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ISUS UOS NEWSLETTER

International School of Urban Sciences
University of Seoul

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01. A Historic Day Out: IUDP students visit Seodaemun Heritage Landmarks



As part of the program “*A Journey through 2000 Years of Seoul History*”, IUDP students recently participated in a special field trip to Seodaemun Independence Park and the Seodaemun Prison History Hall on April 4th. Organized by the Seoul Historiography Institute, the visit offered more than just a walk-through historical landmark; it was a powerful reminder of Korea’s resilient spirit and the sacrifices made for independence.

Through guided tours, students explored the symbolic grounds of Seodaemun Independence Park, which honors those who dedicated their lives to Korea’s liberation. Furthermore, the journey continued inside the Seodaemun Prison History Hall, a solemn site where students learned about the harsh realities faced during the Japanese occupation.





One MUAP-17 student reflected, “Visiting the Dongnimmun Arch and the Seodaemun Prison History Hall transports us back to a time of oppression and terror. It deepens my appreciation for the sacrifices made by those who endured suffering in pursuit of Korea's liberty.”

Overall, the event provided an immersive learning experience, allowing students to gain vivid insights into Korea's modern history. With Seoul as their living classroom, IUDP students continue to uncover the layers of the city's urban and historical evolution — one meaningful stop at a time! (K.B)



02.

Seoul's **TOPIS** Welcomes **IUDP** Students for Smart City Field Trip

In April 2025, students from MUDSIP 7, MGLEP 11, and GULP taking the Smart City Development course visited Seoul's Transport Operation and Information Service (TOPIS) to explore how the city is leading the way in smart urban mobility. Located in the basement of Seoul City Hall in the heart of downtown, TOPIS offered a close-up look at Seoul's approach to managing its transportation systems through technology and innovation.



The group of students was welcomed with a guided tour of the main control room, where massive screens displayed live data on traffic flow, accidents, bus movements, and subway operations across the city. This immersive experience helped illustrate how TOPIS functions as the central hub for real-time traffic management, emergency coordination, and data-driven decision-making.



Students were also introduced to advanced technologies such as intelligent transportation systems, sensor-based data networks, and AI-driven modeling that support efficient mobility solutions, including autonomous vehicles. The visit provided a practical understanding of smart city planning through the lens of smart transport. For many, it was a meaningful glimpse into how digital infrastructure and innovation are shaping the cities of tomorrow. (J.T)



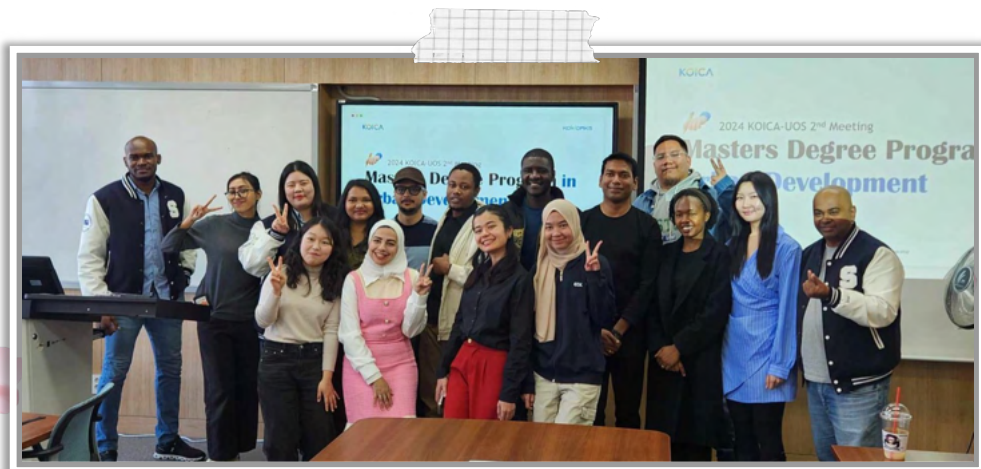
03. MUD Students Reflect at Monitoring Session by KOICA

On March 21st, MUD students gathered for the 2nd Monitoring Session hosted by KOICA KOWORKS. The dynamic session provided a meaningful platform for students to reflect on their academic journey, share experiences from daily life, and discuss their thesis progress.

Held in a supportive and open setting, students shared their achievements, voiced challenges, and explored areas for future improvement. A highlight of the session was the discussion of mid-term survey results, which sparked insightful conversations and encouraged students to think critically about their academic growth.



With honest reflections and shared laughter, the session not only strengthened peer connections but also fostered a sense of motivation and purpose, underscoring the importance of mutual support and collaboration as students continue their journey in Korea and within the MUD program. (K.B)



04.

MGLEP-11 Visits Sustainability and Water Management Sites on Field Trip

On April 18, 2025, students from the MGLEP 11 cohort took part in an engaging academic field trip that offered them real-world insights beyond the classroom. The visit, closely tied to their studies in Environmental Policy and Climate Change Adaptation, included two key sites in Seoul: the Energy Dream Centre and the Han River Control Office.

The day began at the Seoul Energy Dream Centre—a former landfill turned into a model of sustainable design, located in the World Cup Park area, Mapo-gu. There, students explored Korea’s first public Zero Energy building. Running entirely on solar and geothermal energy, the facility generates enough power to meet its own needs and even contributes excess electricity to the grid. Students were particularly intrigued by how architectural choices and sustainable technologies were integrated to minimize energy loss.





Later in the day, the group visited the Han River Control Office, where they learned about flood monitoring and water resource management. The center has recently boosted its capacity by adding over 200 new weather stations to respond more effectively to the city's increasingly unpredictable rainfall.

Overall, the trip gave students a closer look at how Seoul is tackling environmental challenges through innovation, infrastructure, and policy. (J.T)



05.

Alum of the Month

Karla Mandujano (MGLEP 7)

Karla Mandujano, an alumna of MGLEP-7, is currently Assistant Manager at Mexico's National Waters Commission (Conagua), where she leads planning efforts in water and sanitation. Her international experience, including work with GIZ, highlights her dedication to collaboration and sustainable development. Karla credits ISUS for expanding her global outlook and inspiring lasting connections.



1. Could you provide a brief description of your current workplace and explain your role there?

I work at Conagua, a decentralized agency under Mexico's Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, responsible for managing the nation's water resources and federal funding for water and sanitation. My main task is overseeing municipal Master Plans for water and sanitation, a requirement for accessing federal funds under new sustainability guidelines. I track progress, review plans, generate reports, develop strategies, and present findings at the national level. My role has also grown to include project management, overseeing public bidding, reviewing policies, coordinating emergency responses, and helping design funding regulations.

2. Could you tell us about a memorable international cooperation project you were involved in?

One standout experience was a project between Conagua and GIZ called Vecindades ("vicinities"), which supported operators of neighboring wastewater treatment plants. It promoted experience-sharing and technical exchange to strengthen their capacity with support from both organizations.

At the time, I was leading Escuela del Agua (School of Water), and I was excited to integrate the Vecindades model. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted our plans, and the program later evolved. Despite that, the project left a lasting impression. I've worked with GIZ and the IDB on other projects, but Vecindades remains close to my heart.

3. How has your experience at ISUS influenced you?

ISUS shaped both my professional and personal growth. I deepened my knowledge of environmental policy, leadership, and global development, especially Mexico's role among developing nations. Personally, I learned to slow down, live more intentionally, and build emotional resilience. A deeply meaningful moment was the support I received from the ISUS community after my mother's passing. More than anything, ISUS taught me about compassion and inner strength.

4. What are your future plans, both personally and professionally?

I hope to pursue a PhD to continue contributing meaningfully to Mexico's development. I am passionate about lifelong learning and believe it will help me grow professionally.

On a personal level, I dream of visiting all the countries of my MGLEP 7 classmates—to reconnect, learn about their cultures, and enjoy their local cuisines. I am also focusing on staying healthy and getting better at softball, which I have taken up as a hobby.



5. Any message for the ISUS community?

I am truly grateful to my professors—especially Shin Lee, Min Park, and Seung Beom Seo, for their kindness during difficult times.

To my juniors: Make the most of your time at the University of Seoul. Learn from each other, be kind, and enjoy the special journey.

To my peers: I miss you all and hope we can reunite and dance together again soon.

06.

94th ISUS Urban Infra Forum Highlights the Role of MDBs in Infrastructure Finance



In late March, ISUS hosted the 94th Urban Infra Forum under the theme “Infrastructure Finance and the Role of Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs).” The session spotlighted the urgent challenge of closing the projected \$15 trillion global infrastructure gap by 2040. From financial barriers to limited institutional capacity, many countries continue to face persistent challenges in delivering essential infrastructure.

Dr. Hun Kim, Acting Vice President of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) based in Beijing, emphasized the critical role of multilateral development banks (MDBs) such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and Korea’s Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) in advancing sustainable infrastructure development.

He highlighted that these institutions provide both upstream and downstream support — from shaping policy environments and structuring bankable projects to facilitating Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) and offering concessional loans. Their interventions help reduce investment risks and enhance access to innovative financing, including climate finance and support for green infrastructure initiatives.



EDCF, in particular, was highlighted as a key instrument of South Korea's development cooperation strategy, helping partner countries pursue inclusive, climate-smart infrastructure.

For ISUS students, the forum offered a practical perspective on the financial and policy frameworks behind global development. It showcased how smart financing, strategic partnerships, and long-term vision come together to build resilient cities and close the infrastructure gap. (J.T)

07. ISUS Students Unite over Home-Cooked Feasts: Eid Celebrations Stir Up Joy in the Dorm Kitchen

On April 2, 2025, groups of international students celebrated Eid in the dormitory kitchen by cooking and sharing their traditional homemade dishes. With no families nearby, this meeting created a warm and festive atmosphere filled with laughter, food, and a strong sense of community. The evening blossomed into more than just a meal; it became a celebration of unity, belonging, and the joy of creating new memories together. (J.T)



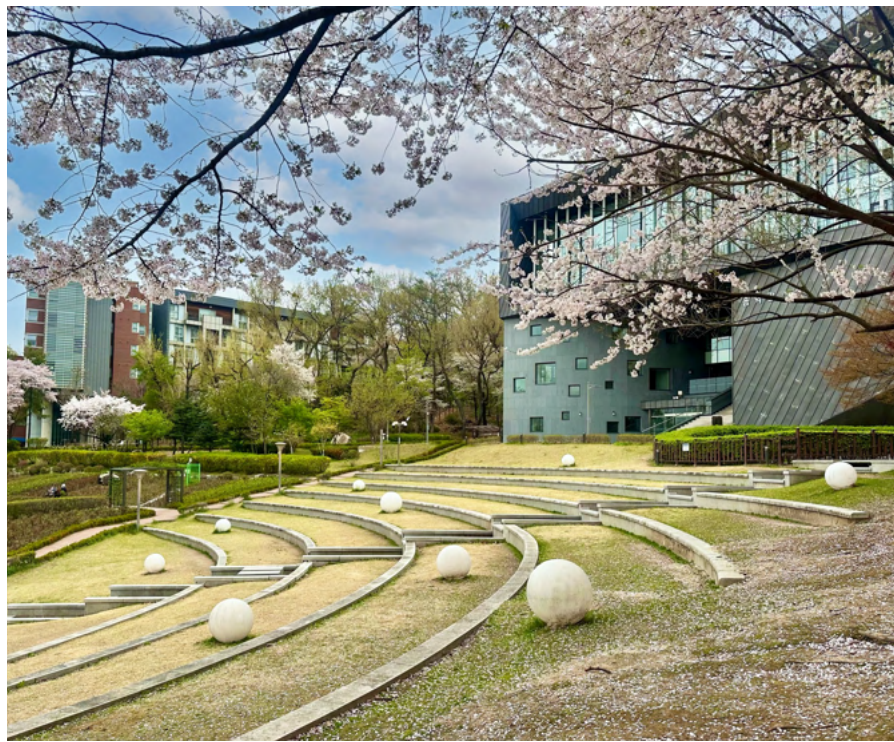
Cherry Blossoms and cherished memories at UOS



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