 students participated in K-Quarantine Expo 2020 to provide individual online export consultation to overseas buyers.

Date: 2020.10.28-29
Venue: KINTEX, Ilsan, Gyeonggi-do



[2021 UNIDO Internship]

KOICA 2020 students provided individual consultation as overseas government officials in SECON 2021 (International Security Exhibition & Conference).

Date: 2021.05.12-14
Venue: KINTEX, Ilsan, Gyeonggi-do



[GKEDC Summer Program]

KOICA 2020 students explored specific cases from Korea's development history, delineated pivotal lessons and shared relevant experiences of their home countries.

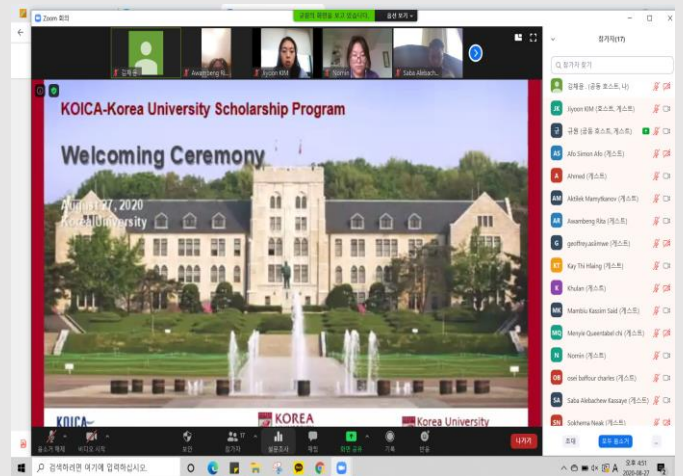
Date: 2021.08.10-31
Method: Live on Zoom



Welcoming Ceremony

For the class of 2020 who have been accepted to the KOICA KU GSIS Master's Degree Program in Finance and Tax Policy, KU GSIS faculty and staff held an online welcoming ceremony to encourage and get to be acquainted with new students.

Date: 2020.08.27
Method: Live on Zoom



Completion Ceremony & Farewell Party



For the KOICA students who have been studying hard and adjusting in Korea for an year and a half, farewell ceremony was held to celebrate their completion of the Scholarship Program and wishing their dreams come true in their home countries.

Date: 2020.12.11
Venue: International Studies Hall,
Korea University

KOICA-KU GSIS SP Alumni News



KOICA-KU GSIS SP Official YouTube Channel
www.youtube.com/channel/UCFQzBTyRITBlzaToqLf69tw



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