



MAGYAR REGIONÁLIS
TUDOMÁNYI TÁRSASÁG

**Hungarian Regional Science Association
19th Annual Meeting**

Is Seamaul Undong a Local Economic Development model for Kyrgyzstan?

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4-11-2021, Corvinus University of Budapest

Outline

- **Background**

- ✓ Origin of the Saemaul Undong (New Village Movement)
- ✓ From an authoritarian (top-down) regime to a democracy (bottom-up)
- ✓ Developmental State

- **Case study**

- ✓ Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) funded My Village initiative based on Korean Saemaul Undong ideology
- ✓ Motivation of the field study
- ✓ Methodology

- **Results**

- ✓ Discussion
- ✓ Conclusion

Republic of Korea

Socio-economic condition

- ▶ 1950-1953 Civil war between North & South Korea. Division of the country into two peninsula.
 - ▶ 1960-1970
 - ✓ Five -Year Economic Plans
 - ✓ Industrialization
 - ✓ Export oriented policy
- International Migration (Germany: miners & nurses)
- Internal Migration (to the capital city in search of work)

1970 -1979 Saemaul Undong

What does Saemaul Undong mean?

The term **“Saemaul”** is formed by combination of **“Sae”**, which means **New**, **“maul”** refers to **village & “Undong” – development/movement** (National Council of Saemaul Undong, 2000:4).

Saemaul 1.0
(diligence, self-help, and cooperation)
Saemaul 2.0
(sharing, service, and creativity) (Choi, 2014).



From an authoritarian (top-down) regime to a democracy (bottom-up)

Authoritarian regime

- ✓ The administrative system in the Saemaul Undong era was highly centralized, and local autonomy was not accessible (Chung, 2010:32). Budget planning, state control, evaluation, and others adopted by Park Chung HEE's military regime.

Academic community is divided when it comes to Saemaul Undong

- ✓ Personal influence of President Park, no Saemaul movement could have been initiated in many villages, and no such miraculous achievements could have been achieved (Jin Hwang Park, 1979: 1).
- ✓ National leader (former President Park Chung HEE) responded to the needs of Koreans with a specific political goal and direction that encouraged the full engagement of the citizens in Saemaul Undong (Choi, 2014; Goh, 2010).
- ✓ Saemaul Undong is an authoritarian policy of rural modernization and backed by the dictatorial President Park Chung HEE. It is a tool to extend the rule and improve the regime's legitimacy of the President Park and gain support from countryside. (Doucette & Mueller, 2016).

From an authoritarian (top-down) regime to a democracy (bottom-up) (2)

Developing a Grassroot Democracy

- Citizen participation and the election of women as leaders of Semaul Undong in patriarchal Korean society was a hallmark of the first democratic regime.

Developmental State & Saemaul Undong

1. Blessed with the government's pursuit of export-driven economy to subsidize Saemaul Undong projects.
2. Catching up period
3. Saemaul Undong is a modernization movement that went hand in hand with urban industry and developed the agricultural and industrial sectors (Han, 2012: 20).

Saemaul Undong characteristics

1. Saemaul project concentrated on **mindset-change** (through education and 'Can Do' spirit employed by Saemaul leaders), **community development** (infrastructure building), and **income increase** (vinyl houses in off season, cash crops – chestnut, animal husbandry).
2. To increase competition, the Korean government has divided villages into '**basic**', '**self-reliant**' and '**self-sufficient**.' Each category is subsidized based on its performance. The more successful, the more grants.

Government inputs & Saemaul outputs

<Table 1> State investment, unit: billion won

State investments in Saemaul Undong	1971	4.1
	1972	3.6
	1973	17.1
	1974	45.5
	1975	165.3
	1976	165.1
	1977	246.0
	1978	338.4

Source: Economic Planning Board (1979), Republic of Korea; Eom, (2011b, p.598).

<Table 2> The outcomes of the Saemaul Undong projects (1971-1980)

Projects	Unit	Goal (A)	Results (B)	B/A (%)
Expansion of village roads	km	26,266	43,558	166
Establishment of farm roads	km	49,167	61,797	126
Building small bridges	one	76,749	79,516	104
Building village halls	one	35,608	37,012	104
Building storehouses	one	34,665	22,143	64
Housing improvement	one	544,000	225,000	42
Community resettlement	one	–	2,747	–
Installing sewage systems	km	8,654	15,559	179
Installing telephone lines in farming and fishing villages	household	2,834,000	2,777,500	98
Saemaul factories	one	950	717	75

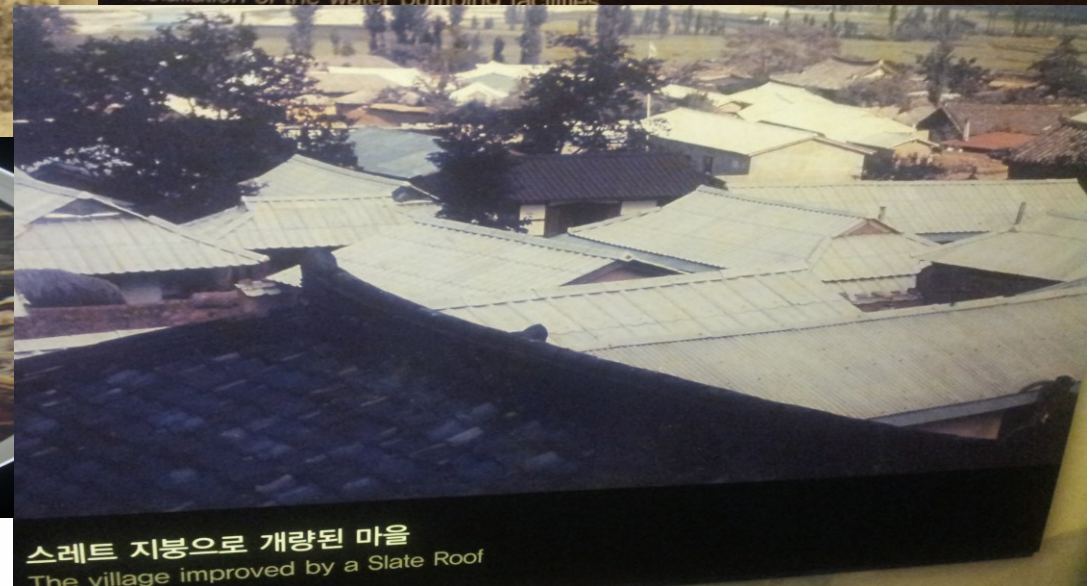
Source: The National Council of Saemaul Movement (1999:22), and Seok-Jin

Government inputs & Saemaul outputs



양수기 시설설치

Installation of the water pumping facilities



스레트 지붕으로 개량된 마을

The village improved by a Slate Roof

Source: Park Chung Hee School of Policy and Saemaul (PSPS) Yeungnam University, Republic of Korea (accesses 2014-2016).



Saemaul Undong in Kyrgyzstan



Case study: KOICA My Village

Objective

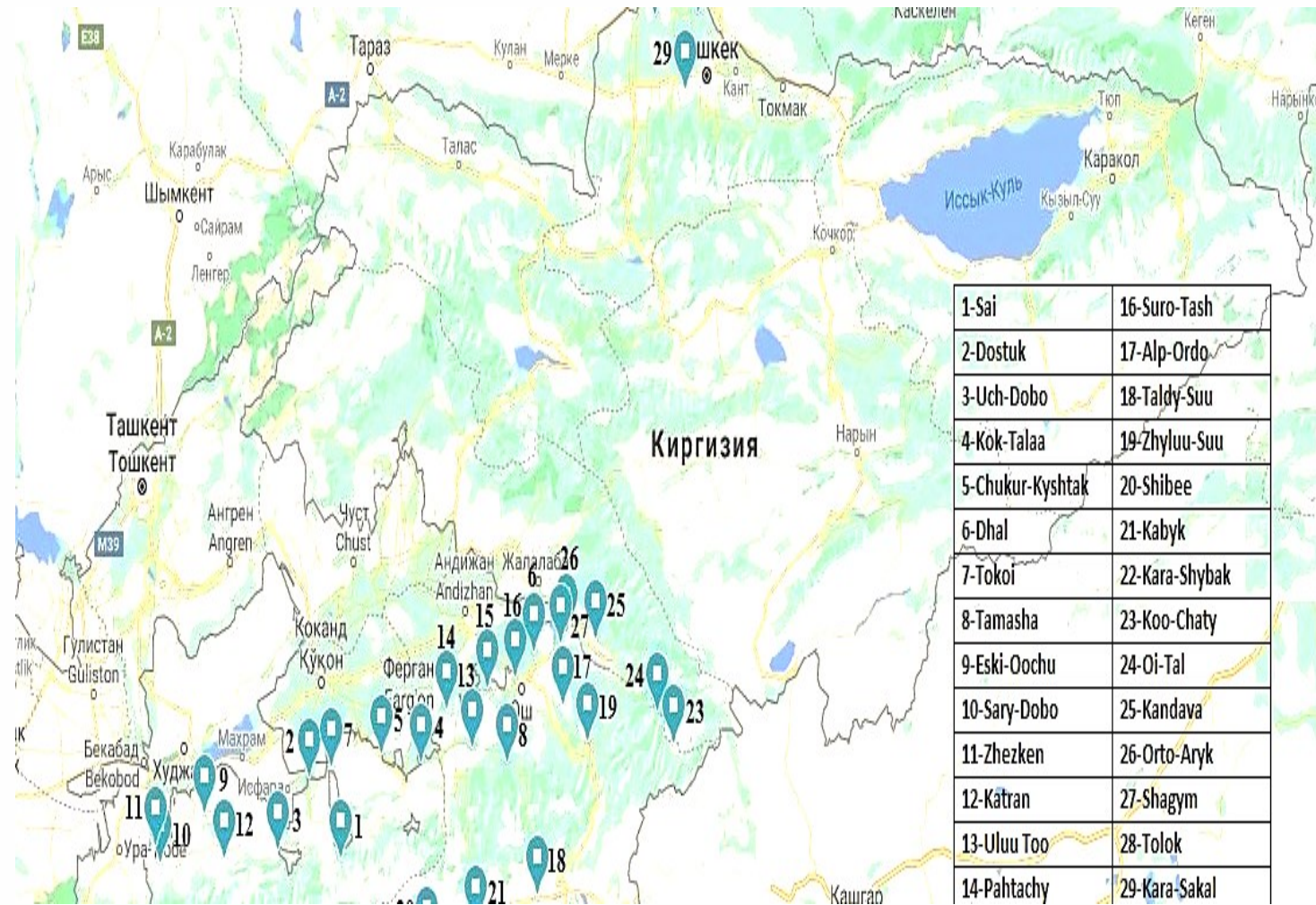
Our field research explores the application scheme of the Korean Saemaul Undong model in Kyrgyzstan. Moreover, we are looking for an answer whether Saemaul Undong could be an alternative model for Local Economic Development in Kyrgyzstan?

Research questions

- What are the possible mechanisms for the implementation of Korean Saemaul Undong in Kyrgyzstan?
- Who are the main local actors in the Kyrgyz version of Saemaul Undong?
- What are the major differences and similarities between original Korean Saemaul Undong & Kyrgyz version Saemaul Undong schemes of local development?

Methodology

- ✓ The comparative case study analysis was applied to the field study in Kyrgyzstan.
- ✓ A semi-structured questionnaire (paper-based form) developed for data collection with personal interviews in the pilot villages.
- ✓ 25 pilot villages from 3 oblasts (regions): Batken (10), Osh (14) and Chuy (1).
- ✓ Total respondents: 48
- ✓ Field study period: October 1, 2020, ~ December 12, 2020.



<Figure 1> The research area of the 25 KOICA My Villages

Is Saemaul Undong a Local Economic Development (LED) model for Kyrgyzstan?

- The total population 6.5 million, however 65% of them live in rural areas
- Today 82% of the Ayil Ökmötüs' (local self-government) are subsidized from state budget. Foreign investments in the countryside are a godsend for them.

Saemaul Undong in Kyrgyzstan or KOICA My Village initiative

- Show interest (2010) & Saemaul training in Korea (birthplace)
- July 18, 2019, the visit of the Prime Minister of Korea (Lee Nak-yon) to Kyrgyzstan, has allowed to start My Village project in 30 pilot villages.
- My Village objective is **to improve the Kyrgyz rural lifestyle through Korean Saemaul Undong principles, diligence, self-help, and cooperation.**
- Donor: Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).
- My Village project budget: \$3,500,000.
- Duration: 4 years (starting from 2019 finalizing in 2022).
- Target beneficiaries should reach up to 35,000 residents in the rural areas of the country.

Saemaul Undong - LED model for Kyrgyzstan? (2)

Interview Results

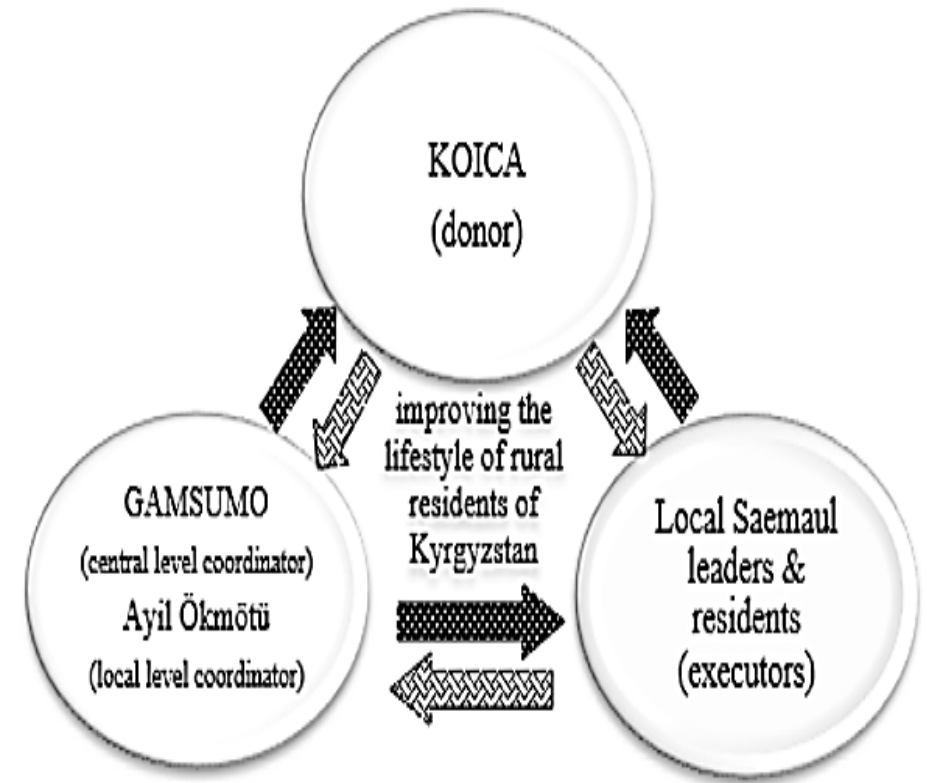
- Pilot village selection** (out of 453 LSG, only 45 showed an interest, the final decision is given for 30 LSGs. These 30 pilot villages are interacted with foreign NGOs. The active LSGs selected through the competition organized by Government Agency for Local Self-Government and Interethnic Relations under the Kyrgyz Government (known as GAMSUMO)

RQ1: application_scheme

Ashar (traditional voluntary participation of residents)

Funding scheme – each village get \$25,000 (1st phase), \$29,000 (2nd phase). Third phase - \$35,000.

RQ2: key actors



<Figure 2> Local stakeholders and collaboration in the KOICA My Village in Kyrgyzstan

Saemaul Undong - LED model for Kyrgyzstan? (3)

RQ3: <Table 3> Comparison of the Saemaul Undong and KOICA My Village

Indicator	Saemaul Undong	KOICA My Village
Policy initiation & objective	Government-led policy Poverty reduction, modernization of villages, income increase, rural development, nation-building, and attitudinal change	NGO-led rural development policy To improve the Kyrgyz rural lifestyle
Local development scheme	Integrated (top-down & bottom-up) approaches	The horizontal collaborative scheme, where Ayil Ökmötü, local Saemaul leader and ordinary participants work together
Basic principles	Diligence Self-help Cooperation	Ashar method (traditional voluntary participation)
Government and governance	Authoritarian regime (highly centralized)	Democratic regime (decentralized)
Main actor	Central government including all layers of government institutions and officials and villagers	GAMSUMO Ayil Ökmötü Local Saemaul leaders
Local participation	Full voluntary participation	Full voluntary participation
Investment	Korean State invested in billions of won	KOICA contribution Ayil Ökmötü contribution, and ordinary citizen contribution including those who are migrated to Russia (migrants)

Preliminary achievements of the Korean model in Kyrgyzstan: interview results

<Table 4> Achievements of the KOICA My Village projects (2019-2020)

Region	Nº	Village	Projects	Unit
<u>Batken</u>	1	Say	Build small bridges	one
	2	<u>Dostuk</u>	Build a kindergarten	one
	3	<u>Üch-Döbö</u>	Public bath	one
	4	<u>Kök-Talaa</u>	Installation of drinking water	4 km 800 meter
	5	<u>Chukur-Kyshtak</u>	Installation of drinking water	6 km
	6	<u>Dzhal</u>	Installation of irrigation water	2700 meter
	7	<u>Tokoy</u>	Construction of a football stadium	one
	8	Tamasha	Installation of irrigation water	1850 meter
	9	<u>Eski-Oochu</u>	Expansion of the social facility (the additional building was built for a kindergarten)	one
	10	<u>Sary-Döbö</u>	Construction of a football stadium	one
	11	<u>Zhezken</u>	Expansion of the social facility (additional classrooms were built for the school)	one
	12	Katran	Reconstruction of the social facility (the roof of the school was renovated, and the underfloor heating system was renewed)	one

Preliminary achievements of the Korean model in Kyrgyzstan (2)

Osh	13	<u>Uluu-Too</u>	Build a kindergarten	one
	14	<u>Pahtachy</u>	Expansion of village streets (asphalted)	1 km
	15	<u>Sütkor</u>	Build a kindergarten	one
	16	<u>Sürötüü</u> -Tash	Establishment of a health center ¹⁶	one
	17	Alp-Ordo	Installation of irrigation water	1200 meter
	18	<u>Taldy-Suu</u>	Reconstruction of the social objects (the roof of the school renovated)	one
	19	<u>Zhylyu-Suu</u>	Street lighting	3 km
	20	<u>Shibee</u>	Build a kindergarten	one
	21	<u>Kabyk</u>	Street lights and a school fence were installed.	
	22	<u>Kara-Shybak</u>	Establishment of a health center (first-aid station)	one
	23	<u>Köö-Chaty</u>	Construction road to the pasture	10 km
	24	Oi-Tal	Construction of a health center (first-aid station)	one
	25	<u>Kandava</u>	Installation of drinking water	5 km 100 meter
	26	Orto-Aryk	Street lighting	1.5 km
	27	<u>Shagym</u>	Installation of drinking water	9 km 200 meter
Chuy	28	<u>Tölök</u>	Establishment of a business center	one
	29	Kara-Sakal	Reconstruction of social institutions (replacement of the roof of the culture house)	one
	30	<u>Lubyance</u>	Road construction (asphalt laid)	3 km

Source: Author's field research



Preliminary achievements of the Korean model in Kyrgyzstan (3)

First phase My Village projects¹

1. **Irrigation and Water** (Water Channel: 28.4 km, Water source -1, Water Reservoir -1)
2. **Health** (Public Health Center-2, Hospital - 1)
3. **Transport and Road** (Road -7km, Sidewalk -980m, Bridge -2, Streetlight – 259)
4. **Education** (school renovation -3, kindergarten-5, School Fence -530m)
5. **Community Wellbeing** (Community Center -2, Public Bath -1, Football field -1)

¹ Source: Good Neighbors Report, "My Village Project 2019-2020." [Accessed through the website [www. goodneighbors.kg](http://www.goodneighbors.kg) January 2021).

Discussion & Conclusion

- ✓ The field study on the Kyrgyz version of Saemaul Undong, its contribution to the LED and application of the principles of the original Saemaul, namely *diligence*, *self-help*, and *cooperation* in the KOICA My Village projects in Kyrgyzstan, was **positively received and experienced in the pilot villages**.
- ✓ The principles of Saemaul Undong reflected the traditional method of voluntary participation known as '*ashar*'.
- ✓ Therefore, **the experience Korean Saemaul Undong principles was not alien** to the participants in the KOICA My Village project.
- ✓ Meeting the local leaders, where Kyrgyz and Uzbeks work together to move their village forward, made the task of being in the countryside even more attractive.

HOWEVER

- ✓ The burden of paper-related business work made the local Saemaul leaders tiresome.
- ✓ Many of them said that the monthly payments for their work would be more sustainable in maintaining the Saemaul Undong projects in Kyrgyzstan.
- ✓ '*Ashar*' method has also its limitations. Due to the migration in the country many youths left the village. To ask people to work voluntarily has its own challenges. No one wants to work for free especially in the villages where the job opportunity is minimum. If '*ashar*' is used repeatedly, the results in a project will be less optimistic and diminishes its value.
- ✓ "*Ashar* is with us, but everyday people cannot work voluntarily. Especially COVID-19 period nobody gathered, and we had to hire a local company to complete the project" (Interview with the leader of Saemaul in one of the pilot villages in Kyrgyzstan, November 2020).

Conclusion (2)

- ❖ The contribution of the donor country Korea is visible and can bring Ayil Ökmötü (LSG) and people to work for the improvement of their villages.
- ❖ The repeated narratives of Koreans that they have suffered and overcome difficulties in village development in the past with their efforts and the principles of Saemaul Undong motivated My Village participants to focus only on their attempts to improve their living spaces.
- ❖ The *‘ashar’* method was handy for practicing the Saemaul principles and implement KOICA My Village projects. Many leaders believed that the *‘ashar’* method was revived in the pilot villages.
- ❖ Finally, the acceptance of the foreign idea in local and rural development has had a positive effect on the lifestyle of the people, and the second phase of KOICA My Village has started successfully. We hope that the final stage of Saemaul Undong in Kyrgyzstan will be followed up in further research.

Saemaul or New Village Development in Kyrgyzstan



Source: author's field study in Kyrgyzstan



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