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ISUS UOS NEWSLETTER

International School of Urban Sciences
University of Seoul

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2024-2 ISUS Field Trip Namsan Tracking

The Thrill of Mass Hiking: Exploring the Amazing Tracks of Namsan Together

Fall is undoubtedly one of the best seasons for hiking, considering the perfect blend of comfortable weather and stunning scenery climaxed with the beauty of autumn foliage. On Friday October 11, 2024, the entire International School of Urban Sciences (ISUS) embarked on a field trip for the Fall Semester. The trip, dubbed, “*Uniting ISUS together to build healthier relationships*”, included three core activities namely; Namsan Trekking, Family Gathering and Dinner Buffet, which provided a memorable experience for the students.

The trip commenced with the Namsan Mountain Trail Walk through the Seoul City Wall. Students who have gathered from the various programs trekked the Wooden Stairway of the Namsan Dulle-gil Trail (near National Theater of Korea) towards Namsan Seoul Tower – a distance of about 1.6 km from the base of Namsan Mountain (Mongmyeoksan). Known for its long flight of well-aligned stone steps and scenic views, the trails offered ISUS student trekkers a challenging experience, allowing them to explore the mountain's natural beauty while capturing photos of its charming landscapes.

Upon arriving at the apex of the mountain, students walking in groups visited the Namsan Seoul Tower, which sits on top Namsan Mountain. The tower represents one of the famous tourist attractions and prominent landmarks of Seoul. Some ISUS students explored the numerous adventure theme parks, game arcade, observatory decks with 360-degree panoramic view of Seoul and photo-taking hot spots, at the top of the Namsan Seoul Tower complex.

Next, the entire group gathered at a picturesque part of the mountain for experience sharing and taking group photographs. It was a great opportunity for students to interact, take smaller group pictures and share insights from the trekking adventure with peers across the various programs before trekking down for dinner together. The final activity of the trip was a dinner buffet at Hotel PJ, where ISUS students enjoyed a variety of Korean delicacies.



Throughout the field trip, students from the various programs bonded with each other, creating lasting memories and strengthening unity while experiencing the beautiful sceneries as part of the life in Korea. The field trip to Namsan was more than just a walk – it was an immersive experience that blended physical exercise with unity and the majestic beauty of the hills and mountains, offering students relaxation to effectively pursue the Fall semester.

After this breathtaking adventure, some students shared their experiences as follow:

ISUS Student 1: *"I had always waited for an opportunity like this to go up the mountain, especially considering the refreshing Fall weather.....because the sweltering heat of summer has given way to cooler temperatures, the trip timing was just perfect!"*

ISUS Student 2: *"The trekking has offered me some time to disconnect from campus routine to explore a little slice of nature in the middle of Seoul city, especially from the top of the mountain."* (J.A.)





Ever wonder how South Korea transformed from a war-torn nation to a global economic powerhouse in just a few decades? It's a question many have pondered, and Dr. Dongsoo Kang, Executive Director of the Global Knowledge and Development Center at the Korea Development Institute (KDI), provided a compelling answer at our Urban Infra Forum. Held on the 25th of September 2024, this exciting event explored the rapid development of Korean enterprises, revealing fascinating insights into the country's rise to global prominence.

In his presentation, Dr. Kang took attendees on a journey through South Korea's history, outlining the broad strategies and detailed steps that shaped its success. Central to the discussion was South Korea's strong commitment to Research and Development (R&D), which has been consistently supported by the government over the years. This R&D focus became a cornerstone of the nation's growth, fostering innovation and propelling industries to the forefront of global markets.

South Korea's transformation began in 1945, when the country started rebuilding from the aftermath of World War II. During the critical reconstruction phase from 1945 to 1961, the South Korean government laid the foundation for future development. This period saw the establishment of a robust governing system, aimed at driving long-term growth and setting the stage for rapid industrialization.

One of the pivotal moments in South Korea's journey came in 1962 with the introduction of its first Five-Year Economic Development Plan. This ambitious strategy emphasized export-led industrialization, encouraging industries to expand globally. Simultaneously, the government pursued balanced development policies to ensure that social progress kept pace with economic growth. These efforts proved instrumental in turning South Korea into an emerging industrial hub.

The road to success wasn't without challenges. In 1997, South Korea, like many nations, was hit hard by the Asian Financial Crisis. However, instead of faltering, the country saw this as an opportunity to pivot. Dr. Kang explained how South Korea transitioned from a state-led economy to one driven by the private sector. By recognizing that its private enterprises were ready to take on a larger role, South Korea unleashed a new wave of innovation and economic vitality.

Today, South Korea is a global leader across various industries, from electronics and automobiles to shipbuilding and entertainment. Its story is a testament to the power of strategic planning, government support for R&D, and the resilience of the private sector. The country's incredible journey from poverty to prosperity serves as a beacon of inspiration for nations around the world, showcasing what can be achieved through vision, determination, and adaptability. (S.U.)



In the heart of the 2023/2024 academic year, ISUS final year students in the various programs geared up for a crucial milestone: Thesis Writing. As part of preparations, several meetings were held in October across the various programs. This pivotal moment serves as a formal opportunity to present research progress and receive valuable feedback from faculty advisors.

Preparing for the Exam

As the day of exam approached, nerves began to rise. Students meticulously refined their presentations, ensuring clarity in their Problem Statement, Objectives, Research Methodology, among others. A successful thesis exam often hinges on a well-structured outline that includes Research Questions, Methodology, and Preliminary results. To achieve this goal, most students had practiced with their peers to bolster their confidence in responding to comments that may arise during the meeting.

Exam Dynamics

Depending on the research advisor, several means were used to interact with students on their thesis progress. Some students had one-on-one meetings with their supervisors, while others, being supervised by the same advisor, had small group meetings. On the exam day, the mixed feeling of excitement and anxiety can be both encouraging or intimidating as students prepare for thesis deliberations with their advisors. Nonetheless, the intent is constructive.

As deliberations unfolded, ISUS students shared their progress, often enhanced by visuals to engage their advisors. In all meetings, several questions arose, ranging from methodological concerns to suggestions for further exploration. These deliberations were a dance of intellectual rigor, which pushed students to think critically about their work.

Post-Exam Reflections

After each meeting, a wave of relief washed over the students. Regardless of the feedback received, students left with a clearer direction for their research. Insights from committee members had illuminated aspects of their work they hadn't considered, prompting deeper inquiry and refinement of their thesis.



A final year ISUS student recounted:

“The selection of my thesis topic has been a bit challenging. However, following a series of meetings with my advisor, I was able to refine it after gaining a clearer understanding. Although I faced a bit of literature review challenges due to my professional background, the advisor’s insights coupled with discussions in some related courses have widened my viewpoint. Throughout the research process, my advisor has instilled in me the art of creative thinking for finding innovative solutions. In my opinion, the thesis exam has been crucial, considering the regular support provided by my advisor in my research. Beyond the final thesis process and graduation, I hope to apply the key findings in my city.”

In the weeks that follow, students would integrate the feedback, using it as a catalyst for growth. The thesis exam, while daunting, represents a crucial stepping stone in the academic journey of ISUS students, fostering resilience and a deeper understanding of their chosen fields. Ultimately, these thesis exams are more than just a presentation of progress, but a rite of passage that navigates students for effective writing in academia and beyond. (J.A.)

Thesis Presentation



The future of urban planning has never looked smarter, and the Master of Urban Development and Smart Infrastructure Policy (MUDSIP) program is leading the charge! Formerly known as the Master of Infrastructure Planning and Development (MIPD), MUDSIP has revamped its curriculum to include a serious focus on Smart City Development. To prove just how committed they are, MUDSIP students embarked on a tech-filled adventure to Seoul TOPIS for their Smart City and Emerging Technology class on October 4, 2024. And guess what? This is now a *mandatory* experience for all MUDSIP students!

If there's one city that truly embodies the essence of a "smart city," it's Seoul. Why? Because of Seoul TOPIS! This high-tech organization is the brain behind Seoul's traffic and transportation systems, operating under the Seoul Metropolitan Government. Seoul TOPIS monitors everything—from buses and subways to the city's traffic flow—providing real-time data that keeps the city's infrastructure running smoothly. All that valuable information is collected, centralized, and processed into big data, which is then disseminated to the public. And on October 4th, MUDSIP students got a front-row seat to this smart city spectacle! 🎉

During their field trip, students saw firsthand how Seoul TOPIS takes transportation management to the next level. They were wowed by the way TOPIS turns streams of data into actionable insights for public use, giving Seoul its edge as one of the world's smartest cities. For future urban planners and smart infrastructure experts, this was a golden opportunity to learn from the best in the business!

But the excitement didn't stop there. The field trip also took students to Cheonggyecheon, where they got a sneak peek at a futuristic mode of transportation: autonomous vehicles! These self-driving prototypes are expected to revolutionize public transport in Seoul, with a full rollout planned for next year. 🚗🤖 The students were able to experience the cutting-edge technology firsthand, leaving them buzzing with ideas and inspiration for their own urban development projects.

The MUDSIP students had a blast, soaking up the high-tech vibes and experiencing Seoul's forward-thinking approach to urban management. With this kind of hands-on learning, they're more than ready to take on the future of smart cities and infrastructure.

At MUDSIP, smart city development isn't just a buzzword—it's a reality. And for these students, the future looks brighter (and smarter) than ever! 🌟 (S.U.)



ESG-ECO Expo is a business platform where companies contributing to carbon neutrality, green projects and transformation to circular economy goals meet to dialogue, showcase and strengthen their capabilities in driving the changeover to green economic society. The 2024 edition of the Expo held from 10th to 12th October at the COEX Exhibition Center, brought together eco-conscious innovators, activists, and development partners from around the world to discuss sustainable practices and showcase groundbreaking solutions for the increasing environmental threats. With over 40 exhibitors and a series of engaging workshops, the expo served as a hub for inspiration and partnership.

It featured a wide array of exhibits from renewable energy technologies to sustainable water innovations, aimed at promoting environmental stewardship. Local Korean startups showcased innovative products, such as biodegradable packaging and energy-efficient appliances, while established organizations highlighted their ongoing projects in water conservation, wastewater treatment and waste reduction. One standout exhibit was a solar-powered water filtration system designed for use in underserved communities. Developed by a startup company, the project demonstrated how accessible technology can address both water scarcity and quality issues in regions affected by climate change.

In addition to the exhibits, the expo offered a series of workshops and panel discussions led by experts in various fields. Topics ranged from water efficiency and sustainable waste management to climate policy and environmental justice. MGLEP attendees had the opportunity to inquire about technologies and methods applicable to their country's contexts. These include integrated composting techniques, leakage detection mechanisms, and recycled products that inspired them to make eco-friendly choices in their daily lives.

The expo also served as a platform for networking and collaboration. Nonprofits and businesses connected with potential partners, fostering a sense of community among those committed to environmental actions. Participants shared stories of their countries' scenarios toward sustainability, creating an atmosphere of support and shared purpose. MGLEP attendees were encouraged to relay the message of standout innovations to their respective institutions in their home countries, as a way of fostering partnerships for sustainable development.

2024 대한민국 ESG 친환경대전
ESG-ECO EXPO KOREA

10. 10^{THU} - 12^{SAT}



As the expo concluded, the hall was filled with an excitement of social networking. Participants left not only with newfound knowledge but also with a renewed sense of inspiration for environmental stewardship. The event underscored the importance of collective action and innovation in addressing environmental challenges. The ESG-ECO Expo proved that by coming together, sharing ideas, and committing to change, we can pave the way for a more sustainable future. Looking ahead, the seeds of inspiration sown at this event will undoubtedly grow into impactful movements, driving progress in the ongoing fight for our planet. (J.A.)



Nor Hazirah Binti Mohd Ghazali, a graduate of the 12th cohort of the MUAP program, is currently serving as the Senior Manager of Engagement and Partnerships for East, Southeast Asia, and Oceania at C40 Cities. We share her story of dedication to sustainable urban development and global collaboration through her work at Kuala Lumpur City Hall, ISUS, and C40 Cities.

Starting at the City Hall

Hazirah began her career in 2014 at Kuala Lumpur City Hall, where she actively participated in city networking and built strategic partnerships with global cities. Working closely with the Mayor and executive directors, she played a pivotal role in international relations. This role allowed her to represent Kuala Lumpur in various international forums, facilitating knowledge exchange and collaboration with other cities. Among various projects, she helped establish a lasting international relationship between Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) and Kuala Lumpur City Hall and connected the Kuala Lumpur Regional Training Center (IDB) with the Seoul Human Resource Development Center (SHRDC). She was also a key secretariat member of the 2015 ASEAN Mayors and Governors Meeting (MGMAC) held in Kuala Lumpur. Through these experiences, she shaped her expertise in fostering international cooperation and supporting city networks.

Studying and Gaining Experience at ISUS

In 2019, driven by her passion for international development and urban planning, Hazirah applied to the MUAP program at ISUS. Her goal was to deepen her insights into how urban policies can be designed to promote sustainable growth, improve the quality of life in cities, and tackle challenges related to rapid urbanization.

What truly attracted her to ISUS was its global perspective. Through her studies, she was able to broaden her understanding of how different cities manage their climate challenges, tackle urban resilience, and implement best practices in urban governance. It gave her a richer, more comprehensive view of the global urban landscape. “This international exposure was essential for me, as it allowed me to connect the dots between the unique challenges faced by cities in the Global South and the innovative solutions being applied in developed regions.” she explains.

The multidisciplinary approach at ISUS also appealed to her. “I wanted to expand my skills beyond policy into areas like finance, public-private partnerships, and technology, all of which are crucial in creating resilient, future-proof cities.” The program broadened her worldview, expanded her network, and equipt her with the tools necessary to contribute more effectively to her work in global city networks.



From ISUS to C40: A Leap into the Global Network

After completing the MUAP program, Hazirah sought to help more cities through global city networks like C40, leveraging her experiences and knowledge gained at ISUS. A pivotal moment in her career was a conversation she had with the ambassador of Malaysia to the Republic of Korea during Global Friends Night in 2022. The ambassador encouraged her to pursue larger goals, beyond just the city of Kuala Lumpur. “I realized that my reach and impact could extend beyond my city and country. I became motivated to help more cities implement ambitious climate actions and raise their profiles internationally.”

C40 is a global network of around 100 mayors from major cities around the world, united in their mission to take bold climate action. Its focus on collaboration and partnerships aligns perfectly with Hazirah’s professional goals. Currently, Hazirah serves as the Senior Manager for Engagement and Partnerships for East Asia, Southeast Asia, and Oceania at C40, supporting the C40 Vice Chairs in their leadership roles and helping enhance their visibility and impact on international platforms. A key aspect of her role involves working closely with cities to build stronger partnerships and engage key stakeholders that are essential for delivering climate action. Additionally, she is committed to creating global partnerships that help cities, especially in the Global South, secure funding for their climate initiatives.

My Growth Journey

“My experience at ISUS has been deeply transformative, both personally and professionally. Previously, I was focused on local urban challenges in Kuala Lumpur, but through this program, I was able to see how cities across the world tackle similar issues in unique ways. This exposure broadened my approach to problem-solving and equipped me with innovative solutions. Furthermore, ISUS expanded my network significantly, guiding me with knowledge on current urban leaders, policymakers, and sustainability experts from around the world. These connections have been invaluable in fostering international cooperation and facilitating knowledge-sharing between cities. Now, in my role at C40, I am utilizing these relationships to coordinate between cities. Lastly, the multidisciplinary approach at ISUS enriched my understanding of various fields, from finance to public policy, which is crucial in my current role where I deal with a wide range of stakeholders and sectors. Ultimately, ISUS not only prepared me for a career in urban planning and climate action but also empowered me to take a global leadership role in these areas, helping cities tackle some of the most pressing challenges of our time.”

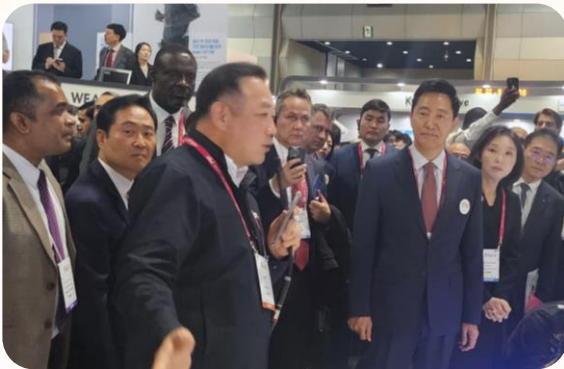
Hazirah continues to dedicate herself to tackling urban issues and climate action, working with global leaders to build a sustainable future. (D.K.)



Seoul Smart Life Week

Seoul Smart Life Week took place from October 10 to 12, 2024, at the COEX Convention & Exhibition Center in Seoul. Hosted by the Seoul Metropolitan Government and the Seoul Digital Foundation, the event aimed to share with city governments, companies, experts, and citizens around the world the future of city life made by state-of-the-art technologies and the value of companionship that embraces diversity and inclusion.

The event welcomed participation from both domestic and international city governments, organizations, companies, and individuals. Notably, two students from GULP Cohort 1, Mohammed Javed Iqbal Chowdhury from Bangladesh and Pisith Sok from Cambodia, were invited to attend. (D.K.)



Suraksan Adventure With ISUS Hiking Community

"Autumn Hikes at Suraksan: A Must-Do for ISUS Students!" 🍁🇰🇷

Seoul never fails to amaze, and with autumn just around the corner, October becomes the perfect month for outdoor adventures. As summer fades, the crisp air and vibrant foliage make hiking a must-do activity. This year, a group of eager students from ISUS took advantage of the season to explore Suraksan, one of Seoul's most scenic mountains.

Standing at 637 meters, Suraksan stretches from Seoul's Nowon District to the cities of Namyangju and Uijeongbu in Gyeonggi Province. Known for its stunning landscapes, rocky peaks, and panoramic views, it's a favorite destination for nature lovers. Some of the ISUS students couldn't resist the opportunity to hike this beautiful trail, soaking in the refreshing autumn atmosphere and capturing the breathtaking scenery along the way.

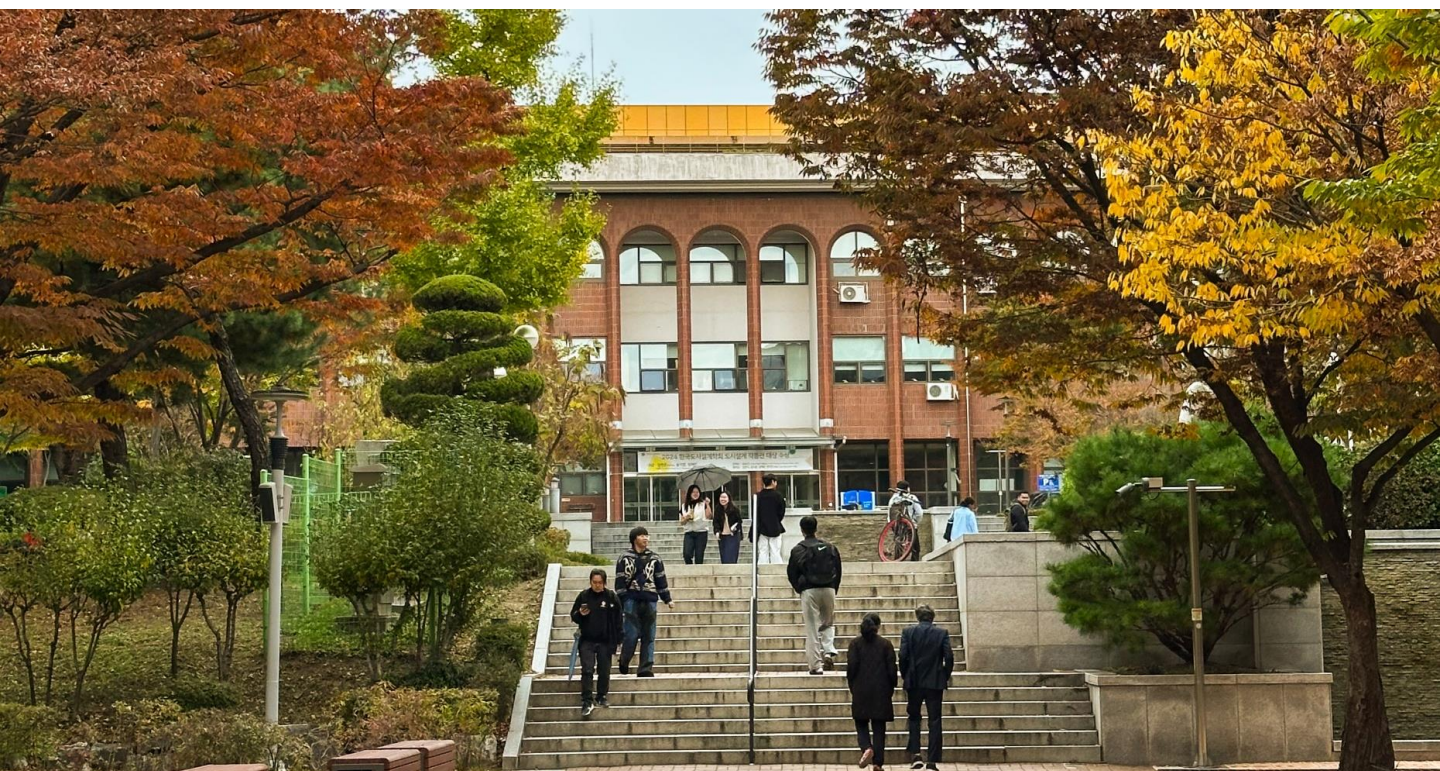
It was the perfect way to enjoy the season and bond over Seoul's natural beauty before winter arrives! (S.U.)



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