

Evaluation of Centres for Migrant Youth in Seoul from the Perspective of Multicultural Education: Focusing on Korean-Chinese Migrant Youth*

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다문화교육 관점에서의 서울시 이주 청소년 시설에 대한 평가 : 조선족 중도입국 청소년을 중심으로*

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Abstract : As diverse migrants and cultures flowed into Korean society amid globalization, the South Korean government declared a transition to multicultural society and formed government-led multiculturalism. In this context, multicultural education has been conducted in the public school system. In particular, the increase in migrant youth affected the need for centres for migrant youth. In this regard, the purpose of this study is to evaluate the establishment and role of centres for migrant youth in local communities. Multiculturalism in Korean society is spread through multicultural policies and can cause exclusion against certain migrant groups. Among the multicultural education projects implemented as part of multicultural policies, I pointed out that centres for migrant youth have set a goal of integrating migrant youth into mainstream society as good citizens. Furthermore, by suggesting that centres for migrant youth can be sites of connections where migrant youth, centres and local communities are linked, I highlighted that centres for migrant youth can play an important role in achieving the ultimate goal of multiculturalism that both migrant youth and native Koreans pursue equal lives as a member of society.

Key Words : Multicultural education policies, Korean-Chinese migrant youth, Centre for migrant youth, Sites of connection, Seoul

요약 : 글로벌화가 진행됨에 따라 한국 사회로 다양한 이주자들과 문화가 유입됨에 따라 정부는 한국 사회가 다문화사회로 전환되었음을 선포하고 정부 주도로 다문화주의를 구성하기 시작했다. 이러한 맥락에서 다문화교육 역시 공교육을 중심으로 시작되었다. 특히, 이주 청소년들의 급증은 공교육 밖에서 그들을 위한 센터들의 필요성이 제기되는 데 영향을 미쳤다. 이러한 점에서 본 연구의 목적은 한국 다문화교육정책의 일환인 이주 청소년 센터의 설립과 지역사회 내에서의 역할에 대한 비판적인 분석을 하는 것이다. 먼저, 한국의 다문화정책에 대한 배경을 간단히 소개함으로써 이러한 정부의 다문화정책이 이주자들을 한국 사회에 적응 및 동화시키려는 목적이 있음을 밝히고자 한다. 두 번째로, 이러한 한국식 다문화정책의 일환으로 시행된 다문화교육 사업 중 이주 청소년 센터는 이주 청소년들을 한국사회에 바람직한 시민으로 통합시키고자 하는 것을 목표로 설정한 것을 지적하면서 이주 청소년-센터-지역사회가 유기적으로 연결될 수 있는 만남의 장의 기능을 이주 청소년 센터가 담당하는 것을 제안하였다. 즉, 이 연구는 이주 청소년과 한국인 선주민이 함께 사회 구성원으로서 평등한 삶을 추구하는 다문화교육의 궁극적 목적을 달성하는데 이주 청소년 센터가 중요한 역할을 할 수 있음을 강조하였다.

주요어 : 다문화교육 정책, 조선족 중도입국 청소년, 이주청소년센터, 연결의 장소, 서울

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I. Introduction

South Korea has been considered a country with a largely homogeneous population and South Koreans pride themselves on adhering to a culture and way of life handed down from their ancestors. However, as diversity in population and culture emerge, this homogeneous nationalism is being replaced by multiculturalism (Oh, 2007). Contrary to accepting of these demographic and social changes, many South Koreans believe that the invasion of diverse cultures undermines their own culture, which arouse antipathy toward heterogeneous cultures.

The South Korean government has begun to use the term “multiculturalism” as a means of dealing with this newly emerging diversity which is perceived as a challenge to the homogeneous nationalism prevalent in society (Koo, 2015). Multiculturalism has become the keynote of the government’s immigration policy. The term “multiculturalism” was announced in April 2006 then circulated over a short period of time without gaining sufficient public agreement for the governments’ plan to support the social integration of migrant families by focusing on married migrant families (Koo, 2015). Popular misunderstandings meant it became associated with discrimination against certain migrant groups and the formation of a negative discourse around them in South Korean society.

In this context, the South Korean government operates multicultural education to solve problems that arise in South Korean society which is reorganised into multi-ethnic and multi-cultural, and to foster tolerance among diverse people and a sense of global citizenship (Park, 2008). Such multicultural education has been conducted mainly in school for children from multicultural families whose one or both parents are foreigners. As of 2021, the number of multicultural students in South Korea was 160,058, and the ratio of them to the total number of students is 2.6 percent¹⁾ (MOE, 2022). Due to the rapid increase in the number of children from multicultural families, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has announced a Multicultural Education

Support Plan every year since 2006. In order to reflect the characteristics of local communities, local education offices also formulate and announce detailed Multicultural Education Support Plans every year (Chang and Woo, 2022).

It is also worthwhile that the number of migrant youth, who was born and raised mainly in foreign countries, (i.e., *Chung-to-ip-kuk-ch’öng-so-nyöñ* (중도입국청소년)) is increasing. As mentioned above, multicultural education has mainly focused on children born in international marriage families that Koreans and foreigners are married (MOE, 2021). However, the number of migrant youth who moved to South Korea for several reasons such as remarriage of parents or parental labour migration is on the increase. According to statistics from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) in 2020, registered migrant youth aged 10 to 24 has 212,982, of which Chinese nationality is 33.7% (71,685 people), the largest percentage. In terms of region, nearly half of migrant youth live in the metropolitan area, including Seoul (26.2%) and Gyeonggi Province (21.0%). In other words, the number of migrant youth is increasing nationwide, but it is especially noticeable in some areas. As the number of migrant youth moving into local communities increases, many changes are emerging in daily spaces. Such changes cause problems in local communities, especially in schools, which pose the social need for multicultural education (Chang and Woo, 2022).

Existing literature on multicultural education policies has mainly analysed multicultural policies of ministries of the central government such as the MOE, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF) and the MOJ (Park, 2016; Kim and So, 2018; Woo *et al.*, 2018). Although some studies argue that multicultural education should be conducted reflecting regional characteristics (Chang and Woo, 2022), it is difficult to find in-depth research, such as practices of multicultural education in a regional context. In geography education, it is argued that the geography curriculum can provide opportunities to explore some topics related to changes in local communities and social issues due to local changes

(Park, 2008; Choi and Shin, 2011; Cho, 2016). However, while most of the research focuses on theoretical discussions such as curriculum, research trends and educational value of multicultural education in geography, there is a limit to the empirical analysis of how multicultural education actually affects students' daily lives.

This study aims to conduct a critical evaluation of purposes and programmes of centres for migrant youth in Seoul focusing on Korean-Chinese migrant youth (KCMY). While research on multicultural education has focused on public education, centres for migrant youth have not attracted attention from researchers even though they are one of the projects of multicultural education policies. However, this research concentrates on centres for migrant youth (e.g., multicultural education policy schools, Korean language classes, multicultural special classes and alternative schools for migrant youth), and analyses the impact of these centres on the lives of migrant youth. In particular, I investigate the opinions of KCMY, who account for a high proportion among migrant youth, on multiculturalism and centres for migrant youth in South Korea. In order to achieve this, I conducted in-depth interviews with 20 KCMY, 11 staff working at centres for migrant youth and 6 policymakers²⁾ in Seoul from October 2019 to September 2020. In order to manage interview data, I gave pseudonyms to all participants. Pseudonyms were created by designating a letter of the alphabet to each group and then adding an Arabic number which were given in the order of interviews. I assigned 'M' to KCMY, 'S' to migrant organisation staff and 'P' to policymakers.

This article consists of two main sections. The first section briefly introduces South Korean government's multicultural policies, including multicultural education. In the second part, I conduct evaluation of the influences of centres for migrant youth in developing a sense of belonging of migrant youth both in the local community and within South Korean society more broadly. Lastly, I summarise the previous sections and describe contributions and limitations of this research.

II. Introduction of Multicultural Policies in South Korea

Multicultural policies in South Korea has the stated aim of supporting the adaptation of migrant families (Koo, 2015). In particular, the South Korean government implement multicultural policies to support the adaptation and integration of married migrant women and their children into South Korean society, as will be explained further below. Therefore, multiculturalism in South Korean policies tends to be a strategy to pursue social stability by managing heterogeneous groups who are believed to hinder social unity (Koo, 2015). Furthermore, government intentions are to implement multicultural policies in parallel with its immigration policies, such as visa policies. Since these multicultural policies mainly target migrants, South Koreans remain unaffected by them. Thus, multicultural policies have played a role in rationalising the boundaries between migrants and the native through accentuating the distinction between those two groups (Yuval-Davis, 2006; Park, 2012; Chang and Woo, 2022). In particular, because South Korean multiculturalism began with a government-led top-down approach, South Koreans had to accept it without enough preparation for accepting the diversity (Jin, 2014). Even though South Koreans understand that the need to pursue coexistence with different cultures and people, they psychologically 'other' them. As such othering could lead to social conflict between migrants and South Koreans, the government expects migrants to join the mainstream social framework through multicultural policies which pursue the assimilation of migrants.

As mentioned earlier, South Korean multiculturalism was created as the South Korean government announced establishing multicultural society as the vision of immigration policies. In 2006, the government, under the Presidency of Roh Moo-Hyun, declared a transition to a multicultural society and said, "We should strive to integrate migrants through multicultural policies" (Pressian, 2006). In particular, the MOE announced policies to support the adaptation and integration of marriage migrant women and their children into South Korean

society, which had become a social issue. In 2008, the Multicultural Family Support Act was enacted and the term “a multicultural family” was defined as a family consisting of a marriage between a South Korean and a marriage-migrant. As this definition of a multicultural family implies, multiculturalism in South Korea’s policies refers to situations where people of different nationalities become mixed up rather than to the coexistence of diverse cultures (Koo, 2015). Migrant youth of foreign nationality were categorised as multicultural students in schools according to the MOE’s definition, which included children who were born to those multicultural families. As the number of diverse migrants has increased, the government has expanded the scope of its definition of multicultural families to include any migrants and their children (MOGEF, 2018). Despite this, because the definition and range of children of multicultural families can vary according to different government ministries, migrant youth become a target of multicultural policies, although this may vary depending on the policy.

As the proportion of migrant youth³⁾ relative to the total number of registered foreigners and the total number of them in South Korea has increased in recent years (see Fig. 1), the South Korean government has begun to pay attention to migrant youth in multicultural policies. South Korea’s multicultural policies are based

on the Basic Plan for Multicultural Family Policy which is announced every five years under the Multicultural Family Support Act. While previous multicultural policies have concentrated on immigration and the initial period of adaptation of migrant youth, the Third Basic Plan for Multicultural Family Policy focuses on the prolonged stay in various forms of migrant families (MOGEF, 2018). This change in policy was influenced by the point that the migrant youth became an object of focus as they were also staying in South Korea for more than a year and belonged to various forms of family due to family reunification or parental divorce or remarriage. Furthermore, although existing policies did not take into account the difference between migrant youth and children of multicultural families born in South Korea, the government has recently announced plans to implement support policies which consider the characteristics of this group (MOGEF, 2018). The government has assumed that the identities of migrant youth differ from those of mainstream society because they grew up mainly in foreign countries, and that their sense of belonging to South Korean society is weak. Therefore, the government set up the promotion of their integration into Korean society through their stable growth as one of the main policy issues in the new multicultural policy plan (see Table 1).

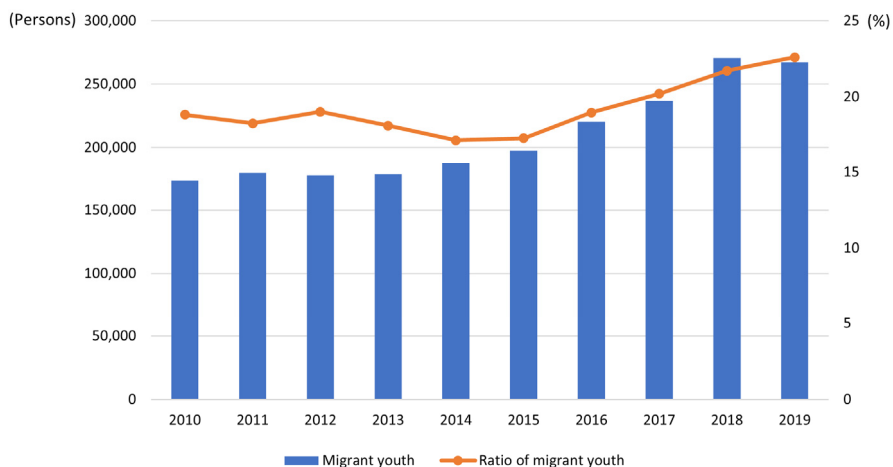


Fig. 1. The Number and Ratio of Registered Migrant Youth (2010–2019)

Source : Korean Statistical Information Service

As Table 1 demonstrates, the current multicultural policies aim to develop a society which respects diversity so that migrants and South Koreans can coexist equally in the society. If previous policies had unilaterally forced migrants to assimilate and integrate into South Korean society, the current policies appear to aim at helping migrants coexist with South Koreans without discrimination (MOGEF, 2018; SMG, 2019; MOE, 2021; SMOE, 2021). In particular, migrant youth have become recognised as members of multicultural families, including migrant families, under the multicultural family policies of the central government. The central government's multicultural policies, which are established mainly by the MOGEF, suggest a broad framework for domestic multicultural policies by setting the stance and direction of overall multicultural policies at the national level (Choi and Lim, 2021). Other government ministries, such as the MOE, have established multicultural policies respectively based on the plan for multicultural policy announced by the MOGEF. Local governments are responsible for implementing detailed tasks based on the major policy directives of the central government and for carrying out their own relevant policies that take into account local characteristics (e.g., demographic

characteristics of migrants, employment, industry, etc.) (Choi and Lim, 2021). The multicultural policies of the SMG, Seoul having the largest number of migrant in the country, offer support for them to live as members of local communities. Through the announcement of the Second Basic Plan for Foreign Residents and Multicultural Families of Seoul (2019-2023), the SMG has set out a vision for its multicultural policies to ensure the social and economic participation of migrants in Seoul. Regarding migrant youth, one of the major policy tasks is to support them in their adaptation so that they can enjoy the right to be educated and work like South Korean citizens. Multicultural education policies which directly influence migrant youth also intend to help to increase diversity in schools (SMOE, 2021). The MOE has announced the Multicultural Education Support Plan (2021), and local education offices, such as the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education (SMOE), implement the multicultural education policies in practice. The goal of multicultural education policies is to help migrant youth adapt smoothly to South Korean schools and to have a positive impact not only on their learning but also on their social adaptation. In these three major policies, migrant youth are judged to be able to adapt

Table 1. Plans for Multicultural Policies in South Korea

Plan	The Third Basic Plan for Multicultural Family Policy	Multicultural Education Support Plan	The Second Basic Plan for Foreign Residents and Multicultural Families of Seoul
Agency	MOGEF	MOE, Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education (SMOE)	Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG)
Target	Marriage migrants, children and local communities	Migrant students, teachers, parents and local communities	Foreign residents and local communities
Vision	Multicultural society with equal participation and coexistence	Students who learn and grow together, and schools with diversity and harmony	Seoul where migrants' participation is guaranteed
Key themes of major policy tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for long-term stay of multicultural families • Enhancement of capabilities of children of multicultural families • Improvement in multicultural acceptability • Cooperative multicultural family policy management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guarantee of educational opportunities • Support for school adaptation and stable growth support • Establishment of a school environment with diversity • Enhancement of the multicultural education support system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cultural diversity city • The human rights-centred safe city where citizens can mutually respect and communicate • The city where all citizens share duties and rights • The tolerance city realised by governance

Source : MOGEF, 2018; SMG, 2019; MOE, 2021; SMOE, 2021

with less difficulty to South Korean society and to be able to coexist with South Koreans.

In the policies and projects of these plans, migrant youth are considered to be assimilated and adapted to the mainstream framework in South Korean society, even if these policies seem to acknowledge their diversity (see Table 2 and 3). Multicultural policies of the South Korean central government and the SMG targeted at migrant youth are divided into the following

categories: bilingual education, career and vocational education and guidance, Korean language education, school life support and social adaptation. These categories imply that those in government wish to encourage migrant youth to adapt to society and school life through Korean language education and, to use the advantages of bilingual abilities to decide their career (Bae, 2016; Lee *et al.*, 2017). The emphasis in these policies is on the adaptation of migrant youth. In other

Table 2. Policies or Projects of the South Korean Government Targeting Migrant Youth

Category	Policy/Project	Responsible Agency
Bilingual education	Enrichment of bilingual human resource development projects	MOGEF, MOE
Career and vocational education	Activation of career programmes for migrant youth	MOGEF, MOE
	Support for the vocational education and training institute : Korean Polytechnic Dasom High school	MOEL
Korean language education	Enhancement of Korean language education management and quality improvement: the Korean as a Second Language (KSL) curriculum and courses for Test of Proficiency in Korean (TOPIK)	MOGEF, MOE
Social adjustment	Expansion and diversification of Rainbow School	MOGEF, MOJ
	Operation of programmes to support the psychological and emotional stability of migrant youth	MOGEF
	Expansion of 'School of achieving my work' management and vocational training courses for migrant youth	MOGEF
Support for school life	Activating the Academic Ability Review Committee to support the entry of migrant youth into public education	MOE
	Support for the basic academic skills improvement	MOE
	Expansion and enhancement of Multicultural Preparatory Schools for migrant youth' early adaptation to school life	MOE

Source : MOGEF, 2018

Table 3. Policies or Projects of the SMG and SMOE Targeting Migrant Youth

Category	Policy/Project	Responsible Agency
Career and vocational education	Providing comprehensive career and school admission services for migrant youth	SMG
	Provision of information for migrant youth and parents who are having difficulty deciding their careers	SMG
	Customised career mentoring programme for migrant youth	SMOE
Social adjustment	Operation and promotion of centres (NGOs) and projects - Operating the 'Seoul On-dream Education Centre' - Support for the emotional aspect of migrant youth	SMG
	Running a winter camp for migrant youth from low-income families	SMG
	Support for entry into public education and school adaptation	SMOE
Support for school life	Strengthening prevention and support of school violence	SMOE
	Operating the multicultural education support centre, "Da Plus On Centre"	SMOE

Source : SMG, 2019; SMOE, 2021

words, multicultural policies encourage migrant youth to learn about South Korean culture and society thus assimilating into the South Korean social system where they will not cause any problem. Centres for migrant youth (e.g., Rainbow school, Seoul On-dream Education Centre and Da plus On Centre) and vocational high schools for migrant youth (e.g., Korean Polytechnic Dasom High School and Seoul Dasom Tourism High School) serve as hubs to implement multicultural education policies. Programmes run by these organisations firstly aim at a smooth and efficient harmonisation of migrant youth with mainstream society by alleviating their difficulties through helping them learn Korean language, culture and society (Yoo, 2020). In this light, South Korean multicultural policies are intended to train migrant youth to be good citizens. Through multicultural policies, including multicultural education policies, government encourages migrant youth to abide by the mainstream framework, not to maintain their own identities. The standard of 'goodness' refers to the desirable standard that mainstream society has adhered to so far (Atkinson, 2005), and the government encourages migrant youth to become good citizens who conform to this standard. Policies aimed at maintaining their identities, such as bilingual education, are intended not to encourage diversity, but to turn them into valuable human resources for South Korea (Kim and Chung, 2015). These policies also demonstrate the South Korean government's intention to manage the diversity of migrant youth within the mainstream framework.

III. Centres for Migrant Youth

The existing Korean literature on centres for migrant youth has focused on the types of support they provide (Bae, 2016; Lee *et al.*, 2017; Yoo, 2020). However, this research considers their aims and programmes while providing critical perspectives on the influences of centres in developing positionalities and a sense of

belonging of KCMY both in the local community and within South Korean society more broadly. The South Korean government's immigration policies focus largely on migrant workers, married migrant women and foreign students (MOE, 2021; MOEL, 2021; MOGEF, 2021; MOJ, 2021). Since these migrant groups account for 62 percent of the foreigners living in South Korea, there are centres dedicated to help them located in each region or city (MOJ, 2020). However, a small number of centres specifically targeted at migrant youth have been provided by the government or NGOs since the late 2000s. The number of these is small as the population of migrant youth is proportionally small compared to the three groups mentioned above. Since the mid-2010s, South Korean academia and the media have begun to highlight the various social difficulties resulting from the problems migrant youth have in adapting to South Korean society. However, at first the South Korean government did not consider it necessary to provide centres to help migrant youth as it judged that they would be fully able to adapt to society through the school system. Only in the late 2010s, when the number of migrant youth began to increase rapidly, especially in Seoul, did the government and a number of NGOs establish centres to provide services to support their adaptation to society. The centres and other services for migrant youth that were established at the time included multicultural education policy schools, Korean language classes, multicultural special classes and alternative schools for migrant youth. As of 2022, there are 5 dedicated centres for migrant youth, 30 multicultural education policy schools and 22 Korean language classes in Seoul.

1. Establishment of centres for migrant youth

The centres for migrant youth were established by both the government and certain NGOs with the aim of instructing migrant youth in how to become good citizens. In South Korean society, a good citizen tends

to be someone who complies with social rules or laws, who receives a formal school education during childhood and who participates in productive economic activities during adulthood. It is held that passive citizens, those who conform to social norms and laws, approach closer to good citizens than active citizens who make their voices heard or express their subjective view on social issues. Thus, the government's perception of what is a good citizen tends to be based on a desire to deter the public from protest or resistance. In this regard, centres for migrant youth aim to help migrant youth adapt to South Korean society by turning them into good citizens who will comply with South Korean social norms and laws (MOE, 2021; SMOE, 2021). This imperative was arose in response to the social needs caused not only by the increasing numbers of migrant youth but also by the social problems that resulted from their difficulties in adapting to the new society.

Currently, there is an influx of migrant youth of various nationalities and with different reasons for migrating to South Korea. According to Korea Immigration Service Statistics for 2019, young people aged between 15 and 19 made up the largest proportion (about 33.9 percent) of migrants under the age of 20. The largest number of this group (10,607 people) were living in Seoul, that is 1.6 times the number of those living in Gyeonggi Province (6,555 people), the second largest

population by area listed. In Seoul, the number of KCMY aged between 15 and 19 has risen sharply since 2017 (see Fig. 2). This increase in numbers has been linked to the easing of visa rules in 2011 which were aimed facilitating the family reunification of Korean-Chinese migrants.

KCMY live largely in the areas of Seoul where Korean-Chinese migrants are concentrated. Korean-Chinese form the largest ethnic enclave in Daerim-dong, Seoul, and Korean-Chinese migrants tend to encourage their children to remain in/around the enclave to make their social adjustment easier. All participants who are KCMY reside either in or near Daerim-dong. As the ethnic enclave provides information and social capital for early migrants while allowing them to live among people of similar ethnic background to themselves, it is a convenient point to ease into the acculturation process (Castles *et al.*, 2014; Mitchell, 2003). As spaces where South Koreans live also exist within the area, the influx of KCMY has meant a change in communal spaces for South Koreans as well. In particular, some conflicts have occurred at schools where KCMY attend. P5, an educational supervisor, describes some of the problems resulting from the influx of KCMY into the area:

Schools now demand that Korean-Chinese students understand Korean language and the working of the

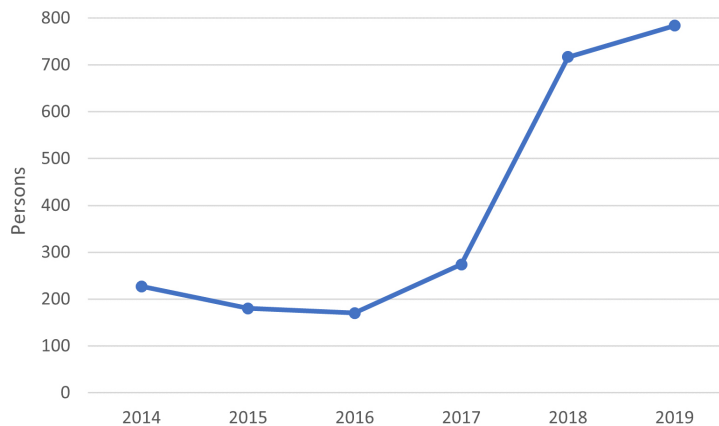


Fig. 2. The Number of Registered Korean-Chinese Migrants aged 15 to 19 in Seoul (2014–2019)

Source : Korean Immigration Service Statistics

South Korean school system before enrolling in the school. KCMY who come to South Korea in middle or high school have some problems at school. In particular, there are many Korean-Chinese migrants in the south-western part of Seoul since there are areas there where the community is concentrated. [...] Teachers say that it is difficult to teach and guide Korean-Chinese students because they do not participate in the class and they communicate only among themselves using Chinese. There are also conflicts between South Korean parents and Korean-Chinese parents.

(P5, Male, Educational supervisor)

KCMY have difficulty in communicating with South Koreans at school due to a lack of understanding of the Korean language on the one hand and of South Korean school culture on the other hand. They tend to form groups among themselves where they can speak in Chinese. A school is a space where students can not only learn subjects but also practice socialisation to enable them to grow up to be good citizens (Chee, 2020; Moskal, 2014). Especially for migrant youth, schools are a place where they can socialise while experiencing the host culture and forming in-depth relationships with natives (Adams and Kirova, 2006). However, KCMY create a boundary between themselves and their South Korean classmates and teachers, even if unintentionally, due to the language barrier that limits the development of relationships with South Koreans. As P5 mentions, both teachers and their South Korean classmates consider this boundary-making to be a problem (Anderson, 2015), and deem Korean-Chinese pupils as being ‘tough to get along with’ or ‘troublemakers’. At schools in or around Daerim-dong, where the number of Korean-Chinese students is large, boundaries between South Koreans—South Korean teachers, South Korean students and their parents—and Korean-Chinese migrants—Korean-Chinese students and their parents—becomes pronounced. The government ministries—MOE and MOGEF—regards difficulties in adapting to South Korean society as the main cause of

conflict between KCMY and South Koreans. Therefore, the government has focused on establishing centres to help KCMY adapt to South Korean society as a means of resolving social conflict (MOE, 2021; MOGEF, 2018).

Both central and local governments have enacted laws and ordinances to establish centres for migrant youth. There are also some NGOs which plan to operate centres for them in a few local areas. However, as detailed below, local residents often oppose the establishment of these centres by bringing civil complaints to borough offices or refusing to rent spaces for the centres. As a result, both governments and NGOs have found it difficult to obtain sites to house the centres. S4 describes their experiences with South Korean residents who were opposed to the establishment of centres:

At first, we tried to rent a floor in a building. When I went to sign the contract, I was told that the owner could not rent it to us because we are a multicultural school. He said multicultural schools are unpleasant places. So, we found a new space in another building that is directly connected to the subway station. However, the owner told me that he could not rent it to us since migrant youth might make trouble. This school is now located at some distance from the subway station, so it can be difficult for students to find the building.

(S4, Male, Head of alternative school for migrant youth)

The alternative school for migrant youth run by S4 only shows its location with a so small sign that people cannot easily find its existence outside the building (Fig. 3). Regarding this, S4 maintains that South Koreans do not welcome centres for migrant youth and are reluctant to rent their spaces to them. According to Anderson (2015), mainstream society is creating a border with ‘the other’ group which has physical or cultural differences from it. The arrival of ‘the other’ into its space is perceived as being like an invasion. In this context, the establishment of centres for migrant youth is viewed as an attempt by migrant youth, that is people of different

nationality and culture, to occupy a space considered as belonging to South Koreans. Also, South Korean prejudice against Korean-Chinese migrants is expressed in terms of concerns that if KCMY flock to an area to use the centre, there will be a negative impact on the safety of the local community. Such concerns often result in nimbyism. This kind of nimbyism is often expressed as discrimination against centres for migrant youth through refusal to rent property to them, which is not illegal and does not involve breaking any laws. Such nimbyism is becoming ever more of a problem around the Korean-Chinese ethnic enclave (Lee, 2015).

KCMY, who do not use the centres run by the governments or NGOs, often attend a category of state school known as ‘Multicultural education policy schools’ or they may attend Korean language classes in a non-multicultural education policy school. These schools and classes provide migrant youth with education designated to help with their adaptation to South Korean society. Services on offer include Korean language classes, psychological counselling and fieldtrip, and may take into account the characteristics of the local community as well as the migrant youth who attend (MOE, 2021). South Korean students and their parents

usually complain that these schools are run mainly for the benefit of foreign students. Some South Korean students then leave their schools. Thus, schools are in general reluctant to be designated as a Multicultural education policy school or even to run Korean language classes due to fears both of an outflow of South Korean students and an influx of foreign students. However, this negative attitude can make it difficult for migrant youth to adapt to the public education system and to the new society. The reason for establishing these facilities was government expectations that migrant youth would be able to adapt to the South Korean public education system without any serious difficulties as education for migrant youth is provided at general schools (MOE, 2021). Also, the government predicted that once migrant youth began to enter the public education system, they would adapt to South Korean society through social interaction with South Koreans. As schools are reluctant to introduce these facilities, even though they are shown to have a positive impact on the school and help with the social adaptation of their pupils, migrant youth often find themselves struggling to adapt school life. Seven participants who attended schools that did not offer special provisions for



Fig. 3. The small-sized sign of the school for migrant youth

migrants claimed that such facilities would have been helpful if they had been provided by their schools.

As S4 mentions, centres for migrant youth run by the government or by NGOs are often located in places which are not easily accessible by public transportation due to South Koreans' opposition to the establishment of these centres. Six participants, who have attended centres for migrant youth which are run by the government or NGOs, were only able to find those centres through the introduction of acquaintances or families or other migrant families. Centres for migrant youth ought really to be located in places where migrant youth and their parents who lack local information can easily find them. In that case migrant youth who are newly arrived in the country would easily be able to access support. However, as places which are easily accessible to migrant youth (e.g., near a bus stop or subway station) are equally accessible to South Koreans they will tend to be occupied by them. If it is the case that the owners of buildings in these places (or the local shopkeepers) have a negative perception of migrant youth they will probably oppose the establishment of centres in the nearby area. The result then is that centres for migrant youth tend to be located in less accessible places and migrant youth who need help from the centres do not even know of their existence or role. In other words, the practical results are very different from those set out by the government.

The key aims of centres for migrant youth are to help with social adaptation and offer vocational education. Firstly, centres aim to support newly arrived migrant youth in adapting to South Korean society through providing Korean language education and activities to help them better understand Korean culture and society. This goal runs in parallel with the aims of other centres for foreigners—Multicultural family support centres and Migrant worker centres—in South Korea. However, the centres for migrant youth provide recreational and artistic activities as well as academic education; in this way they recognise the particular characteristics of adolescence. Furthermore, they provide

education and advice on Korean culture and society in order to assist migrant youth in their adaptation to everyday life in South Korea. All participants working at centres also insist that the priority of their centres is the social integration of migrant youth. The priority of these centres reflects governmental and social discourse about migrant youth. According to a National Multicultural Family survey carried out in 2019, 33.2 percent of migrant youth who mainly grew up abroad do not currently attend school, and 25.9 percent of them have never attended school in South Korea. Also, the percentage of migrant youth who go to high school is about half that of those who attend primary school (Choi *et al.*, 2019). Crimes involving migrant youth have recently received much media coverage. In news articles about migrant youth, it is sometimes claimed that they are involved in mass violence or in phishing scam. While it is true that some migrant youth have been involved in criminal activity, this media coverage also reflects a moral panic amongst South Koreans, and there is much exaggeration in the reporting. In particular, media coverage of crimes involving KCMY emphasises the fact that they are Korean-Chinese thus fulfilling South Koreans' negative perception of Korean-Chinese migrants as a problematic group (Pressian, 2019). Such coverage goes to strengthen negative public opinion about migrant youth, especially KCMY. As a result, the public demands that migrant youth adapt better to society in order to prevent further problems because they are considered a problematic social group. Thus, the primary goal of the centres has become that of guiding migrant youth who are believed to be disengaged and at risk (Vromen and Collin, 2010; Mansouri and Mikola, 2014).

Another goal of the centres is to help migrant youth gain skills that will enable them to make a livelihood through vocational education. There are ten participants aged 16 to 18 who are preparing for future employment through vocational training provided by specialised high schools or centres. Four of these participants are attending specialised high school along with South

Koreans, whereas the other six are attending ones solely for migrant youth, S11 and P6 discuss the implications of the vocational education provided by the specialised schools or centres:

I think the goal of this school is to integrate foreign students into South Korean society quickly by turning them into making them labourers. The government assumes that migrant youth can adapt well to society if their lives are stabilised through employment, and that they will then be able to live well in South Korea without any problems. So, it manages this school in order to offer them a vocational education. [...] Students do not want to get a job as soon as they graduate from this school because they do not want to work in a factory, getting paid much less than college graduates.

(S11, Female, Teacher in a high school for migrant youth)

Vocational education for migrant youth is very limited. Centres do not investigate market demand for vocational education and only provide programmes with simple equipment that are easy to teach. Migrant youth need to experience various jobs to judge their aptitude in order to adapt properly to South Korean society. Government and society are not interested in finding ways to allow migrant youth to enter the mainstream and interact with South Koreans.

(P6, Male, Researcher)

Vocational education for migrant youth can lead to marginalisation within South Korean society. This vocational education is provided at alternative or specialised schools or centres run by NGOs who have been entrusted to do this by the government. With professional instructors providing vocational education in locations equipped with specialised tools, equipment or machines there are a number of places where migrant youth can receive vocational training. The alternative high school for migrant youth where S11 works belongs to the Ministry of Employment and Labour (MOEL). As this government ministry oversees employment prospects

for migrant workers, migrant youth who attend the school are also considered a pool of potential labour. The school aims to prepare students for factory work immediately after graduation by offering the kind of technical education currently in demand in the manufacturing sector. However, as social perceptions about, and treatment of, factory workers are poor in South Korean society, students prefer to enter university instead. This can cause issues with migrants youth who are over-qualified not wanting to work in the sectors for which they have received training—i.e., the low-paid sectors of the economy such as factory labour. While the government provides technical education to support migrant youth in their adaptation to a new society and way of life, this support can also be a factor which contributes to their social marginalisation. Centres operated by NGOs generally provide vocational education which is easy to teach. It tends to be conducted superficially with little consideration for the aptitude or interests of the students or of which industries might be suitable for them. This kind of superficial vocational education reflects government education policies which aim to prevent migrant youth from becoming a social burden when they become adults. Thus, South Korean government and society, which consider KCMY as a potentially problematic group, end up marginalising them rather than encouraging them to join the mainstream. In the next section, I will examine the role of centres for migrant youth in terms of the relationships between KCMY and local communities.

2. Influences of centres on the relationship between migrant youth and local communities

Previously published studies on centres for migrants in South Korea limited themselves to examination of the relationship between the centres, migrant youth and the local community. However, in order to grasp the dynamics of social adaptation of migrant youth, it is necessary to look into the relationship between these

three groups at the local scale. KCMY often go to multicultural schools for migrant youth, to centres or to preparatory schools before moving on regular state schools. Even if they go to a regular school, there is often a preparatory class, such as a Korean language class, for foreign students, and it is through this class that they start adapting to school life. Such facilities have been established to support migrant youth in their adjustment not only to Korean language but also to school life more generally before they join a regular class. According to the precepts of these facilities, migrant youth must move on a regular state school or class after completing an essential adaptation programme. However, some KCMY choose to remain at these facilities, as M12, M18 and S11 mention:

I thought I would not be able to get along with my South Korean peers due to Korean language, so I went to a multicultural middle school. Even though I am good at Korean, I kept going to the alternative school. Now, I am attending a multicultural specialised high school that only migrant youth can attend. I could not keep up with the class if I went to a regular state high school.

(M12, Female, High school student, Entry in 2016)

I thought my South Korean classmates would snub me as I cannot speak Korean well. So, I decided not to go to school. However, because I wanted to go to university, I started preparing for the high school certification examination at the centre. [...] As there are many Korean-Chinese in the centre, I usually speak in Chinese with Chinese friends. So, even though I am learning Korean, my Korean is not improving.

(M18, Female, High school dropout, Entry in 2018)

Since this school is an alternative school for migrant youth, the teachers speak slowly in class and other students help to interpret into their native languages. So, students can participate in classes. However, this kind of teaching method is not available in regular schools. [...] There is a dilemma about the role of multicultural school.

The school must be kind to the students and take care of them. However, who cares about them when they are outside the school?

(S11, Female, Teacher in a high school for migrant youth)

While centres or schools for migrant youth were established to help them enter the mainstream, these establishments can sometimes end up influencing them to remain on the fringes of society. As the above three participants mention, KCMY worry about their weakness in Korean language, their relationship with South Korean peers and the difficulties of school adaptation. As a result they make up their mind to attend the centres or schools for migrant youth instead. This decision is made because they believe they will not face discrimination as 'the other' group in these facilities. In other words, KCMY are generally reluctant to leave these facilities where they feel that they are 'in place' (Cresswell, 1996). The end result is that KCMY often prefer to remain in a place that feels comfortable to them, even if this is one that occupies a marginal area of society, rather than endeavour to integrate into the mainstream.

KCMY can become marginalised from mainstream South Korean society due to the parallel hospitality and tolerance they are shown in the centres for migrant youth. It is well known that hospitality can encourage integration and interaction between different groups (Bell, 2007). Therefore, as facilities for migrant youth provide them with hospitality and tolerance, this can help to reduce psychological boundary between themselves and mainstream South Korean society. It can help them to adapt easily to the new society. However, if they face South Korean society outside the centres, they are forced to follow an unfamiliar set of customs and morals which makes them feel uncomfortable. They realise that while it seemed natural for them to receive help in their special schools or centres, this was not something to which the public gave priority. They experience discrimination and exclusion from the mainstream when they do not follow the social order

(Anderson, 2015). These experiences of discrimination and marginalisation may then reduce their desire to form a relationship with the majority culture and influence them to maintain their own group identity outside the mainstream (Valentine, 2008). This is a similar impulse to that which encourages ethnic enclave organisations for migrants to seek support from their co-ethnic group (Samers and Collyer, 2017).

Some centres for KCMY are forced to relocate due to conflicts with South Koreans. At the local scale, the indistinct boundary between the two groups leads to otherness (Popescu, 2012; Cresswell, 2015). If 'the other' group continues culturally or geographically to invade 'our' space or does not fit 'our' norms, the mainstream group may wish to expel 'the other' group from 'our' space (Popescu, 2012; Anderson, 2015). In this context, having South Koreans bordering onto a centre for migrant youth may result in its displacement. S9 describes the displacement of their centres:

When I said I wanted to establish a centre for migrant youth, the pastor of the church lent us part of the church space for free. As the number of migrant youth increased, we mainly occupied the church, and Korean members of the church used it in the morning and on weekends. As the number of migrant youth had been increasing, the Korean church decided that they wanted to use this space only for themselves.

(S9, Female, Head of a cultural and research centre for ethnic Koreans)

Centres for migrant youth can be displaced as a result of South Koreans who shared with whom they share space asking them to move. Some churches share their space with small centres for migrant youth like those of S9. At first, these churches considered migrant youth a precarious group treating them with courtesy and tolerance, and the South Korean congregation and the migrant youth interact with each other. However, as the number of the migrant youth users of the centres increase, the South Korean members, begin to feel that

'our' place is turning into a place for migrant youth. They then ask the centre to leave. These are examples of power conflicts over the ownership of space between different ethnic, national or age groups (Vanderbeck, 2007; Valentine, 2008; Anderson, 2015). As a result, migrant youth run up against boundaries between themselves and mainstream society as a result of being excluded from the community.

Regarding their educational programme, centres for migrant youth mainly offer courses that encourage students to adapt to society by respecting the prevailing social order. In other words, centres run programmes which focus on how to make migrant youth good citizens. However, they do not provide any programmes aimed at helping the local community better understand the situation of migrant youth. S8 and S10 are sceptical about whether migrant youth can ever become good citizens without local community attitudes towards them changing as well:

Since our orchestra practice room is located in Daerim-dong, many KCMY participate in our orchestra. We want migrant youth and South Korean youth to interact and get to know each other, so South Korean youth also participate in the orchestra. Since we are a migrant centre, we had to pay more attention and offer more opportunities to our migrant youth members. So, the South Korean members then felt alienated. I came to realise that we have to provide an atmosphere where both groups can interact with each other.

(S8, Male, Activist in an NGO)

When this centre becomes like a reception room for the wider community, migrant youth will be welcome here. In order not to hurt them, South Korean students, teachers and residents also need to be educated at this centre.

(S10, Female, Teacher in a centre for migrant youth)

As S10 suggests, better local community understanding of KCMY can promote their social adaptation. They may then come to feel a sense of belonging in the

community through interactions with their neighbours in daily spaces. Participation in the community increases migrants' sense of belonging via direct personal contact and experiences that re-mediated both socially and culturally (Gustafson, 2009). In this regard, KCMY and South Koreans need the provision of an environment where they can learn to understand each other.⁴⁾ As S8 mentions, even where South Koreans and migrant youth do share the same space, if there are no opportunities to interact directly with each other, the two groups will remain separate. In other words, the spatial proximity does not translate into a newfound closeness. Emotional attitudes to neighbours affect not only one's sense of belonging to the community, but also have an impact on social change (Anderson and Smith, 2001). Thus, it is necessary to create opportunities that KCMY and South Koreans to build emotional relationships with each other (den Besten, 2010). The result hopefully is that prejudice against 'the other' group can be reduced through the creation of a sense of familiarity nurtured by shared physical contact and opportunities to share emotions and opinions.

The centres for migrant youth could play a role as "sites of connection" (Valentine, 2008) for daily contacts between KCMY and South Koreans. Allport (1979) suggests that meaningful contact is an effective way to reduce prejudice and promote social integration of migrants as it decreases feelings of uncertainty and anxiety about different groups. Therefore, centres for migrant youth would seem ideal spaces where KCMY and South Koreans could interact comfortably with each other. As there are staff there who have knowledge and experience of those who use the centres, migrant youth, their families and South Koreans could with the staff's help interact with each other there. If encounters within the centres take place in an informal and friendly manner, prejudice against KCMY may disappear of its own accord. Most of participants mention that it is difficult for KCMY to form relationships with their South Korean neighbours due to prevalent negative perceptions about Korean-Chinese. These difficulties might possibly

be resolved were the centres for migrant youth, which have already been established at a number of locations around the Korean-Chinese ethnic enclave, opened up to South Korean residents with the organisation of events or activities where KCMY and South Koreans would have the chance to interact. Currently, no such opportunities exist with the centres closed in practice to South Koreans. However, if as suggested by S10, the centres could be open to the local community like reception rooms then Korean-Chinese migrants and South Korean residents could easily access them and participate together in the same activities.

As I mentioned above, several programmes provided by centres, such as the vocational education and social adaptation programmes for migrant youth, have an impact on excluding them from mainstream society. This demonstrates that those centres are not currently serving as a site of connection in the local community. In order to overcome the limitations of the current role of centres for migrant youth, programmes which allow local residents, including South Korean youth, to participate in the programmes of centres, as well as migrant youth, should be operated first. When planning these programmes, centres for migrant youth should investigate how migrant youth can become members of the local community at first, and then consider how centres can use their resources accordingly. In the programmes with native Koreans, centres should encourage local residents and migrant youth to participate in them, for example, by providing vocational education which needs collaboration between participants. Thus, the first step for the centres to play a role as a site of connection is to provide the centre with experiences of interacting between participants through various programmes which reflect the local context. Once the centre-centred programmes are established, it needs to expand the centre's functions to schools, community centres and other youth facilities in the local community, and to organise programmes according to the characteristics of each facility (e.g., characteristics of users and purposes of facilities). In this process, centres

for migrant youth can serve as a hub for providing information and advising on relevant programmes operated at those facilities. Through the spread of sites of connection in the local community, places and opportunities for migrant youth to interact with native people can be diverse.

In this vein, P5 argues that it is necessary to establish a micro-scale encounter system, in which the office of education, borough offices and the local community are all closely linked to each other (SMOE, 2020). Although this system is still in the planning stage, its implementation will provide opportunities for local community members to better understand and build relationships with migrants in a comfortable and natural setting. The hoped for result is that migrant youth, including KCMY, will begin to develop a sense of belonging in the local community.

IV. Conclusion

This research critically considered the role of centres by conducting an evaluation of goals and programmes of centres for migrant youth in Seoul focusing on voices of KCMY. This article is divided into two main sections. The first main section looked at the multicultural policies, including multicultural education. I highlighted the goal of multiculturalism in South Korea as reflected in its government's multicultural policies is not the realisation of a nation united in diversity but rather a framework of integration.

In the second main section, I explored the process of establishing and operating the centres for migrant youth from critical perspectives. Existing research on centres for migrant youth has focused on the support they provide to migrant youth. However, I make a case for the need for critical analysis of the centres' aims and programmes where they touch on relationship-building between migrant youth, the centres, local communities and South Korean society. Regarding the aim of the centres, this is to separate migrant youth from

mainstream South Korean society by making them use the centres then training them to work in specific sectors and hopefully turning them into good citizens. The end result of this appears to be even greater marginalisation within South Korean society. As for the programmes provided by the centres, I criticised those which mainly focus on social adaptation only for migrant youth. These programmes, which require only migrant youth's assimilation, demonstrate the opposite reality to the academic criticism of assimilationist multicultural education. Furthermore, I stressed the need for centres to function as sites of connection with the broader community and two-way integration processes.

This research is significant in that it provided critical perspectives on the goals and programmes of centres for migrant youth, one of the places where multicultural education is conducted, through grounded and in-depth analysis. Although there are several studies on centres for migrant youth so far, they have been mainly performed in education, social welfare studies and policy research. In geography, it is difficult to find research focusing on centres for migrant youth as well as migrant youth. This paper not only demonstrated the possibility of analysis on centres for migrant youth from a local context, but also presented the need for centres as a place for multicultural education in consideration of local contexts, emphasising the role of centres as a site of connection for migrant youth and native Koreans. Furthermore, I was able to understand that the multicultural education in South Korea aim for assimilation of migrants and migrant youth cannot belong to their local communities through the voices of diverse groups who are related to centres for migrant youth. This means that we need to reflect on the meaningful direction of multicultural education in South Korea.

This research also has limitations. Firstly, this paper did not investigate centres for migrant youth reflecting the characteristics of each centres. Although each centre has its own background, goals and programmes, I explored their common characteristics. Therefore, in further research, I intend to investigate how centres for

migrant youth affect migrant youth and even local residents based on the characteristics of each centre and local context. Also, I could not overcome the criticism of scholars that multicultural education policies and research focus only on the aspect of race and ethnicity. They argue that multicultural education should teach that minority groups of diverse gender, culture and hierarchy form society, as well as migrants who have racial and ethnic diversity. However, since I focused on centres used by migrant youth, this research explored one aspect of multicultural education. Nevertheless, this article can provide an empirical basis when discussing the goals and programmes of the centre to support other minorities in multicultural education. Based on my contributions and suggestions, more effective policies for centres for migrant youth and other minorities in South Korean society.

Notes

- 1) Because this included only children from multicultural families who go to school and did not include those who do not go to school, the exact number of children from multicultural families would be even higher than this statistics.
- 2) Detailed information about participants by group is as follows:

(1) Korean-Chinese migrant youth

ID	Gender	Age	Year of Entry	Education background
M1	Male	19	2017	High school student
M2	Female	17	2018	High school student
M3	Female	18	2019	High school dropout
M4	Female	18	2019	High school student
M5	Female	18	2015	Freshman
M6	Male	19	2012	Freshman
M7	Female	16	2017	High school student
M8	Female	15	2014	Middle school student
M9	Male	16	2017	High school student
M10	Female	15	2017	High school student
M11	Male	17	2013	High school student
M12	Female	18	2016	High school student
M13	Female	17	2017	High school student
M14	Female	15	2016	Middle school student
M15	Female	19	2015	High school graduate
M16	Female	19	2016	High school student
M17	Female	19	2018	High school dropout

ID	Gender	Age	Year of Entry	Education background
M18	Female	18	2018	High school dropout
M19	Male	16	2016	Middle school student
M20	Male	19	2017	Middle school dropout

(2) Staff

ID	Gender	Age	Role
S1	Female	30s	Head of the centre for migrant youth
S2	Female	50s	Head of a <i>hagwon</i> for migrant youth
S3	Female	40s	Elementary school teacher in the Korean-Chinese ethnic enclave
S4	Male	50s	Head of an alternative school for migrant youth
S5	Female	50s	Pastor who runs programmes for Chinese migrant youth
S6	Male	30s	Lawyer in an NGO for migrants
S7	Female	30s	Lawyer in an NGO for migrants
S8	Male	30s	Activist in an NGO for migrants
S9	Female	50s	Head of the cultural and research centre for ethnic Koreans
S10	Female	40s	Teacher in the centre for migrant youth
S11	Female	30s	Teacher in a high school for migrant youth

(3) Policy makers

ID	Gender	Age	Role
P1	Male	50s	Policy consultant for migrant students policies
P2	Female	40s	Research fellow in a SMG think tank
P3	Male	40s	Policy consultant for Korean-Chinese migrant policies
P4	Female	40s	Civil servant in a department for foreign residents in the SMG
P5	Male	40s	Educational supervisor in the SMOE
P6	Male	40s	Research fellow in a South Korean central government think tank

- 3) According to the Multicultural Family Support Act, the upper age limit for migrants to be considered as youth is 24. Therefore, South Korea's multicultural policies implemented under this Act determine the target age group of migrant youth under the age of 24 according to their policy goals.
- 4) They need some opportunities such as organising local events together or having a shared place like a community centre where they can encounter and talk in a relaxed manner.

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