

THE NIWANO PEACE FOUNDATION  
THE FINAL REPORT OF RESEARCH/ ACTIVITY GRANTS  
FOR FISCAL YEAR OF 2010

**Title of the project:**

33 Religious Leaders' Meeting for Life Movement

**Organization title:**

Korea Dialogue Academy

**Project director:**

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**Date:** November 30, 2011

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Dr. Chan Su Yi, Project director

## Purpose of activity

During the colonization period, 33 Korean religious leaders delivered a Declaration of Independence on Mar. 1, 1919. The Declaration was based on nonviolence, justice and peace. The Declaration promoted independence movements fast and widely. We, Koreans, call the historical moment “3.1 Movement”. The 3.1 Movement has been considered one of the most important interreligious cooperation in Korean history. Before the year of 1919, there were no interreligious works in Korean history.

The religious leaders were composed of 16 Christians, 15 Chondo-gyos and 2 Buddhists. They accepted their responsibility toward the society. They cooperated for the independence which was the most important social agenda in Korea at that time though they have different religions. Through the cooperation they overcame the misunderstandings and conflicts caused by the difference of religions.

The 3.1 movement mainly led by the religious leaders has been generally considered a political movement for independence from Japanese imperialism. However, it was basically a peace movement and life movement beyond the political purpose. The religious leaders did not curse, even not blame, Japan. They just declared the justification of the independence. They also believed that Korean independence would contribute to world peace and everyone’s happiness. They kept the principle of nonviolence through their movement.

We name our activity project “33 Religious Leaders’ Meeting for Life Movement” after the 3.1 Movement.

Korean Dialogue Academy will organize the task force team for the 33 Religious Leaders’ Meeting which will play a role to promote and spread religious leaders’ meetings at various levels in terms of locality or/and agenda. .

The 33 Religious Leaders’ Meeting for Life Movement ultimately aims to make Korean society better from local communities based on the spirit of “reciprocity”(互惠) and “coexistence”(共存). The 33 Religious Leaders’ Movement for Life Movement will try to find the position which it should be to sublimate individual spirituality to social spirituality by making local networks or solidarity among people.

The short-term plan of the 33 Religious Leaders’ Meeting is to establish a model to promote the interreligious conversation which reflects a local issue and to spread the model in local communities. We expect interreligious meetings will come from grassroots through

our efforts. The interreligious meetings will provide a public sphere where people discuss not only local agendas but also national and international agenda such as peace and environmental matters. The 33 Religious Leaders' Meeting has an ultimate plan to revive local communities and grassroots democracy through various community activities led by religious leaders.

Therefore the 33 Religious Leaders' Meeting for Life movement will play a role to promote and spread religious leaders meeting at various levels in terms of locality and agenda because it will gather good will based on religious spirituality, though their religions are different, and create social power which is different from political power.

There are a few organizations which pursue the interreligious conversation. However they did not seek interreligious cooperation which has a social meaning, but they just satisfy the fact they got knowledge of the different religions or mutual understanding of them as a social system.

## **Content of the Activity**

We targeted the Kyung-gi province as our field for the activity. We organized two forums at Feb. 16, 2011 and Oct. 10, 2011 respectively. The following is the outline of the forums

### **First Forum**

Time: Feb. 16, 2011

Place: Meeting room at the city hall of Kwangmyung

Chairperson: Seung Mook (Buddhist Monk, Geumgangjeong Sa-Temple)

Participation: 30

Presentation:

Seung Bong Lee (Ex-secretary, Kwangmyung Citizen's Coalition for Economic Justice)

"Past, Present and Future of Kwangmyung Civil Society"

Ho Lee (Chief, Grass Roots Research Institution)

"Grass Roots Movement and the Role of Civil Society"

Bum Soo Kim (Steering committee member, Steering Committee of City of Koyang)

"Governance and Civil Participation"

Discussion Panel:

Seung Chang Ha (Coordinator, The Think Café)

“The Role and Task of Civil Society to Realize Grassroots Autonomy”

Young-E Lee (General Secretary, Kwangmyung YMCA)

“The Assignment and Vision of Local Movement at the City of Kwangmyung”

Chang Ho Kang (Chief Editor, Kwangmyung Citizen’s Newspaper)

“The Reinforcement of the Basis of Civil Society thorough Communication and Solidarity)

Byung Ryul Lee (Chairman, Local office of Democratic Labor Party)

“For Win-Win and Communication within the Civil Society”

Through the first forum, we discussed many issues such as civil society, citizen’s participation, grassroots movement, village building for the small city, Kwangmyung, which was a kind of satellite city or bed town for the capital of Korea, Seoul. We especially focused on how to vitalize the civil society of the city of Kwangmyung and how to make strong communication system within the civil society. We found out that we need to make social network at the grass roots level. It also should be noted many religious persons worked hard for the forum with commitment.

(Photo)



## Second Forum

Time: Oct. 10, 2011

Place: Meeting room at St. Nazaro Village, the City of Euwang

Participation: 38

## First Segment

Chairperson: Duk Soo Kim (Won Buddhist Nun)

Presentation:

Soo Il Chae (President, Hanshin University)

## Second Segment

Chairperson: Chan Su Yi (Researcher, Korean Dialogue Academy)

Presentation:

Daehae (Buddhist Nun, Ssang Ryong Temple)

“True Harmony among Different Religions”

Taek Gyu Lee (Pastor, Ji Pyung Church)

“Pray Meeting for Peace of Religious People at the City of Bucheon”

Jin Heung Byun (Professor, Catholic University)

“Case Study on Activities Made by Different Religious People”

The title of the second was “The Culture of Life and the Echo of Sharing”. All of the participants of the forum were religious leaders in Kyung-gi province. Under the title, we first thought about the meaning and necessity of inter-religious conversation and activity. We acknowledged again that it was very important to talk with the religions persons who had different religion from mine to understand. In the second segment we shared the experience of the corporation with different religious persons. It was seen that the experience was very valuable activities for local communities. The participants promised to develop the forum further to find their roles as religious leaders for local communities and neighbors. Also the participant was very happy to have a chance to meet religious leaders from various religions and they strongly felt that religious leaders waked up first to make this society better place where people live together peacefully and harmoniously.

(photo)



## **Achievement of the Activity**

There are interreligious conversation meetings. However it is basically for religious leaders focusing on just mutual understanding of each religion. This activity, the 33 Religious Leaders' Meeting for Life Movement, functioned not only for uniting religious organizations but also expanding religious persons' interests and role into Korean society. In other words, it was a motivation to find a proper and right role of religious persons in Korean society. Through the forum, the participants, mostly Korean religious leaders, had a chance to reconsider the role of religious leaders within Korean society and to take their responsibility to make Korean society better and harmonious. They decided to continue this forum and to make cooperated activities for not only local communities but also the entire nation.

## **Future area to be pursued**

Democracy should reflect voices coming from various local communities. The 33 Religious Leaders' Meeting for Life Movement will help the local communities make their own voice based on public interest. As well, it will awake religious people including religious leaders in order to find their role as true social leader. The 33 Religious Leaders' Meeting for Life Movement will contribute to make interreligious conversation and cooperation socially meaningful. We expect its activity will contribute to build the society where people help each other, market where focuses not on material but humanity culture which respects each other and community where people enjoy their true happiness. Therefore the number of beneficiaries of this activity is beyond count.

We will pursue to develop the forum and find practical activities through the forum which is socially meaningful. And we will incubate various local interreligious cooperation works at local level, especially in Kyungki province, and spread them nationwide.

If we are successful to develop the forum, various interreligious cooperation works will be formed at the various levels. We will help the works to make outcome effectively and to have the spirit of the 33 religious leaders.

## Itemized Statement of Expenditure

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Amount (US Dollar)</b>	<b>Details</b>
Director	2,500	Chan Su Yi
Associate	1,200	Young Kun Yu
Associate	1,000	Jae Eun Kim
Preparation Meeting	289	
Payment to outside source	1,680	1 chairperson 7 presenters 4 discussion panel
Cultural performance	215	
Rent for meeting space and providing meals	370	
Forum materials	196	
Travel (domestic)	55	
Invitation card	72	
Reference materials	54	books
Recording	57	
Printing and copying	200	
Communication charge	400	Postal fees and telephone charges
Miscellaneous	400	Including wear and tear expenses
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,688</b>	