



KOREAN
WOMEN'S
DEVELOPMENT
INSTITUTE

Korean Institute for Healthy Family

Kim Hye-yeong, CEO

Recently, there has been a stream of reports on dreadful domestic violence and crimes. With the reality leading some people to mention 'family crisis,' we had an interview with Kim Hye-yeong CEO of the Korean Institute for Healthy Family (KIHf), who is busy dealing with numerous policy demands under keen attention. The interview was led by Dr. Hwang Jung-Mee, Visiting Researcher at the Institute for Gender Research in Seoul National University, at the CEO's office in the KIHf located in Seocho-gu, Seoul, from 4:00 to 6:00 PM on July 29, 2019.

Newly emerging types of families, family services customized for various needs of different families, need for family policies differentiated from stereotyped approaches in the past ... 'Family services and policies to reflect newly emerging types of families and the importance of family diversity and move forward from stereotyped approaches in the past.. 'Family Change Response Center' to be established for monitoring various family-related statistics and trends, identifying public understanding of family changes, and introducing new family services...



CEO Kim Hye-yeong of KIHf (left) and Dr. Hwang Jung-Mee (right) during the interview

Dr. Hwang Jung-Mee (hereinafter "Hwang"): Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule for this interview. From crimes to changes in values, I think change is the keyword these days. I hope you can start by telling us about your opinion on the changes in family at this point.

CEO Kim Hye-yeong (hereinafter "Kim"): Family has always been changing. However, in the Korean society in 2019, the family is changing in a way similar to the diffusion of technological innovation to contemporary people, bringing about changes on an enormous scale and speed. Changes in the labor patterns lead to changes in family, and it is important for us to decide how to deal with these changes using policies. Actually, public policies implemented by the country are developed to provide appropriate services according to prior diagnosis of demands and needs of the majority of its people, and I think it is difficult to solve diversified social problems due to recent changes in family with stereotyped family services based on the needs of the majority. In this sense, new approaches differentiated from the past are needed regarding family services and family policies.

The Korean Institute for Healthy Family (KIHf) has striven to accommodate the needs for diversity of families by responding sensitively to newly emerging family types and lifestyles. As part of this effort, when we went through the reorganization in February 2019, we have created the Family Change Response Center in response to self-reflection that we have been maintaining mechanical approaches to only certain typified families such as multicultural families and single parent families in spite of the unprecedented speed of changes families facing today. The headquarters, above all, monitors various facts about families. We thought that it is necessary for us to redefine KIHf's roles through the monitoring process, by understanding how family lives are changing, and how people's awareness of family and overall culture are transforming amid these changes.

If it is the role of the Korea Women's Development Institute to develop family policies within a large framework of social policies, it is up to KIHf to figure out people's needs, promote the necessity of new services quickly by cooperating with policy experts or responsible authorities, and offer customized services suitable for newly arising needs. I think that the conventional way of conducting surveys based on policy studies, and deriving policy tasks based on the survey results or implementation of services based

on public hearings, may not be time-effective. Of course, this kind of process is required to build universal service infrastructure, but responses to service blind spots and certain specific needs should be made more timely.

Hwang: So you believe that changes in family should be noticed and responded promptly.

Kim: It is our plan to monitor media reports, publications, etc. quickly to minimize the time gap, share the results with the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, relevant scholars and policy researchers and carry out pilot projects on new services that we can try autonomously. For example, the Family Change Response Center is monitoring on the issue of family biases while conducting the awareness improvement programs including promotional campaigns and education.

Hwang: Monitoring on biases towards families seems to be a new approach.

Kim: For instance, we examine whether there are cases in which YouTube channels or various media make fun of families formed through international marriages or unmarried people, or undermine their rights. We offer a variety of different family services, including activities for improvement of awareness. The Family Change Response Center plays the role of communicating with the public on what people are talking about in general. However, it's hard for us to clearly identify the overall direction of the changes, and what kinds of family policies we need to implement first based on what we hear from the people. Considering low birth rate, we need to give preferential support to families with children, but it is difficult for us to determine how we should support one person households who have not or cannot form families, or whether we should choose between one person households and families with children in prioritizing government support. As I said before, we have recently added efforts to identify where people's awareness should be improved and where people take offense due to our insensitivity or lack of timely responses, although it may take more time to introduce nationwide institutional systems or universal services. If existing policies focus on universalization of services suitable to different needs of various types of families, recently we have been working on catching up with the rapid changes to add to the ongoing efforts.

KIHF's main tasks are to provide central management of the Healthy

Family Support Center and Multicultural Family Support Center and to offer total services related to child care through the Child Support Agency, established in 2015 with the implementation of the child support management program, from counseling and claim for child support to overall counseling and provision of information for single parents.

Hwang: For several years, we have been talking about customized services for different types of families following the diversification of families, but you think that may already be an outdated approach. I think that the Family Change Response Center is a highly appropriate title. Can you tell me what kinds of programs and services your institute is providing besides this and which you are putting the most emphasis on?

Kim: KIHf was a juridical foundation and it became a special corporation in 2015. Until the present, its main mission has been central management of the Healthy Family Support Center and Multicultural Family Support Center. We monitor whether services are equitably offered in local centers, examine shortcomings, and provide counseling as well as education programs and workshops for local workers. In addition, the Child Support Agency was established with the introduction of the child support management program in 2015. I will explain more later, but the child support management program is not just limited to securing child support expenses through lawsuits between child-rearing parents after divorce. I believe that total service packages related to childcare, such as counseling, claim for child support, and provision of information for single parents are required.

Hwang: So it is important to provide information to single parents.

Kim: Yes. That's why we offer various information such as the amount of support for single parents, how and where they can apply for it, etc. through telephone counseling. This year, we have been exploring the possibility of expanding visitation services in a pilot project. I think that it is necessary to strengthen visitation right of divorced parents with their children and third parties to promote the payment of child support, and provide not only legal services related to child support but also counseling and assistance. However, the Child Support Agency is a single central organization at present. So, we are studying the possibility of a pilot project in which local centers well capable of family counseling are selected and provide closer assistance to people who want visitation

right. There are specialized lawyers and counselors who help implementation of child support, but they are concentrated in the metropolitan area or large cities. So, although we have similar limitations, we have selected several among over 70 local centers on the city/county/district level, which are considered to be specialized in and good at divorce counseling, and conducting a pilot project.

Hwang: Apart from legal assistance for helping people to receive child support after divorce, you consider visitation quite important.

Kim: We do. Not all the parents who are not raising their children pay child support even after a court ruling has been rendered. Visitation enhances not only the voluntary payment of child support but also children's psychological and emotional development and stability when it is maintained. Actually, many specialized counselors and directors in local healthy family support centers and multicultural family support centers also work as mediators in family courts. As the Child Support Agency is playing the key role in dealing with the issue of child support, we are considering connecting with personnel in charge of the child support management and competent local centers to supplement the system by supporting divorced parents who are not raising their children but interested in being good parents. It used to be, and is still true that many divorces are occurring due to emotional reasons.

Hwang: They usually say that when a couple divorces, they become enemies.

Kim: That's right. Although the marriage breaks, however, the family cannot break. From a child's viewpoint, his/her parents have separated from each other, but they should continue to be parents as he/she grows up. The child support management program is being carried out well, but as there's only one center in Seoul, we are preparing to offer counseling or services to assist childcare after divorce in cooperation with local centers in the future. It is our understanding based on internal data that visitation helps increase the ratio of child support expense payment substantially.

Hwang: Visitation right is an issue that a lot of families, who went through divorces after international marriages, are deeply interested in.

Kim: As you may know, one of KIHf's main programs is Danuri Call Center (1577-1366). The service is provided in 13 languages, and it's not just for migrant women but both men and women in international marriages. We offer necessary information and support in emergency situations such as hospital visits, violence and criminal incidents by assigning interpreters to accompany them.

Hwang: Do you provide accompaniment service?

Kim: Accompaniment service is provided on the local level. We have six local branches and we provide not only support for service use but also home visit counseling service and emergency shelters for temporary protection. For example, we offer protection until people, who have nowhere to go, are ready to be sent to police or professional protection facilities. At local centers, translation services are not available in all of the 13 languages, but they do their best to provide translation and interpretation in all these languages as soon as possible through the support of the main center or other local centers, and if necessary, provide third-party telephone service. Frankly, I didn't realize the importance of telephone counseling in family services before I became the CEO of KIHf. However, when I visited the call center last year, I was deeply impressed. Those who provide services in foreign languages, who are migrant women, have experienced identity crisis and confusion themselves. So it is very meaningful for them to provide information to newcomers or neighbors, and they are also very proud to play their part effectively. In addition, we started to operate the Family Consultation Team earlier this year. The team provides counseling for foreign migrants, single parents and parents involved in child support issue, and it will start to offer counseling for conflicts related to pregnancy and childbirth in September.

Hwang: Family counseling is being expanded systematically.

Kim: We are still in the process of personnel reinforcement, but we will expand the Family Consultation Team at Danuri Call Center to around 120 people so that we can provide counseling on various issues such as pregnancy, marriage, and differences in cultural backgrounds at hours convenient for service users. KIHf's first function is the management of local centers that I mentioned earlier, and its second function is the child support management. Its third function is to provide telephone

counseling on the crises and a variety of problems in family life including those of multicultural families. Then, its fourth function is to carry out programs to improve people's awareness, by monitoring newly arising prejudices and negative views on diversifying family lives and responding swiftly to improve them if necessary. Last year, we produced a web drama titled *What's Wrong in Joseon*, and it won the Silver Prize in the 2019 Asia-Pacific Awards in the category of innovation in public policy and communication. The contribution of our web drama to the improvement in the awareness on and acceptance of multiculturalism was recognized in the event where national organizations and individual businesses from 29 countries in the Asia-Pacific region compete with one another.

Hwang: A web drama?

Kim: We try to improve people's awareness and promote our family services through web dramas, webtoons, and social network services. Our purpose is to look back on our biases, gender stereotypes, differentiation between normal and abnormal families, etc. and to spread information on family services among the public to help those who need assistance. Also, in May, we held a seminar to seek alternative titles for relatives and selected and presented small prizes to outstanding contestants contributing to the improvement of awareness related to this issue.

Hwang: The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family supported a TV drama titled *Witch at Court* a few years ago in an effort to promote our policies, and it seems KIHf engaged in the production of a web drama and held an open competition for the titles of relatives under similar purposes.

Kim: Yes, we did. We also held a competition for posters aimed at improving the awareness of the youth. We received a lot of good works with lots of fresh ideas, so we published a calendar using them. Likewise, we continue to promote our activities in various ways, and are focusing on media monitoring this year.

Hwang: I agree that media monitoring is highly important. Today's media report family-related crimes, accidents, and new trends without any censorship to catch people's attention, using sensational titles.

Kim: This year, we also started to support family-related civic campaign groups and small citizen groups. In fact, there are not many civic groups engaged in activities related to families. We receive a lot of questions from private companies hoping to support multicultural families, families of North Korean refugees, teenage single mothers and single parents, because we are connected to these people and relevant local centers. We're not dedicated to these missions, but we connect them if their purposes correspond to the public good. I think that in the long run, we need the roles of private organizations supporting families. There are many organizations playing active roles in matters related to women. Regarding family issues, there are some single parent groups, single mother groups, and father groups. Somehow, family-related groups are in worse situations. For example, even though they try to implement programs with the support fund from organizations like the Community Chest of Korea, it is difficult for them to develop into campaign organizations making notable outcomes, because they are too small.

Hwang: They need a variety of practical skills including accounting to carry out programs.

Kim: That's right. So we created a space where family-related organizations can hold meetings and get education for free this year. They need a lot of money to rent places where they can have meetings, and it's not easy for civic groups, especially single parent groups or single mother groups, which tend to be quite small, to operate their organizations on their own.

Hwang: So, you arranged a space in this building.

Kim: We reformed two offices on the B1 floor of the Public Procurement Service building where our institute is located, and recently had an opening ceremony.

Hwang: I asked you about KIHf's main programs, and I see that you're engaged in quite a variety of programs and activities. Now, I would like to ask about the management of child support expenses. Earlier, you mentioned briefly about it while you were talking about visitation right, but we see a lot of news reports on one-person protests regarding the child support issue. It is known through media that child-rearing parents, who are usually the mothers, experience great difficulties even after the

court ruling on the payment of child support expenses. What kinds of measures do you think are needed to solve this problem?

Kim: The problem is related to the Korean family culture. Although people are obsessed with patriarchal blood ties, they cannot accept that cooperative parental roles should be maintained with the children at the center when the marriage breaks up, both emotionally and socioculturally. In other words, we are trying to impose child support by law whereas the culture in which both parents raise children after they divorce has not been established. We appeal to law without the support of culture or norms, so coercive legal execution is important, but it's not quite effective at present. Even at the institute, there are mixed opinions, whether to see child support expenses as individual debt or public duty for the prevention of child neglect or abuse. First, it should be recognized that the payment of child support is a public obligation, the parent should pay it not for the former spouse but as the expenses needed for the child's growth, and parental responsibilities are maintained even after the marriage ends. Second, the amount of and the way of taking personal properties, such as the possessions of a parent who is not rearing the child, for the payment of child support expenses should be clearly determined through the consultation process reflecting laws and regulations.

Hwang: The problem is that the law is not enforceable enough.

Kim: No, it's not. Meanwhile, it is also important to note that many fathers or mothers cannot pay the expenses even after the court decision due to the recent deterioration in economic stability. If one party demands the payment of child support until he/she becomes an adult, we provide assistance for the lawsuit. In actual lawsuits, sometimes it's not possible to order the payment, and even in some cases where the court rules the other party to provide the support; many parents cannot afford to pay. That's why there needs to be full-scale support for single parent households with underage children, including the government's prepayment system for child support.

Hwang: There arise the issues of prepayment and claim for indemnities.

Kim: KIHf is actually an executive organization, so we have limitations in proposing and demanding the introduction of new systems. The

prepayment issue is a topic that should be considered financially and legally, and I heard that it is being examined at present. But we don't know when it will be realized, because there are problems such as financial burden. At present, KIHf provides temporary child support for urgent cases, and the support period has been extended this year to 300,000 won monthly for a maximum of 12 months, from six to nine months last year. Of course, this won't be sufficient. There are continuing demands for easing support requirements and expanding the amount of support.

Hwang: So, people in urgent cases can receive child support expenses up to one year.

Kim: The legal procedure for payment of child support expenses has been improved substantially. Among the cases in which child support counseling was made at KIHf and the court ruled on the payment, the payment rate is slightly above 30%. However, making regular payment every month for 20 years until the child grows up is another problem. Therefore, the role of the personnel who manage the payment of child support is highly important. If the parents divorced when the child was one year old, the payment of child support expenses should be made regularly and stably for a very long period. So, there should be systematic supplementation to enable this by strengthening legal enforcement. Also, both parents should cooperate by maintaining regular visitation from the parent who isn't raising the child and continuing to play the roles of parents. Thus, there is so much to be done. In this sense, it is quite natural for single mothers or fathers who raise their children on their own to be angry and frustrated. If they receive the child support only once or twice and never hear from the other parent again, they should file another lawsuit, and the procedure is quite complicated. So, it's up to the government to pay the child support expenses first, to help the child's uninterrupted growth, and receive the expenses later somehow, and we need to keep an eye on how this can be institutionalized.

Hwang: I agree that there need to be both institutional measures to promote the payment of child support and cultural changes to enable divorced parents to keep in contact and raise their children together.

Kim: So, we are focusing on the promotion of the child support issue via social networks through public participation under the slogan "Show your love through child support." There is a lot of difficulties at present, but I think people's awareness will change if we continue to campaign and make various efforts.

Hwang: Now, I would like to ask you about the child caregiver service, which is most widely known among the programs carried out by the Healthy Family Support Center, and which KIHf is putting special emphasis on. We have seen incidents in which children's rights were violated recently, but there are more fundamental problems. Also, while there are certain demands for caregivers, some people question the rationale for continuing the service based on the criticism that their wages and job quality are too low.

Kim: I think that people's concerns and criticism on the caregiver service are totally justified. However, there are numerous demands for caregivers. I think childcare is quite different from elderly care in our society. In elderly care, it is usually possible to communicate with the elderly who are not very aged or suffering from serious conditions, so we can standardize the care service. With children, and especially in the case of infants, we need a more careful approach because we can't communicate with them as easily as with adults. In the contemporary society where people have less children than in the past, parents have higher expectations for their children's growth and are thus making more detailed demands. The child caregiver program was introduced as part of the efforts to respond to specific demands, such as the parents' fear about their children catching the flu from other kids at daycare centers and concern about their children being alone at home when they have to leave earlier for work. As the child caregiver service expanded on a large scale, due to soaring demands and the government's recognition of the seriousness of low birth rate, there were certain problems with quality management. As you pointed out, it became a low-paid job in spite of the high and varied demands, and there is more likelihood of low service quality. At present, several organizations with different backgrounds are arranging matching between individual families and caregivers under the direction of the local healthy family support centers and mediating in the case of dissatisfaction or conflicts, but there still are quite a lot of difficulties.

Hwang: Are you focusing on the role of mediation between caregivers

and families?

Kim: That's right. For example, after the matching is made, the parents may complain that the caregiver is not paying sufficient attention to the child, and the caregiver may say that the young mother is expecting her to do the housekeeping too. The staff at the local centers has great difficulties dealing with these complaints. In the case of elderly care, the elderly can raise questions if they are not too sick, but children requires more sensitive approach because they do not understand the caregiving process very well and can hardly raise questions. In this regard, I am deeply proud of, and respect child caregivers and the personnel in charge of the child caregiver program who have been working hard with a sense of mission in spite of such difficulties.

But I think the problem is an issue of labor. The service is offered by the Healthy Family Support Center or the Multicultural Family Support Center, and the program has an adverse structure under which the caregivers are not paid sufficiently. It's an additional program that is a burden to the centers, and it is not easy to set up a standard management and reward system for the caregivers who are in various different situations, including those who work part time and others who work full time. Some of them have built local confidence and have a sense of mission as reliable neighbors or teachers, but it is actually an unstable job without a merit for those who want better payment and job security. Notably, in large cities, it's becoming gradually more difficult to match the parents and caregivers due to rising demand and diversification of caregivers. The role as a mediator handling complaints is increasing each day, but the employees at the centers, who manage the caregivers, are facing unstable situations as workers themselves. While it is true that KIHf has not played an appropriate role to deal with the situation, and we need to reflect on ourselves, the management and supervision have actually been entrusted with local governments. KIHf's role has been limited to education of the management personnel handling child caregivers at local centers and development of text materials for caregivers, and it has not had a chance to make necessary interventions.

Hwang: How about the education of caregivers?

Kim: Above all, the caregivers are employed by local governments, so the responsibility of human resource training does not lie with our institute. It's a problem that arises from the lack of a unified education system for

child caregivers. Another problem is that the central headquarters has been carrying out the monitoring of child caregivers around the country, and this has been absolutely insufficient. They monitor about 300 households, but it's not arranged properly in consideration of which day the child caregiver visits and what time they can meet the mothers who use the service. If they can't visit the houses, they just monitor on phones, so the result is often unsatisfactory.

Hwang: So, the education of child caregivers is done by local governments.

Kim: It means that the education of child caregivers is carried out by different agencies in different regions. We develop standard text materials for education, but the quality of education differs according to the instructors and education agencies. There are about 19,000 child caregivers who belong to 222 different organizations at present. So, it becomes a collective training. Child caregivers are usually in their mid-50s or older. They get 8-hour training for three days, and I think we also need more active training suitable for their ages and conditions. Care giving based on children's rights should accompany changes in the attitude, roles, and behaviors, so there should be something more than passive education. We at KIHf hope that we will be given the role and authority to carry out meta-monitoring on the standardization and monitoring of the education process, personnel in charge of the management of child caregivers at local centers, and the monitoring of the service.

Hwang: I think that the quality and credibility of the caregivers may also be important.

Kim: There was an increase in personnel expenses, and a lawsuit was filed on the nature of child caregivers as employees. The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family is currently considering whether to recognize their nature as employees. If we recognize child caregivers as full-time employees, we need quality education indeed. Notably, their education is provided by the government for free, and government funding is spent in the case of households receiving the government subsidy, so I think a system that ensures appropriate management and acceptance of the monitoring results should be set up.

Multicultural family support centers and healthy family support centers, which have been expanded for the past several years, need restructuring for further development and provision of integrated and open-minded family support services ... Toward the realization of open programs in complex spaces

Hwang: There are multicultural family support centers and healthy family support centers around the country. They offer a lot of benefits but, in the case of multicultural family support centers, which have increased in number, there are different opinions on whether they are providing services properly. I would like to ask you how you plan to reorganize these centers in the future.

Kim: As you have said, the multicultural family support centers have increased in number, but they have had limited budget and personnel. Nevertheless, they seem to have become a kind of space for exchange for migrant women or multicultural families. However, the increase in the number of migrant women married to Korean men has slowed down, and there seems to be some changes in the services. The Ministry of Gender Equality and Family decided to provide family support services in an integrated way regardless of whether they are multicultural families, single parents or North Korean defectors. I personally think that there is certain limitation in the centers' ability to support a variety of different families, and the support institutions need to be well established as organizations to function as good workplaces. For example, organizations with less than ten employees have difficulties in terms of job assignment based on specialization of duties, relationships among members and management of conflicts. For them to develop further as organizations, I think it is a good idea to integrate these centers. The majority of these centers have already been put together, with more than 250 of them operating as integrated centers. However, there still are centers that need to be integrated and there remains some criticism that their service targets are not clear.

Hwang: If they become integrated centers of appropriate sizes, what kinds of changes will they have in terms of the details of the programs?

Kim: There are clearly limitations in the programs currently being implemented by the family support centers. I think that existing education programs and cultural activities are not suitable to accommodate the

changing needs of families, and it is KIHf's job to actively seek programs and services of higher quality. Our concern is related to the first question, that there is limitation in service development due to the diversification of families and the difficulty of standardization. So, I think dyadic relationship, which requires caregiving, needs to be formed. All our service users, including one-person households, multicultural families, single parent families, single people and married people, have the need for care. In addition to the expansion of key infrastructure for care services by the central and local governments, local communities also need to play the function of voluntary caregiving. However, local centers at present are highly restricted in their operations due to their complete financial reliance on the central and local governments. Their programs are extremely provider-centered, without giving opportunities to people to visit freely and talk about their needs. Local centers do not have open spaces or inclusive operation styles. So, we are seeking ways to integrate more functions by connecting with SOC programs. The plan for restructuring into complex facilities have been finalized in five cities including Gwangjin-gu, Seoul, and Cheongju, and I think it is the position of the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family to expand this idea nationwide.

Hwang: It seems to be an integrative approach to enhance inclusiveness.

Kim: That's right. The goal is to accommodate more people, in addition to families who visit for specific purposes or those who are well aware of the functions of the local centers. Ideally, for example, people can stop by a café accidentally and find out it's a nice playground for elementary school children or suitable activity space, and naturally the fathers or mothers can be led to participate in parent education or co-parenting. If, for instance, there's a small library, it can be an open space with basic facilities and functions as a family center, where anyone in the local community, not just parents or children, can visit and get exposed to information and exchange, and it doesn't actually need to belong to the family programs offered by the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family. So single parents do not need to go to single parent facilities but can be naturally integrated into the social support network through opportunities to take part in counseling and exchange. Also, children can come without any specific purposes and spend time listening to music, until mothers visit after work. If these spaces are located in your neighborhood, I think the programs will be able to mingle naturally,

without the need to determine who runs the place and who the users are. What's important now is not just to provide services to families but to give them a place for exchange and empathy, where families with diversified needs can come and get some kind of support at any point in their life cycles, such as parents accompanying their young children, divorced men who need self-care, single men and women who join the cooking program to share what they have cooked with others or bring it home to eat for the next several days. Actually, the healthy family support centers and multicultural family centers have had very limited spaces. First, we can secure them as open spaces, and then explore how to operate programs jointly with other facilities or organizations, which have offered programs targeting different types of users, in integrated and complex ways.

Hwang: It seems to be a good idea to provide open programs in complex spaces.

Kim: As the spaces evolve, the institute needs to offer programs that are more open. However, there are also concerns about these programs that we develop, however open they may be, whether it's really a good idea to offer them. We need to mobilize people to operate the programs, whereas they are all busy and focused on their jobs and careers. It may be burdensome for them to take part in these programs once or twice a week.

Hwang: Then, you need consulting about how to convert the spaces and how to set the direction of activities.

Kim: We are providing consulting this year as a trial. We have the Family Service Support Center at KIHf, which manages performances of local centers and provides employee education and consulting. One of our main concerns is how to forecast changes in local centers and what kinds of specific messages we can give them. Our institute handles both performance management and consulting, so it's a demanding job. The idea of communicating and blending with local residents in an unconstrained way, leading them to visit either with family members, companions, or alone, and to meet new companions at the centers, which are transformed into spaces of a new dimension for communicating with neighbors and familiarizing with the community, is an important attempt that requires creative and novel imagination

because it's totally different from the current systems.

Hwang: A lot of attention is also being paid on local communities from the field of social welfare these days. The overall trend is the integration of services on the local community level to provide easy access to the users, rather than a number of different centers providing different services.

Kim: That's right. When you go to a complex space, you understand the meanings presented by the space. For example, at the former site of Yongsan-gu Office, there are the Support Center for Childcare, a toy rental shop and a youth support center, although there isn't any healthy family support center or multicultural family support center. So, the place is always full of children, toddlers and teenagers, and parent education is naturally carried out there even if there's no healthy family support center. Now, family support centers are planning to convert this way, with about 60 of them scheduled to convert this year.

Hwang: That's why the role of local governments is important.

Kim: Yes. It's up to the local governments to apply for the program, and then the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family requests KIHf to provide consulting for the family support center. What is emphasized in the process is the creation of a space for exchange and communication serving multiple purposes, where anyone can drop by to have a cup of tea, play with toys at the cooperative childcare sharing space, and sometimes request parent education or childcare support. For KIHf, it's actually a big challenge and considerable shift. Now, we need to work on how to manage local centers that are evolving.

Hwang: You mean you're sharing the budget with local governments in cooperating with them?

Kim: That's right. For an average complex space, we contribute about 1,500,000,000 won and the local government contributes the same amount, so the total budget is about 3,000,000,000 won. This year's application was closed on August 2.

Hwang: To facilitate the delivery of KIHf's family support services, I believe the roles of the leaders and staff at relevant centers are very

important. What do you think are important in the training of field workers, their competence level and working conditions?

Kim: This may sound a little outdated at present, but we have managed the quality of workers at local centers under the principle of equal service. Meanwhile, welfare workers are not being paid well, and especially the wage level of our workers is even lower than that of the social welfare service workers at the Ministry of Health and Welfare. If local governments such as the Seoul Metropolitan City and corporations operating the healthy family support centers or multicultural family support centers are financially stable and have sound visions, they provide better payment for the workers. However, there are organizations that don't, so we see a lot of job movement.

Hwang: Low payment often leads to job movement.

Kim: We provide retraining for new workers, and hold briefing sessions and maintain Q&A on new manuals after new ones are developed. For example, if a labor issue breaks out in relation to child caregivers, the labor support group engages in it. Among the employees of KIHf, the Division of Local Service Support has the largest staff following the childcare expense management program. We also set up the Education Consulting Team at the time of reorganization in February this year. Our employees have diversified backgrounds, including healthy family supporters, social workers, and those who deal with such varied programs as child caregiver specialization program, support for single fathers and mothers, education for understanding of multiculturalism, and education for international marriage brokers. Our institute has to deal with a huge amount of education programs, and it's not easy to systematically organize them because there are so many different targets. We have various education programs for workers, all in different stages, direct programs for the public, and education programs for teachers and instructors.

Hwang: It must be very difficult to get different demands, complaints, and requests for improvements related to all those diversified programs.

Kim: We need to plan and improve programs to resolve those problems, but our resources are limited. Anyway, the management of local service personnel has been, and will continue to be important, and we will

reinforce the system in consideration of the operation results of the Education Consulting Team later this year. In the case of multicultural education, for instance, our performance goal is to have more than 100,000 persons complete the education courses. We have the same goal for parent education, too. The question is how to do it effectively. We will have to give online courses in the elementary level program, but plan to hold two days and one night collective training sessions for intermediate and advanced levels. We also provide retraining for teachers who deal with language development and home visits for children in multicultural families. We are establishing the education consulting group that will handle various tasks that have been divided among different departments, so it is expected that we will see improvement into a clearer education system by next year.

In the future of Korean family rapidly being transformed due to low birth rate, late marriages, increase in people who choose not to get married, crisis in middle-class families, etc., the most heated issues are how to define the relationship between those who need care and those who provide care, although there's no blood ties, marriage relationship or sexual intimacy, and with whom you can share the burden. From the policy perspective, the burden or responsibility for care should be made to be shared by the family support centers in the local community, to enable co-existence of healthy citizens who can take the hand of those in need, although there's no family relationship.

Hwang: I see. In the case of multicultural family support, many home visiting teachers also play the role of human rights protectors in the early days. So, I hope you will provide effective assistance for these diversified workers to play their roles well. Finally, I understand that you are a scholar and expert who has studied about family for a long time, and I would like to ask your opinion on what we need to pay most attention to in the future of Korean family, amidst rapid changes in family life, such as low birth rate, late marriages, increase in people who choose not to get married, and crisis in middle-class families.

Kim: I'm not sure if you can call me a real expert. I had a lengthy discussion on the value of family with the officials in KIHf. What is the value of family? The value of family keeps changing, and what can we say if we should define family? Earlier, I told you that we should pay attention to the dyadic relationship; especially to those who have people to take care of. We need to redefine society as the caregiver for the

elderly population, who have devoted their labor for the society and are now retired as workers and in need of support, and for children and the youth, who it needs to take care of as new workers who will lead the society in the future.

People often talk about how we can socially recognize the value of care, which is highly important but does not have an exchange value in the market. The most heated issues are how we can define the relationship between those who need care and those who provide care, although there are no blood ties, marriage relationship or sexual intimacy, and how to share the burden. I think that the burden can't be borne by individuals or the nation alone. There are aspects that belong to the nation's responsibility, the local government's responsibility and the individuals' responsibility. Then, what makes the individuals accept the burden? From the policy perspective, the focus should be on co-existence of healthy citizens who can take the hand of those in need, although there's no family relationship, and it is important to figure out ways to divide the burden appropriately and to effectively bring together the interests and energy of those who are willing to share it. Also, we need to come up with a plan based on which family support centers can share the burden and responsibility of the care in the local community. I believe that we have a lot of difficult tasks ahead of us.

Hwang: It's been a very fruitful interview, and I learned a lot from your stories ranging from philosophical basis to highly practical issues. I'm really grateful to you.

Kim: If families change rapidly, family services should change, too, as well as the ways to manage the services. In some way, we are going on a road that's not been taken yet. I will do my best in carrying out all the KIHf's programs and making new attempts that I have mentioned to you. Thank you.