

Participants at the Global Engagement and Empowerment Forum (GEEF) held at Yonsei University in February 2019.

# INNOVATIVE RESEARCH TO REACH SUSTAINABILITY GOALS

YONSEI UNIVERSITY is engaging with social and environmental issues — locally and globally.

**As centres of excellence in education and research,** universities are well placed to tackle the global challenges addressed by the United Nations' 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs), ranging from healthcare and hunger, to clean water and climate change. The strength of Yonsei University's commitment to working towards the SDGs is reflected by its 47th place globally and 4th place in Asia in the 2020 Times Higher Education Impact Rankings.

In February 2019, the university welcomed more than 2,000 visitors to the Global Engagement and Empowerment Forum (GEEF), the second such annual event hosted by Yonsei's Institute for Global Engagement & Empowerment (IGEE). World leaders, international organizations, academics, students, and members of the public gathered to discuss approaches to realize the SDGs and call for collaborative action

to empower people and pursue social equity. "I am confident all our ongoing efforts and commitments can ultimately achieve goals of the 2030 global agenda," said IGEE's honorary chairman, the former UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon.

Yonsei University is also pursuing research-based SDG initiatives to contribute to the social and economic development of societies for a sustainable future. In response to SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities, Professor Jong-Moon Chung from the School of Electrical & Electronic Engineering has developed an augmented-reality-based disaster response integrated training simulator that will be used in disaster preparedness training for national government ministries, local governments, and public institutions in Korea.

Professor Sang Chul Yoon from the School of Medicine turns discarded mobile

phones into high-quality ophthalmoscopes that are only 1% the price of conventional fundus cameras. "We've been looking for ways to utilize outdated mobile devices, also known as e-waste," says Yoon. The upcycling program, in partnership with Samsung, reduces waste while promoting the health of the community in marginalized areas of developing countries, lowering healthcare barriers to create a more sustainable world, in line with SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing.

Empowering students to make positive change is at the heart of Yonsei University's vision. "I prioritize efforts in providing education to nurture innovative leaders with community spirit," says Yonsei University President Seoung Hwan Suh. The Towners at Workstation programme is an extracurricular initiative that sends groups of Yonsei

students to engage with local and global communities and find innovative ways to resolve social and environmental problems. Projects ranged from developing an app to help the visually impaired do online shopping, to addressing population decline in Niue - an island in the South Pacific, to using edible insects to tackle food shortages and combat waste.

Committed to its founding core principles of Truth and Freedom, Yonsei University will continue to engage in the needs of society and facilitate sustainable changes, as an active member of the global community. ■



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