

University of Pécs

Faculty of Business and Economics

Doctoral School in Regional Policy and Economics

Alternatives for Local Development for the Kyrgyz Republic

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Candidate: Aida Musaeva

Supervisor: Ilona Pálné Kovács

Pécs, 2023

Table of Contents

List of Figures	VI
List of Tables	VII
Abbreviations	VIII
Glossary	VIII
1. Introduction	1
1.1 Country context and local development challenges	1
1.2 The motivation for the research	6
1.3 Aim and Research Questions	8
1.4 Structure of the doctoral dissertation	9
2. Literature Review	12
2.1 Local Development Theories	12
3. Local Development Alternative I: European Union’s LEADER Model	18
3.1 Introduction	18
3.2 Socio-economic background of the LEADER	20
3.3 The basic principles and characteristics of the LEADER	21
3.3.1 Policy delivery mechanism of the LEADER	23
3.3.2 Good Governance and Decentralization and LEADER.....	25
3.3.3 A brief overview of the LEADER programme implementation in Hungary	27
3.4 Summary	31
4. Local Development Alternative II: Korean Saemaul Undong Model	32
4.1 Introduction	32
4.2 Socio-economic background of Saemaul Undong	35
4.3 The basic principles and characteristics of Saemaul Undong	36
4.3.1 Saemaul Undong’s local community development strategies.....	37
4.3.2 The institutional framework of the Saemaul Undong	39
4.3.3 Developmental State and Saemaul Undong (1970-1979).....	43
4.3.3.1 Government inputs and Saemaul Undong output	45
4.3.3.2 Criticism of Saemaul Undong Movement.....	47
4.4 Summary	48

5.	Discussion and Comparison of two role-models	50
5.1	Possibilities and limitations of role models to the application in Kyrgyzstan	54
5.2	A proposed analytical framework for Kyrgyzstan’s local development.....	55
5.2.1	A Tripartite Stakeholders’ Model	56
5.3	Research Methodology.....	57
5.3.1	Data Collection Techniques	58
5.3.2	Facilitating data management, coding, and analysis.....	59
5.4	The research areas of the selected case studies in Kyrgyzstan	60
6.	Case study I: Korean Saemaul Undong application in Kyrgyzstan.....	62
6.1	Saemaul Undong application process to Kyrgyzstan.....	63
6.1.1	Korea International Cooperation Agency-funded My Village Initiative context.....	65
6.1.1.1	My Village Initiative’s leading local actors	68
6.1.1.2	Cooperation in the My Village Initiative in Kyrgyzstan.....	70
6.1.1.3	The scheme of local development of the My Village Initiative.....	73
6.1.1.4	Preliminary outcome of the My Village Initiative	74
6.1.1.5	Contribution and comparison of the Korean and Kyrgyz versions of the Saemaul Undong model.....	75
6.2	Case Study II: EBRD’s Modernization of drinking water infrastructure project	79
6.2.1	European Union’s mission in Kyrgyzstan.....	79
6.2.1.1	EBRD’s Modernization of drinking water infrastructure project context.....	79
6.2.1.2	EBRD project’s local critical actors and their cooperation.....	81
6.2.1.3	EBRD project’s local development scheme.....	82
6.2.1.4	EBRD project’s contribution to Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality	82
6.3	Case Study III: Kyrgyz businessman-initiated local development initiative	83
6.3.1	Ülgülüü Ayil Ökmötü: Exemplary local self-government initiative context.....	83
6.3.1.1	Exemplary local self-government’s critical local actors and their collaboration.....	84
6.3.1.2	Exemplary local self-government scheme for local development	85
6.3.1.3	Targeted project under the Exemplary local self-government initiative.....	86
6.3.1.4	Preliminary contribution of the Exemplary local self-government.....	89
6.4	Discussion of empirical findings.....	91
7.	Summary and Conclusion.....	98
7.1	Summary	98

7.2 Conclusion.....	100
References.....	104
Appendixes	113
Acknowledgment.....	133

List of Figures

Figure 1 – Kyrgyz Republic, Personal remittances received (% of GDP).....	3
Figure 2 – Research stages of the doctoral dissertation	11
Figure 3 – The seven fundamental principles of the LEADER	23
Figure 4 – Institutional scheme of Saemaul Undong for local and rural development	40
Figure 5 – Organizational Arrangements for the Saemaul Undong	42
Figure 6 – Tripartite Stakeholders’ Model for local development for the Kyrgyz Republic	56
Figure 7 – The research areas	61
Figure 8 – Local business sector inclusion in the KOICA My Village in Kyrgyzstan.....	69
Figure 9 – Main Stakeholders and Collaboration in the KOICA My Village in Kyrgyzstan.....	70
Figure 10 – How was your Municipality selected for the EBRD funding?.....	80
Figure 11 – Critical Stakeholders and Collaboration in the EBRD Water Project.....	81
Figure 12 – Local Stakeholders and Cooperation in the Exemplary local self-government	85
Figure 13 – The complexity of local development perspectives	97

List of Tables

Table 1 – Territorial disparity in Kyrgyzstan	6
Table 2 – The scale of the LEADER programme (1991-2013).....	19
Table 3 – Local characteristics of LEADER	24
Table 4 – The scale of Saemaul Undong (1971-1978)	34
Table 5 – Saemaul Undong local development scheme	38
Table 6 – The outcome of the Saemaul Undong projects (1971-1980).....	45
Table 7 – Comparison of the Korean Saemaul Undong and EU LEADER	52
Table 8 – Codes	59
Table 9 – Characteristics of the selected case studies in Kyrgyzstan	61
Table 10 – Activities related to Saemaul Undong in Kyrgyzstan.....	65
Table 11 – The acceptance of <i>Ashar</i> as the primary mechanism for implementing My Village's local development initiatives	71
Table 12 – Outcome of the KOICA My Village Initiative (2019-2020)	74
Table 13 – Comparison of the Korean Saemaul Undong and Kyrgyz versions of Saemaul Undong (KOICA My Village project).....	77
Table 14 – EBRD local development project	82
Table 15 – Exemplary local self-government Projects	90
Table 16 – A comparative analysis of international and domestic approaches to promoting local development in Kyrgyzstan	95

Abbreviations

EU: European Union

EBRD: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

GAMSUMO: Government Agency for Local Self-Government and Interethnic Relations under the Kyrgyz Government

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

KOICA: Korea International Cooperation Agency

LAGs: Local Action Groups

LEADER: Liaison Entre Actions pour le Developement de l'Economie Rurale.

LED: Local Economic Development

LSG: Local Self-Government

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

NSC: National Statistic Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic

WB: World Bank

Glossary

Aksakal – the word "*aksakal*," translated into English, is an elder. Youngsters respect elders and always are given the highest respect.

Ashar – The essence of *Ashar* is collective action to address a specific task voluntarily. It is practiced in rural areas of Kyrgyzstan. Although the exact date of *Ashar's* emergence is unknown, it is believed nomads practiced it. There is no payment for the *Ashar* activities.

Ayil (village) – the small-sized administrative and regional subdivision of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Ayil Bashchy – Village head.

Ayil Ökmötü – an executive and administrative body under the *Ayil* (village) or community, *Ökmötü* (village self-government, also local self-government). The Kyrgyz Government established *Ayil Ökmötü* in 1996 as a body of the local self-government unit. Depending on the size of a village, *Ayil Ökmötü* can contain from one to several villages.

Kenesh – (council) representatives of an administrative unit, such as an *Ayil* (village), Rayon (district), city, and Oblast (province/region), which are responsible for local social activities, services, and other related issues for the needs of the inhabitants of a particular territory of the country.

Rayon (district) – the primary administrative and regional structure of the Kyrgyz Republic after the *Ayil*.

Oblast (region) – the most significant administrative and territorial unit in the Kyrgyz Republic concerning regional territorial divisions.

"Liaisons Entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie Rurale" (LEADER) – the acronym of LEADER is French, which means "links between actions for developing a rural economy."

Saemaul Undong (새마을운동) – Korean word "*Saemaul Undong*" translation in English is a New Village Movement/Development, where *Sae* means new, and *maul* is a village. *Undong* is Development, and it is also known as Movement.

"Ülgülüü Ayil Ökmötü" – The word "*Ülgülüü*" means Exemplary or Model, and *Ayil Ökmötü* is the local self-government (LSG).

1. Introduction

1.1 Country context and local development challenges

Kyrgyz Republic (Kyrgyzstan) is a landlocked and one of the post-Soviet countries in Central Asia. After the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991, Kyrgyzstan became a sovereign country. The country shares borders with Kazakhstan to the north, China to the east and southeast, Tajikistan to the southwest, and Uzbekistan to the west. Administratively, Kyrgyzstan comprises seven *oblasts* (regions): Batken, Osh, Jalal-Abad, Talas, Chuy, Issyk-Kul, and Naryn. The regions are subdivided into 40 districts (*rayons*), 32 cities, and 452 local self-governments (*Ayil Ökmötüs'*) (NSC, 2019). The capital is Bishkek, and Osh is the city of the Republic meaning. In 2022 the population reached seven million. The territory is 199,949 km², of which nearly 90 percent lies in mountainous areas over 1,500 meters above sea level. The Pamir Alai Mountains surround the country to the southwest and the Tien Shan Mountains to the northeast.

World Bank (2021a) categorizes Kyrgyzstan as a lower-middle-income country with a gross domestic product (GDP) of US\$ 8,5 billion and a per capita GDP of US\$ 1,276 in 2021. The economy is vulnerable to external shocks owing to its dependence on one gold mine, Kumtor, which accounts for about 9,7% of GDP, and on worker remittances (mainly in Russia), equivalent to approximately 31,1% of the country's GDP (World Bank, 2021b). Over the last twenty years, remittances have become instrumental in economic development in Kyrgyzstan (see Figure 1). The long-run positive impact of remittances¹ on economic growth is significant for Kyrgyzstan, and it supports its economic growth (Aitymbetov, 2006; Kumar et al., 2017). Murzakulova (2020: 12), on the other hand, argues remittances' flow does not do anything to generate sustainable economic development. They are usually used for daily consumption and cover low payments. Dependence on remittances reduces domestic investment and labor shortages in rural areas, especially in the agricultural sector, and makes exports less competitive in the long run. Although it positively impacts reducing poverty, consumption, and imports. Most studies (Ergeshbayev, 2006; Schmidt & Sagynbekova, 2008; Thieme, 2014) indicate that external migration is primarily an economic issue of the meager labor market, limited opportunities, and slow development of the

¹ Remittances are personal transfers: cash and in-kind compensation, workers' seasonal and other short-term work income.

national economy that have an impact on the development of the labor market outside of Kyrgyzstan. According to the Department of External Migration under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, 740,500 citizens registered as migrants in 2018. The destinations are the following countries: Russian Federation – 640,000 people; Kazakhstan 35,000; Turkey 30,000; the USA around 15,000; Italy 5,500; the Republic of Korea 5,000; Germany 5,000; Great Britain 2000; and the United Arab Emirates 3,000.

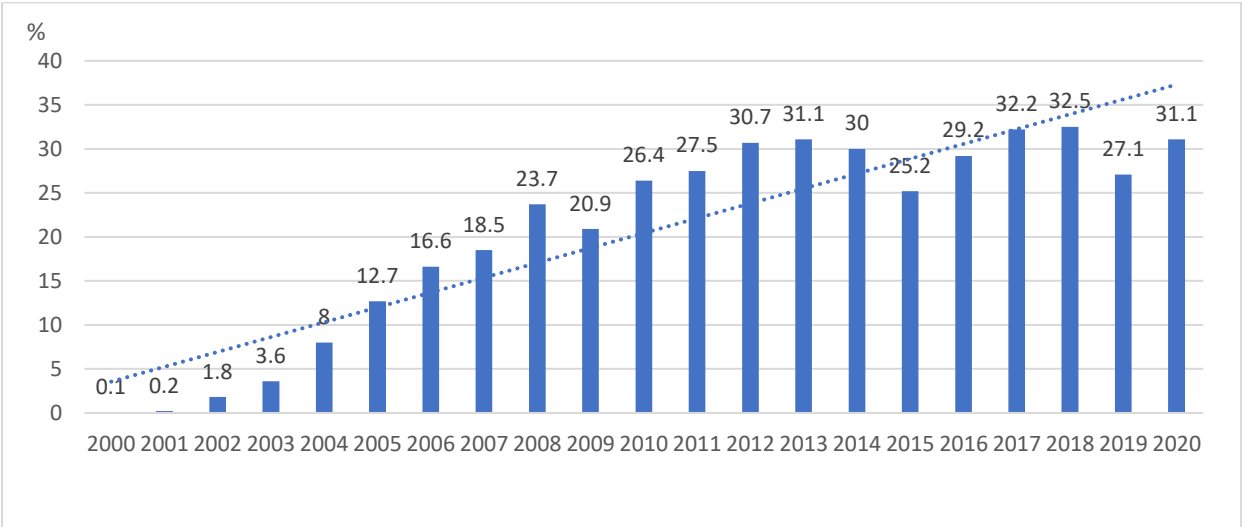
The leader of these countries is the Russian Federation. Unofficially, the number of migrants from Kyrgyzstan reaches around a million. Migrants mainly work in the construction and service areas. Kyrgyzstan's citizens do not need a visa to reach the Russian Federation, while it is a member of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU²). In 2015, the EAEU was established for regional economic integration, providing unrestricted movement of goods, services, capital, and labor. The EAEU pursues a coordinated, harmonized, and unified policy in specified sectors of the treaty and international agreements. The Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Russian Federation are Eurasian Economic Union members. The Union is created to upgrade comprehensively, raise the competitiveness of cooperation between the national economies, and promote stable development to raise the national living standards of the member-states.

Kudaibergenova (2016) claims that Kyrgyzstan's integration position into the EAEU is primarily driven by its economy and dependence on its significant immigration flows to Russia. Due to one million Kyrgyzstan citizens in Russia, membership in the EAEU is the right way to achieve freedom of movement within all member countries. The Kyrgyz-Russian Development Fund was established in 2014. The fund is created to support Kyrgyzstan's economic and industrial development and decrease the negative impact of the transition process to EAEU (Tiulegenov, 2015). Mostafa & Mahmood (2018) argue that Kyrgyzstan has become one of the most unstable countries in Central Asia. Its economic and political instability (revolutions, ethnic tensions between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in 1990 and 2010) and tensions between regional elites (clan conflicts) affect its neighboring countries, especially Russia. Concerns about the rise of radicalism and Islamic fundamentalism in Afghanistan, also located in Central Asia, are another concern for joining EAEU. Kyrgyzstan needs Russian development assistance, military cooperation, and

² Detailed information about the Eurasian Economic Union can be found on the official website <http://www.eaeunion.org/?lang=en#about>.

support for its internal and external security and political stability. Even if the Eurasian Economic Union has hardly achieved any notable success (Mostafa & Mahmood, 2018). The goals of the EAEU are declarative or politically motivated and not taken seriously. Because Russian dominance, influence, control, and pressure may also be reasons for the lack of progress and success. Present realities and economic conditions in Russia, the ruble crisis, and the conflict with Ukraine weaken the Eurasian Economic Union. The Eurasian discourse, however, appears to serve as a legitimate strategy of political elites in providing stability and security, economic development, and migration and mobility routes for member-states, especially Kyrgyzstan (Kudaibergenova, 2016; Mostafa & Mahmood, 2018). As shown in Figure 1, private remittances contribute 30% of Kyrgyzstan's GDP today.

Figure 1 – Kyrgyz Republic, Personal remittances received (% of GDP)



Source: World Bank

Local development challenges in Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan is a land of contradictions (Anderson, 1999). Once referred to as the "island of democracy," it experienced three revolutions in 2005, 2010, and 2020 that overthrew its Presidents. The fundamental causes of the political unrest during the so-called “colorful” revolutions in 2005 and 2010 were unfair parliamentary elections, corruption, nepotism, and the failure of national development programmes. The latest 2020 event occurred due to a rigged parliamentary election

again, which led to the resignation of the late President Zheenbekov. Aside from its neighbors, whose leaders have been in power since Soviet times, Kyrgyzstan elected its sixth president in 2021. Although there is one positive outcome of all this political instability, it is the emergence of a vibrant society, opposition parties, and independent media that neighboring countries in Central Asia lack (Marat, 2012).

In Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan is the only state characterized by its open political process, but weaknesses in governance are pervasive (WB, 2021b). In 2022, Kyrgyzstan ranked 140th out of 180 economies in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, scoring 27 out of 100 (on a scale of 0 to 100, with 0 being very corrupt and 100 being very clean). Improving state governance is a top priority to achieve better development outcomes, and corruption is the biggest obstacle to economic development (WB, 2021b).

Political instability, nepotism, and corruption are the consequences of slow development that leave no chance for local development. Moreover, the regime change led to the frequent replacement of high-ranking officials, including the prime ministers. The newly appointed prime minister comes with a new national development programme. Adapting to the new policies takes time, and the previous national development programmes are neglected. It is because of the length of service, where some served for three months and the longest, nine months. Around thirty prime ministers have served since the country's independence. As a result, the parliamentary system of governance has not been effective; instead, Kyrgyzstan's third revolution (2020) has resulted in the change from a parliamentary³ to a presidential government.

Kyrgyzstan's ordinary citizens are tired of protests and colorful revolutions. Currently, Kyrgyzstan's national interest is peace and economic development.

There has been an increased awareness that more attention must be paid to Kyrgyzstan's local and regional development. The importance of regional development was emphasized during the reign of former President Zheenbekov (2018–2020). By his decree, 2018-2019-2020 were designated “Years of Regional Development.” The regional development policy assigned to the

³ With the passage of the new constitution in 2010, most formal powers were delegated to Parliament (*Zhogorku Kenesh*). However, the President continued to play a crucial role in formulating foreign and domestic policy decisions. On 10 January 2021, Kyrgyzstan voted to change the system of government from parliamentary to presidential in parallel with the presidential elections, reversing the transition to a parliamentary system following the 2010 popular revolution, in which most executive power rests with the prime minister. On January 10, 2021, Kyrgyz voters supported the presidential governance model.

priority aspects, as reflected in National Strategic documents such as the *National strategy for sustainable development of Kyrgyz Republic through the period 2018-2040 (section of Economic Development of regions)*. Regional development policies mainly focused on the construction of roads, basic infrastructure building, provision of clean drinking water, efficient energy, poverty reduction, and local economic development through the specialization of local areas (tourism, agriculture, mining, etc.).

Kyrgyzstan inherited a well-developed, albeit basic, infrastructure and social service system from the Soviet era. Nevertheless, the current condition of these infrastructures and facilities has deteriorated since independence. The disappearance of the Soviet Union left significant gaps in the maintenance of infrastructure, drinking water provision, sanitation, health care, childcare, and social facilities. As the provision of basic services is the responsibility of local self-governments, many of which are struggling to perform their duties due to a lack of funding, technical resources, and institutional capacity. Based on data from the Kyrgyz Ministry of Finance (2021), 72% (329) of the 452 local self-governments are state subsidized today. Most local self-governments have no financial autonomy. Grävingholt et al. (2006) contend that local self-governments are incapable of meeting the grand expectations associated with local development in Kyrgyzstan. The amount of grants and transfers to lower levels is insufficient to pay even salaries for administrative staff at the local level. The revenues of local self-government at the local level are often of such minor importance for local budgets that they do not even close the gap between tasks assigned by the central government and the actual funds transferred. The outcome of this situation is that local self-government relies on transfers from the top levels of administration and top-down fund transfers throughout all levels of administration. This implies the possibility that not all funds actually reach the bottom layer in time or their entirety (Grävingholt et al., 2006: 9).

The disparity in population distribution between regions, districts, and villages is another bottleneck for local development in Kyrgyzstan. For example, the population of one district (*Kara-Suu*) is around 457,000⁴, which exceeds the entire region (e.g., the *Talas* region has around 267,000 inhabitants, and the *Naryn* region has 289,000). The same discrepancy exists at the village level, where over 20,000 people live in one village (e.g., *Shark Village*), and the other has 722 people

⁴ Information on the population in regions, districts, and villages can be found on the official website of the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic <http://stat.kg/kg/statistics/naselenie/>.

(*Ak-Kuduk* village). There are numerous such cases. In addition, the endless border conflicts with neighboring countries such as Tajikistan and Uzbekistan complicate the overall national development, not to mention local development. The border clashes and disputes are triggered by the access and use of natural resources such as water for irrigation and pasture grounds for grazing animals (Kurmanalieva, 2018). Table 1 provides data on territorial inequality, poverty, and unemployment rate, including Kyrgyzstan's gross regional product (GRP) per capita (NSC, 2019).

Table 1 – Territorial disparity in Kyrgyzstan

	Population	Poor population (people)	Area (km ²)	Poverty rate (%)	Unemployment rate (%)	Gross regional product (GRP) per capita (thousand soms)
	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020	2020
Kyrgyz Republic	6,523,5	1,678,265	199,949	25,3	5,8	95,1 (US \$ 1,126)
Batken oblast	537,3	190,043	17,0	34,7	7,4	42,3 (US\$ 500)
Osh oblast	1,368,1	261,842	29,0	18,8	2,6	37 (US\$ 438)
Jalal-Abad oblast	1,238,8	469,423	33,7	37,2	11,0	54,2 (US\$ 641)
Talas oblast	267,4	33,753	11,4	12,5	2,6	66,4 (US\$ 786)
Chuy oblast	959,8	247,531	20,2	25,4	6,1	88 (US\$ 1042)
Naryn oblast	289,6	107,560	45,2	36,8	7,3	61 (US\$ 722)
Issyk-Kul oblast	496,1	139,909	43,1	27,9	7,4	176,5 (US\$ 2090)

Source: NSC and own calculation

1.2 The motivation for the research

The country's current socio-economic and political context poses challenges and requires research and, more importantly, action. Kyrgyzstan faces many unresolved issues, like many other countries in the world. However, regional, rural, and local development is the most pressing, which requires

immediate attention. Accordingly, this research focuses on local development in rural Kyrgyzstan, home to more than 4,4 million people (63% of the total population). Rural areas are disadvantaged, with poverty rates well above the national average and unemployment. Today, remittances and agriculture are the primary sources of income in the country's rural areas. Therefore, to expand the opportunities and enhance the quality of life in the rural areas of Kyrgyzstan, this research looks for alternatives for local development.

It should be noted that the study does not focus on agricultural development. The aim is to explore a new paradigm that is local, inclusive, and sustainable. Two role models are selected for this: the European Union's (EU) "LEADER" and the Republic of Korea's (Korea⁵) "Saemaul Undong." In selecting these models, several factors were considered. First, the selected models have become a popular area of research, with *Liaisons Entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie Rurale* (LEADER, meaning links between the rural economy and development actions) in the European Union. Similarly, Korea's Saemaul Undong (New Village Movement/Development) is gaining popularity in Africa, Latin America, the ASEAN region, and Central Asia, where it has recently expanded. The initiatives have a global footprint. Second, both regions motivate academics, the public sector, policymakers, and ordinary citizens with their development paths: the EU core value of democracy in a diverse and heterogeneous environment and the rapid development of East Asia resulting from an authoritarian regime and developmental state and modern technologies. Third, these models represent the local development characteristics that are inclusive, sustainable, and above all, local, which is most appropriate for this research motivation. Finally, Kyrgyzstan has expressed its interest in the Korean Saemaul Undong, introducing it as a model of action in rural areas as the first Central Asian country to do so.

Although the EU and East Asia have different contexts, socio-economic conditions, and political systems, this study examines role models' historical context and theoretical underpinning to understand local development strategies. The primary objective is to identify the basic principles and characteristics of the two models by comparing them in terms of their local development schemes. Based on the similarities and differences, adopt appropriate local development strategies that could be applied to Kyrgyzstan to promote local development based on its context.

⁵ South Korea is officially named the Republic of Korea.

1.3 Aim and Research Questions

This thesis explores the potential for local development models for rural Kyrgyzstan. First, the study examines literature to identify the critical components of local development concepts. The next step is to investigate the role models' fundamental principles, characteristics, and local development schemes through comparative analysis.

After examining role models' main similarities and differences (EU LEADER and Korean Saemaul Undong), this study proposes an analytical framework for Kyrgyzstan's local development. It is an actor-based "Tripartite Stakeholders' Model" (TSM) for Kyrgyzstan's local development. The proposed model combines LEADER and Saemaul Undong's core local actors, the engines of local development. Therefore, this research study has selected three different case studies in Kyrgyzstan: two international and one domestic field study. Choosing unrelated case studies aims to investigate the presence of the proposed model TSM's critical local actors and the factors that impact Kyrgyzstan's local development.

The first international local development project is the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) funded "*Menin Ayilym*," or My Village Initiative, based on the Korean Saemaul Undong model in Kyrgyzstan's pilot regions. The second international local development project is the EBRD drinking water project in Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality, Kyrgyzstan. I tried to find a LEADER-type of initiative in Kyrgyzstan but failed. First, Kyrgyzstan is not a member of the EU. Second, gaining access to EU representatives in Kyrgyzstan was challenging, let alone conducting a research study of their development activities. After numerous requests, refusals, and delays in response, I only accessed the EBRD project in Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality through personal networks. Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality was the researcher's former workplace, and this was the only way to highlight somehow EU activities in rural Kyrgyzstan that target local development. As regards the Korean Saemaul Undong activities in Kyrgyzstan, the researcher's master's degree from Korea⁶ played a significant role. Unfortunately, in Kyrgyzstan, people cannot give an interview; it is not the culture of the people to give a spontaneous interview.

The final domestic field research which targets local development is "*Ülgüülüü Ayil Ökmötü*," which means Exemplary local self-government in Kyrgyzstan's Bel territory. The

⁶ The author studied International Community Development and Saemaul Undong (Master Studies) at Yeungnam University, Republic of Korea.

initiative is launched by the private sector (a Kyrgyz businessman). Three independent case studies are conducted in Kyrgyzstan in 2019~2021. In order to obtain access to the data, semi-structured questionnaires are developed for international field studies. In-depth interviews are conducted for domestic field research.

The following two research questions are addressed in the first part of this research (the theoretical part of this dissertation). The theoretical literature review is conducted to find the answers to our first and second research questions. Furthermore, three different case studies are conducted to address the third research question and its sub-questions.

Accordingly, the research postulates are:

RQ₁: What are the guiding principles and characteristics of the European Union's LEADER and Korean Saemaul Undong's approach to local development?

RQ₂: What are the main similarities and differences between European Union's LEADER and Korean Saemaul Undong schemes for local development?

RQ₃: How can European Union's LEADER and Korean Saemaul Undong be applied as an alternative model for local development in Kyrgyzstan?

1.4 Structure of the doctoral dissertation

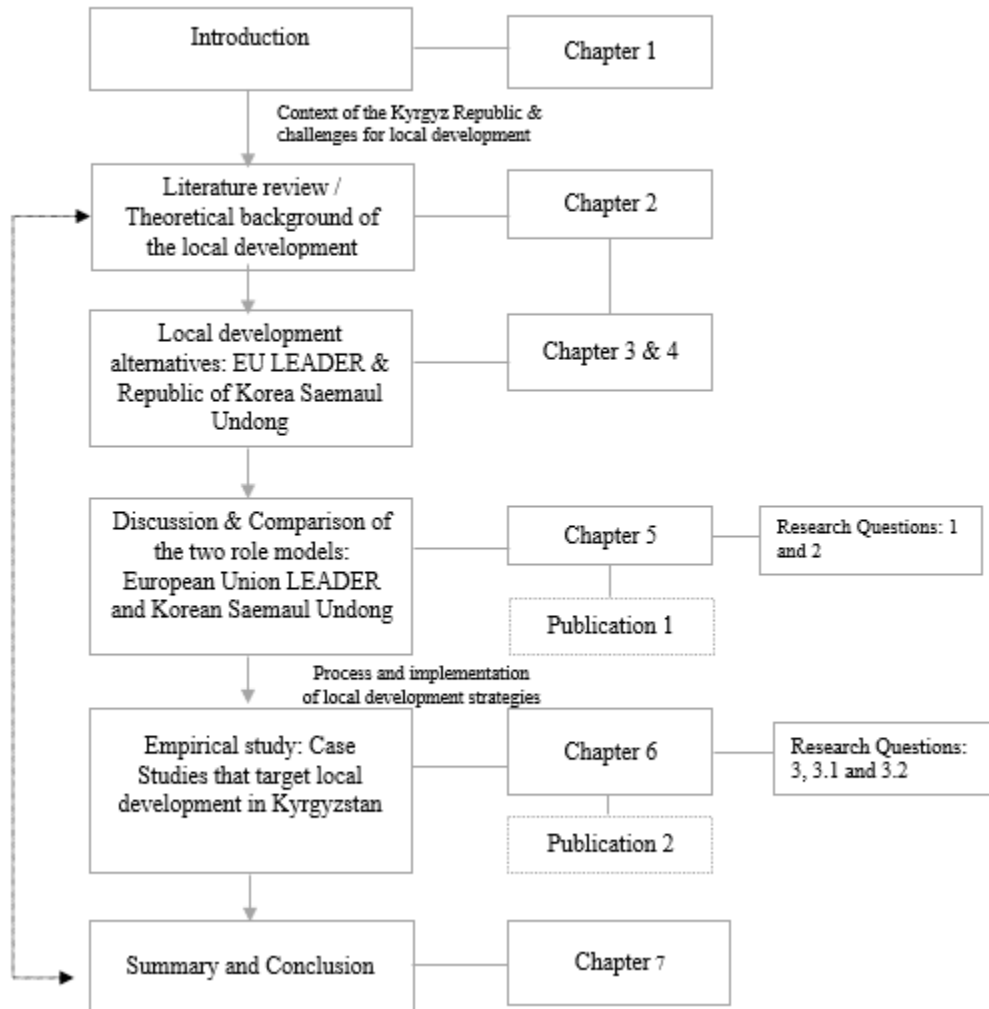
The thesis is structured as follows. The first chapter introduces the context of Kyrgyzstan, the challenges of local development, and the aim of this thesis. The following chapter 2 discusses the theories of local development. Chapters 3 and 4 are dedicated to local development alternatives: the European Union's LEADER and the Republic of Korea's Saemaul Undong models. The chapters introduce alternatives and outline role models' socio-economic backgrounds, basic principles, characteristics, and local development schemes. A comparative analysis is used to identify similarities and differences between the selected role models based on their local development schemes. Chapter 5 compares two role models, LEADER and Saemaul Undong, and closes by proposing an actor-based "Tripartite Stakeholders' Model" for Kyrgyzstan's local development. Whether critical actors of the tripartite stakeholders' model are present or absent in Kyrgyzstan, this research employs three case studies in the following chapter. Chapter 6 is the

empirical part of this dissertation, and three different case studies are selected. The first case study, Korean Saemaul Undong's application, vital local actors, and their cooperation in Kyrgyzstan presented. The chapter examines the processes and implementation of local development schemes by Korean donors. The chapter closes with a comparative analysis of the original Korean and Kyrgyz versions (globalized) of Saemaul Undong. The second case study is the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) "drinking water provision" project in Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality. EBRD project context, vital local actors, and their collaboration are presented. This section closes with the contribution of the EBRD drinking water project in Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality, Kyrgyzstan.

The third case study, the "Exemplary local self-government," was initiated by a Kyrgyz businessman in Kyrgyzstan's Bel territory, the southern part of Kyrgyzstan. The section follows the project's context, critical local actors and their collaboration process, and primary contributions to the pilot area. Empirical chapter 6 closes by discussing the selected case studies' findings, similarities, and differences regarding local development schemes.

Chapter 7 summarizes the research answers, results, and findings based on the research questions formulated in the first chapter. This study attempts to provide a balanced overview and analysis of the field studies conducted in rural Kyrgyzstan in response to our main research questions.

Figure 2 – Research stages of the doctoral dissertation



Source: own elaboration

2. Literature Review

2.1 Local Development Theories

Local and regional development has established multi and inter-disciplinary contexts of social, cultural, economics, geography, planning, urban studies, and environmental and political studies (Pike et al., 2011: 3-4). In addition, local and regional development conception has extended and integrated with the "Development Studies" concept to address ongoing and future challenges. Therefore, "what kind of local and regional development" and for "whom" framework of understanding, instruments, and policies should be considered as the fundamental questions of the concept of local and regional development (Pike et al., 2007: 1254). Moreover, consideration should also be given to the historical context and the "where" of local and regional development in space, territory, place, and scale. Definitions are an essential and deceptively tricky starting point for comprehending what local and regional development entails. It has been suggested that success, failure, and development in localities and regions are shaped and determined by the processes and politics of government and governance. There is a need for renewed politics of local and regional development based on questions of who governs and how power is exercised. It is because it determines the varieties, institutions, and resources available to frame, address, and answer the question, "What kind of local and regional development is appropriate and for whom?" It is rejected that thoughtful and parochial approaches are developed at the expense of other people, classes, and places. Instead, multilevel institutional structures operating at various levels and intergovernmental coordination are likely to provide the most significant potential. Pursuing local and regional development comes with potential challenges. The lack of a local and regional development vision would make this task even more challenging (Pike et al., 2007: 1266). In local and regional development, principles and values are socially and politically determined by actors within localities and regions. A principle refers to an ingrained or fundamental truth that underlies individual and social behavior, belief systems, and frameworks of logic and reasoning. A value is a belief or ideal considered necessary, valuable, and meaningful. Principles and values provide information on how specific interests and social groups in particular places define, interpret, comprehend, and articulate what is described and meant by local and regional development.

Regional development theories consider local development as a policy based on the local aspects of a particular territory. For example, Cochrane (2011: 97) emphasizes that historically and until the 1980s, a regional policy was defined as “distressed” or otherwise economically deprived areas. Similarly, local development has been framed within the economic decline or decay discourse. Local and regional development policies have concentrated on attracting new industries and stimulating relocation from thriving in less affluent areas. However, since the mid-1990s, self-help processes have been emphasized to identify how regions can generate growth and prosperity through the initiative of locally based actors such as businesses and public agencies.

From another perspective, Tödting (2011) stresses the importance of indigenous and endogenous development for local and regional development. Indigenous is characterized by “homegrown” assets and resources embedded more locally, committed, and capable of enduringly contributing to local development. Such resources comprise land, natural resources, the inhabitants' local labor force, historically rooted traditional skills, and local entrepreneurship. The idea of endogenous development is widely described. Endogenous development includes social and political factors, such as the engagement of social agents and civil society, that trigger self-help processes, local initiatives, and social movements to improve a particular region's living conditions. Due to the influential role of local forces and factors of the development strategy, it is often referred to as a “bottom-up” approach. The central idea is that indigenous and endogenous forces and factors should drive local and regional development from the bottom up. Local and regional actors and agents should initiate local-regional development rather than central government or external agencies. It should be oriented to the needs and objectives of the local-regional population.

Endogenous approaches to local and regional development have evolved as a counter-thesis to previous regional development approaches for less developed areas, which strongly emphasize external factors. Such as interregional trade (exports, imports) or the mobility of capital (firms), labor, and technology between regions and countries (Tödting, 2011: 334). Local development takes into consideration the endogenous potential of local areas. Economic and non-economic factors must be considered for a successful local development process. The development of local economies can be influenced by non-economic factors such as social, cultural, historical, institutional, and geographical aspects.

As outlined in a recent study by Pálné Kovács (2015), local governments play an essential role in local development. However, they must improve their capabilities and enhance local knowledge to succeed. As well as impacting local living conditions and economic development, local governments significantly impact the environment. The term "local knowledge" refers to "mixed knowledge." The concept of a place representing a mix of distinct types of knowledge is implied; it is also intended to convey the meaning of a place in which the environment shapes knowledge. The author discusses the application of local knowledge (the slightest moveable knowledge) to support local governance and economic development. A significant focus will be placed on the degree of competence and maneuvering space granted to local governments as well as the degree of centralization and decentralization of their powers. Based on the author's example of Hungary, it is evident that the government's strong centralization is not conducive to effective leadership at the local level. Centralization resulted in losing many public service competencies and funding sources for local governments in Hungary (Pálné Kovács, 2021; Kákai & Kovács, 2023). As a result, local governments are losing the opportunity to possess and channel local knowledge into development due to the lack of instruments and resources.

The overall governance environment determines the functioning of local governance. Decentralized systems allow local governments to shape the frames of locally optimal decision-making. Exploiting the chance is by no means easy. The challenge of local governance is whether it can manage problems at the right time and place. Local governance is good if it can give correct local answers. The feature of local governments is providing direct participation since being closer to the citizens. It is not closed within branch logic; therefore, it can make complex decisions based on local knowledge. Although there is a contradiction in the more complex decision-making processes, the more significant is the danger of the selection of actors to be involved. Government openness is broader at easier decisions; however, in the case of complex decisions, the only chance of "consensus" is in bargaining mechanisms. The learning process of local government requires the time of one generation and the continuous demand for governance renewal. Based on excellent tolerance and sensitivity, it is recognized that a lot of energy and knowledge of different individuals and groups are needed to develop a city or region. The world of local governments is colorful; they cannot motivate local knowledge or adapt to the changes. The empowerment and investments granted by the government system are only the starting point for successful "good" local

governance. The crucial driving forces are local knowledge, information on local circumstances, and the ability to cooperate with partners.

Blakely & Bradshaw (2002: xvi) define local economic development (hereinafter LED) as a process through which partnerships are formed between local governments, community groups, and the private sector to manage existing resources to create jobs and stimulate the economy in a specific community. It emphasizes local control, using the potential of human, institutional and physical, and area natural resources. Local economic development initiatives are believed to mobilize actors, organizations, and resources and develop new institutions and local systems through "dialogue" and "strategic actions." Blakely & Bradshaw (2002) consider LED an emerging field of study that is currently more of a movement than a strict economic model that specifies a standardized approach. The authors acknowledge that LED (2002: xvi) is a process in which local governments and community-based organizations engage to stimulate business activity and employment. The principal goal of LED is to promote local employment opportunities in sectors. In recent decades, more attention has been given to the local place and people-oriented approaches to dealing with market opportunities, failures, and unevenness in the national and global economies. The rise of a robust national economy and the potential for increased immigration have given weight to the notion that the capacity to solve the problems of low-income areas lies within these communities (Blakely & Bradshaw, 2002: 53-55). Further, the authors point out that LED can be explained through the underlying rationale.

$$\text{Local and regional development} = c \times r,$$

where c equals an area's capacity (economic, social, technological, and political capacity), and r equals its resources (natural resources availability, location, labor, capital investment, entrepreneurial climate, transport, communication, industrial composition, technology, size, export market, international economic situation, and national and state government spending).

A c value equaling 1 represents a neutral capacity that neither adds to nor detracts from the resources of a community. A c value greater than 1 represents a strong capacity that increases when applied to (multiplied by) resources. A c value less than 1 indicates a weak community capacity (low-functioning social, political, and organizational leadership), which can be attributed to cronyism, corruption, self-interest, disorganization, or ineptitude, and when applied to resources, reduces them, and impedes development.

The communities must market their resources intelligently and use their human, social, institutional, and physical resources to build and gain competitive advantages to create new firms and maintain their existing economic base. For example, schools, colleges, hospitals, recycling centers, churches, daycare centers, youth programs, housing projects, county fairs, and ethnic organizations all have a stake in the local economy. The new insight into local economic development is that these same organizations have the potential, through partnership, to identify their assets and utilize them to build a better local economy. Partnerships are shared commitments to pursue joint economic objectives determined by public, private, and community sectors and instituted as collective actions (Blakely & Bradshaw, 2002: 351). The authors claim that the theories of economic development have traditionally focused mainly on the r part of the equation (resources), neglecting the c part (capacity). Hence, LED theory should consider both the r and c parts.

Helmsing (2003: 68), on the other hand, emphasizes that globalization exemplifies the growing mobility of firms, capital, and people. This increased competition can be attributed to two factors. The first is that firms, capital, and individuals can access more alternatives. They are better informed and can more easily switch to alternative places. The second factor is that territories (countries and municipalities) compare themselves to attract inward resources to create employment and income in the local community. Therefore, getting a small share of the fast-growing volume of an international mobile investment may make a significant difference. The other is that selective attraction of inward investment may assist in bridging the local-global gap and help resolve crucial bottlenecks in the local production system and improve access to new external markets.

Swinburn et al. (2006) present that LED "is a collaborative process in which the public, private, and non-governmental sectors work together to improve economic growth and job creation." LED aims to increase a local area's economic capacity to improve its economic future and overall quality of life. Today, a community's success is determined by its ability to adapt to the volatile local, national, and international market economies. Communities are increasingly using strategically planned LED to boost an area's local economic capacity, improve the investment climate, and boost the productivity and competitiveness of local businesses, entrepreneurs, and workers. Understanding the LED process and acting strategically in the

changing and increasingly competitive market economy is critical to communities' ability to improve their quality of life, create new economic opportunities, and combat poverty.

Based on the theoretical literature review, it can be stated that to promote local development, a partnership should be established with the key actors of local government (public sector), business agencies, non-governmental organizations, and local associations (private sector). Local governments are placed better to drive local development than governments at larger geographic scales because they have better access to local information and can quickly identify and engage with local stakeholders. Local development is based on identifying and utilizing endogenous potentials such as r (resources) and c (capacity) of a specific area (community, neighborhood, city, municipality, or equivalent). Moreover, local development strategy may not achieve its intended purpose unless a clear understanding of "where," "for whom," or "what kind of local and regional development" is available. However, it can be challenging to achieve the level of collaboration and participation, including elements of coordination, between local stakeholders in implementing local development strategies, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (Rodríguez-Pose & Tijmstra, 2007).

3. Local Development Alternative I: European Union's LEADER Model

3.1 Introduction

LEADER was introduced in 1991 for three years and was extended in 1995 by an expanded, five-year version: LEADER II (Ray, 2000: 164). A pilot intervention of "Community Initiatives" was introduced by the European Commission. LEADER is the version of this programme designed specifically for rural development (Maurel, 2008). It was announced as a pilot programme to stimulate innovative approaches to rural development at the local level. The Cork Declaration (1996) underlines the importance of a new paradigm in which rural development is integrated, sustainable, community-oriented, and local within a coherent European framework. The European LEADER programme was aimed to enhance the quality of life in rural areas and encourage rural economic diversification by providing support initiatives for rural-agricultural tourism, local entrepreneurship, and community facilities.

Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) in the EU are developed and implemented based on the unique challenges and opportunities of each Member State. The rural development paradigm has emerged since the 1990s as a relevant European policy field. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the Cohesion Policy are the backbones of the LEADER programme (EC, 2006). In the rural development context of each Member State, the LEADER programme was implemented under the national and regional RDPs, co-financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). The approval process involved negotiations between the European Commission, the local organization, and the designated intermediary representative of the national Government (Ray, 2000: 165).

The origin of LEADER is the French abbreviation for "*Liaison Entre Actions pour le Développement de l'Economie Rurale*," meaning links between the rural economy and development actions (EC, 2006). LEADER is a local development method used for 30 years to attract stakeholders to develop and implement local strategies, make decisions, and allocate resources for developing EU rural areas. A new model of local development began to appear, based on a bottom-up approach to evaluating local resources and attracting new participants to create and implement strategies (EC, 2006; Ray, 2000; Chevalier et al., 2012). LEADER programme aims to establish a partnership by forming Local Action Groups (LAGs) to mitigate disparities in the diverse and

heterogeneous context of the European Union (EC, 2006; Van de Poele, 2015). The LAG is the tool to implement the LEADER principles (Staic & Vladu, 2020). The main feature of LEADER is the local action group representing the public-private partnership. The role of the LAG is to manage financial resources and implement local development strategies. The private partners must represent the majority (at least 51% of the partnership structure). LAGs are chosen through an open procedure based on the criteria set out in the programs. The operation of the LEADER programme takes place in a geographical area where the population of LEADER territory should be at least 5000, 10,000, and not more than 100,000. Each EU Member State can decide how to implement LEADER on its territory (planning, selection, and funding of LEADER areas) (Staic & Vladu, 2020). This policy initiative is based on a territorial rather than a sectoral approach. It offers a new way of thinking about territorial development, which was initially based on a centralized, exogenous model (top-down), which allows for an endogenous perspective (bottom-up), including new forms of governance (Chevalier et al., 2012). LEADER programme encourages partnerships between local authorities, local associations and residents, and entrepreneurial spheres. It strongly emphasizes partnership building and networking to exchange good practices and experiences (Van De Poele, 2015). LEADER is widely regarded as a resounding success for the EU's rural development initiative.

LEADER programme has four generations: LEADER I (1991-1993) focused on an innovative approach to rural development. It focused on territorially oriented, integrative, and participatory mechanisms. LEADER II (1994-1999) emphasized the creative aspects of projects. LEADER + (2000-2006) and LEADER Axis (2007-2013) are the EU mainstream rural development policy. It plays the role of a laboratory and contributes to uniting and assessing the novel approaches to integrated and sustainable development to influence, complete, and strengthen the EU policy on rural development. The scope of the LEADER programme is shown in Table 2.

Table 2 – The scale of the LEADER programme (1991-2013)

LEADER programme	No. of LAGs	Area covered (1000 km ²)	EU funding (Billion euros)
LEADER I – 1991-1993	217	367	0,442
LEADER II – 1994-1999	906	1,375	1,775
LEADER + 2000-2006	893	1,577 ^a	2,105 ^b

LEADER Axis (2007-2013)	1,400	3,500 ^c	5,800 ^d
-------------------------	-------	--------------------	--------------------

Source: Van de Poele, 2015, p. 199.

^a Equal to 15% of the total territory of EU-15 and covering some 50 million people.

^b Plus 1,5 billion euros by private contribution and some 1,5 billion euros by the Member States of EU-15.

^c Covering 88 million people in EU-27.

^d Plus 3.4 billion euros by the EU-27 Member States and private contribution

In the 2014-2020 programming period, the LEADER programme has extended under the broader term Community-led Local Development (CLLD). Three other EU funds have funded CLLD: the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, and the European Social Fund. The LEADER method was developed 30 years ago in 217 pioneering LAGs. It is currently implemented by an impressive network of 2800 LAGs, each of which can count on hundreds of active citizens, covering 61% of the rural population in the European Union (EU Rural Review, 2020).

3.2 Socio-economic background of the LEADER

Local development in Europe has evolved through several stages (Lukesch, 2018). In the last century of the 1980s, local development experts and activists, usually confined to their national or regional context, found opportunities to share experiences at European gatherings organized by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Council of Europe, and the European Community, which became the European Union in 1993. In the 1980s, the economic crisis in lagging regions and old industrial areas brought new responses, such as Local Employment Initiatives (LEIs). The phenomenon was identified and analyzed by the OECD's local economy and employment programme, an ongoing priority focus of the OECD since 1982. It has been funded for several years by the European Commission's Local Employment Development Action Programme (LEDA) and was implemented in 45 local areas between 1986 and 1996. LEDA distilled the critical characteristics of bottom-up local development approaches, with the triptych of "local partnership," "local area," and "local development strategy" already emerging, offering a generic model of area-based development pursuing a broad range of social and economic development objectives. These evolved against accelerated industrialization and structural change

in rural areas, specifically in France, Italy, and the newly entered southern EU Member States: Greece (1981), Spain, and Portugal (1986) (ibid., 2). The perceived depletion of rural areas prompted a new policy approach that focused on the role of rural regions. This shift in policy was marked by the 1988 European Commission Communication *"The Future of Rural Society."* Since 1989, the Presidency of Jaques Delors and the Agricultural Commissioner Ray McSharry have provided targeted pastoral development assistance from the Structural Fund. A committed official at the European Commission named Michel Laine drafted the first edition of LEADER, launched in 1991 (ibid.).

On the other hand, Granberg, Andersson, and Kovach's (2015) research emphasize that agriculture was an economic sector in the EU after World War II due to the lack of food. The solid political position of farmers and increasing prosperity made it possible to increase agricultural subsidies. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) played a role in this priority. Nevertheless, overproduction, increasing subsidies, rural exodus, and the pressure of changing global contexts made changes in spatial planning inevitable. The negative development of rural areas in Europe and the inability of agricultural policy to solve the cumulative development problems prompted the creation of the LEADER programme. LEADER approach aims to shift EU rural development policy from government to governance to improve local efficiency and inclusive policy implementation (ibid.). The shift towards decentralization and participation is viewed positively by many researchers in the EU LEADER programme for local development. Kovach (2000) emphasizes that a rural development option is now available under the EU LEADER program. The options involve developing niche markets such as rural tourism and local organic products. In addition, it involves seeking funding through creative, innovative ideas based on the revival of local traditions, the reconstruction of local monuments, and the recreation of rural/local images.

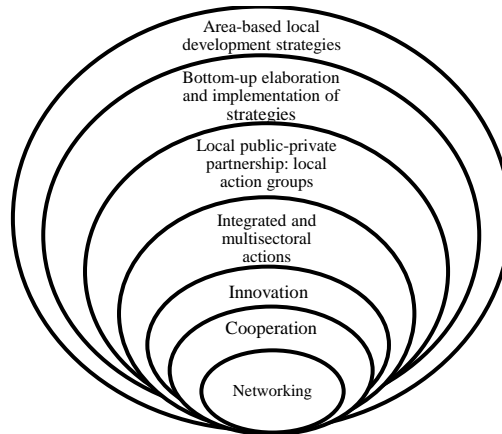
3.3 The basic principles and characteristics of the LEADER

The LEADER local development strategy is based on seven principles (see Figure 3). Seven key features summarize the LEADER model. As a toolkit, they are vital. As each feature complements and interacts with the others throughout the policy implementation process, it significantly impacts rural dynamics and their problem-solving ability. A broad interpretation of the seven leading principles was provided by the European Commission (2006).

- 1) *Area-based approach* is characterized by local identity and shared traditions that reflect the small, homogeneous, and socially cohesive area. As a target area for policy implementation, an area-based local development strategy emphasizes belonging to a specific area. Focusing on a specific area makes the policy effective in identifying local potentials and bottlenecks for local development.
- 2) *The bottom-up approach* is unique among the seven local development strategies. It intends to invite stakeholders to participate in the initiatives and make decisions about the priorities of their local areas. This means that local actors participate in the design and decision-making processes. The involvement of local actors includes the inhabitants of these specific areas, a group of economic and social interests, and representative public and private institutions.
- 3) *Public-private partnerships* or Local Action Groups (LAGs). Establishing LAGs (local partnerships) is a crucial feature of the LEADER model. A local action group is expected to bring together public and private partners, including representatives from non-profit organizations and local associations in the specific area. Private partners and associations must represent at least 50% of the local partners at the decision-making level. The LAGs define and implement a local development strategy and make financial resource allocation and management decisions.
- 4) *Integrated and multisectoral actions* indicate that the local development strategy is not sectoral development. Instead, it should be connected and coordinated as a single entity encompassing diverse economic, social, cultural, and environmental actors.
- 5) *Promoting innovation* means freedom of action by introducing new products and processes, modernizing traditional know-how, or searching for innovative solutions to current challenges in rural areas. LEADER has the potential to stimulate creative and innovative approaches to local development. However, innovation should be defined broadly as a new product, process, organization, market, etc.
- 6) *Cooperation* encompasses more than just networking. Local Action Groups collaborate on projects with another LAG or similar group from another Member State region or even a third country.
- 7) *Networking* creates connections between people, projects, and rural areas. It includes exchanging experiences and know-how within and between LAGs, rural areas,

administrations, and organizations implementing local development policies at all levels. Institutional networks include the European Commission at the supranational, national, regional, and local levels.

Figure 3 – The seven fundamental principles of the LEADER



Source: Musaeva, 2020, p.16.

3.3.1 Policy delivery mechanism of the LEADER

The importance of partnerships in LEADER is emphasized a lot. The Local Action Group is conceived as a constituent of participatory democracy (Dax & Oedl-Weiser, 2016; Esparcia et al., 2016: 33). They are seen as a local expression of the transition from government to governance in European rural development policy. Accordingly, the core of the LEADER method is the establishment of LAGs, which consist of representatives from the public, private, and non-profit sectors. LAGs are multisectoral, area-based partnerships operating throughout the European Union to support participatory local development in rural areas (Furmankiewics et al., 2016a). The establishment of the LAG is one of the operational elements of LEADER to apply for EU funding by producing a “business plan” of proposed development actions based on the valorization of indigenous resources (tangible and intangible) and the active participation of the public, community, and business sectors within the specific territory designated (Ray, 2000: 164; Maurel, 2008; Bumbalova et al., 2016). LEADER programme is called the “Pan-European example of participatory democracy” due to local characteristics.

Pan-European example of participatory democracy

In the LEADER programme, the local actors and partnership mechanisms actively support territorial diversity and community values. Consequently, rural development policy (in this case, the LEADER) must follow the principle of subsidiarity. It must be decentralized and based on partnership and cooperation between local, regional, national, and supranational (EU) levels. The emphasis must be on endogenous (bottom-up, participative, and community) development that harnesses rural communities' creativity and solidarity (Ray, 2000). Rural development must be local and community-driven within a coherent European framework.

Local characteristics of the LEADER

Localizing the LEADER programme through a territorial approach, a bottom-up approach, a partnership, innovation, and multisectoral integration creates a platform for tackling local challenges. Table 3 displays the local characteristics of LEADER.

Table 3 – Local characteristics of LEADER

Local	Area-based Bottom-up Partnership Innovation Multisectoral	Represented by the local groups and the local development strategy
Trans-local	Networking Trans-national cooperation	Emerge from the interaction between local groups and their respective strategies
Vertical	Decentralized management and financing	They are represented and implemented by the programming authority. It provides the governance structure where the local groups conduct their activities. However, local partnerships are a crucial element of this feature, which can be considered management's 'terminal' at the local level

Source: CEC, 2003, p. 66; Van de Poele, 2015, p. 200.

3.3.2 Good Governance and Decentralization and LEADER

In 1994, the European Commission adopted a decentralized approach to implementing initiatives that operate at the national or regional level but do not change their local character (Van de Poele, 2015). The importance of decentralization of institutions is crucial for solving local problems. Decentralization can form changes in the model of democracy (Pálné Kovács, 2015). There is general agreement that decentralization is one of the prerequisites for good governance. Furthermore, the participation of citizens in decentralized countries is supported by more than a centralized one. It rearranges the position of local and regional interests in the central decision-making arenas, changing the parties' territorial organization and clientele. Public policy success is defined by the organizational framework in which the implementation occurs (“governance matters”). The institutional system affects the goals and instruments of local development policy. The organization and value system of the actors involved, the effectiveness of coordination, and the level of decentralization determine the performance of local development priorities.

Good governance entails granting an appropriate voice and opt-out opportunities and successfully addressing the territory's social and economic development challenges (Rodríguez-Pose & Tijmstra, 2007). With the increasing localization of businesses and a consequent emphasis on locality as a development point, good governance at all levels of government has become increasingly important. However, traditional development strategies relied heavily on national systems and the capabilities of central government officials. LED strategies' success primarily depends on a suitable local-regional institutional system and the availability of the necessary framework and skill levels at all levels of government. This trust in good governance encourages local actors to participate. It can empower local civic groups and populations in general and facilitate cross-pollination. High-quality and inclusive local government institutions are critical to the success of the LED approach, as it relies heavily on the involvement of various stakeholders to identify local opportunities and threats and develop strategies to address them. Participation can take many forms, from voting in regional or local elections to attending strategy meetings and knowledge-sharing exercises. Decentralization has resulted in the formation of new levels of government in many countries and increased local participation through elections and new local debates. Reduced distance between politicians and their constituents can increase political accountability, transparency, and participation. As local and regional governments are closer to their constituents and deal with less complex central government agendas, citizens can better

understand political issues, monitor politicians' behavior, and hold them accountable. The close links between politicians and their electorates can make regional and local arenas more vulnerable to corruption and pressure groups. The ability of local governments to stimulate genuine horizontal collaboration and multi-stakeholder participation depends on the characteristics of local officials and the existence of capable formal and informal interest organizations with which local governments can work (Rodríguez-Pose & Tijnstra, 2007).

Returning to LEADER is based on a set of goals proposed and negotiated by the Member States – a top-down approach. However, at the local level, the local action groups can decide on the objectives and principles of the program they consider relevant and achievable in their local areas (Convey et al., 2010). Introducing a new territorial development model based on a bottom-up approach appears to be an entirely new process and experiment in the formerly communist countries of Central Europe (Maurel, 2008). Maurel highlights territorial development policies, which focus on promoting new territories based on local community activities, are understood as development support policies. Territorializing the Structural Funds became a trend. The shift from a centralized (exogenous) mode of development to a decentralization (endogenous) based on local initiatives and resources has taken various forms in the European Union's LEADER programme. Rather than defining general guidelines for using funds, the novel approach left more room for maneuvering in implementing the LEADER programme in each EU Member State (ibid., 513).

Although, after the EU expansion toward Central European countries, creating conditions for local development was not easy (Kovach, 2000; Chevalier et al., 2012; Maurel, 2013). In these post-socialist countries, adopting the European local development model is considered unprecedented. Countries with a communist past, with new modes of governing systems and tools for implementing local development projects, demanded strict transfer of legal norms and regulations from European Union institutions to the new Member States under the hierarchical structure and constrictive type of governing (Maurel, 2013). The legal and institutional adaptation required a significant amount of institutional learning and modes of governance, which should comply with various European Directives: decentralization, regionalization, re-implementation of local autonomy, and others. This type of transfer is created based on the ability of local actors to demonstrate the kind of initiative to enhance dynamics. Chevalier et al. (2012) highlight the main obstacles of a communist background, which led to passive local people's participation, the gap between national politics and policy, and the principles of local elective democracy. The absence

of social capital (trust), social connections (networking), insufficient education of rural residents, and relatively weak civil society hindered local participation. Maurel (2008; 2013) stressed that LEADER's principles are poorly disseminated among local communities and stakeholders in Central Europe. The applicability and effectiveness of the LEADER method were a concern in the implementation process in Central Europe due to path dependency heritage.

In the second half of the 1990s, post-socialist countries such as Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Poland changed their path toward Europeanization. During this period, the party-state was dismantled, the economy was liberalized, and parliamentary democracy was established (Kovach, 2000). LEADER is executed in rural development via each EU Member State's national and regional rural development programs (RDPs).

3.3.3 A brief overview of the LEADER programme implementation in Hungary

Like many other EU Member States, Hungary participates in the LEADER initiative. The LEADER programme is implemented through each EU Member State's national and regional rural development programs (RDPs). RDP is managed at Hungary's national (Ministry of Agriculture) level and funded through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and national contributions (Hungarian government). Each Member State is part of a broader framework of European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) that includes Regional Development, Social, Cohesion, and Fisheries Funds managed nationally by each EU Member State. Hungary's strategic plans outline the country's goals and investment priorities based on Partnership Agreements (ENRD, 2023).

The main ideas of the LEADER programme were gradually introduced in Hungary in the 1990s within the SAPARD and PHARE programs (Balogh & Erőss, 2015). In 2001, Hungary launched an experimental program based on the LEADER model, establishing fourteen local action groups with a total budget of 1,7 million euros (Maurel, 2008: 518; Chevalier et al., 2012). Although Hungary joined the EU in 2004, the LEADER model was introduced in 2001 and laid the groundwork for developing documents, procedures, and pilot programmes (Kováč, 2000; Patkós, 2018). The local action groups intended to adopt local rural development strategies to address three types of action: (1) aid for large families, (2) the integration of Roma into local society, and (3) youth training. Later, most of the projects of LEADER in Hungary centered on

"rural tourism," "preservation of cultural heritage," and "non-agricultural SMEs" (Maurel, 2008; Chevalier, 2012).

A study by Maurel (2008) highlights that LEADER+ came into force immediately after EU enlargement within the Operational Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (2004-2006) with a budget of around 19 million euros, of which 14,3 million came from the EU. The 67 LAGs were established, and implementation of the local strategies began in 2006. However, LEADER+ is operated in a highly centralized manner, with project selection based on hard bargaining. The same opinion is emphasized in the work of Csurgo & Kovach (2015), where the LEADER programme continues to give national authorities a crucial role in management, control, and institutional mediation. The authors emphasize that local action groups are under the control of the Agriculture and Rural Development Agency. The Agency comprises a central organization for cross-cutting issues, directorates with administrative powers, and county offices with 19 representatives. The Agriculture and Rural Development Agency is an institution that was founded to manage funding applications and to award and implement market regulation measures. The relationships between local action groups and Agriculture and Rural Development Agency are hierarchical and bureaucratic.

The local action group has informal relations with various institutions at the local level, and its position in the local development system is horizontal. The case study by Csurgo & Kovach (2015) found that LEADER implementation is bureaucratic (top-down), which goes against the bottom-up principle. According to the LEADER principles, the selection of the local action group should not be determined and conducted by the central government or ministries. They claim that the bottom-up approach is suffered in this matter. LEADER stakeholders often complained about the dirty tricks of the Agriculture and Rural Development Agency (Patkós, 2018: 179). This organization seemed interested in withholding EU funding from beneficiaries and wanted to block local action groups (*ibid.*). Another disadvantage of the LEADER programme in Hungary is the excessive bureaucracy, which discourages the civilians involved from further cooperation and involvement (Ruszkai & Kovács, 2013).

The research study describes the selection of LAGs, critical local actors, and their cooperation and participation in the LEADER programme in Hungary.

Selection criteria for Local Action Groups in Hungary

In 2007, the Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture introduced a new administrative structure for the local development programme, the “Local Development Offices.” These Offices, established in all statistical micro-regions (administrative level), have no counterparts in other Central European countries. Funded by the Ministry of Agriculture (from a budget allocated by the New Hungary Rural Development Programme), competitions are organized in the micro-regions to decide who will manage them. Municipal associations, enterprises, and local associations with multiple objectives can bid. One of the tasks of these Offices is to organize applications for the third and fourth axis of the national rural development program with the technical help of managers. The establishment of local communities whose parameters correspond to the administrative region (or several administrative regions) and aim to become local action groups after the Ministry of Agriculture recognizes them. Local action groups must be registered as legal entities by the Ministry. Upon recognition, they acquired a Coordination and Planning Group, elected from among local action group members, representing the civil, public, and private sectors. These Groups consist of no fewer than five members, including at least one academic with solid management experience. They are responsible for planning and drafting the local development strategy selected by the Ministry of Agriculture. Once validated by the Ministry of Agriculture, they legally become Local Action Groups (Chevalier et al., 2012: 17-18).

The main local actors in the LEADER programme in Hungary

In order to support community development in Hungary, the LEADER initiative involves teamwork among local actors like local action groups, representing the public, businesses, civic, or locals. Local action groups are the key players in the LEADER programme in Hungary at the local level. LAGs are legal entities formed locally. They are responsible for defining local development needs, priorities, and strategies and implementing local development initiatives (Interview, 2021⁷).

Today around 103 LAGs are active in Hungary (ENRD, 2023) and have a budget of HUF 42 billion under the Rural Development Programme scheme for the execution of economic and

⁷ Interview, October 28, 2021. The interview was conducted with Finta Istvan, President of the Association of LEADER Organizations in Hungary. The interview was conducted about the role of the LEADER programme and the implementation of LEADER projects in Hungary.

service development objectives responding to local needs (Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture, 2018). Local action groups comprise municipalities, business owners and entrepreneurs, civic society and local associations, and NGOs.

Local municipalities. They are critical partners in the LEADER programme due to their strong influence and presence in local communities. Support can be provided for LAGs, and local development activities can be facilitated.

Business owners and entrepreneurs. Local businesses and entrepreneurs can play a significant role in the LEADER programme by offering employment opportunities. They can also contribute to the local economy and participate in development programs.

Residents and community organizations of the local area. Residents are essential stakeholders and beneficiaries of the LEADER programme since local development initiatives directly impact their livelihoods. Local community members are encouraged to provide input and feedback on local development priorities and participate in local development activities. In the process of developing and implementing local development strategies, civil society organizations, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community organizations, provide valuable input and expertise.

Cooperation and participation in the Hungarian LEADER programme

Theoretically, collaboration occurs through the partnership with key local actors or LAGs: local authorities (public sectors) and local associations (community residents), as well as entrepreneurial spheres (private). It is a primary requirement and one of the fundamental pillars of the LEADER programme as well as EU directives in this matter.

The following is an excerpt of the interview on the collaboration between local stakeholders in the LEADER programme in Hungary.

“... Three actors, such as local government, entrepreneurs, and civil society never been integrated into the “united” sector. The LEADER programme was just created for that purpose, to fill the gap. LEADER membership requires the abovementioned actors' participation, and the local government's share cannot exceed 49%. The state cannot push down other sectors due to the 49% of local authorities' representation. Leader in this matter is different from other development models. The additional value of LEADER is the capability to identify local specificities, demands, needs, and possibilities....”

Among the characteristics distinguishing the Hungarian LEADER programme from others is the simultaneous and combined presence of most difficulties (Balogh & Eröss, 2015). One of the most significant problems is an over-centralized system, the profound influence of politics, paralyzing bureaucracy, overdue payments, concise call and reporting periods, a deficit in LAG operation costs, unpredictable legislative and personal environments, and a lack of competitive spirit within the LAGs or between them (ibid.). However, Balogh & Eröss (2015) conclude their research about LEADER implementation in Hungary by noting that the symptoms mentioned above tell a story and indicate the actual state of the LEADER environment. However, it does not by itself prove that the LEADER is inefficient.

3.4 Summary

The LEADER has been implemented throughout the European region and is one of the longest-standing and most well-known European-wide initiatives. To seek a way to engage local communities to change their living environment, the LEADER approach, with its seven principles, sets an objective to achieve accurate results in LEADER territories. In addition, LEADER became identified as the primary delivery mechanism for this approach because its organizational structure removed control of rural development from state institutions and placed it in the hands of LAGs that provided a platform for participation by local people, having the potential to democratize rural development (Navarro et al., 2016: 271). Indeed, studies of LEADER and its main achievements were identified in decentralizing the authority of rural communities by emphasizing partnerships, bringing about a cultural change in governance that goes beyond the current decentralization of decision-making at the local level. As partnerships, LEADER LAGs were pioneers of this process in the EU's rural regions.

In today's world, we have to look for ways to engage local communities where they can change their living environment. The LEADER approach depends on integrating its seven principles to achieve actual results for residents (EU Rural Review, 2020). How principles work in practice, produce results, and ensure sustainable development varied in each Member State depending on stakeholders' capabilities, decentralization administration, historical background, and other social characteristics. The EU LEADER program's funding has helped finance local development projects in the EU rural areas. These innovative projects have contributed to mitigating inequality and created jobs in the EU Member States.

4. Local Development Alternative II: Korean Saemaul Undong Model

4.1 Introduction

The Republic of Korea's economy has experienced rapid changes in the last decades. The nation has transformed from a traditional agrarian economy to a newly industrialized and export-oriented economy. Industrialization allowed Koreans to increase their per capita income significantly. In 1953, the country's GDP per capita was US\$ 73; in 2007, it rose to US\$ 21,695 (Park Sooyoung, 2009). Today, Korea is the 13th largest economy globally, with a GDP of about US\$ 1,63 trillion and a per capita GDP of around US\$ 35,000 in 2020 (WB, 2020b). In addition, Korea is one of the youngest members of the first former-aid beneficiary to join the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC), which it joined in 2010 (Lim, 2011; Doucette & Müller, 2016). As Korea's status rises, so does the pressure to fulfill its obligation to provide international development assistance. The Korean government has established Saemaul Official Development Assistance (ODA) for third-world countries to honor its commitment.

The term "*Saemaul*" is formed by the combination of "*Sae*," which means New, and "*maul*," which refers to the Village (the basic unit of the community). "*Undong*" denotes both Movement and Development. In other words, Saemaul Undong is a New Village (or community) Movement (Park Jin-Hwan, 1998; National Council of Saemaul Undong, 2000: 4). Rural development in Korea is linked to Saemaul Undong as a rural and community development paradigm. Initially, it was founded on alternatives, such as narrowing the gap between urban and rural areas caused by the first (1962-1966) and second (1967-1971) Five-Year Economic Development Plans (Park Sooyoung, 2009; Chung, 2009). The Five-Year Economic Development Plan focused on heavy and chemical industrial and export-oriented trade policies. Eventually, the economic development strategy began to bear fruit. However, the countryside worsened due to massive internal migration from the countryside to the city, and urban-rural disparities have widened. Under these circumstances, Saemaul Undong was officially launched on April 22, 1970. Park Jin-Hwan (1998: 47) highlights that until 1973, there was no official definition of the Saemaul Movement. The late President Park Chung-Hee gave an impromptu speech at the village's national convention in 1973 to boost the villagers' morale. President Park Chung-Hee stated, "*We may call this Movement for a better life.*" Farmers' common goal was to eliminate the vicious circle of

poverty, and they received the definition of Saemaul Undong well (ibid.). Although Park Jin-Hwan's⁸ (1998) definition of Saemaul is "to develop the work ethic of farmers by participating in village projects to accelerate rural modernization." Goh (2010: 30) claims that Saemaul Undong is a self-help initiative to eradicate rural poverty in Korea. The Movement began with a limited program supplying rural communities with construction materials. This program was named "Saemaul Refurbishment," out of which the Saemaul Undong proper was to evolve. Under this program, the government supplied each of the 34,665 villages with 335 bags of cement (one bag of cement amounts to 40 kilograms) and iron rods (Chung, 2009; 44). The villagers have to decide for themselves what to do with the cement. Cooperation is encouraged on joint projects leading to a change in rural villages suffering from prolonged stagnation.

The basic principles of the Saemaul Undong are "diligence," "self-help," and "cooperation." As late President Park Chung-Hee was the author of the Korean Saemaul Undong, he defined its philosophy, purpose, and concept as follows:

"... To put it more easily, Saemaul Undong is a campaign to live a better life. A better life is one where people escape poverty and income increases so that rural communities can become affluent and enjoy an elegant and cultural life. Neighbors share friendships and help one another, and a good and beautiful village to live in is created. Although having a good life today is important, it is a bigger ambition to create a better life for tomorrow and our offspring. Everyone knows the method; the problem is how to practice it. One should be diligent in living a better life and acquiring a strong spirit of self-help. All villagers must foster a strong cooperative spirit to live a better life, while for a person alone to be diligent is not enough. Therefore, all the family should be diligent. Even for a family alone, diligence is not enough to live a better life. All the villagers should be diligent. If all the villagers are diligent, they can cooperate more effectively...."

For further information, refer to Choi's research study (2014: 80).

Saemaul Undong is an integrated rural development model based on top-down and bottom-up approaches (Goh, 2010: 32; Chung, 2009). A prominent feature of top-down development is the support and influence of the late President Park Chung-Hee. Moreover, the revenue generated by the Korean government's Five-Year Economic Development plans provided an opportunity to invest in rural areas through the Saemaul Undong program. For rural communities' economic

⁸ Park Jin-Hwan served as a special assistant to the late President Park Chung-Hee on economic affairs and Saemaul Undong.

development, the government provided materials for constructing village roads, bridges, electrification infrastructure, and storage sheds. The government spent an average of 2,5% of GDP per year on the Saemaul Undong projects (Kwon, 2010; Eom, 2011b). As part of the bottom-up approach, Saemaul projects were implemented with the voluntary participation of the population.

The execution of Saemaul Undong took ten years (1970-1979) as a nationwide social movement (Chung, 2009; Reed, 2010; Yang, 2017). The second stage was during the 1980s and was called “the stage of cooperation between the government and non-government entities.” The significant role of the 1980s Saemaul Undong was to advocate national values and played a significant role in the Seoul Olympics in 1988. The headquarters organized Saemaul National Olympic Committee to propagate three social values of order, kindness, and cleanliness to advance the general public's consciousness. From the 1990s until now, Saemaul Undong has operated as a non-government movement to provide volunteer services in Korea. In 2010⁹, Saemaul Undong globalized and became the Korean government's Official Development Assistance. Table 4 illustrates the scale of Saemaul Undong from 1971 to 1978.

Table 4 – The scale of Saemaul Undong (1971-1978)

Saemaul Undong by Stage	Year	No. of participated villages	No. of participants	No. of projects	Total investments (millions won)
Stage 1 Initiation by the government Priority: living condition improvement	1971	33,267	7,200	385	12,200
	1972	34,665	32,000	320	31,594
	1973	34,665	69,280	1,093	96,111
Stage 2 Spatial and functional expansion Priority: income improvement and consciousness reforms	1974	34,665	106,852	1,099	132,790
	1975	35,031	116,880	1,598	295,895
	1976	35,031	117,528	887	322,652
Stage 3 Promotion of urban-rural links Priority: improving productivity	1977	35,031	137,193	2,463	466,532
	1978	34,815	270,928	2,667	634,191

Source: Eom, 2011a

⁹ In 2010 Korea changed its national status from a recipient to a donor, and Saemaul Undong became a Korean type of Official Development Assistance (ODA).

4.2 Socio-economic background of Saemaul Undong

Korea became a colony of Japan from 1910 to 1945, and after World War II, it was liberated from colonial rule. The Korean peninsula was divided into two parts: northern and southern, along 38 parallel lines, according to the agreement reached at the Yalta summit conference between the United States of America (USA), Britain, and Russia after the end of the Pacific War in 1945 (Park Jin-Hwan, 1998). It was agreed that the US army would occupy the southern part of the 38 parallel lines. In contrast, the Soviet army would occupy the northern region. A communist political system was established in North Korea, while a democratic one was established in South Korea. Imperial Japanese occupation, the Korean civil war in 1950-1953, which ended with the territorial division between North and South, and heavy dependency on the USA aid program were the country's realities (Park Jin-Hwan, 1998: 10).

Living conditions were depressing; Koreans lost confidence and motivation (Park Seung Woo & Choi, 2016). They have become idle and lazy as their living conditions have deteriorated. Most men in the village were too lazy to work and indulged in alcohol and gambling. These realities and challenges penetrated Korea in the 1960s before the introduction of Saemaul Undong.

Several government programs failed to combat poverty in the 1960s. For instance, the People's National Reconstruction Movement (PNRM) failed (Goh, 2010; Rho, 2014). PNRM is focused on training and educational projects and not on ideological reform. Rho (2014) emphasizes establishing regional training institutions; trained instructors could not achieve the goal of poverty reduction. The main reason was to promote order in the bureaucratic and top-down military government. The government has failed to provide enough economic incentives to stimulate the PNRM (Goh, 2010; 35). The participation was coerced due to the top-down implementation approach and lack of leadership. The neglect of economic aspects and spiritual elements of the other program, such as Special Projects for Rural People's Income Increase in the 1960s, was also another failure of the government development programmes (ibid.). These two failures provided an empirical basis upon which spiritual and economic aspects could be integrated into the government launched Saemaul Undong.

4.3 The basic principles and characteristics of Saemaul Undong

The basic principles of Saemaul Undong are "*diligence*," "*self-help*," and "*cooperation*." In addition, "can-do" and "must-do" spirits are also applied to Saemaul Undong's principles. Rho (2014) argues that the spirits of Saemaul are social capital (trust) for solving social problems. Brandt (1981) stresses the ideology of Saemaul Undong in the three principles that have become values. The Koreans, like the Germans, Japanese, Chinese, and Swiss, are regarded as diligent; therefore, they are considered to have the characteristic of "diligence." When Koreans worked, they worked exceptionally diligently. "*Self-reliance*" is supposed to live, relying on one's own. Chung (2009) describes the second spirit of self-help as helping those who help themselves. Goh (2010) argues that government support encourages and motivates farmers to actively participate in rural and local development without relying on anyone but themselves. President Park Chung-Hee believed "*cooperation*" creates tremendous strength and inspires confidence.

On the other hand, Choi (2014) has suggested the globalized Saemaul Undong spirits: "*sharing*," "*service*," and "*creativity*." "*sharing*" denotes an experience of growth, and "*service*" is a solid form of sharing. "*Creativity*" is the driving force to improve the quality of life through the changes and development of the community.

Chung (2009) claims that local-rural development cannot happen without the villagers taking ownership of uplifting their lives and developing their own villages. A collaborative culture in Korean rural communities, such as "*dure*" and "*hyangyak*," inspired Saemaul Undong's spirits to pull themselves out of poverty. Korean cooperation culture is considered self-governance and cooperation of the people. Chung believes that the collaborative culture of Koreans has stimulated a sense of camaraderie that necessitates harmony and mutual help.

Park Soyoung (2009) presents a different view of the tradition of collaboration, claiming that homogeneous communities are usually related by kinship and Confucian values. Ethnic homogeneity has also contributed significantly to close cooperation, reducing the possibility of disputes and conflicts. Every village had its own autonomous rules and customs of collaboration, called "*dure*," "*gyae*," and "*hyangyak*." The term "*dure*" is a tradition of over 500 years of working together to accomplish demanding tasks that no family can perform alone. "*Gyae*" is a small savings scheme especially popular among stay-at-home spouses. The centuries-old tradition called "*hyangyak*" is an autonomous, accepted norm that promotes cooperation and good relations among rural residents based on the Confucian tradition. This productive social capital in rural villages

made the villagers feel less hostile to Saemaul Undong, as cooperation for the common goal was not a foreign idea. Saemaul Undong, in turn, made traditional collaboration more thoughtful and sophisticated (Park Sooyoung, 2009).

4.3.1 Saemaul Undong's local community development strategies

Saemaul Undong's implementation strategies distinguish it from other local community development models. First, it focuses on villages (*maul*), where the smallest settlement size is less than 20 households. The larger one is 200 and more households, of which about 32,485 villages have joined the Saemaul Undong Movement (Park Jin-Hwan, 1998: 72). Second, the government has divided rural villages into three categories based on their level of development: “basic,” “self-help,” and “self-reliant.” The more successful the villages are, the more support they receive from the government. The implementation scheme has distinctive characteristics regarding its development units, entities, development areas, methods, and strategies. This section summarizes Korean Saemaul Undong's local development schemes, which are based on scholarly works by leading Saemaul researchers such as Park Jin-Hwan (1998), Chung (2009), Goh (2010), and Choi (2014).

1. The village as the strategic unit of community action
2. Integration of two extremes of development approaches (top-down and bottom-up)
3. Voluntary participation and democratic decision-making (or what to do with government-supplied resources? (cement and iron rods)
4. Selection of Saemaul leaders (male and female) with a sense of duty, patience, and perseverance who can lead the community
5. Nationwide Saemaul education and training
6. Classification of villages (basic, self-help, and self-reliant) in order to promote competition between villages
7. Public relations (PR) promotion in local community development, Saemaul Undong

Table 5 – Saemaul Undong local development scheme

<p>Village as the strategic unit of community action</p>	<p>The development process of a Saemaul project starts with a village, the most basic administrative unit in Korea. The size of the Korean villages identified by households: One village has fewer than 20 households, and the other has more than 200 and more.</p> <p>Moreover, Korean rural villages had organizations for cooperation among farmers called <i>dure</i> (farmers’ fraternity for mutual aid) and <i>hyangyak</i> (autonomous regulatory charter). Villagers were united around traditional characteristics, such as regional affinity, shared interests, and group works</p>
<p>Integrated two extremes of development approaches (top-down and bottom-up)</p>	<p>Saemaul Undong integrates two extremes of development approaches, both top-down and bottom-up. Government leadership was inevitable to produce the necessary conditions for development in the early stage of Saemaul Undong. However, as time passed, the government prioritized villagers' voluntary implementation activities over its direct control by confining its role to provide only support. Consequently, Saemaul activities were organized based on mutual interactions and cooperation between government organizations and village residents</p>
<p>Voluntary participation and democratic decision-making</p>	<p>In Korea’s culture, there have always been practices of cooperative labor among villagers, especially in a traditional rural community. Saemaul Undong projects were designed to fully utilize such cooperation culture among villagers so that project participants willingly participated in Saemaul Undong activities for the sake of their own villages.</p> <p>The government was only a guide to provide technical information relevant to villagers’ preferences. Increasing farmers' participation and letting them decide what to do with government-supplied cement and iron rod contributed to the development of grass-roots democracy and voluntary participation in Korea</p>
<p>Selection of Saemaul leaders (male and female) with a sense of duty, patience, and perseverance who were able to lead the community</p>	<p>In each village, there were Saemaul male and female leaders. They were elected and non-paid.</p>
	<p>The government provided Saemaul Training to foster Saemaul leadership. The government opened the Saemaul Training Institute at the central level and ten (10) provincial-</p>

<p>Nationwide Saemaul education and training</p>	<p>level training institutes for Saemaul leaders. The curriculum consisted of a one-or two-week training program that focused on motivating trainees toward rural development, convincing them of the importance of leadership roles, building up leadership capability, and developing the ability to persuade villagers. The presentation of the experiences of successful Saemaul leaders (case studies) was used as an effective and persuasive means of educating other Saemaul and social leaders. The training was oriented not to theories but to practical action and empirical cases. The Training emphasized teaching and self-learning through rational discussion of successful cases, group dynamics, field tours, and so on.</p>
<p>Classification of villages to promote competition between villages</p>	<p>The government classified rural villages into three categories based on the degree of development: “basic,” “self-help,” and “cooperation.”</p>
<p>Public Relations (PR) promotion</p>	<p>Public Relations efforts fostered a social environment favorable to Saemaul Undong and disseminated success stories to other villages. Public Relations activities focusing on the Saemaul songs, flags, uniforms, and street sweeping promote the social atmosphere of the Saemaul Undong Movement. Public media involvement is one of the most effective ways to inform the general public about Saemaul Undong’s objectives.</p>

Source: author’s own compilation based on research studies by leading Korean Saemaul Development scholars Park Jin-Hwan, 1998; Goh, 2010; Chung, 2009; and Choi, 2014.

4.3.2 The institutional framework of the Saemaul Undong

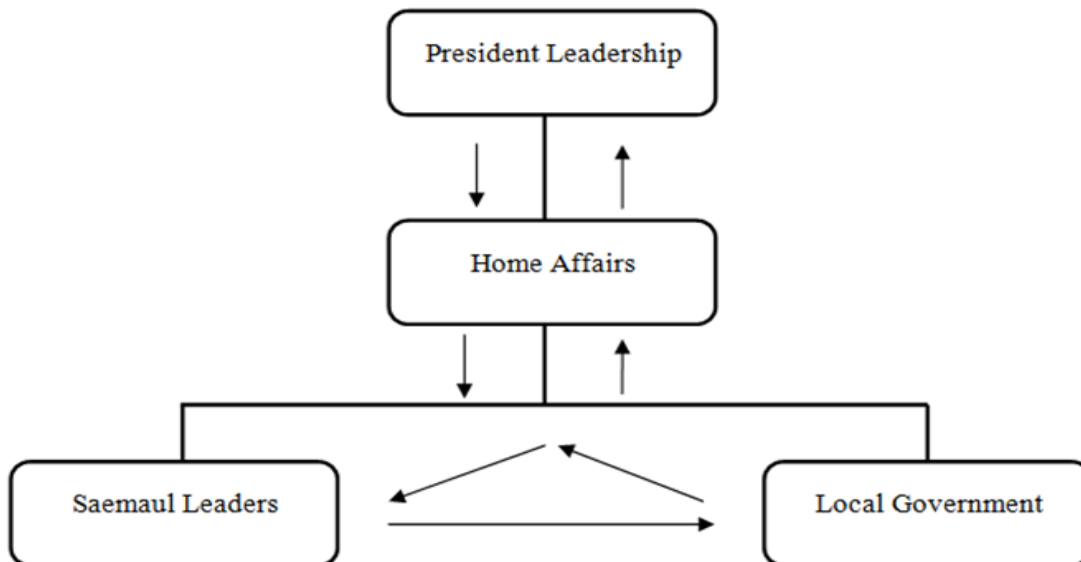
Saemaul Undong's studies by Chung 2009, Choi 2014; 2018, and Goh 2010 have highlighted the vertical dependence and the central decision-making process in local development in Korea during the Saemaul Undong era (1970~1979). Chung (2009) claims that during the Saemaul Undong era (1970 ~ 1979), the administrative system was highly authoritarian (centralized), and local autonomy was impossible. The author describes these central administrative systems inherited from Park Chung-Hee’s military regime, such as budgeting, state control, appraisal, and others.

In 1972, the Park Chung Hee administration declared the Saemaul Undong policy the top priority of all government policies. In every government organization, local or central, Saemaul-

related units were installed. The Saemaul general survey was published with detailed statistics on all villages. The Saemaul Medal was augmented into the government award system, and the first national convention for Saemaul leaders was held in November 1973. In addition, Saemaul songs were composited and propagated. According to Chung (2009: 57), the idealistic Saemaul Undong is when villages independently conduct local community development activities.

Nonetheless, the 1970s were marked by a lack of self-sufficiency spirit, financial resources, farming technologies, and capable village leaders. Therefore, the government's initial involvement through guidance, support, and leadership was necessary to kick off initial development activities. Since Saemaul Undong was all about the comprehensive development of agricultural communities, coordination between and participation by every government and non-governmental organization was necessary. Figure 4 illustrates the institutional scheme (analytical) of Saemaul Undong for local development.

Figure 4 – Institutional scheme of Saemaul Undong for local and rural development



Source: Musaeva, 2021, p. 7.

Saemaul Undong was established under Home Affairs¹⁰ during the Saemaul campaign. It was responsible for monitoring the implementation of Saemaul projects. Promotion Council (Home Affairs) was authorized to coordinate Saemaul projects at various levels of the hierarchy, from government institutions to villages, by order of the President on March 7th, 1972 (Chung 2009: 59). Park Chung-Hee's government provided administrative guidance, material and technical support, project evaluation, and delegation of civil servants.

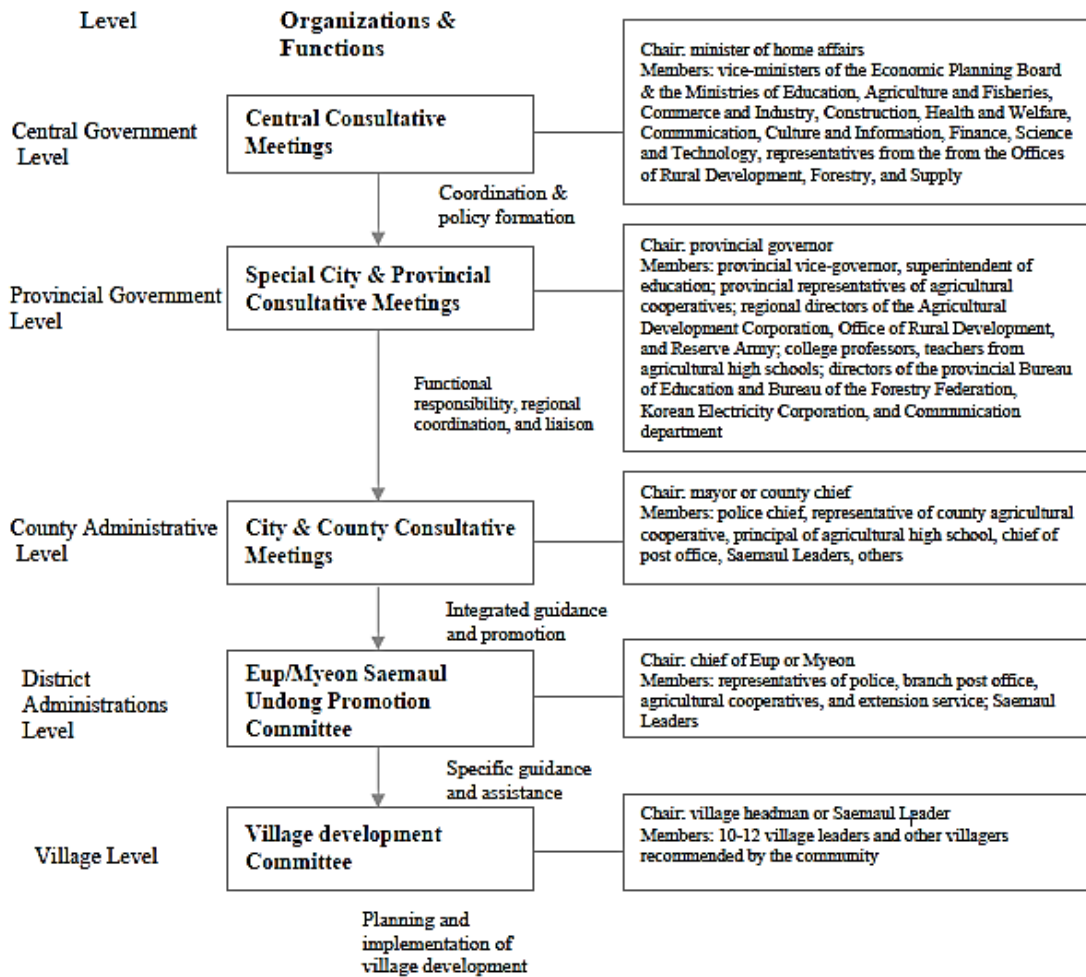
Such an approach Figure 4 reflects the insights of an institutionalist approach to understanding the dynamics of the Saemaul Undong. On a purely institutional basis, Saemaul Undong was founded by many scientists, international observers, and researchers as an integrated rural development model.

The Korean Saemaul Undong is characterized as a mixed approach, such as top-down and bottom-up (Goh, 2010). Saemaul Undong's administration system has been systematic and centralized (top-down) with the Ministry of Home Affairs as it is a hub to tackle the progress and difficulties of Saemaul projects. In addition, Saemaul comprehensive briefing rooms were established in the hierarchy of government organizations to ensure the smooth running of the movement. The local community and workforce involvement was a new bottom-up approach to success in Saemaul Undong. The government encouraged participation, stressing that successful completion depends only on people. Brandt (1981: 502) emphasizes that government agencies should pay tribute to their actual performance and not talk endlessly about the changes in farmers' mindset. What has been achieved in nine years is far more critical: an integrated rural development program in which psychological, technological, bureaucratic, and material resources have been effectively mobilized and coordinated to address highly recalcitrant agricultural problems. The Saemaul Movement increasingly functioned as a practice-oriented institution. In terms of input, output, and process, Saemaul Undong can be described as the Korean model of integrated rural development (Goh, 2010: 32). Each community is administratively integrated into larger units to keep its projects structured and scalable as a development model. In contrast to previous development approaches, the movement has established healthy relationships between the highest levels of government and the basic unit of the community so that careful project planning and

¹⁰ "Home Affairs" was the "Ministry of Home Affairs in the 1970s —currently, the "Ministry of the Interior and Safety" of the Republic of Korea.

collaboration are guaranteed throughout (Choi, 2018: 79). The organizational arrangement for Saemaul Undong is presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5 – Organizational Arrangements for the Saemaul Undong



Source: Ministry of Home Affairs, 1981 (adapted from Eom, 2011a, Figure 1, p.37)
Eup and *Myeon* are levels of a district in the local administrative system in Korea

Figure 5 shows vertical and horizontal promotion systems for each project (Eom, 2011a: 38). The outcome of the Saemaul Undong projects in each region was reported back to the central administrators, and rewards and punishments were distributed accordingly to support maximum effectiveness further. This comprehensive promotion system became an institutional prerequisite

for prompt and accountable support, assessment, coordination, and modification for the Saemaul Undong (Park Sooyoung, 2009; Eom, 2011a).

4.3.3 Developmental State and Saemaul Undong (1970-1979)

The economic miracles in East Asia (Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Taiwan) are often called developmentalism. Meredith Woo-Cumings (1999: 1) defines East Asian industrialization as the state of developmental theory. *“Developmental state is an abbreviation for the seamless network of political, bureaucratic and monetary influences that structure economic life in capitalist Northeast Asia.”* The state emerges as the region’s characteristic response to a world dominated by the West. Despite many related challenges, such as corruption and inefficiency, state policy is still justified today by the need to improve its economic competitiveness and residual nationalism (even in the age of globalization). Bolesta (2007: 105) describes that the “Developmental state is often positioned between a liberal open economy model and a centrally planned model. The theory of the developmental state is neither capitalist nor socialist. The developmental state combines the private sector's positive advantages and the state's positive role.”

As one of the strongest arguments, the developmental state theory stresses the state's decisive role in governing the market (Wade, 2018). In the 1980s, this shifted to a framework providing a role in a largely deregulated and maximally open economy. The critical role, however, played in the developmental state is fast industrialization in South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore which have transformed developmental into close-to-neoliberal states (Wade, 2018). The state insulated itself from the particularistic interest of the private sector, particularly big business, and cooperated with it in purposeful ways. Wong (2004), on the other hand, argues that East Asian economies (Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan) learned the ways of economic advancement not from scratch but by imparting knowledge, technology, and economic know-how from abroad. Land reform was jointly planned and administered by both domestic authorities and U.S. advisers. Pirie (2007: 7) contends that South Korea was essentially a US creation and played an integral role in the development of modern Korea. The US has been protected from outside threats and material assistance for over four decades. The Korean state received US\$ 12,6 billion in military and economic aid from the United States between 1947 and 1976. In addition, Wong (2004: 350) emphasizes that the technology was imported from the advanced industrial West, then later from

within the East Asian region. Management spillovers were similarly internalized through foreign investment ventures. Macroeconomic policy management was transferred abroad and adapted at home to fit domestic priorities. Korea's case has been considered a developmental-state model characterized by state-institutionalists active role in economic growth and state control of fiancé in the process of Korean industrial transformation (Evans, 1995: Hyun-Chin & Jin-Ho, 2006). State institutionalists argue that the developmental state forced private capital to serve its interest. Evans (1995) defines a developmental state as having a strong bureaucracy and embedded autonomy. In order to become an effective agent of development, the state must possess a certain level of bureaucratic capacity and coherence. The state must maintain both a close working relationship with capitalists and the ability to discipline that capital. Therefore, the state must be both embedded and autonomous. The Korean government used *chaebol* (family-owned businesses) to achieve national goals (rapid growth, development of heavy industry, and promotion of exports). Central to the state's economic strategy was a policy of developing and supporting large, nationally owned firms.

To return to Saemaul Undong in the early 1970s, when the Saemaul Undong began, Korean rural communities remained little blessed with the government's pursuit of export-driven economic growth (Goh, 2010). In addition, the Korean developmental state had another unique selling point: strong leadership from the upper state (Han, 2012: 20). Han admits that Saemaul Undong is a modernization movement that went hand in hand with urban industry and developed the agricultural and industrial sectors. Han (2012: 21) regards Saemaul executives responsible for medium-sized businesses called *villages*. The companies of these villages received different levels of government support depending on their competitiveness and performance.

In contrast to an urban business, the village was a company operated through the villagers' cooperation, whose sub-units were individual families. The village as a "business" was a kind of cooperative enterprise. During the Saemaul Undong period, the villages had a contract with the government for projects as if they were the private sector, and such a phenomenon was a widespread practice. The "business contract" was a popular method with Saemaul Undong (Han, 2012: 23). This is impossible if the village officials or the Saemaul leader lacked management and planning skills. Therefore, a thorough knowledge of farming and other skills is required. As a result, those who did military service in the village had to be Saemaul leaders. In the initial stages of Korean modernization, the military sector was a school of modernity in which most Korean

men experienced modern and organized lives (Han, 2012: 21). The Korean War (1950-1953) multiplied the military sector in Korea. It became the most modern compared to other areas. The author outlines that some Saemaul leaders were forced to resign from the village chief because they did not do their military service (Han, 2012:22). The author argues that most studies on Saemaul Undong neglect the importance of this method. The pursuit of profitability improved the lives of the villagers. The introduction of developmentalism and its independence-based training was a new phenomenon that began with Saemaul Undong (Han, 2012: 24).

4.3.3.1 Government inputs and Saemaul Undong output

The residents of the community, initially mostly villagers, got involved in basic projects to improve the living environment as a basis for their development. The first stage of the 1970s was considered a milestone in the rapid modernization of rural villages. The commitment of the rural people in Saemaul Undong has created a mechanism of trust and cooperation. Saemaul Undong's leadership went exclusively into the private sector and was characterized in the second and third stages by voluntary activities to promote local and rural development (Choi, 2018). Table 6 below shows the project outcomes that exceeded their goals.

Table 6 – The outcome of the Saemaul Undong projects (1971-1980)

Project	Unit	Goal (A)	Result (B)	B/A (%)
Expansion of Village Roads	km	26,266	43,558	166
Establishment of Farm Roads	km	49,167	61,797	126
Building Small Bridges	one	76,749	79,516	104
Building Village Halls	one	35,608	37,012	104
Building Store Houses	one	34,665	22,143	64
Housing Improvement	one	544,000	225,000	42
Community Resettlement	one	–	2,747	–
Installing Sewage Systems	km	8,654	15,559	179
Installing Telephone lines in Farming and Fishing Villages	household	2,834,000	2,777,500	98
Saemaul Factories	one	950	717	75

Source: Eom, 2011b, p. 612.

Goh (2010) emphasizes that in the early 1970s when the Saemaul Undong started, Korean rural communities remained little blessed with the government's drive for export-led economic growth. Communities in rural areas were trapped in the vicious circle of poverty. Moreover, about 80% of Korean farmhouses remained thatched, only 20% could enjoy electricity, half had no village entry roads for cars, and even power tillers were denied access to most village roads. The role of the late President Park Chung-Hee is significant. Goh (2010) claims that the late President Park Chung-Hee was born into a poor rural family; he knew the hardships of being poor. Determined to combat poverty in Korea, President proposed the Saemaul Undong as a self-help community development campaign. The movement began with delivering 335 bags of cement (one bag of cement amounts to 40 kilograms) and 1,000 kg of steel wires to every 33,000 villages for community development projects.

Local governments and villagers came together to decide how to use government support. Cement and iron rods were valuable resources at that time. These resources were targeted for constructing small bridges, roads, and other activities (Goh, 2010: 30). The villagers should decide how to use government-provided resources. Cooperation was ignited through Saemaul Undong's projects. Villagers contributed by providing their labor without compensation, land (for widening village roads), and other resources. The government's material support brought a snowball effect, claims Goh (2010). In 1971, one year after the movement started, the government support for the 33,000 villages produced positive results amounting to three times the government support. In the following 1972, the Saemaul Refurbishment program was grown to the full-fledged Saemaul Undong; the government provided the materials support to only about half of the 33,000 villages. Only 16,600 villages were evaluated as good performers. It reflected the strict application of the *self-help* development principle "*the better village, the first support,*" designed to stimulate lagging villages. The approach attracted more than 6,000 villages to the movement. In the initial stages, Goh highlights that Saemaul Undong has received cold responses from the general public and social elites, politicians, intellectuals, and journalists. Nevertheless, their negative attitudes changed when they saw some 6,000 villages that did not receive government support. They joined the movement with their own resources and volunteered to participate in the Saemaul Undong Movement.

County and township levels of municipal authorities channeled the government support for Saemaul projects. After the start of the Saemaul Undong, the local government's function, which

was the maintenance of law and order, became reoriented toward rural development. An effective government support system at the local government level was essential for successfully implementing the Saemaul Undong. In delivering their services, the coordination and integration of various development projects concerning required development inputs at the village level were promoted primarily by county-level local officials. The Saemaul divisions were established at the local governments, on the district (*eup*) and county (*myeon*) levels. The timely and accurate delivery of materials and services to villages according to the planned schedule was an indicator of the outstanding performance and commitment of the local administrator. The merit evaluation for local government officials was based on the performance of the Saemaul projects they took under their charge.

Saemaul Undong is a local community development supported by the top political leader's commitment. The president expressed his concern about village development by personally visiting rural villages. In addition, he expressed great concern about movement on various occasions, such as the New Year press conference, the monthly meeting for the national economic report, and the Cabinet meeting. The firm commitments of the top political leadership had been reflected in a fair allocation of resources to the rural sector. It had been helpful to rural development primarily because political leaders and society had supported the ideas and changes implied in the Saemaul Undong. Their perception of rural problems and their understanding of the philosophies and strategies of the Saemaul Undong was conducive to a fair allocation of resource mobilization and adequate policy support from the government and other social sectors (Goh, 2010).

4.3.3.2 Criticism of Saemaul Undong Movement

Saemaul Undong is an authoritarian policy of rural modernization that has led the government since the 1970s and was backed by the late dictatorial President Park Chung-Hee (Doucette & Müller, 2016). The authors emphasize that Saemaul Undong's rise and beginning in modern times are owed to the administration of Park Geun-hye (daughter of the late President Park Chung-Hee). When the Korean government initiated and ran the movement, Saemaul Undong was criticized as a tool to extend rule and improve the regime's legitimacy back to the Park Chung-Hee era. Hence, it is alleged that Saemaul Undong was a political supporter of the Park Chung-Hee regime in the countryside. Lee (2011: 364-365) outlines that in the initial stages of Saemaul Undong, farmers

were seen as the other excuse for the state to intervene in the village's affairs and gain administrative control in exchange for cosmetic changes in their earthly life. Lee emphasizes the modest funding scheme: 335 bags of unsalable surplus cement were delivered to the countryside "for village projects that meet the common demands of villagers." At that time, cement was a valuable resource; therefore, the maximum utilization of that resource in widening roads, building bridges, and other activities was necessary.

4.4 Summary

The outcome of the Korean Saemaul Undong is manifold (Douglass, 2014: 136). First, the Saemaul Undong projects have improved people's living standards in the countryside (Eom, 2011b; Park Sooyoung, 2009) and brought significant advances in the rural living environment, infrastructure, and the expansion of roads. In combination with village upgrading and heavily subsidized rice production, rural households have achieved the same living standards and incomes as urban households. Second, Saemaul Development projects had a snowball effect. One success encouraged another, leading to substantial village improvements in a relatively brief time. The first phase of the 1970s was considered a landmark decade for the modernization of rural villages. Third, the principal direction running through all decades has been to limit the role of government in the Saemaul Undong and to increasingly emphasize the spirit of voluntary cooperation as a central characteristic. However, Saemaul Undong has undergone several reformulations. This vital principle was transferred to the private sector and has been characterized by volunteer activities to stimulate local and rural development.

Between 1971 and 1979, the Saemaul Movement participants built 85,000 kilometers of roads across the country. For every village, 2.6 kilometers of roads are constructed. The government provided research-based guidance and monitored village activities (Goh, 2010). The extension of telephone lines and electrification allowed villagers to receive timely information on the market situation. The sewage system was modernized with improved sanitation, which created a healthier environment that improved villagers' quality of life. Also, it was an experience of cooperation with the government, providing learning opportunities in practice to build capacity in project management. It also increased trust and changed the attitude that led to the empowerment of people in villages and the transformation of local governance (Park Sooyoung, 2009). Goh

(2010) acknowledges that the tangible outcomes of village projects and updating the physical environment, such as farm roads, the village entrance road, and improved infrastructure, have resulted in the substantial economic development of Korea.

Furthermore, Saemaul projects were evaluated at preliminary, intermediate, and post-project stages. The initial assessment was applied to determine the priorities of suitable projects; the project's prioritization was necessary. The interim review evaluates progress errors and redirects projects, analyzing the input and output data. The successful results were reported at weekly, monthly, and annual meetings with high-ranking officials, including President Park Chung-Hee. All thriving villages, Saemaul leaders, and local governments were awarded by the President and circulated in the news to stimulate competition and spread the achievements of the Saemaul projects to other villages. Mass media participation in Saemaul Undong was crucial to disseminating information about village success, building a network with other Saemaul Undong communities, and propagating participation and competition.

5. Discussion and Comparison of two role-models

In this section, the two main research questions are addressed, followed by the comparison of the role models. The main goal of the comparative analysis is to find possibilities and limitations of the applicability of the selected role models to Kyrgyzstan.

RQ1: What are the guiding principles and characteristics of the European Union's LEADER and Korean Saemaul Undong's approach to local development?

LEADER programme is an initiative of the European Union that aims to promote projects focused on local development in rural areas of the EU Member States. LEADER programme funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development to decentralize public policies and introduce a more local definition of public problems and solutions (Chevalier et al., 2012).

A key characteristic of LEADER is it is the bottom-up approach. It facilitates the emergence of collective projects by providing LEADER pilot areas with a framework conducive to collaborative project development. The European Commission (2006) presents the logic of LEADER as follows: the central concept behind the LEADER approach is that it considers the diversity of European rural areas. Therefore, local development strategies are more effective and efficient when adopted and implemented by stakeholders led by public-private agencies. To this end, establishing local action groups is crucial. In order to transfer successful local development practices, the seven LEADER principles must be adhered to area-based, bottom-up, public-private partnerships, integrated and multi-sectoral actions, promoting innovation, cooperation, and networking.

As regards Korean Saemaul Undong, rural communities in Korea have several characteristics that distinguish them from other rural communities, such as their long history of settlement by people usually related by kinship, rice cultivation as their primary source of income, and sharing of traditional customs and autonomous norms based on Confucian principles. The homogeneity of ethnic groups also contributed significantly to the development of coherent cooperation. It reduced the probability of disputes and conflicts. Can-do it and must-do it are the defining characteristics of Saemaul Undong. However, the doctrines of the Saemaul Undong Movement are diligence, self-help, and cooperation. To make Saemaul Undong successful and to

live a better life, the spirits of Saemaul Undong are needed. As Park Chung-Hee describes Saemaul Undong's values: "Saemaul Undong is a mental development campaign." The campaign cannot be driven by words alone but by action and practice. Five considerations should be considered when choosing a project. (1) Base decision-making on the opinions of the whole village; (2) Contribute to the interest of the entire village; (3) Consider the village's characteristics. There is no point in imitating other villages; each village needs to find its own set of capabilities and resources; (4) Identify the capabilities of villagers; (5) Directly and indirectly link projects with the increase in villagers' incomes (Park Chung-Hee's own writings about the Saemaul Undong plan draft, 1972: 13).

RQ2: What are the main similarities and differences between the European Union's LEADER and the Korean Saemaul Undong schemes of local development?

The **similarity** between Korean Saemaul Undong and European LEADER is in policy formulation and design. In both cases, local development initiatives are designed from the top. LEADER originates from the European Commission and is delivered to its Member States, Saemaul Undong, by the late President Park Chung-Hee and his administration. Both role models permit flexibility in project implementation at the grassroots level, where the main focus is community building, participation, and cooperation. In both cases, the bottom-up approach to local development operates within a centrally defined set of development strategies. EU LEADER and Korean Saemaul Undong focus on the territorial rather than the sectoral approach and empower local communities.

The substantial **difference** between the EU LEADER and Korean Saemaul Undong lies in the regime. It is the regime that makes the difference between the two cases, liberal democracies (decentralization) in EU LEADER and authoritarianism (centralization) in the Saemaul Undong era (1970-1979). It should be noted that decentralization is a core value in the European Union. Nonetheless, Central and Eastern Europe still suffer from their path dependency due to the Soviet legacy of bureaucratic control and political centralism. For example, implementing the EU LEADER method in Hungary is challenging. It has been assessed that the EU principle of bottom-up development is challenging due to Hungary's increasing centralization (Maurel, 2008; Chevalier et al., 2012; Csurgo & Kovach, 2016). Local action groups have no real decision-making

power; government agencies Ministry of Agriculture (Csurgo & Kovach, 2016) have controlled them. Over-bureaucratization violates bottom-up principles. This was also the case with the Romanian LEADER, where weak administrative networks, political influence, and the legacy of the socialist era hindered the smooth implementation of the LEADER programme (Marquardt & Buchenrieder, 2012).

Another difference lies in the targeted goals. Saemaul Undong aims to alleviate poverty, modernize villages by building infrastructure, and build people’s confidence in social change in Korea. In contrast, the LEADER programme has a broader goal to assist rural communities in improving the quality of life, local economic prosperity in the EU's rural areas, environment conservation, social inclusion, and support for innovative projects. The next critical difference is the culture of cooperation among Koreans, which is rooted in Confucian values. However, in the EU LEADER programme, cooperation and participation are achieved through establishing a local action group, LAG. Table 7 compares the two role models based on the local development schemes.

Table 7 – Comparison of the Korean Saemaul Undong and EU LEADER

Indicator	EU LEADER	Korean Saemaul Undong
Policy initiation	The supranational level programme, initiated by the European Union (EU Commission)	Government-led policy, initiated by the late President Park Chung-Hee and his administration
Objective	Mitigate disparities in rural areas in the EU Member States, job creation, helping to develop innovative projects, tourism, conservation of cultural heritage, non-agricultural activities, and enterprise development.	Saemaul Undong aims to alleviate poverty, upgrade villages, increase income, develop rural areas, and change farmer attitudes by incorporating a can-do and must-do spirit.
Local development scheme	Top-down and bottom-up approaches (EU funding instrument and obligation to set up a Local Action Group (LAG). LAGs are vital local actors in the implementation of the LEADER programme. They ensure	Top-down and bottom-up approaches (government resources and guidance, villagers’ participation).

	local development strategies and projects that respond to the specific needs and potential of each local area).	
Basic principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Area-based (2) Bottom-up (3) Local action groups (4) Integrated and multisectoral actions (5) Innovation (6) Cooperation (7) Networking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Diligence (2) Self-help (3) Cooperation
Government and governance	Democratic regime (decentralized)	Authoritarian regime (Highly centralized)
Main actors (stakeholders)	Municipalities, the private sector, and local associations (residents of that area).	Central government includes all layers of government institutions, officials, and villagers (community residents).
Local participation	Participation in the EU Member States varies passive in Eastern Europe with the communist heritage and weak due to sparsely populated rural areas in Western Europe.	Full voluntary participation
Precondition for success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Formation of Local Action Groups (LAGs) for a successful LEADER implementation in the pilot area; they are an essential agent in the LEADER programme. (2) Pan-European example of participatory democracy (3) Local characteristics: (area-based, bottom-up, partnership, innovation, multisectoral. Trans-local: (networking, transnational, and cooperation. Vertical: (decentralized management and financing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) A village is the strategic unit of community action (2) Integration of two extremes of development approaches (top-down and bottom-up) (3) Voluntary participation and democratic decision-making (4) Selection of Saemaul leaders (male and female) with a sense of duty, patience, and perseverance who were able to lead the community (5) Nation-wide Saemaul leadership education and training (6) Classification of villages (basic, self-help, and self-

		reliant) to promote competition between villages (7) Public relations (PR) promotion in local community development
Local-level scale	The LAG area comprises a minimum of two and several settlements The population target should be between 10,000 (exceptionally 5,000) and 100,000 inhabitants.	In Korea, Saemaul Undong targets a <i>village</i> as a unit for development. The size of the village is determined by the number of households in one village. For example, one village has less than 20 households, while another has 200 or more.
Geographical domain	Expanded in the Member States, but only within the European Union.	Saemaul Undong has become a global development paradigm and is now being implemented in Africa, Latin America, and ASEAN countries, and recently Central Asia (Kyrgyzstan) has joined.

Source: Musaeva, 2020, p. 21-22.

5.1 Possibilities and limitations of role models to the application in Kyrgyzstan

This dissertation focuses on alternative local development models. Therefore, the study selected two European Union LEADER and the Republic of Korea's Saemaul Undong role models. Considering the third research question, this section examines how the chosen role models can be applied to Kyrgyzstan.

RQ3: How can European Union's LEADER and Korean Saemaul Undong be applied as an alternative model for local development in Kyrgyzstan?

Throughout the study of the EU LEADER programme and Korean Saemaul Undong, this thesis identified that the sustainability of local development models depends on continuous investment in the implementation stages. Under the late President Park Chung-Hee's rule, the Korean government spent billions on Saemaul Undong. Korea's Five-Year Economic Development Plans, industrialization, and export-oriented economy enabled the launch of Saemaul Undong. In the case

of LEADER, all Member States are eligible for LEADER funding from European Union's European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). Institutional coordination in implementing community development projects is another significant component of the Korean Saemaul Undong. Regarding LEADER, each EU Member State has been given the flexibility to implement LEADER and establish LAGs.

Furthermore, in LEADER, the involvement of new actors in elaborating and implementing local development strategies is mandatory. These actors are representatives of local authorities, endowed with additional rights and obligations, and new actors from local associative and entrepreneurial spheres (Chevalier et al., 2012: 5). Setting up local action groups (LAGs) is a precondition for the European Commission to apply for funding and launch the LEADER programme in the EU Member States. In contrast, in Saemaul Undong, the villagers and Saemaul leaders conducted the projects at the grassroots level. Choosing male and female Saemaul leaders from a community (village) is necessary for Korean Saemaul Undong. Both role models encourage critical actors, institutional (at different levels), or non-governmental organizations, to join forces and work together. In order to adopt EU LEADER and Korean Saemaul Undong, critical local actors are needed. This research, therefore, designed an actor-based "Tripartite Stakeholders Model" for Kyrgyzstan's local development.

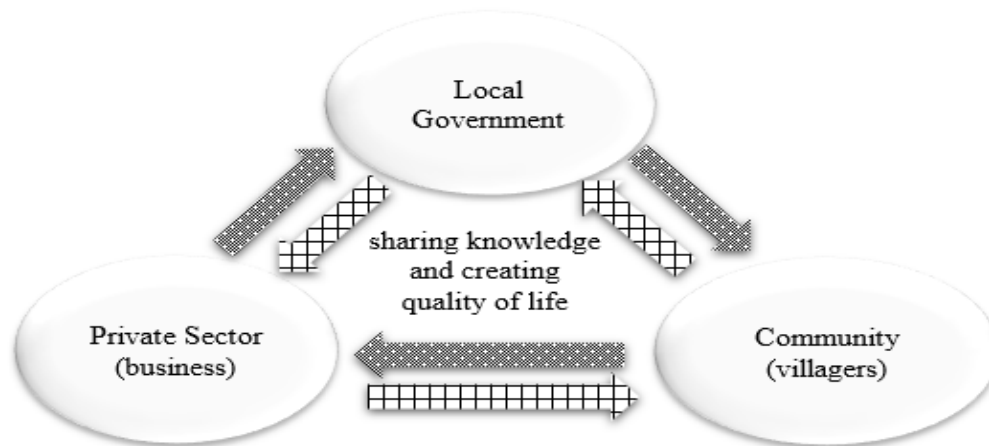
5.2 A proposed analytical framework for Kyrgyzstan's local development

The research of Blakely & Bradshaw (2002), Cochrane (2011), and Swinburn et al. (2006) highlight the role of local actors, participation, and cooperation as crucial components and principles of local development. In addition, the importance of indigenous (resources rooted in the local environment) and endogenous (where the engagement of social agents and civil society triggers self-help processes; bottom-up approach) development (Tödting, 2011). Pálné Kovács (2015) contends that local government is essential to local development since it is the closest administrative unit to the people. The selected role models, LEADER, and Saemaul Undong, incorporate core elements of the local development theories of the authors mentioned above. In order to apply LEADER and Saemaul Undong in Kyrgyzstan, this research designed the "Tripartite Stakeholders Model" for Kyrgyzstan's local development.

5.2.1 A Tripartite Stakeholders' Model

The “Tripartite Stakeholders Model” (hereinafter TSM) combines the European Union’s LEADER and the Republic of Korea’s Saemaul Undong schemes for local development. More specifically, the backbone of TSM is LEADER’s Local Action Group (LAG). This research believes that critical local actors are essential in local development; for this purpose, LAGs actors, such as local government, the private (business), and the community (residents of a particular area), are adapted from the EU LEADER model. As individuals, we have a limited capacity to act; therefore, if our critical actors join their efforts, knowledge, and experience to promote local development in a given area, it will increase the possibility of doing so. As the LAG area comprises around 10,000~100,000 inhabitants, in exceptional cases 5,000 residents, in this study, our target area is a “village” in rural areas of Kyrgyzstan. In the Korean Saemaul Undong model, the village is the strategic unit of community action; the same principle applies to the proposed TSM. The tradition of cooperation and voluntary participation among rural people in Saemaul Undong (Korea) prompted this research to seek its counterpart in the cultural context of the beneficiary country Kyrgyzstan. Figure 6 illustrates the proposed analytical framework for Kyrgyzstan's local development.

Figure 6 – Tripartite Stakeholders' Model for local development for the Kyrgyz Republic



Source: Musaeva, 2020, p. 26.

RQ_{3.1}: Who are the key local stakeholders, and how do they collaborate in the selected international and domestic-led local development case studies in Kyrgyzstan?

RQ_{3.2}: What are the main similarities and differences between the international and domestic-led local development case studies schemes for local development in Kyrgyzstan?

5.3 Research Methodology

A multiple case study (Yin, 2003) is a research approach used in the empirical part of this thesis. As part of the case study, I designed a semi-structured questionnaire for the international-led KOICA My Village Initiative, EBRD project to get quantitative and qualitative data. As for the locally led Exemplary local self-government Initiative, in-depth interviews were conducted in Kyrgyzstan's Bel territory. I chose the potentially most knowledgeable individuals (key informants) about KOICA My Village and EBRD projects. Regarding Exemplary local self-government initiatives, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in the pilot *Bel* and *Borbash* villages. These were typically up to five women and men in different focus groups of the Exemplary local self-government field study.

The study did not initially limit the number of semi-structured questionnaire respondents and interviews. The sample size in each field research reflects the natural "breakpoint," after which the new evidence did not add different information. The sample size was defined by theoretical saturation (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and verified after not finding new data relevant to the study.

In all these studies, I needed the approval of the local authorities of those territories. As a result, such individuals (the head of *Ayil Ökmötüs* ') had a somewhat formal response. They restricted themselves from freely expressing their views. In contrast, local leaders and activists were open, as they did not feel they were being interviewed. Our key informants range from local self-government officials, local council (*ayil kenesh*) members, a village chief, Kyrgyz and Uzbek Saemaul leaders, schoolteachers, medical personnel, businessperson (initiator of the Exemplary local self-government), academia, village elders (*aksakals*), as well as ordinary participants of the pilot areas and non-participants involved in our selected case studies which were conducted in Kyrgyzstan.

In addition, secondary data such as public policy documents, official decrees, reports, and publications were also included in this field study in Kyrgyzstan for data collection. Seminar and workshop materials pertinent to our investigation also contributed to data collection.

The field study was conducted in 25 KOICA My Village pilot areas of *Batken* (10), *Osh* (14), and *Chuy* (1) *oblasts* (regions). The EBRD project area comprises one Municipality in *Batken oblast* (*Kyzyl-Kiya* small town). Finally, the Exemplary local self-government project area includes two pilot villages: *Bel* and *Borbash*, of the *Osh* region.

There are forty-eight respondents ($n=48$) from KOICA My Village project, EBRD Water projects respondents, fifty-two ($n=52$), and twelve ($n=12$) key informants from Exemplary local self-government in the *Bel* area. The field study period: autumn (2020), spring (2021), and summer of 2021.

5.3.1 Data Collection Techniques

This research uses numerical ID for key informants to ensure anonymity. However, with the respondents' permission, their names are mentioned in the empirical section of this work. The given semi-structured questionnaire survey is attached in Appendix A and B. The interview questions are in Appendix C. The semi-structured questionnaire survey and interview were developed by an author through several discussions and considering previous literature focused on EU LEADER and Saemaul Undong studies. Furthermore, participants' sociodemographic information was gathered to characterize them and attached in Appendix D. Fieldwork was completed with observation notes on some aspects found during the interviews. Interviews and focus group discussions lasted 30~80 minutes, were audiotaped in mp3, and transcribed. In addition, interviews were translated from the Kyrgyz language to English.

All quantification table data analyses were performed in SPSS for descriptive analysis. NVivo 12 Pro is applied for this research study's in-depth interviews and open-ended semi-structured questionnaires. NVivo 12 Pro is a computer software program that allows researchers to manage, analyze, and visualize qualitative data and documents systematically and individually.

5.3.2 Facilitating data management, coding, and analysis

When adequately managed, qualitative data can provide meaningful insights (Dhakal, 2022). NVivo 12 Pro was created in 2018 and supported by QSR International to analyze field notes, semi-structured questionnaires, and in-depth interviews for qualitative data. In order to analyze “textual data” files and organize data for analysis, display, and reporting, the coding had to be created first.

The data sets were coded based on the research questions. *Coding* means labeling and creating categories for data sections in the dataset. In addition, the mapping tools include templates and visual representations that allow users to interact with and populate data and relationships established between blocks of data.

These coding, classification, and mapping tools promote the additional organization of the data so that the researcher can query the data to analyze it, draw conclusions and verify findings across all units of analysis (Dhakal, 2022). It should be noted that interview transcripts are classified as files before coding begins.

Table 8 – Codes

No.	Name	Description
1	Donor demand	What requirements were for selecting your <i>Ayil Ökmötü</i> / Local Self-Government from donors? (Identification prerequisites of the donors: KOICA My Village, EBRD, and Exemplary local self-government)
2	Financial incentives	How much investment did your <i>Ayil Ökmötü</i> / local self-government receive under ___KOICA My Village, EBRD, and Exemplary LSG? (Identifying financial incentives of the KOICA, EBRD, and Businessman launched initiatives)
3	Scale	How many villages (administrative area) participate in your <i>Ayil Ökmötü</i> / local self-government? (identifying the scale of the KOICA My Village, EBRD Water project, and Exemplary local self-government)
4	Leader selection	How do local leaders were chosen in the pilot areas? (How did you get selected as the KOICA My Village leader?)
5	<i>Ashar</i>	Is <i>Ashar</i> (traditional voluntary participation method) suitable for the Korean-led My Village project?

		Are you using the traditional method of voluntary participation (<i>Ashar</i>) in the EBRD and Exemplary local self-government projects?
6	Participation	Overall, how many local inhabitants have participated so far in the KOICA My Village, EBRD, and Exemplary LSG projects in your village? Is participation through <i>Ashar</i> (voluntary basis)?
7	Sustainability	What do you think about the project (KOICA My Village, EBRD, and Exemplary local self-government)? How successful and sustainable are they?
8	Other opinions	Share other additional opinions, experiences, and plans

Source: author’s research

5.4 The research areas of the selected case studies in Kyrgyzstan

In the introductory part of this research study, I mentioned that Kyrgyzstan had expressed an interest in applying the Korean Saemaul Undong model to its rural areas. In 2019, 30 pilot villages were selected for the Korea International Cooperation Agency-funded “Menin Ayilym,” or My Village initiative based on the Korean Saemaul Undong model. The state agency chose these 30 target areas for local self-government and interethnic relations under the government of Kyrgyzstan (GAMSUMO). This agency implements local self-government and interethnic relations policies as a central government body.

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development drinking water project comprises one, Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality in the Batken region. As mentioned above, EU local development projects in Kyrgyzstan are challenging to access. LEADER type of projects is non-existent. Therefore, to illustrate the role of the EU in Kyrgyzstan’s local development, the EBRD water supply project in the Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality was chosen for this research.

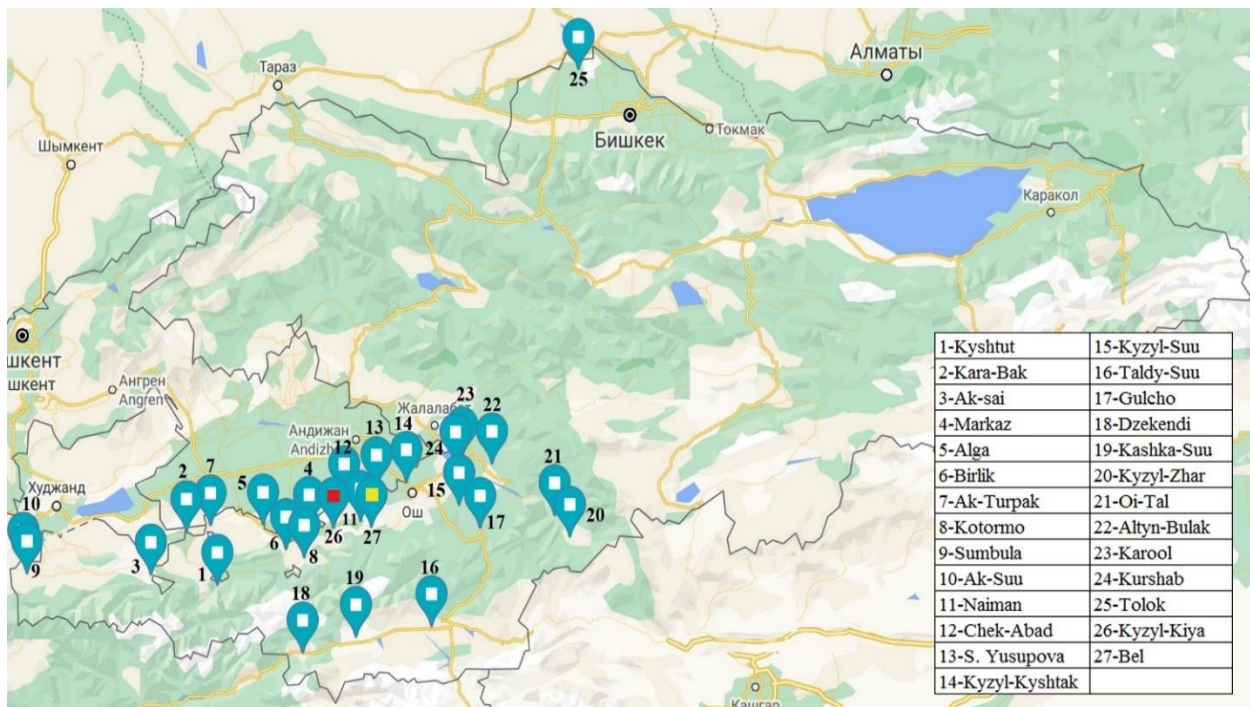
The Exemplary local self-government initiative is the first historical project in Kyrgyzstan's local development initiated by a private sector businessperson. A pilot project is being conducted in two villages, Bel and Borbash.

Table 9 – Characteristics of the selected case studies in Kyrgyzstan

KOICA My Village's target location			
Participated region	No. participated local self-government	Area covered	Funding & period
Batken	12	17,048 km ²	US\$ 3,500,000 (grant) Period: 2018-2022
Osh	15	28,937 km ²	
Chuy	3	19,895 km ²	
EBRD water supply project location			
Batken	1	Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality 7831km ²	US\$ 1,700,000 (credit) US\$ 3,500,000 (grant) Period: 2017-2019
Exemplary local self-government initiative's pilot area			
Osh	1	Bel local self-government 187,000 km ²	No data on funding Period: 2018-2023

Source: author's research

Figure 7 – The research areas



Source: own illustration

6. Case study I: Korean Saemaul Undong application in Kyrgyzstan

After the independence, Kyrgyzstan established diplomatic relations with the Republic of Korea (Korea) in January 1992. In recent years, however, Korea has begun to invest in Kyrgyzstan's rural areas through its Saemaul Undong model.

Korea is one of the youngest members and the first former development aid recipient to join the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC), which it joined in 2010 (Doucette & Müller, 2016). Today, the Republic of Korea is the 13th largest economy globally, with a gross domestic product (GDP) of about 1,63 trillion US dollars in 2019 (World Bank, 2020). Choi (2014) remarks that Saemaul Undong is for living better life together and can be adopted as a significant project for global development cooperation by Korea, whose global status has changed from that of a "receiving country" to that of a "giving country." As Korea's status rises, so does the pressure to meet international obligations. The Korean government launched Saemaul Official Development Assistance (ODA) for third-world countries to fulfill its duty. For this mission, the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and several government agencies, organizations, and foundations have expanded the rural development model based on the Saemaul Undong concept under Global Saemaul as a model for the development of the world community. In addition, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recognized Saemaul Undong as a steppingstone to transforming Korea from one of the world's poorest countries in the world to an economic giant between 1970 and 1979 and added it to the Memory of the World Register in 2013¹¹. It has also sought United Nations (UN) recognition that Saemaul Undong is an effective model for rural development. In addition, former Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon has recommended that UN-affiliated organizations in Africa consider the Korean Saemaul Undong as a role model (Choi, 2014). Choi highlights the former President of the United States of America (USA) Obama, who stressed Korea's Saemaul Undong as a paradigm for combating poverty during the G8 press conference on July 11, 2009, parliamentary speech in Ghana. Then, former World Bank President Kim Yong pledged to work together on Saemaul Undong's globalization and international development projects to encourage developing countries

¹¹ In 2013, UNESCO added Saemaul Undong to the Memory of the World Register. Available at: [<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/memory-of-the-world/register/full-list-of-registered-heritage/registered-heritage-page-1/archives-of-saemaul-undong-new-community-movement/>] (accessed June 26, 2021).

to fight poverty. In other words, pursuing greater international recognition prompted the Korean government to export its Saemaul Undong as an official development aid model for emerging economies. In addition, Saemaul Undong is going to expand the Korean products market and economic area (Choi, 2013).

According to the Korea Saemaul Undong Center¹² database, there are 42 villages in nine Asian (9) counties: Kyrgyzstan, Laos People's Democratic Republic, Timor-Leste, and Myanmar from Africa, Burundi, and Uganda. Oceania: Papua New Guinea, Fiji, and from Latin America, Honduras is actively implementing Saemaul projects with Korean support and the voluntary participation of villagers from their respective countries. To successfully disseminate and pursue various Saemaul projects and Global Saemaul Undong, the Korea Saemaul Center has selected model pilot villages from neighboring areas in some developing countries. For the first time in Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan has started to show an interest in Korean Saemaul Undong and present its application and implementation in this research study.

6.1 Saemaul Undong application process to Kyrgyzstan

Today, in rural areas of Kyrgyzstan, home to 65% of the total population, various Saemaul Undong-related projects are being conducted by KOICA, the Public Fund "Center of SMU in Kyrgyzstan," and the Saemaul Globalization Foundation. Former President Sooronbay Jeenbekov, by his decree, declared 2018¹³-2019¹⁴-2020¹⁵ the year of regional development of Kyrgyzstan. Regional development policy is a priority for economic development, reflected in the Kyrgyz Republic's National Development Strategy for 2018-2040. In the regional economic development section, rural development policy focuses primarily on constructing roads and transport infrastructure, the nationwide supply of clean drinking water and an efficient energy supply, the fight against poverty, and local economic development through local specialization.

¹² Korea Saemaul Undong Center. Saemaul Projects Overseas - Saemaul Undong Model Village Development Status. Available at: [<https://www.saemaul.or.kr/eng/sub/globalSMU/overseas.php>] (accessed June 28, 2021).

¹³ Decree of the Kyrgyz Republic President of January 10, 2018, No. 2 "On declaring 2018 the Year of Regional Development."

¹⁴ Decree of the President of Kyrgyzstan of January 11, 2019, No. 1 "On declaring 2019 as the Year of Regional Development and Digitalization of the Country."

¹⁵ Decree of the Kyrgyz Republic President of January 8, 2020, No. 1 "On declaring 2020 the Year of Regional Development, Digitalization of the Country and Support for Children."

The KOICA-funded “*Menin Ayilym – My Village*” project and other activities relevant to Saemaul Undong received substantial assistance from the Kyrgyz government. While today 82% of the *Ayil Ökmötüs*’ are subsidized by the state budget. Foreign investments in the countryside are a godsend for them.

Kyrgyzstan has shown interest in Korea’s experience with effective village development since 2010. In the same year, 2010, a short-term civil servant training program was organized by Saemaul Undong Center in Seongnam City, Korea. An initiative group from Kyrgyzstan visited Korea to get to know the Saemaul Undong on-site. Based on the trainee’s database of the Korea Saemaul Undong Center, 309 participants from Kyrgyzstan completed a Saemaul invitation training in the period 2009-2020¹⁶. Korea bore all training program costs, including other expenses (travel and accommodation). Saemaul Veterans organized unique educational programs, lectures, and field trips for the initiative group from Kyrgyzstan on Saemaul Undong. After the delegations’ visit, the Saemaul Undong Public Foundation was established in Kyrgyzstan to learn the philosophy and principles of Saemaul Undong continuously.

The practical application of the Saemaul Undong principles began in 2010 in four Kyrgyz villages: Manas, Ak Jol, Lesnoe, and Tortkul of the At-Bashy local self-government, Sokuluk district, Chuy region¹⁷. In the designated villages, the partners have implemented the following projects through the joint efforts of the residents and with the support of the Korean Saemaul Undong: the reconstruction of local roads through technical assistance with the appropriate equipment. Rebuilding and construction of social facilities (cultural center, gyms in schools, playgrounds). Repair of the water supply network (installation of a water tank). To support the younger generation and introduce them to a healthy lifestyle, the Kyrgyz Korean Friendship Park was opened. The implementation of these projects benefited 8,636 rural residents from selected villages. The following Table 10 shows the activities of Saemaul Undong in Kyrgyzstan.

¹⁶ Data provided by the International Bureau of Korea Saemaul Undong Center trainee’s database (personal communication, May 6, 2021).

¹⁷ In March 2016, I was invited by KOICA Kyrgyzstan as a local expert on Saemaul Undong’s studies in the pilot areas of Kyrgyzstan.

Table 10 – Activities related to Saemaul Undong in Kyrgyzstan

	Public Fund “Center of the <i>Saemaul</i> Undong Movement in Kyrgyzstan”	<i>Saemaul</i> Globalization Foundation	KOICA Korea International Cooperation Agency
Start of cooperation (year)	2010	2015	2019
Direction	Training (2010~2017) Project financing (since 2017)	Seminars and training courses on Global <i>Saemaul Undong</i> in Kyrgyzstan and Korea	My Village project financing and training for the pilot villages
Partner (local & foreign)	<i>Ayil Ökmötü</i> (local) Korea <i>Saemaul Undong</i> Center (foreign, Korean)	<i>Ayil Ökmötü</i> (local) Korea <i>Saemaul Undong</i> Center (foreign, Korean)	<i>Ayil Ökmötü</i> (local) GAMSUMO (local) Good Neighbors International (foreign Korean) Center for Overseas Agriculture and International Development (COAID) (foreign, Korean)

Source: Musaeva, 2021, p.113.

6.1.1 Korea International Cooperation Agency-funded My Village Initiative context

The preliminary feasibility studies have been conducted regarding the KOICA My Village project in Kyrgyzstan (outgoing official letter №K16-163 dated September 1, 2016¹⁸). The Korean government approved Saemaul Undong's application to Kyrgyzstan as an annual ODA plan for 2017. However, the official commencement occurred in July 2019¹⁹ in Ala-Archa residency, Kyrgyzstan. The former Prime Minister of Korea, Lee Nak-yon, visited Kyrgyzstan and officially

¹⁸ The outgoing official letter №K16-163 of September 1, 2016 (accessed on September 2, 2016) of the Ministry of Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic.

¹⁹ Invited as an alum of the Park Chung Hee School of Policy and Saemaul (PSPS), Yeungnam University, Korea (2014 ~ 2016). Presented the “Application of Saemaul Undong in the context of Kyrgyzstan” at the “Menin Ayilym - My Village project” opening ceremony in the residence of Ala-Archa, Kyrgyzstan.

launched the My Village project on July 20, 2019. Both countries, Korea and Kyrgyzstan, former Prime Ministers, took part in the opening ceremony.

The prominent donor is the Korea International Cooperation Agency; the total grant is around US\$ 3,500,000. Beneficiaries of My Village Initiative are thirty (30) villages of three regions, Batken, Osh, and Chuy. The target of My Village beneficiaries should reach up to 35,000 residents. The duration is four (4) years, starting in 2018 and finalizing in 2022. The main objective of the KOICA-funded My Village Initiative is “to improve the Kyrgyz rural peoples’ (villagers’) lifestyle through Korean Saemaul Undong principles of diligence, self-help, and cooperation.”

The research study describes the preconditions of Korean donors and the process of selecting pilot villages for the My Village Initiative funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency.

Korean donor preconditions

Before introducing the Korean Saemaul Undong model in Kyrgyzstan’s pilot areas, a Korean expert team conducted a survey. They visited each selected pilot territory and met with the local self-government authorities, the village head, leaders, and ordinary residents.

Here is the list of the donor (Korea’s) preconditions for the launch of Saemaul Undong in rural Kyrgyzstan.

- Voluntary participation of pilot village residents. A prerequisite of donors is voluntary participation in the Saemaul Development projects in pilot territories of Kyrgyzstan. The Korean Saemaul Undong model is based on the conventional voluntary participation of residents. The same principle has applied to a beneficiary country, Kyrgyzstan.
- *Ayil Ökmötü* (local self-government) contribution
- Leader selection
- Local self-government and village residents' contribution is necessary to the KOICA My Village project. The village residents’ contribution to the Korean Saemaul Undong is labor without compensation and in-kind contributions if necessary.

Furthermore, pilot village leaders and local authorities were asked if they would cooperate and participate in the Korean-led project. If the response is “yes,” local self-government should provide

financial and technical assistance, human resources, and preparation documents (decrees, business plans, reports, and others). The following section describes the village selection process for the Korean Saemaul Undong model.

Process of pilot villages selection for KOICA-funded My Village Initiative

The Government Agency for Local Self-Government and Interethnic Relations representative under the Kyrgyz Government (known as GAMSUMO) introduced pilot villages for the donor, KOICA. GAMSUMO representative *Nurlan Asanbekov*²⁰ gave a speech, presented at the Saemaul Undong Leadership Seminar in the Issyk-Kul region of northeast Kyrgyzstan, and explained the selection process.

“Out of 452 local self-governments, only 45 expressed their willingness and interest in participating in the KOICA My Village project.” However, the last thirty local self-governments became beneficiaries of the Korean model. Only one (1) village from each local self-government is eligible. The thirty pilot villages are selected from the Batken, Osh, and Chuy regions (oblasts). These pilot villages were chosen because of their active collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and motivation to learn new experiences from a donor country. The desire to learn something new about village development from the Korean experience was great among these thirty pilots of LSGs (Local Self-Governments). Every year, the number of people interested in studying Korean Saemaul Undong is increasing. Around 20-30 active leaders, including heads of local self-governments and mayors, visited Korea to learn about the Korean brand of village development known as Saemaul Undong at the birthplace.” The representative of GAMSUMO mentioned that he visited Korea for ten days to learn more about the Korean village development experiences. A memorandum was signed between KOICA and GAMSUMO about implementing the My Village project in Kyrgyzstan in 2018.

²⁰ Personal meeting with GAMSUMO representative in Issyk-Kul oblast on December 18, 2020. I asked permission to use his name and surname in the research work.

6.1.1.1 My Village Initiative's leading local actors

Central government involvement. The coordinating institution from Kyrgyzstan's side is given to the Government Agency for Local Self-Government and Interethnic Relations under the Kyrgyz Government (GAMSUMO). This institution is this project's highest administrative unit on the Kyrgyz government side. Monitoring the project performance in each village is the main task of GAMSUMO.

The role of local self-government (Ayil Ökmötü). Coordination at the local level was assigned to the local self-government, the lowest administrative unit. Additionally, the implementation and management of the My Village project is the local authority's responsibility. Moreover, in addition to the grant, the local self-government finances the deficits of the My Village project. The facilities built-in pilot villages must be included in the *Ayil Ökmötü* balance to ensure sustainability at the final stage of the KOICA My Village project. The further maintenance of the project is the responsibility of the local self-government.

The locomotives of the KOICA My Village. The pilot villages should select a local Saemaul leader (hereinafter Kyrgyz Saemaul leaders willing to work voluntarily (unpaid) because Saemaul Undong leaders in Korea served in villages without remuneration (Park Sooyoung, 2009: 123; Park Jin-Hwan, 1998). The same method applies to the Kyrgyz version of the Saemaul Undong model. Local Saemaul leaders are the engines of the project because the project's implementation and mobilization of residents depend on them. In addition, active leaders should establish a village development committee and community fund for the KOICA financial operations in their pilot areas. As the physical entity, the public funds serve as a meeting place for the Saemaul leaders to meet and discuss their activities related to the My Village Initiative. However, during the field study, I have not seen any of them. Saemaul leaders typically meet with their teams in their homes to discuss project activities.

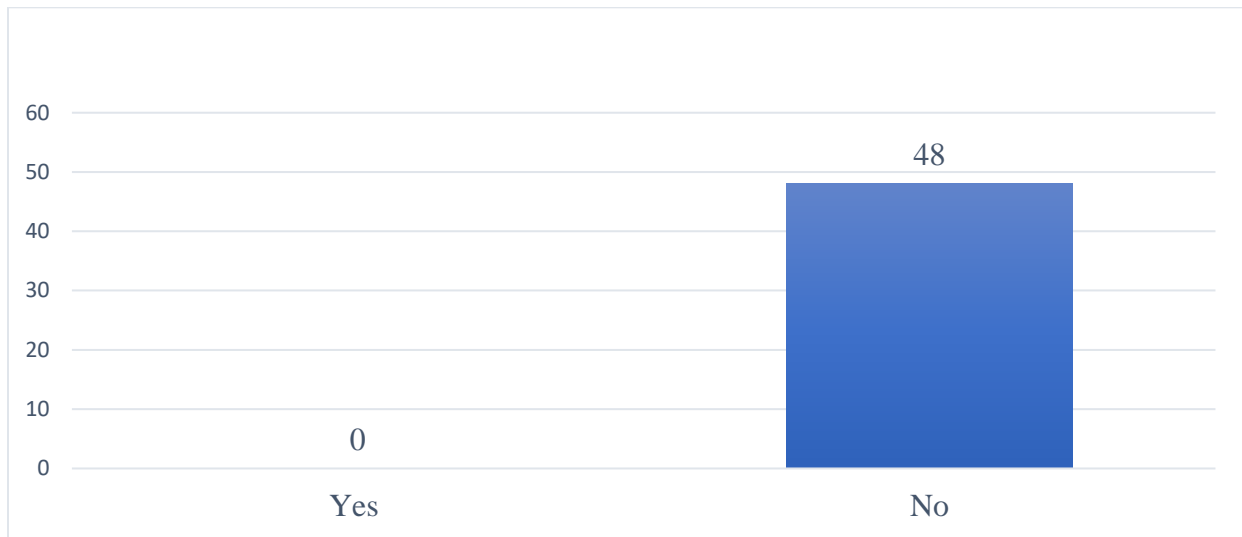
In this regard, I have asked: “*How the donor (KOICA) chose the local Saemaul leader in Kyrgyzstan's pilot areas.*” The majority of respondents responded based on residents' choices. The local government approved the villagers' preferences. The following are the most common answers to this question.

- The village chief chose me to be the project leader.

- It was the choice of the villagers.
- People (village inhabitants) chose the candidate at the local government meeting, and the local authority supported him/her.
- Local self-government organized a general meeting to introduce the Korean model, and the leader was selected.

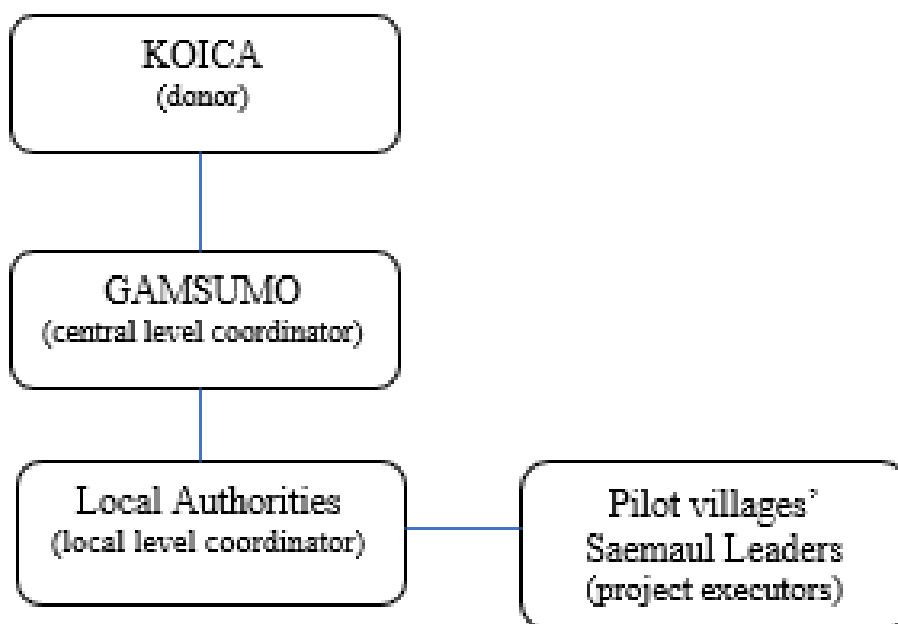
The private sector in the KOICA My Village. The role of local businesses does not play any role. All respondents (48) chose “no.”

Figure 8 – Local business sector inclusion in the KOICA My Village in Kyrgyzstan



Source: semi-structured survey, 2020.

Figure 9 – Main Stakeholders and Collaboration in the KOICA My Village in Kyrgyzstan



Source: author's own illustration

6.1.1.2 Cooperation in the My Village Initiative in Kyrgyzstan

The Korean Saemaul Undong's primary development strategy is the residents' mobilization. The supported principles and spirits aimed to achieve tangible results in the rural modernization of Korea. Therefore, Kyrgyzstan has suggested its traditional *Ashar* method. *Ashar* is the traditional method of collective action or voluntary citizen participation in rural areas of the country. It is practical and still in use, mainly in rural Kyrgyzstan. The emergence of this tradition goes to the nomadic life of the Kyrgyz people. The main goal of the *Ashar* is to complete the work in a brief time through collective action (Musaeva, 2020: 24). Construction of internal roads of villages and bridges, cleaning the environment, planting trees, and other community activities conducted in *Ashar* way in Kyrgyzstan. Thus, Earle et al. (2004) emphasize that the *Ashar* tradition is a tool that stimulates the participation of villagers. However, it is a top-down process mainly applied by local authorities to mobilize villagers for community work.

In this regard, I have asked whether *Ashar* can be an analog to Korean soft principles; the following is the output of our semi-structured questionnaire.

Is the *Ashar* (traditional voluntary participation) method suitable for the KOICA My Village project?

All respondents agree that the traditional method of voluntary participation is the main prerequisite for Saemaul Undong activities in the pilot areas of Kyrgyzstan. The respondents indicated a positive response of 97.6% with a “yes” opinion.

Table 11 – The acceptance of *Ashar* as the primary mechanism for implementing My Village's local development initiatives

<i>Ashar_suitable_Korean_Saemaul_Undong in Kyrgyzstan</i>					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	do not know	1	2.4	2.4	2.4
	yes	47	97.6	97.6	100.0
	Total	48	100.0	100.0	

Source: results obtained from the SPSS program

This study also investigates the role of the cooperation tradition (*Ashar*) method in the pilot areas of the beneficiary country Kyrgyzstan through an in-depth analysis of an open-ended semi-structured questionnaire.

Key findings on the traditional cooperation method: Ashar

“... *Ashar* (traditional voluntary participation) method is a popular and well-developed method in villages suitable for the Korean-led My Village project,” Kyrgyz and Uzbek Saemaul leaders stated in Kyrgyzstan. It is common in Kyrgyzstan’s rural areas but rare in cities. The *Ashar* tradition has not lost its significance in the rural parts of the county. One of the main principles of Saemaul Undong is cooperation, and it is like the *Ashar* tradition. I believe that the *Ashar* tradition can facilitate village initiatives. It is appropriate because it is part of our long nomadic history, where yurts (movable houses) are built through the *Ashar* method or with joint efforts. KOICA

My Village gave an excellent chance to spread the tradition of unity and voluntarism through the *Ashar* method in developing our pilot areas of Kyrgyzstan.

Moreover, *Ashar* is the community's call to action; it fits well with Korea's Saemaul Undong, which is now adopted through the KOICA funded My Village Initiative in the pilot areas. Teamwork and self-confidence were developed during KOICA My Village. We can support a variety of local initiatives through *Ashar*, which is comparable to the principles of Saemaul Undong. We got the idea of the Korean Saemaul Undong Movement from our traditional *Ashar's* notion of working together. Saemaul Undong adheres to the same philosophy as *Ashar*, encouraging the villagers to collaborate for community development.

Ashar awakened the villagers' feelings and fostered unity among the people. In addition, it instilled in the residents a sense of ownership over the local development project and fostered community cohesion. The path of *Ashar* paved the way for people's unity and sparked public interest. Instead of soliciting donations, one should use *Ashar*, a tradition of unity and self-help”

The limitations of the Ashar method in the KOICA My Village project

KOICA My Village has accepted *Ashar* as an analog of the Korean Saemaul Undong principles of “self-help” and “cooperation.” However, this research highlights the limitations of Kyrgyzstan's *Ashar* tradition or voluntary participation of rural residents in local development initiatives.

“... In a market economy, people do not want to work for free. At first, people hesitated to participate in the KOICA My Village in our pilot village. As a result, I (a Saemaul leader) gathered my relatives and classmates in the village. My wife's friends and relatives later joined us. We had constructed a bridge and street lighting in our pilot area. ...”

Another Kyrgyz Saemaul leader emphasizes that *Ashar's* limitations were evident during the pandemic. “... COVID-19 challenged all nations' economies, well-being, and other socioeconomic conditions, including Kyrgyzstan. At that moment, physical contact was dangerous, not to mention voluntary participation or through the *Ashar*. Our project was interrupted for a while, and people did not want to cooperate and participate in the KOICA-funded My Village Initiative.” In my village, a kindergarten was prioritized and selected for KOICA My Village funding. The pilot village borders China to the east and Tajikistan to the southwest. It is mountainous terrain with a harsh winter season. In this area, there are no jobs; most people live

off cattle breeding and remittances from migrants. In the village, migration is high. Most young people go to Russia in search of work. However, *Ashar* is still a practical technique for local development. The pilot leader stressed that a person could not work voluntarily every day, where job opportunity is minimum, and there is high unemployment in the rural areas of Kyrgyzstan.

The Kyrgyz Saemaul leader stresses that people should get paid for their labor, especially in a market-driven economy. During COVID-19, nobody gathered, and they had to hire a local company to complete their first project. The Kyrgyz Saemaul leader was responsible for implementing the project in the village. Later, the Kyrgyz Saemaul leader notified that he resigned from that position due to his local self-government position as village head (*ayil bashchy*). A newly implemented rule prohibited government employees from being appointed Saemaul leaders in the second and third stages of KOICA My Village Initiative in Kyrgyzstan.

However, a former Kyrgyz Saemaul leader highlighted their first achievement of opening a kindergarten completed and given for exploitation. For the first time in a mountain village, the kindergarten is opened with the support of a Korean donor.”

6.1.1.3 The scheme of local development of the My Village Initiative

My Village is a three-phase project in Kyrgyzstan sponsored by the Korea International Cooperation Agency. Initially, the pilot villages focused on infrastructure improvement projects such as roads and bridges. The second and third phases focus on income-generating projects such as mini-factories, processing plants, greenhouses, and other activities to help residents reap economic benefits.

KOICA My Village Initiative scheme is grant support. It funds the selected pilot areas aiming to learn Korean Saemaul Undong. The total fund is US\$ 3,500,000 for the whole period, starting from December 2018 and finalizing in December 2022. Each pilot village receives US\$ 25,000 on a grant basis for the first phase (2018-2019). If the village thrives in the first stage, it promotes the second stage. The first phase objective is to build primary infrastructure in three regions of all thirty (30) pilot areas. If the pilot villages complete the first project on time and efficiently, they advance to the second stage. The second phase (2020-2021) focuses on income increase projects, with an additional US\$ 4,000 grant added to the base amount (US\$ 25,000). The total grant amount reaches US\$ 29,000. The total grant amount for the third stage is US\$ 35,000

(Musaeva, 2021). This strategy is thought to increase participants' motivation to complete projects on time and receive an additional bonus in subsequent rounds.

In the first round, each of the thirty selected villages received US\$ 25,000. Nevertheless, out of 30 finalists, only 15 advanced to the second round, marking a watershed moment for all thirty pilot areas. In the second stage, 15 fortunate villages are classified as "self-help" villages, while the remaining 15 are regarded as "basic." Meanwhile, the remaining fifteen receive the same amount as in the first stage (US\$ 25,000) and continue the second stage income increase projects. The pilot villages' selection for the next phase depends on project performance and timely completion. Pilot villages were classified to encourage competition among participating pilot villages and project leaders.

The third phase of the KOICA My Village grant, which runs from October 18th, 2021, to October 18th, 2022, is worth US\$ 35,000 to the most successful "self-sufficient" villages. It is a critical step which expected to continue income-generating projects. Only nine (9) villages were eligible for the final round (2021-2022). The rest twenty-one (21) pilot locations received an additional US\$ 2,000 compensation to complete projects in their respective territories. The third phase of the project brings the project to a close.

6.1.1.4 Preliminary outcome of the My Village Initiative

KOICA My Village is still ongoing. Therefore, through our field study, we have identified the first successful projects of the initial phase. The Korean Saemaul Undong in Kyrgyzstan as part of the KOICA My Village project's contribution to local and rural development is presented in Table 12.

Table 12 – Outcome of the KOICA My Village Initiative (2019-2020)

Projects	Result	Unit
Irrigation and Water	28,4	km
Water Source	1	one
Water Reservoir	1	one
Public Health Center	2	two
Hospital	1	one
Road	7	km
Sidewalk	980	m
Bridge	2	two

Streetlight	2,265	household
School	3	three
Kindergarten	5	five
School Fence	530	m
Community Center	2	two
Public Bath	1	one
Football Field	1	one

Sources: Government Agency for Local Self-Government and Interethnic Relations under the Kyrgyz Government; Field Survey, 2019~2020.

6.1.1.5 Contribution and comparison of the Korean and Kyrgyz versions of the Saemaul Undong model

The field study on the Kyrgyz version of Saemaul Undong, and its contribution to local development in rural Kyrgyzstan, has positively impacted people’s lives in pilot areas. Through the KOICA funding, the essential infrastructure development has been completed at the minimum cost of accomplishments in the first phase of the KOICA My Village Initiative. All the planned facilities were built on time. As the state budget finances 72% of local self-governments, foreign investments in the countryside are “manna from heaven.”

Ashar tradition is deemed the most accurate analog to the original Saemaul Undong's principles, namely self-help, and cooperation, but it also has shown its limitations. Some pilot villages have experienced a successful revival of the *Ashar* tradition, whereas others have not. COVID-19, high external and internal migration rates, limited job opportunities, and a market-oriented economy have negatively impacted the traditional *Ashar* method, limiting its role in local development in rural Kyrgyzstan, as we have revealed through KOICA-funded My Village Initiative.

My Village Initiative’s local development projects start with building basic infrastructure. The construction of pavement, bridges, school fences, and irrigation water channels in each pilot village benefits the entire community and does not require exceptional talent and professionals in these works. Ordinary villagers can do such work and benefit the whole community. Therefore, the villagers willingly participated in *Ashar/ voluntarily*. Professionals are required when it comes to serious projects, like the construction of a school, a clinic, a hospital, and a kindergarten. Our research has found that *Ashar* is not helpful in this matter. Professionals should be paid according

to their work, especially in rural areas. The role of the *Ashar* tradition is controversial regarding local development in Kyrgyzstan. The traditional method of cooperation can be applied in local development, but not repeatedly. Using *Ashar* repeatedly devalues its impact on local development in Kyrgyzstan. The donor (KOICA) will not be able to achieve satisfactory results if it insists solely on using the *Ashar* / or voluntary participation principle to achieve tangible results in the subsequent second and third phases (income generation) of the KOICA My Village Initiative. We anticipate that the second and third phases of the My Village Initiative should use different approaches to engage local communities.

KOICA My Village Initiative's most valuable contribution is not the revival of *Ashar* nor the development of the local area through voluntary participation but the emergence of local leaders. So-called Kyrgyzstan's Saemaul leaders made the most incredible sacrifices in the My Village Initiative. They were not paid but held accountable for their duties. In addition, meeting the local leaders, where Kyrgyz and Uzbeks work together to move their village forward, made the task of being in the countryside even more attractive. However, the burden of paper-related business plan writing work made the local Kyrgyz and Uzbek Saemaul leaders tiresome. Many expressed that the monthly work payments would be more sustainable in maintaining the future Saemaul Undong activities in Kyrgyzstan. Although the local self-government shows great interest in the project, the main burden of conducting the activity rests on the shoulders of the local Kyrgyz and Uzbek Saemaul executives.

Comparison of the Korean and Kyrgyz versions of Saemaul Undong. Comparing the authentic Korean Saemaul Undong with the globalized Saemaul Undong of the modern era in third-world countries, in this case, the KOICA My Village Initiative in Kyrgyzstan, the first approach was the involvement of the central and local governments. By involving them, Saemaul pilot villages have been selected in three Kyrgyzstan regions: Batken, Osh, and Chuy. Second, Saemaul Undong Development in Kyrgyzstan focused on indigenous participatory traditions like *Ashar* to involve residents voluntarily. It worked well until the tradition of cooperation showed its limitations, although, in the infrastructure building phase, *Ashar* can be a handy tool to involve localities. The main similarities and differences are presented in the following Table 13.

Table 13 – Comparison of the Korean Saemaul Undong and Kyrgyz versions of Saemaul Undong (KOICA My Village project)

Indicator	Republic of Korea’s Saemaul Undong	Kyrgyz version of Saemaul Undong within the framework of the KOICA My Village project
Policy initiation & objective	Government-led policy Poverty reduction, modernization of villages, income increase, rural development, nation-building, and attitudinal change	NGO-led rural development policy To improve the Kyrgyz rural lifestyle
Local development scheme	Integrated (top-down & bottom-up) approaches	The vertical & horizontal collaborative scheme, where <i>Aiyl Ökmötü</i> , LSG, a local Saemaul leader, and ordinary participants work together
	Village as a strategic unit	Village as a strategic unit
	Every Korean Saemaul village has Male and Female Saemaul leaders	Every pilot area has a Kyrgyz or Uzbek Saemaul leader
	Villages are classified into basic, self-help, & self-reliant	Pilot villages are classified into the same principles (basic, self-help & self-reliant) to boost competition
	Nationwide Saemaul education and training	Saemaul Education is organized at home, Kyrgyzstan & Republic of Korea
	Public relations (PR) promotion, Saemaul song, flag, centers, and others	Social media (Facebook & WhatsApp to exchange messages and news about Saemaul Undong activities in pilot areas of Kyrgyzstan) Mass media (newspaper articles are rarely recorded about Saemaul Undong in Kyrgyzstan, but there are some articles in Kyrgyz language and a TV interview with a representative of the Saemaul Public Fund in Kyrgyzstan)

Basic principles	Diligence Self-help Cooperation	<i>Ashar</i> (conventional voluntary participation)
Government and governance	Authoritarian regime (highly centralized)	Democratic regime (decentralized)
Critical actor	The central government, including all layers of government institutions, officials, and villagers	GAMSUMO <i>Aiyl Ökmötü</i> (LSG) Local Saemaul leaders
Local participation	Full voluntary participation	Voluntary participation exists
Investment	Korean State invested billions of won (subsidized by the state)	KOICA contribution (grant) <i>Aiyl Ökmötü</i> (LSG) contribution Ordinary citizens' and migrants' contributions
Cultural background (Saemaul Undong era: 1970~1979)	A homogeneous society with Confucian values	The heterogeneous Islam religion dominated society

Source: Musaeva, 2021, p. 120.

6.2 Case Study II: EBRD's Modernization of drinking water infrastructure project

6.2.1 European Union's mission in Kyrgyzstan

In line with its strategic priorities for external action, the EU Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) highlights the EU's commitment to continuing to develop a solid political partnership with Kyrgyzstan, specifically: support for digital transformation, including more transparent, accountable, and rule-based institutions as well as human rights promotion and protection. And enhancement of human development and gender equality, as well as quality and inclusive education. Assist in the development of a green and sustainable economy, including the promotion of green skills, green growth, and the strengthening of trade and investment. To strengthen cooperation with Kyrgyzstan, the EU proposes three priority areas: (1) governance and digital transformation, (2) human development, and (3) a green and climate-resilient economy.

The chosen for this research study is the EBRD drinking water project, which addresses the third objective of the EU mission in Kyrgyzstan: creating a resilient climate economy. Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality has received approval for a project worth US\$ 6,7 million to rehabilitate its water supply and sewerage systems. By receiving the funding, the city will be able to modernize its water supply system, install modern water meters, and upgrade the equipment necessary to operate the system. In July 2017, an agreement was ratified with the EBRD on restoring the water supply system in Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality. The project lasted three years, starting in 2017 and finalizing in 2019.

6.2.1.1 EBRD's Modernization of drinking water infrastructure project context

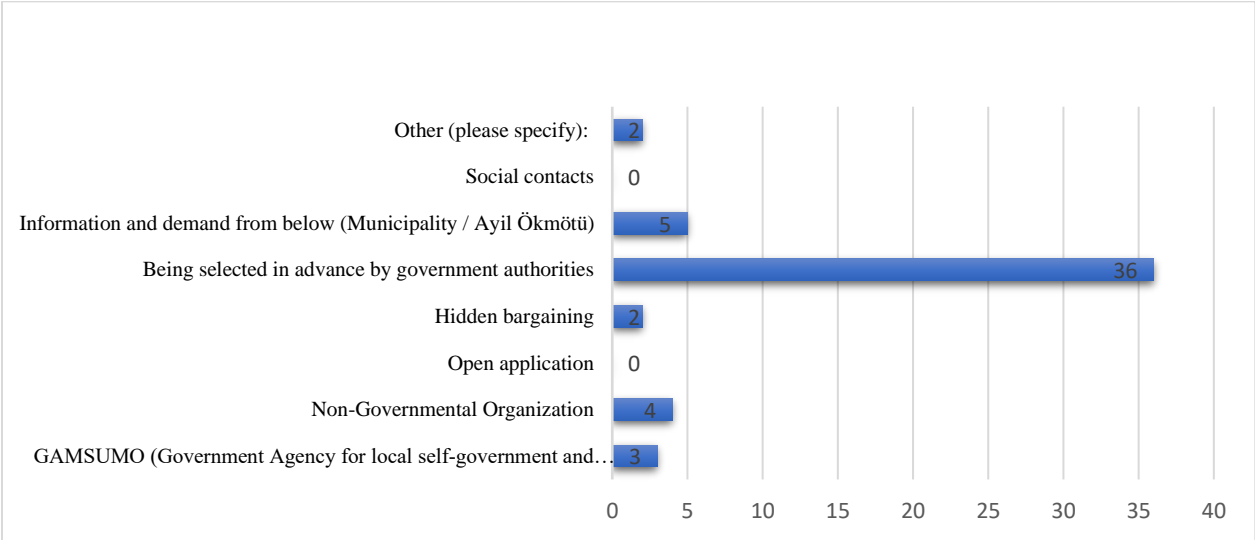
Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality has 56 thousand residents who often experience water shortages due to the outdated water supply network built during the Soviet era. In that area, water loss is approximately 80%. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) project has waited many years. *Abdilazis Satybaldiev*, the head of the municipal enterprise of water and wastewater reception (hereinafter The Kyzyl-Kiya Water Company), underlined the need to reconstruct the water supply system built in 1956-1980, indicating that pipes have become outdated. The water intake is in the neighboring district (Kadamzhay), 15 kilometers or half an hour from the pilot area, Kyzyl-Kiya town.

Former mayor *Ermekbay Topchubayev* stressed that while he was mayor, providing drinking water was his top priority.

"... the local budget allocates funds to renovate water pipes yearly, but it is not enough to fix them. Even though the Municipality of Kyzyl-Kiya is self-sufficient, it has its own budget of about 140 million Kyrgyz soms (around US\$ 1,65 million in 2021); the financing of large projects in this area is not yet possible"

Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality’s efforts to find donors for the rehabilitation of the water supply system were rewarded. The EBRD intervened. The EBRD's local development scheme consists of grant and loan assistance. This scheme is intended to replace the internal water supply and sewerage lines, providing residents with clean drinking water, a local concern since the country’s independence. We asked the vice mayor²¹ how the Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality was selected for the EBRD funding, and he stated it was agreed with the central government at our request, and they waited over seven years. Figure 10 illustrates the selection criteria of the Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality for EBRD funding. It shows that “being selected in advance by government authorities” is the most responded (by 36 respondents) answer.

Figure 10 – How was your Municipality selected for the EBRD funding?



Source: Semi-structured survey, 2021.

²¹ The interview was conducted with the 1st Vice Mayor, A. Gaparov, in the Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality in the spring of 2021.

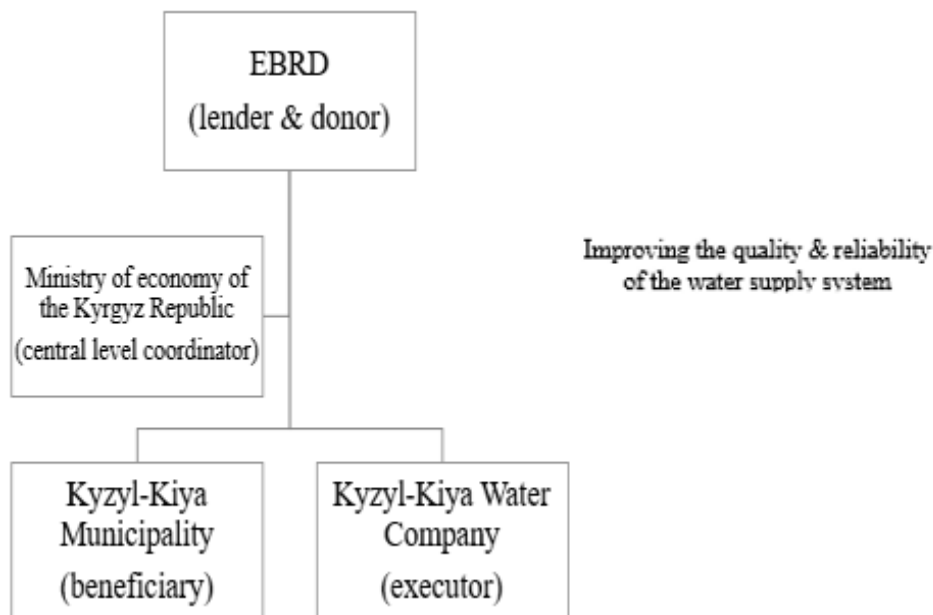
6.2.1.2 EBRD project's local critical actors and their cooperation

The primary responsibility for implementing the EBRD Water project is entrusted to the Mayor's Office and municipal enterprise or Kyzyl-Kiya Water Company. In addition, the Municipal Property Department is also responsible for the smooth operation and implementation of the project.

The EBRD is a critical player as a donor and a lender. Also, there is the Ministry of Economy, the central government coordinator. At the local level, Kyzyl-Kiya Water Company executes the water project under the supervision and coordination of the Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality.

The collaboration is purely institutional, top-down. The *Ashar* / voluntary participation of localities is not in use. The repayment of a loan is deducted from the resident's utility tax. Therefore, we have considered residents *as loan payers* through utility payments for water consumption. The residents also benefit from this project but are not involved in its implementation. The private (business) sector is not involved in the EBRD drinking water supply project.

Figure 11 – Critical Stakeholders and Collaboration in the EBRD Water Project



Source: author's research

6.2.1.3 EBRD project's local development scheme

The EBRD drinking water project is a grant and loan financing scheme. A total of US\$ 6,7 million has been set aside for rehabilitation. Loans totaling US\$ 1,7 million have been approved. The Mayor's Office of Kyzyl-Kiya must repay the debt within 15 years, with a 3-year grace period of 1% per year. Grants totaled US\$ 4 million. US\$ 1 million for technical support, US\$ 0,4 million for equipment, and US\$ 0,6 million for technical consultants.

6.2.1.4 EBRD project's contribution to Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality

EBRD project was launched to replace inland water and sewage pipes in Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality. It aimed to improve the quality and efficiency of the Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality's water supply and sanitation services. As part of the project, new pipelines were installed, outdated equipment was replaced, and a new wastewater treatment plant was constructed. These improvements resulted in safe and reliable access to clean water and an improved environment for the city's residents. The project was completed. Additionally, Kyzyl-Kiya Water Company purchased four units of specialized equipment (heavy vehicles) during the EBRD project. The project outcome is presented in Table 14.

Table 14 – EBRD local development project

Project	Unit	Outcome
Replacement of internal water supply and sewerage lines	km	32,5
Special equipment (heavy vehicles)	four	4

Field Survey in Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality, October 1~December 12, 2020.

6.3 Case Study III: Kyrgyz businessman-initiated local development initiative

6.3.1 Ülgülüü Ayil Ökmötü: Exemplary local self-government initiative context

The meaning *Ülgülüü* is “Exemplary or Model” and “*Ayil Ökmötü.*” Exemplary local self-government) in the Bel territory was launched by the businessperson²² (private sector). Bel is a territory in southern Kyrgyzstan and the businessman's birthplace. The businessperson is a prominent leader of the Bel territory and the country which has succeeded in the hospitality industry. A businessperson owns several resort areas in Kyrgyzstan. The initiator of this study has been listed among the top hundreds of wealthiest Kyrgyz citizens according to data derived from social media²³. The document stated that the fortune was valued at approximately US\$ 200 ~ 220 million.

The businessperson explained the motivation behind launching the Exemplary local self-government initiative in the following manner.

“... In Kyrgyzstan, most local self-government units receive state subsidies. Due to the constant reliance on state subsidies, local development is hindered. Similarly, the Bel local self-government, subsidized by the state, always seeks to attract investors. Local authorities have always urged me (the businessman) to create job opportunities and invest in his home village. Instead of building hard infrastructure projects such as roads, bridges, and other facilities, I (a businessman) chose a different approach. The first mission was to identify a qualified leader for the Bel local self-government ...”

During the First Year Report Conference ²⁴, the businessperson stated that young professionals should be attracted to local self-government to promote local (economic) development. The businessperson believes that in developing the hometown of Bel, selecting the most competent manager and professional in the local self-government sphere is necessary. Businessman's first task was identifying Kyrgyzstan's most effective and best-performing local self-government.

²² The businessman is one of the country's wealthiest citizens, owning several five-star hotels and recreational centers in Kyrgyzstan.

²³ “A list of the hundred (100) wealthiest persons in Kyrgyzstan” obtained <https://ruh.kg/2020/01/25/kyrgyzstandagyi-e-bay-100-chinovnikti-bilip-alyi-yiz-2013-zhyilkyi-k-rs-tk-ch/>.

²⁴ I have been invited to participate as a guest at the "First Year Report Conference" regarding Exemplary local self-government initiatives activities and challenges in Kyrgyzstan's Bel area. The conference was held in the Osh region, in one of the resort areas, owned by a businessperson/initiator of the domestic field research.

Every year, the Government of Kyrgyzstan organizes the competition “Outstanding Results of Local Self-Government Activities.” The competition is held among 452 local self-governments of Kyrgyzstan. It is an attractive competition, with incentives ranging from 500,000 to 3 million Kyrgyz soms (in US\$, around 6000 ~ 35,000). The competition fund is allocated from the state budget. The outstanding performance of the local self-government competition prompted the initiator of the Exemplary local self-government to invite the winner to serve in the Bel area for a year in the pilot phase. The effort to search for the leading local self-government was successful. A young specialist from northern Kyrgyzstan was one of the winners and achieved the best performance in basic local self-government services in 2017, such as implementing infrastructure projects, road paving, electricity supply, clean water, and irrigation. The businessperson approached the candidate and offered to collaborate on his initiative, Exemplary local self-government. To motivate the young specialist, the businessperson pays an additional incentive on top of the wages. A deal has been made.

I had the opportunity to meet the winner and candidate for a businessman’s initiative. The idea of moving to an unknown location and beginning from nothing was discussed with this individual. The newly appointed head of Bel local self-government stated the following:

“... the opportunity to work in south Kyrgyzstan was the first case in the history of the local self-government of the country. This kind of activity never happened even in the whole country. Trying to gain new experience in my career, I agreed to come to south Kyrgyzstan for a year, not more. However, I served as the head of Bel's local self-government for one year and four months. The supportive staff and residents of Bel and Borbash welcomed me with open arms....”

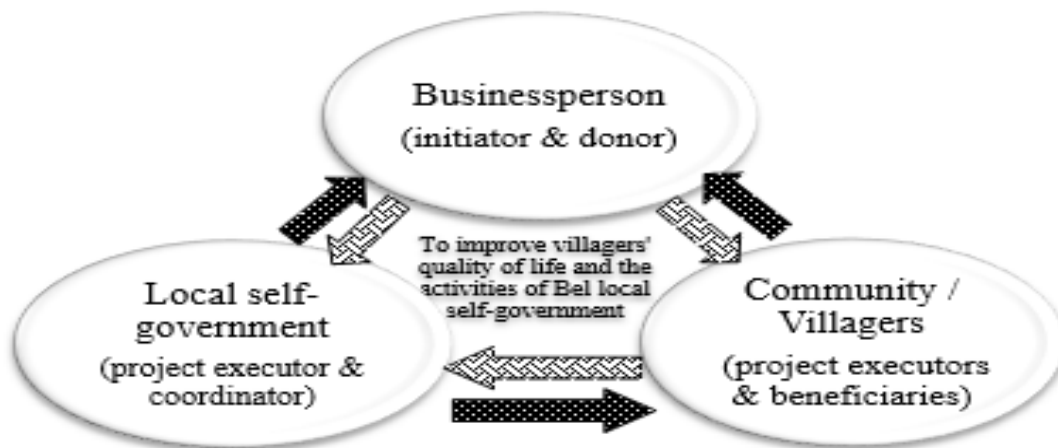
6.3.1.1 Exemplary local self-government’s critical local actors and their collaboration

Critical local actors in the Exemplary local self-government include Businessman *Ayil Ökmötii* (local self-government) and Villagers.

The collaboration is achieved through established focus groups. Four types of different focus groups were created within the framework of the Exemplary local self-government project, such as “Youth,” “Women,” “Local Businessmen,” and “Farmers.” Focus groups are aimed at determining the community's most pressing issues.

In addition, the usage and role of social media are indispensable and essential to communication with a businessperson who is permanently abroad. Social media provides a platform for exchanging ideas and discussing feedback related to their activities within the boundaries of Exemplary local self-government initiatives. The chat group contains more than five thousand residents of the pilot area. The businessman stated there is no need to reach a physical location to resolve issues in the digital era. The use of social media is now an integral part of the everyday life of people in business and even those living in remote regions. Technological advancement of Western developed countries in the field of social media has positive externalities for developing nations like Kyrgyzstan. The following Figure 12 illustrates the businessman-initiated project's local actors.

Figure 12 – Local Stakeholders and Cooperation in the Exemplary local self-government



Source: author's research

6.3.1.2 Exemplary local self-government scheme for local development

The local development scheme of the Exemplary local self-government is not grant or loan assistance. However, the businessman has contributed and donated in many spheres of the Bel territory for many years. By launching the Exemplary local self-government initiative, the businessman wanted to pass the responsibility and ownership to his village residents, stressing that their future depends only on their further actions for development. An overview of the project implementation through the framework of the Exemplary local self-government initiative and its

impact on the pilot area allows readers to gain clear insight into the local development scheme of the businessman-launched initiative in his home village, Bel territory, the southern part of Kyrgyzstan.

6.3.1.3 Targeted project under the Exemplary local self-government initiative

The development strategy of the Exemplary local self-government for 2018-2023 was developed as the main document. A particular working group was created to develop this strategy, consisting of several projects to achieve the targeted goals. Exemplary local self-government projects focus on “socioeconomic,” such as income increase, “youth and adult education,” and “learning a foreign language, English,” “environmental,” “infrastructure building,” and “enhancing the activities of Bel local self-government.”

First (1) the *socioeconomic project*: The businessman pays 5,000 soms monthly (around US\$ 60) for three semi-orphan families in the Bel and Borbash villages. Over the last five years, starting from 2017, the three households receive about US\$ 60 monthly from a businessperson. It continues to this day. (Beneficiaries: three households).

(2) The following project aims to *increase income through livestock acquisition*. Ten sheep are delivered to poor households with a businessman's funding in collaboration with the Bel local self-government. The process of acquiring these ten sheep is as follows. In total, there are ten heads of sheep provided for a needy household. At first glance, the income-generating project (animal breeding) seems straightforward. Sheep are raised throughout the year by the household to produce lamb. A family retains the lambs, and the original ten are transferred to another household. The duration of this project is one year. The project is primarily intended for profit-making purposes only. (Beneficiaries: ten poverty-stricken households).

(3) *Educational projects*: The businessman funds 50% of the total tuition fee for ten school students attending the region's prestigious private lyceum. The tuition fee is around US\$ 1,500~3000 per year. Middle high school is private, which only well-to-do families can afford. There are twelve of these kinds of schools throughout Kyrgyzstan. Math and science subjects are

prioritized in the curriculum, taught in English and Turkish. (beneficiaries: three middle school students).

The following projects are also related to education, but it is about obtaining higher education abroad and at prestigious universities in Kyrgyzstan. A bachelor student studying at the American University of Central Asia (AUCA) and financially supported by a businessman. The tuition fee is around US\$ 5,000 for one semester. The businessperson also funds two bachelor's students; one is studying in South Africa, and the other is at the prestigious University in the capital city of Bishkek. (Beneficiaries: three University students).

(4) ***Educating adults***: Women focus group leader explained educating adult project:

“... There is a famous teacher and author of the “Mothers’ School” novel concept in Kyrgyzstan. In the Batken region of Kyrgyzstan, this teacher founded a school for mothers. The main message of his vision is that nurturing youth begins with educating mothers. This teacher was invited to the Bel area by the initiator of the Exemplary local self-government. During his visit to Bel, this teacher lectured high school teachers. Teachers in Bel and Borbash villages supported establishing a center for educating mothers. The process began in Bel territory with the assistance of a businessman. Bel's local self-government teachers traveled to the neighboring region, Batken, for a knowledge exchange seminar. A businessman paid all expenses related to the trip”

I had a chance to meet this teacher in person at a First Year Report Conference that a businessman organized. The author of the Mothers School gave a special lecture during a conference to participants. I asked how the Exemplary local self-government project benefits from the Mothers’ School. The response is the following:

“... Currently, I am (*Gapyr Madaminov*) delivering an online lecture to high school teachers in Bel and Borbash villages. Before establishing a new Mothers’ School, there should already be qualified teachers to implement the project in the recipient place. Therefore, I am educating teachers at present....” (Beneficiaries: teachers).

(5) The next project is ***learning a foreign language, English***: Four European volunteers arrived for the first time in the Bel area as part of the Exemplary local self-government initiative. The starting period was 2019. Volunteers from Switzerland, Germany, and France visited Bel's pilot area. Their mission was to provide English language courses for local middle school pupils.

Volunteer activities lasted between one and three months. Localities provided accommodation and food. A businessman recruited Bel territory's talented youth living abroad as part of this project. The businessman invited talented young people in Bel to contribute to their home villages through an Exemplary local self-government framework. An anthropologist from a Swiss university born in the Bel area coordinated this project of voluntary activities. The project was a success.

Additionally, under an Exemplary local self-government project, a new educational facility was constructed in Bel territory. The center is for learning foreign languages and other short-term courses such as floristry, sewing, wedding party service organization, etc. (Beneficiaries: middle school students and youth).

(6) ***Sanitation project:*** The businessperson funded the construction of seventy bathhouses for seventy households. These poor households never had private baths. (Beneficiaries: seventy households).

(7) ***Environmental and economic project:*** Provision of drinking water. The drinking water project is still ongoing. The main issue in Bel territory is drinking water. People in the village use irrigation water for their daily use. Villagers approached a businessperson seeking assistance with a problem with drinking water.

*Aizada*²⁵, an inhabitant and activist of the pilot Borbash village, explained that provision of the drinking water project is still ongoing, even though it began in 2018. The following is the excerpt from an interview:

“... A businessperson invited women and youth activists from Bel village to the capital city of Bishkek. He owns a resort area there. We were offered to taste the water in that resort area. It was fresh mountain water from a local artesian well. The message from the businessman was to encourage residents to contribute to the provision of drinking water projects in Bel territory. The businessperson states that he is going to cover the project's deficits. Residents should, however, bear most of the costs. After returning from the businessman's resort area, activists started agitating to raise funding for clean water in Bel territory. Every household was asked to raise and donate 2,000 soms (US\$ 20) to provide safe drinking water to every household in the Bel area. The actions, however, were not without challenges. Some households donated, but some did not because they did not trust the project's success. Even though activists approached every household

²⁵ Aizada has permitted me to use her name in this research study.

door-to-door to explain drinking water provision, raising funds was challenging. No success in the matter....”

Aizada, an activist and a Women's focus group member note that the passive nature of this project is due to the local self-government's primary responsibility for providing clean water to the community. Because of this, villagers are reluctant to raise funds and help finance clean water, emphasizing that Bel's local self-government should deal with the drinking water problem, not the residents.

(8) The most intriguing final project is "*an invited candidate for the head of the Bel local self-government position.*" The initiator of the Exemplary local self-government project believes that talented managers are vital in developing his home village. Therefore, he started to search for a competent candidate for his home village, Bel.

Kyrgyzstan's local self-government law mandates that the local council elects the candidate for the local self-government's head (Ministry of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2011). As mentioned above, local authorities asked a businessman to invest and create job opportunities in the Bel region. When the businessman started looking for a new candidate for the post of head of the Bel local self-government, all agreed to support the new candidate for the position of Bel LSG. The area has a tradition of changing the head of the local self-government more frequently. Therefore, local council deputies agreed to elect the businessman's candidacy. Everybody agreed to accept, support, and vote for the invited businessman's candidate, but for a brief period as a pilot phase of the project. As a result, the businessman's candidate won the election and became the head of Bel local self-government. The candidate service lasted a year and four months in Bel territory, south Kyrgyzstan.

6.3.1.4 Preliminary contribution of the Exemplary local self-government

Several residents and community leaders believe that the businessman has contributed significantly to the lives of the community for many years. However, the real work of the businessman began through the Exemplary local self-government initiative in the Bel area, south Kyrgyzstan. The following Table 15 outlines the local development projects undertaken by the businessman initiative.

Table 15 – Exemplary local self-government Projects

Project	Unit	Outcome
Income increase: animal husbandry (sheep)	household	10
Social protection assistance (cash: every month five thousand soms - US\$ 60)	household	3
Education 1: Scholarship for talented school students	ten	10
Education 2: Scholarship for talented University students	three	3
Education 3: European volunteers visit to conduct English language courses	four	4
Infrastructure: Established the educational center “Inspiration.”	one	1
Infrastructure: Bathhouse	household	70
Environment: Drinking water	ongoing	
Education 4: Mothers’ School	ongoing	

Source: Field study in Bel and Borbash villages, August 2021.

6.4 Discussion of empirical findings

This section addresses the final third research question and its sub-questions. The comparative analysis served to identify similarities and differences between international and domestic local development initiatives implemented in Kyrgyzstan.

RQ3: How can European Union's LEADER and Korean Saemaul Undong be applied as an alternative model for local development in Kyrgyzstan?

My dissertation aims to find a local development model for Kyrgyzstan. For this purpose, this research chose two role models from the European Union and the Republic of Korea. They are EU LEADER and Korean Saemaul Undong models of local development. This research has studied each role model's background, core principles, and local development schemes separately. Further, the comparative analysis is applied to find role models' main similarities and differences. Based on them, this research has designed a Tripartite Stakeholders' Model (TSM) for Kyrgyzstan's local development. TSM is an actor-based model, where its locomotives for local development are local government, private sector (business), and community (villagers). This research believes that joint efforts of the core local stakeholders are critical in local development. The complex problems of a community in a specific territory require a novel approach to bringing together critical local stakeholders, who will function as a catalyst in the decision-making and implementation of local development activities. In order to observe and discover critical actors of our proposed TSM, three distinct case studies in Kyrgyzstan are chosen for this research. Although this research aims to bring together key local actors to establish collaboration and partnership, it also explores the Kyrgyz tradition of cooperation.

As mentioned, the proposed TSM originated from the EU LEADER's Local Action Group and Korean Saemaul Undong's tradition of cooperation principles (theoretical part of this research). Each case study identifies different critical actors at the local level. Cooperation tradition, namely *Ashar*, voluntary participation, and cooperation is seen in the Korean donor-led case study, KOICA My Village project in Kyrgyzstan. However, in the EBRD water project, the traditional method of collaboration is missing. Furthermore, in the domestic case study, Exemplary local self-government initiative cooperation occurred through the formed Focus Groups.

RQ3.1: Who are the key local stakeholders, and how do they collaborate in the selected international and domestic-led local development case studies in Kyrgyzstan?

Case study I: KOICA My Village. KOICA, most local Kyrgyz and Uzbek Saemaul leaders implement the My Village Initiative. Local self-governments (*Ayil Ökmötüs'*) are the primary coordinators at the local level and owners of all KOICA My Village projects in their administrative units. Government Agency for Local Government and Interethnic Relations under the Kyrgyz Government (GAMSUMO) is a coordinator at the central level. This institution is responsible for collecting data on project implementation in the pilot areas of Kyrgyzstan. This research highlights that the involvement of central and local government agencies is a critical factor for Korean donors to implement the Saemaul Undong model in Kyrgyzstan. The private sector (business) does not play any role in this project. Businesses are scarce in remote mountainous rural areas. If it exists, it is one of those “necessity-driven” businesses in rural Kyrgyzstan.

Cooperation tradition. *Ashar* method is suggested for the KOICA My Village Initiative as an analog of the collaboration culture of Koreans. It is important to note that *Ashar*, the tradition of cooperation and voluntary participation from Kyrgyzstan, has played a crucial role in localizing the original Korean Saemaul Undong principles of "diligence," "self-help," and "cooperation." *Ashar* method is included in the KOICA My Village project as part of the cooperation of villagers at the local (village) level under the coordination and supervision of local self-government and selected Kyrgyz and Uzbek Saemaul leaders. The role of social media (*WhatsApp*) is also indispensable in the KOICA My Village project in Kyrgyzstan. The pilot villages are located in remote areas; social networks provide an ideal platform for sharing and receiving information regarding the project, seminars, training, and other related activities. The cooperation between crucial actors, including the central government (GAMSUMO), local self-government (vertical), and Kyrgyz and Uzbek Saemaul leaders (horizontal), is a combination of both vertical and horizontal. However, this research has found that the *Ashar* method (voluntary participation and cooperation) is a handy tool rather than a principle of localization of Korean Saemaul Undong's diligence, self-help, and cooperation in Kyrgyzstan under the KOICA My Village Initiative. In the first basic infrastructure-building phase of the KOICA My Village project in Kyrgyzstan, the *Ashar* cooperation tradition has played a significant role. As the project has targeted the whole community (village), every villager has contributed its resources, mainly free labor. Although, some pilot areas of the KOICA My Village project could not benefit from a tradition of cooperation

method. Kyrgyz Saemaul leaders hired firms to finish the project. The failure of the voluntary participation of villagers is a socioeconomic issue of unemployment and high migration. Villagers just wanted to get compensation for their labor in the project.

A clear statement should be made that the practical application of *Ashar* occurs when a real problem arises for community collaboration or when relatives seek assistance (brotherhood) without compensation. Nevertheless, the donor's (Korean) prerequisite was clear from initiating the Saemaul Undong model in Kyrgyzstan: "Villagers should contribute, and it must be voluntarily." The historical experience of villages' development in Kyrgyzstan using the *Ashar* method does not confirm the relevance of large-scale implementation programmes to introduce Korean Saemaul Undong in Kyrgyzstan, given the differences in spiritual and ideological factors between the two countries. The President and his administration backed the Korean Saemaul Undong. Its success depends on the extensive coordination and involvement of high-ranking officials, ministries, agencies, and local authorities. Economic growth through industrialization, political stability, and the firm and committed leadership of President Park Chung Hee and elected Korea's Saemaul leaders are the critical factors behind Saemaul Undong's success in Korea.

Regarding Kyrgyzstan, the lack of presidential leadership, the political instability that followed multiple colorful revolutions, frequent changes in high-ranking officials, and the lack of a clear ideological foundation are gaps that require generations to fill. Local development in Kyrgyzstan is a long-term process that needs the leaders' political will and commitment.

Case study II: EBRD drinking water project. The EBRD takes an institutional approach from top to bottom. The Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality is primarily responsible for project coordination, and implementation is delegated to the Kyzyl-Kiya Water Company. There is also a role of the Ministry of Economy as a central government responsible for the coordination at the central level and data collection of the EBRD project in Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality. Civil society has been excluded from the EBRD drinking water project. The private (business) sector is not involved.

Cooperation is institutional, top-down. The tradition of cooperation or the *Ashar* method is absent in the EBRD drinking water provision project in Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality. A pure institutional approach is taken to solve the water provision project, which is vital for quality of life, health and sanitation, and the local economy.

Case study III. Exemplary Bel local self-government initiative. Businessman-initiated local development project's local actors are the businessperson (private sector), the invited head of *Ayil Ökmötü* (local self-government), and villagers (community). The domestic case study presents all desired vital actors of the proposed Tripartite Stakeholders' Model: local government, private sector (business), and community (villagers).

Collaboration is horizontal and occurs through established focus groups. There is no tradition of collaboration or the *Ashar* method in the businessman-initiated project in Bel territory. In particular, the businessman explained that the *Ashar* method is ancient, and the tradition of cooperation does not fit into his project of Exemplary local self-government. Communication with a businessman who is mainly lives abroad is through social networks (*Telegram*). Businessman emphasizes that there is no need to travel to the countryside, where technology is developed and available in the 21st century. Social networks provide a platform to resolve issues related to the Exemplary local self-government initiative for a businessperson.

RQ_{3.2}: What are the main similarities and differences between the international and domestic-led local development case studies schemes for local development in Kyrgyzstan?

Similarities. The similarities between the three case studies selected for analysis are scarce in this study. Nevertheless, the empirical part of this study indicates some similarities, namely geographic location, rural areas, and the initiatives that target local development. Three different case studies reveal that local development promotion in rural Kyrgyzstan is a primary responsibility of the central and local governments. It is also important to note that international and domestic donors play a vital role in funding and promoting local development initiatives, whether it is in the form of a grant or loan assistance.

Differences. Local development case studies conducted by international and domestic donors differ substantially, starting with objectives and key stakeholders and further developing schemes for implementing local development activities in rural Kyrgyzstan. Table 16 presents international and domestic-led case studies' schemes for local development in the pilot areas of Kyrgyzstan. Figure 13 illustrates the different approaches to pursuing local development in Kyrgyzstan, as found in our field studies.

Table 16 – A comparative analysis of international and domestic approaches to promoting local development in Kyrgyzstan

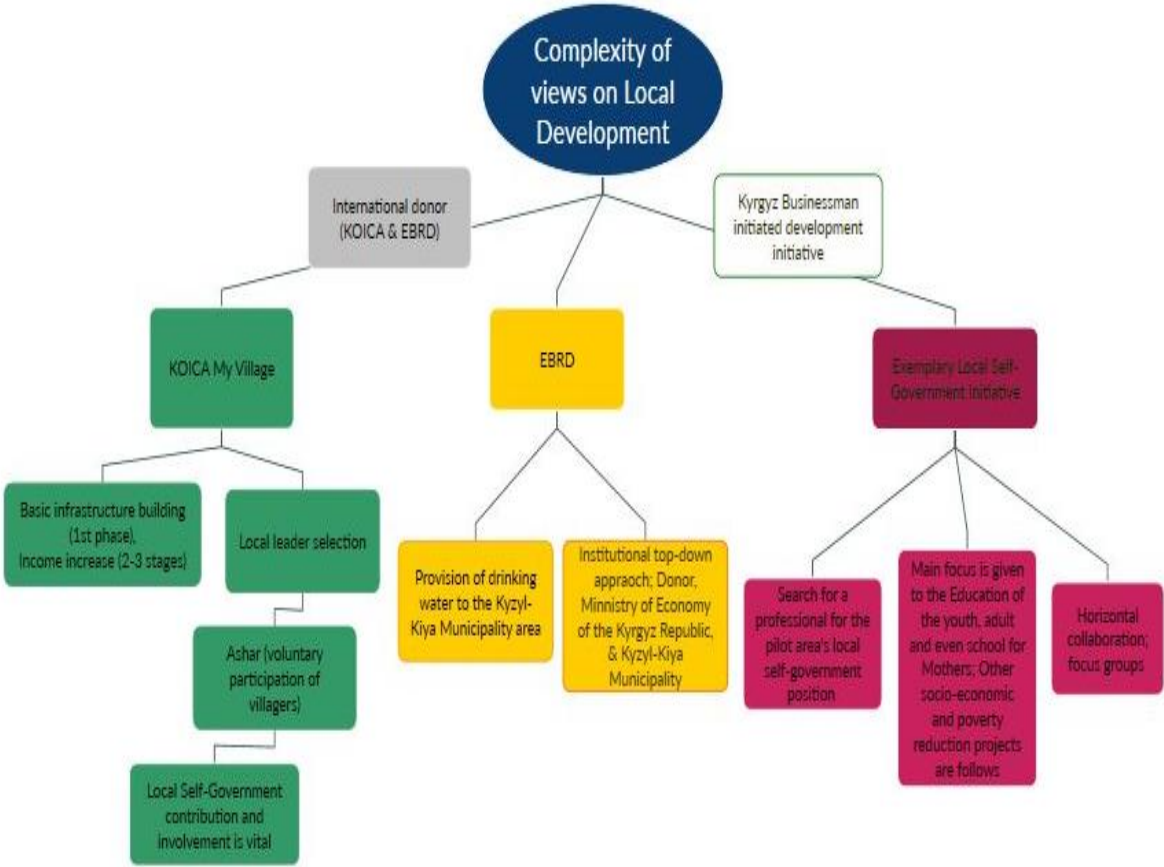
Indicator	KOICA My Village Initiative	EBRD Drinking Water project	Exemplary Local Self-Government Initiative
Objectives	Improving the lifestyles of rural residents of Kyrgyzstan	Improving the life and health of the population through the modernization of water supply and sanitation services	Improving villagers' quality of life and the activities of Bel local self-government
Project initiation	A bilateral agreement between the Republic of Korea and the Kyrgyz Republic	A bilateral agreement between European Union and the Kyrgyz Republic	At the request of the local authorities of Bel territory of the southern part of Kyrgyzstan
Critical stakeholders	Donor (foreign NGO or KOICA), Government institutions (GAMSUMO from central & <i>Ayil Ökmötü</i> / LSG from local), Local Kyrgyz and Uzbek Saemaul Leaders, including residents of pilot areas	Donor (foreign NGO or EBRD), Ministry of Economy and Finance from central, Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality from a local level and its departments	Donor (Kyrgyz businessperson), <i>Ayil Ökmötü</i> , LSG, Focus groups members and Villagers
Roles of local development stakeholders'	Government institution (coordinator), International NGO (investor), LSG & Community/villagers (executors & beneficiaries)	Government institution (implementor), International NGO (investor & lender), Community/municipality residents (beneficiaries & debt payors for the utility)	Local self-government (local level coordinator), Private sector/businessman (initiator & investor), Community/villagers (executors & beneficiaries)
Cooperation mechanism	A combination of vertical and horizontal collaboration exists. <i>Ashar</i> , the traditional voluntary participation		Collaboration with project executors happens through the established different focus groups. However,

	<p>method, played a crucial role in the first infrastructure-building phase, only in the first phase of the KOICA My Village project in Kyrgyzstan. The inhabitants of the pilot areas have indeed participated and cooperated through the <i>Ashar</i> method.</p>	<p>Hierarchical (top-down)</p>	<p>communication with a businessman occurs through social media (<i>Telegram</i>) <i>Telegram</i> is an online platform for all Exemplary local self-government project participants to exchange feedback and receive information from each other and the initiator (businessman).</p>
<p>Local development scheme</p>	<p>The combination of vertical and horizontal collaborative scheme, where <i>Aiyl Ökmötü</i>, LSG, a local Kyrgyz and Uzbek Saemaul leader, and ordinary participants work together</p>	<p>Institutional top-down</p>	<p>Horizontal</p>
<p>Communication with investors</p>	<p>Through selected leaders & <i>WhatsApp</i> social media</p>	<p>Through Mayor's Office and responsible Municipal departments</p>	<p>Focus groups leaders, face-to-face and online communication through <i>Telegram</i></p>
<p>Investment scheme</p>	<p>A grant from a donor, an in-kind contribution from pilot area residents, and a local self-government contribution. Besides, migrants also contributed to the KOICA My Village project.</p>	<p>Grant & loan</p>	<p>A grant from a businessperson, local self-government contribution and in-kind contribution of residents</p>
<p>Scope and scale</p>	<p>Thirty pilot villages of the three regions: Batken, Osh, and Chuy, Kyrgyzstan</p>	<p>Only one Municipality of the Batken region, Kyrgyzstan</p>	<p>Only one, Bel local self-government from Osh region, Kyrgyzstan</p>

Beneficiary	From 35,000 rural residents ~ up to 100,000	56,000 ~ 100,000 residents	13,527 Bel LSG residents
-------------	---	----------------------------	--------------------------

Source: author’s research

Figure 13 – The complexity of local development perspectives



Source: obtained through NVivo 12 Pro mapping tool

7. Summary and Conclusion

7.1 Summary

The Korean Saemaul Undong model has numerous features that make it an effective intervention. It requires the third-world countries benefiting from it to look at and adapt it based on their country's context. However, the beneficiary country should know that the Korean government intensively supported Saemaul Undong, not to mention the personal influence of the late President Park Chung-Hee. A village serves as the strategic unit of community action based on the political will for rural and community development at the local level. Korea's industrialization and export-oriented economies allowed Saemaul Undong to modernize rural areas and villages. In Saemaul Undong's decade (1970-1979), stable investment and political climate led to positive changes in rural areas and people's lives. As a result of government intervention, the Korean Saemaul Undong model opened the possibility of bottom-up development. Another critical characteristic of Korean culture is its cooperative spirit, closely related to Confucian values. Diligence in serving, unselfishness, and social conscience was incorporated from Confucian values into Saemaul Undong's philosophy.

The field study on the Kyrgyz version of Saemaul Undong, this research study's empirical part found that Kyrgyzstan, as a third-world beneficiary country, benefited from the Korean Saemaul Undong. Threefold investment in a single pilot village within three years is a sound investment for Kyrgyzstan's selected pilot regions (*oblast*) and its local development. The local self-governments, which have received state subsidies for over twenty years, particularly benefited from Korean Saemaul Undong grant assistance. The residents of these pilot villages have also benefited greatly. If we see the implemented projects (see Table 12), all infrastructure-building projects contribute to those areas' well-being. The first stage paved the path for economic development by creating conditions for income-increase projects in the second and third stages of the KOICA-funded My Village project.

The lesson learned from the Korean Saemaul Undong application in Kyrgyzstan is nurturing "local leaders." They contributed significantly to changing their pilot areas for better living areas with the infrastructure and other projects under the flagship Korean Saemaul Undong in Kyrgyzstan. Local action linked by local (village) leaders in the Korean Saemaul Undong model

in Kyrgyzstan. The voluntary participation or *Ashar* method is a handy mechanism but not crucial in the KOICA My Village Initiative. Furthermore, involving the local self-government as a critical local stakeholder has been instrumental in building their human capacity to develop further their business plan projects and their educational capacity through training and seminars in Korea and Kyrgyzstan.

The LEADER-type project in Kyrgyzstan is absent, and conducting field research on the EU-led projects in Kyrgyzstan was difficult. The only option was to reach the EBRD water project through personal networks. Our empirical study highlights that the EBRD lacks local action; it is a top-down institutional solution for water provision, a vital ingredient for the local development in the Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality in Kyrgyzstan. The lesson learned from the EBRD water project is the “grants-and-loan scheme.” The grant-and-loan scheme is an appropriate method for ensuring accountability for international donor projects, enabling the Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality to be held accountable for accomplishing these projects.

Exemplary local self-government field research shows that local self-government is one of the key players in local development. Therefore, the businessman started searching for a “professional candidate” for the pilot Bel territory, south Kyrgyzstan. The lesson learned from the Exemplary local self-government initiative in the Bel territory is a “search for a competent leader for the position of Bel LSG.” Second, to establish educational facilities and invest in the human capital (youth of that area). Another critical element that we want to emphasize is networking. As an initiator, within the framework of the Exemplary local self-government project, the businessman has reached out to talented youth born in the Bel and Borbash areas (pilot villages) of Kyrgyzstan and abroad. Due to the well-coordinated networking, European volunteers have visited the Bel territory for the first time to teach the English language there. The project has received positive feedback from the people in these pilot areas. Many were willing to accept volunteers into the Bel territory. The villagers provided housing and food free of charge.

The third locally led case study gives hope for future local development projects in Kyrgyzstan, being an Example to other Kyrgyzstan’s LSG. Despite the slow development and difficulties in funding local development initiatives in Kyrgyzstan, the third (domestic) field study has identified new ways to drive development at the local level. As we have studied earlier, a new understanding of the competencies needed for local development lies in the absence of professional personnel in

the LSG sector. Moreover, it is not on a grant or loan basis, although the initiator has contributed significantly to his home village. Although the “invited” candidate only spent a brief period (one year and four months) in Bel territory, he completed several projects successfully. As one of the local deputies in the Bel LSG mentioned, the rotation of talented local self-government professionals is another critical factor of local development in Kyrgyzstan. Further, this study gives hope for the designed *Tripartite Stakeholders Model*, built on EU LEADER and Korean Saemaul Undong's core principles, to promote local development in Kyrgyzstan.

The following 7.2 sub-section discusses *Tripartite Stakeholders Model* and concludes this research study.

7.2 Conclusion

Tripartite Stakeholders Model for local development in Kyrgyzstan

The field research is interesting in understanding and exploring international and domestic donors' approaches to developing locally in third-world countries like Kyrgyzstan. In every case study, the critical actors are present and active but differ. For example, in KOICA My Village Initiative, the private (business) sector is missing. The EBRD case is purely institutional. The business sector and civil society are excluded. Although our domestic Exemplary Bel local self-government has all desired critical local stakeholders such as local government, private sector, and community, the absence of “local” entrepreneurs is evident. Developing the business sector is vital for the local development foundation in Kyrgyzstan. In addition, the rotation of the best professionals into the local government implies “trust” and “human capital” issues. “An invited candidate” for the head of the Bel local self-government position from the northern part of Kyrgyzstan by the deal of businessperson proves that professional managers with novel local development ideas are needed in the first place. Then creating the condition for local development, such as infrastructure building, increasing income follows. An initiator of the domestic field study stresses that “*if the man or woman can lead the community and improve the economy of his home village Bel, he can even attract professionals from Africa.*” His statement about Africa is rhetoric, implying that professionals should be attracted to the local self-government in Kyrgyzstan.

The local development phenomenon is still a developing concept in Kyrgyzstan; it needs investment in human capital, especially in creating local entrepreneurs embedded in the local territory. Another key factor is establishing a partnership with a critical local development stakeholder. Collaboration should build on mutual interest, and partnership should be encouraged instead of the tradition of cooperation (*Ashar* method). Even though the traditional way of cooperation and participation (*Ashar*) is not the best alternative in the 21st century, it can still be handy in remote areas with a scarce population due to the high migration situation in Kyrgyzstan. This study considers that it is a time to think about collaboration through a partnership with the key local stakeholders, and that is what Kyrgyzstan needs today regarding developing locally.

Footnotes

- [1] Remittances are personal transfers: cash and in-kind compensation, workers' seasonal and other short-term work income.
- [2] Detailed information about the Eurasian Economic Union can be found on the official website <http://www.eaeunion.org/?lang=en#about>.
- [3] With the passage of the new constitution in 2010, most formal powers were delegated to Parliament (*Zhogorku Kenesh*). However, the President continued to play a crucial role in formulating foreign and domestic policy decisions. On 10 January 2021, Kyrgyzstan voted to change the system of government from parliamentary to presidential in parallel with the presidential elections, reversing the transition to a parliamentary system following the 2010 popular revolution, in which most executive power rests with the prime minister. On January 10, 2021, Kyrgyz voters supported the presidential governance model.
- [4] Information on the population in regions, districts, and villages can be found on the official website of the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic <http://stat.kg/kg/statistics/naselenie/>.
- [5] South Korea is officially named the Republic of Korea.
- [6] The author studied International Community Development and Saemaul Undong (Master Studies) at Yeungnam University, Republic of Korea.
- [7] Interview, October 28, 2021. The interview was conducted with Finta Istvan, President of the Association of LEADER Organizations in Hungary. The interview was conducted about the role of the LEADER programme and the implementation of LEADER projects in Hungary.
- [8] Park Jin-Hwan served as a special assistant to the late President Park Chung-Hee on economic affairs and Saemaul Undong.
- [9] In 2010 Korea changed its national status from a recipient to a donor, and Saemaul Undong became a Korean type of Official Development Assistance (ODA).
- [10] “Home Affairs” was the “Ministry of Home Affairs in the 1970s —currently, the “Ministry of the Interior and Safety” of the Republic of Korea.
- [11] In 2013, UNESCO added Saemaul Undong to the Memory of the World Register. Available at: [\http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/memory-of-the-

- world/register/full-list-of-registered-heritage/registered-heritage-page-1/archives-of-saemaul-undong-new-community-movement/] (accessed June 26, 2021).
- [12] Korea Saemaul Undong Center. Saemaul Projects Overseas - Saemaul Undong Model Village Development Status. Available at: [https://www.saemaul.or.kr/eng/sub/globalSMU/overseas.php] (accessed June 28, 2021).
- [13] Decree of the Kyrgyz Republic President of January 10, 2018, No. 2 "On declaring 2018 the Year of Regional Development."
- [14] Decree of the President of Kyrgyzstan of January 11, 2019, No. 1 "On declaring 2019 as the Year of Regional Development and Digitalization of the Country."
- [15] Decree of the Kyrgyz Republic President of January 8, 2020, No. 1 "On declaring 2020 the Year of Regional Development, Digitalization of the Country and Support for Children."
- [16] Data provided by the International Bureau of Korea Saemaul Undong Center trainee's database (personal communication, May 6, 2021).
- [17] In March 2016, I was invited by KOICA Kyrgyzstan as a local expert on Saemaul Undong's studies in the pilot areas of Kyrgyzstan.
- [18] The outgoing official letter №K16-163 of September 1, 2016 (accessed on September 2, 2016) of the Ministry of Economy of the Kyrgyz Republic.
- [19] Invited as an alum of the Park Chung Hee School of Policy and Saemaul (PSPS), Yeungnam University, Korea (2014 ~ 2016). Presented the "Application of Saemaul Undong in the context of Kyrgyzstan" at the "Menin Ayilym - My Village project" opening ceremony in the residence of Ala-Archa, Kyrgyzstan.
- [20] Personal meeting with GAMSUMO representative in Issyk-Kul oblast on December 18, 2020. I asked permission to use his name and surname in the research work.
- [21] The interview was conducted with the 1st Vice Mayor, A. Gaparov, in the Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality in the spring of 2021.
- [22] The businessman is one of the country's wealthiest citizens, owning several five-star hotels and recreational centers in Kyrgyzstan.
- [23] "A list of the hundred (100) wealthiest persons in Kyrgyzstan" obtained <https://ruh.kg/2020/01/25/kyrgyzstandagyi-e-bay-100-chinovnikti-bilip-alyi-yiz-2013-zhyilkyi-k-rs-tk-ch/>.

[24] I have been invited to participate as a guest at the "First Year Report Conference" regarding Exemplary local self-government initiatives activities and challenges in Kyrgyzstan's Bel area. The conference was held in the Osh region, in one of the resort areas, owned by a businessperson/initiator of the domestic field research.

[25] Aizada has permitted me to use her name in this research study.

References

- Aitymbetov, S. (2006). Emigrant remittances: Impact on economic development of Kyrgyzstan. *Kyrgyzstan, The Economic Policy Institute*.
- Anderson, J. (1999). *Kyrgyzstan: Central Asia's Island of Democracy?* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315079325>
- Balogh, N. & E. Á. (2015). *Needle in a haystack: about the LEADER programme in Hungary* (Łukasz Sykała, Magdalena Dej, & Oskar Wolski, Eds.). Institute of Urban Development.
- Bernadett, C., & Imre, K. (2015). *The LEADER Programme in Hungary–Bottom-up Development with Top-down Control? 1 In Evaluating the European approach to rural development* (Leo Granberg & Kjell Andersson, Eds.; (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315581194>.
- Blakely, E. J., & Bradshaw, T. K. (2002). *Planning local economic development*. Sage.
- Bolesta, Andrzej (2007). "China As a Developmental State." *Montenegrin Journal of Economics*, 3, (5), 105-111.
- Brandt, Vincent S. (1981). "Value and Attitude Change and the Saemaul Movement." Lee Man-Gap (ed.), *Toward a New Community*, pp. 483-507. Seoul: Institute of Saemaul Undong Studies, Seoul National University.
- Bumbalova, M., Takáč, I., Tvrdoňová, J., Valach, M. (2016). "Are Stakeholders in Slovakia ready for community-led local development?" Case study findings. *European Countryside*, 160-174.
- CEC. (2003). "Ex-post evaluation of the Community Initiative Leader II." Final report. Vienna: Austrian Institute for Regional Studies and Spatial Planning.
- Chevalier P., Dedeire M., Kovacs D., and Pola, P. (2012). "The implementation of the Leader programme in Central Europe: between a local development approach and political

- instrumentalization.” Discussion papers #89, Institute of Regional Studies, Research centre for Economic and Regional Studies Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Pecs, Hungary, 5-30.
- Chevalier P., Mačiulyté J., Razafimahefa L., Dedeire M. (2017). “The LEADER programme as a model of institutional transfer: learning from its local implementation in France and Lithuania.” *European Countryside*, 317-341.
- Choi Oe-Chool (2013). “Sharing Saemaul Undong with the global village.” Newspaper column about Saemaul Undong. *The Korea Herald*. Published September 15, 2013.
- Choi Oe-Chool (2014). “Towards a Safer and Happier World.” Park Chung Hee Saemaul Undong Institute, Yeungnam University, Gyeongsangbuk-do, Republic of Korea, 4-87.
- Choi Oe-Chool (2018). “Saemaul Development and Global Saemaul Undong for Community Development: perspectives from around the globe.” Sue Kenny, Brian McGrath, and Rhonda Philips (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Community Development*, New York, 73-86.
- Choi, O. C. (2017). “The Role of Community-Based Organizations: The Case of the Saemaul Undong Women’s Club.” In *Handbook of Community Well-Being Research*, 455-472, Springer, Dordrecht.
- Chung Kap Jin (2009). “Experience and Lessons from Korea’s Saemaul Undong in the 1970s.” Seoul: Korea Development Institute KDI, 23-110.
- Cochrane, Allan (2011). “Alternative approaches to local and regional development.” Pike, A., Rodriguez-Pose, A., Tomaney, J. (eds.), *Handbook of local and regional development*, London: Routledge, 97-105.
- Convey I., Soane I., Dutson T., Shaw H. (2010). “Mainstreaming Leader Delivery of RDR in Cumbria: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.” *Socologia Ruralis*, 50 (4), 370--391.
- Csurgó, B., & Kovách, I. (2016). *The LEADER Programme in Hungary—Bottom-up Development with Top-down Control? 1. Evaluating the European approach to rural development*, Routledge, 53-77.
- Dax, T., and Oedl-Wieser, T. (2016). “Rural innovation activities as a means for changing development perspectives—An assessment of more than two decades of promoting LEADER initiatives across the European Union.” *Studies in Agricultural Economics*, 118 (1316-2016-102857), 30-37.
- Declaration, C. (1996). “The Cork Declaration-A living countryside.” In *The European conference*

on rural development, 7-9.

Decree of the Kyrgyz Republic President of January 10, 2018, No. 2 “On declaring 2018 the Year of Regional Development.”

Decree of the Kyrgyz Republic President of January 11, 2019, No. 1 “On declaring 2019 as the Year of Regional Development and Digitalization of the Country.”

Decree of the Kyrgyz Republic President of January 8, 2020, No. 1 “On declaring 2020 the Year of Regional Development, Digitalization of the Country and Support for Children.”

Department of External Migration under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic (2022). “Statistics.” Retrieved from: <http://ssm.gov.kg/en/main/page/39/0>.

Dhakal, K. (2022). NVivo. In *Journal of the Medical Library Association* (Vol. 110, Issue 2, pp. 270–272). Medical Library Association. <https://doi.org/10.5195/jmla.2022.1271>

Doucette, J., & Müller, A. R. (2016). “Exporting the Saemaul spirit: South Korea’s Knowledge Sharing Program and the ‘rendering technical’ of Korean development.” *Geoforum*, (75), 29-39.

Douglass, M. (2014). “The Saemaul Undong in Historical Perspective and in the Contemporary World.” In: Yi, I., Mkandawire, T. (eds) *Learning from the South Korean Developmental Success. Social Policy in a Development Context*. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 136-171.

Dubois, H. F., & Fattore, G. (2009). “Definitions and typologies in public administration research: the case of decentralization.” *International Journal of Public Administration*, 32(8), 704-727.

Earle, L., Fozilhujaev, B., Tashbaeva, Ch., Djamankulova, K. (2004). “Community development in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan.” Occasional papers series №:40, INTRAC, England, 1-64.

Eom, Seok-Jin (2011a). “The Rural Saemaul Undong Revisited from the Perspective of Good Governance.” *The Korean Journal of Policy Studies*, 26(2), 17-43.

Eom, Seok-Jin (2011b). “Synergy between State and Rural Society for Development: An Analysis of the Governance System of the Rural Saemaul Undong in Korea.” *Korea Observer*, 42 (4), pp. 583-620.

Ergeshbayev, U. (2006). Trends and development of migration processes in Kyrgyzstan. *Migration perspectives in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Planning and managing labor migration*, 45-54.

- Esparcia, J., Escribano, J., and Buciega, A. (2015). "A Perspective of LEADER Method in Spain Based on the Analysis of Local Action Groups." Granberg, L., Andersson, K., Kovach, I. (eds.), *Evaluating the European Approach to Rural Development*, Routledge, 33-53.
- European Commission (2006). "The LEADER approach, a basic guide." Brussel, 5-20.
- European External Action Service (2014). "Multi-Annual Indicative Programme for the Kyrgyz Republic 2014-2020." [online]. Available from: https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/mip-2014-2020-kyrgyzstan-20140814_en.pdf.
- Evans, P. (1995). *Embedded Autonomy: State and Industrial Transformation*, Chichester, Princeton University Press.
- Furmankiewicz, M., & Macken-Walsh, Á. (2016a). Government within governance? Polish rural development partnerships through the lens of functional representation. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 46, 12-22.
- Furmankiewicz, M., Janc, K., & Macken-Walsh, Á. (2016b). The impact of EU governance and rural development policy on the development of the third sector in rural Poland: A nation-wide analysis. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 43, 225-234.
- Furmankiewicz, M., Janc, K., & Macken-Walsh, Á. (2021). "Implementation of the EU LEADER programme at member-state level: Written and unwritten rules of local project selection in rural Poland." *Journal of Rural Studies*, (86), 357-365.
- Goh Kun (2010). "Saemaul (New Village) Undong in Korea." Saemaul Undong 40th Anniversary International Symposium, Park Chung Hee Saemaul Undong Institute, Yeungnam University, Gyeongsangbuk-do, Republic of Korea, 29-47.
- Government - Ministry of Agriculture - News. (n.d.). Retrieved March 31, 2023, from <https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/en/ministry-of-agriculture/news/borderless-cooperation-under-the-leader-programme>
- Granberg, L., Andersson, K., and Kovách, I. (2015). "Introduction: LEADER as an experiment in grass-roots democracy." *Evaluating the European Approach to Rural Development*, Routledge, 1-12.
- Grävingholt, J., Doerr, B., Meissner, K., Pletziger, S., Rümker, J. V., & Weikert, J. (2006). *Strengthening participation through decentralisation: Findings on local economic development in Kyrgyzstan* (16), 144, DEU.

- Han Do Hyun (2012). “The Successful Cases of the Korea’s Saemaul Undong (New Community Movement).” Korea Development Institute, Ministry of Strategy and Finance, Republic of Korea, 20-24.
- Helmsing, A. H. J. (2003). “Local economic development: New generations of actors, policies, and instruments for Africa.” *Public Administration and Development: The International Journal of Management Research and Practice*, 23(1), 67-76.
- Hungary | The European Network for Rural Development (ENRD). (n.d.). Retrieved March 15, 2023, from https://enrd.ec.europa.eu/country/hungary_en
- Hyun-Chin, L., & Jin-Ho, J. (2006). Between neoliberalism and democracy: The transformation of the developmental state in South Korea. *Development and society*, 35(1), 1-28.
- Kákai, L., & Kovács, I. P. (2023). Cui prodest? Why local governance came to a deadlock in Hungary. *Politics in Central Europe*, 19(1), 21–42. <https://doi.org/10.2478/pce-2023-0002>
- Kovach, I. (2000). “LEADER, a new social order, and the Central-and East-European Countries. *Sociologia ruralis*, 40(2), 181-190.
- Kudaibergenova, D. T. (2016). Eurasian Economic Union integration in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. *European Politics and Society*, 17(1), 97-112.
- Kumar, R. R., Stauvermann, P. J., Patel, A., & Prasad, S. (2018). The effect of remittances on economic growth in Kyrgyzstan and Macedonia: Accounting for financial development. *International Migration*, 56(1), 95-126. <https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12372>
- Kurmanalieva, G. (2018). Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan: Endless border conflicts. *L’Europe en formation*, (1), 121-130.
- Kwon, Huck Ju (2010). “Implications of Korea’s Saemaul Undong for International Development Policy: A Structural Perspective.” *The Korean Journal of Policy Studies*, Seoul National University, 25(3), 87-100.
- Lim, K. S. (2011). How to cultivate and Develop Global Saemaul Undong Model Village. *한국지역개발학회지*, 23(4), 89-105.
- Lukesch, Robert (2018). “LEADER RELOADED.” Keynote paper, the ELARD conference on the heartbeat of the LEADER community, 26-28 September, pp. 1-23. Available from: <http://elard.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/I20-20181009XLEADERXRELOADEDXPAPERXROBERTXLUKESCH.pdf>.

- Marat, E. (2012). *Kyrgyzstan: a Parliamentary system Based on inter-elite Consensus, Demokratizatsiya*, 20(4). <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/10/>
- Marquardt, D., Möllers, J., and Buchenrieder, G. (2012). "Social networks and rural development: LEADER in Romania." *Sociologia Ruralis*, 52(4), 398-431
- Maurel, M. C. (2008). Local development stakeholders and the European model: learning the leader approach in the new member states. *Sociologický časopis/Czech Sociological Review*, 44(03), 511-529.
- Maurel, M. C. (2013). "Transferring the LEADER Model to New Member States: Success or Failure?" Kovacs I.P., Scott J., Gal, Z. (eds.), *Territorial Cohesion in Europe, for the 70th Anniversary of the Transdanubian Research Institute*, 391-401.
- Ministry of Finance, Kyrgyz Republic (2021). "Republican budget of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2021 and forecast for 2022." [online]. Available from: <https://gb.minfin.kg/>.
- Mostafa, G., and Mahmood, M. (2018). Eurasian Economic Union: Evolution, challenges and possible future directions. *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, 9(2), 163-172. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euras.2018.05.001>
- Murzakulova, A. (2020). Rural Migration in Kyrgyzstan: Drivers, Impact and Governance. *Research Paper*, (7).
- Musaeva, A. (2020). "Alternatives for Local Economic Development for the Kyrgyz Republic." *Journal of Saemaology*, 5(2), 1-37. <https://doi.org/10.22963/jos.5.2.202012.1>
- Musaeva, A. (2021). "Case study of Saemaul Undong application as a model of rural development in Kyrgyzstan." *Journal of Saemaology*, 6(2), 95-124. <https://doi.org/10.22963/jos.6.2.202112.95>
- My Village Project 2019-2020, The First Year Report. Good Neighbors International, 2/1 Molodaya Gvardia, Bishkek, [online]. Available from: <http://www.goodneighbors.kg/en/>.
- National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic (2019). Classifications - System of the designation of objects of administrative-territorial and territorial units." [online]. Available from: <http://stat.kg/en/klassifikatory/>.
- National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic (2021). Population stick and flow, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic. [online]. Available from: <http://www.stat.kg/en/opendata/category/316/>.

- Navarro, F. A., Woods, M., & Cejudo, E. (2016). The LEADER initiative has been a victim of its own success. The decline of the bottom-up approach in rural development programmes. The cases of Wales and Andalusia." *Sociologia Ruralis*, 56(2), 270-288.
- Pálné Kovács, I. (2015a). "Good Governance and Decentralization." University of Pécs: Department of Political Studies, 1-74.
- Pálné Kovács, I. (2015b). "Local knowledge based development: What can local governments do for it." *Region: Ekonomika I Sociologija*, 4 (88), 261-277.
- Pálné Kovács, I. (2021). Politics Without Meso-Level? No Politics at the Meso? *Frontiers in Political Science*, 3. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2021.694260>
- Park Jin Hwan (1998). "The Saemaul Movement: Korea's Approach to Rural Modernization in 1970s." Seoul: Korea Rural Economic Institute KREI, 1-219.
- Park Seung Woo and Choi Oe-Chool (2016). "Some Controversial Issues in Saemaul Undong in Korea and Their Implications for Its Transferability." *Journal of Saemaulogy*, 1(1),5-30.
- Park, Sooyoung (2009). Analysis of Saemaul Undong: A Korean Rural Development programme in the 1970s. *Asia-Pacific Development Journal*, 16(2), 113-140.
- Patkós, C. (2018). "Specialties in the Institutionalization of Hungarian Leader Local Action Groups." *European Countryside*, 10(1), 89-106. <https://doi.org/10.2478/euco-2018-0006>
- Pike, A., Rodríguez-Pose, A., & Tomaney, J. (2007). What kind of local and regional development and for whom? *Regional studies*, 41(9), 1253-1269. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343400701543355>
- Pike, A., Rodríguez-Pose, A., & Tomaney, J. (Eds.). (2011). *Handbook of local and regional development* (No. DEMO-BOOK-2017-055). London: Routledge.
- Pirie, I. (2007). *The Korean Developmental State: From dirigisme to neo-liberalism*. Routledge. <http://doi.org/10.4324/9780203944653>
- Ray, C. (2000). "The EU LEADER programme: rural development laboratory." *Sociologia ruralis*, 40(2), 163-171.
- Reed, Edward P. (2010). "Is Saemaul Undong a Model for Developing Countries Today?" *Anniversary of Saemaul Undong Hosted by the Korea Saemaul Undong Center*, 1-13.
- Rho, Wha-Joon (2014). "Triple Helix for Social Innovation: The Saemaul Undong for Eradicating Poverty." *Journal of Contemporary Eastern Asia*, 13 (1), 39-55.

- Rodríguez-Pose, A., & Tijmstra, S. A. (2007). Local economic development in sub-Saharan Africa. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 25(4), 516-536.
- Ruszkai, C., & Kovacs, T. (2013). “The Community Initiative LEADER I and the implementation and results of the Hungarian Pilot LEADER programme in rural development.” *Bulletin of Geography. Socio-economic Series*, Torun: Nicolaus Copernicus University Press, 87-97. <https://doi.org/10.2478/bog-2013-0006>
- Schmidt, M., & Sagynbekova, L. (2008). Migration past and present: changing patterns in Kyrgyzstan. *Central Asian Survey*, 27(2), 111-127.
- Staic, L. G., & Vladu, M. (2020). “Studies concerning the evolution of the LEADER Approach, part of the Common Agricultural Policy, as a support for sustainable development of the rural area.” *Studies*, (20), 495-500.
- Swinburn, G., Goga, S., & Murphy, F. (2006). Local economic development: a primer developing and implementing local economic development strategies and action plans. *World Bank*.
- Thieme, S. (2014). Coming home? Patterns and characteristics of return migration in Kyrgyzstan. *International Migration*, 52(5), 127-143.
- Tiulegenov, M. (2015). A Certain Path to an Uncertain Future Kyrgyzstan’s Accession to the Customs Union / Eurasian Economic Union. FES International Policy Analysis. The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Foundation. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id-moe/11252-20150429>
- Tödting, Franz (2011). “Endogenous approaches to local and regional development policy.” Pike, A., Rodríguez-Pose, A., Tomaney, J. (eds.), *Handbook of local and regional development*, London: Routledge, 333-344.
- Van de Poele, Laurent (2015). “Rural Development from the grassroots: twenty years of the EU LEADER Approach.” *Book Series: Research in Rural Sociology and Development*, (22) 195-207. Emerald Group Publishing Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.1108/S1057-192220150000022007>
- Wade, R. H. (2018), The developmental state: Dead or Alive? *Developmental and Change*, 49 (2) 518-546. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12381>
- Wong, J. (2004). The adaptive developmental state in East Asia. *Journal of East Asian Studies*, 4(3), 345-362. <https://doi:10.1017/S1598240800006007>

- Woo-Cumings, M. (1999). "Introduction," in the *Developmental State*. Woo-Cumings, M. (ed.), Cornell University Press, United States of America, pp. 1.
- World Bank (2020a). "Personal remittances received (% of GDP) the Kyrgyz Republic." [online]. Retrieved from: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?locations=KG>.
- World Bank (2020b). "The World Bank in the Republic of Korea, Country Context." [online]. Available from: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/korea>.
- World Bank Group (2021a). "Kyrgyz Republic Country Program Evaluation." World Bank Publications.
- World Bank Group (2021b). "Kyrgyz Republic Country Program Evaluation." Approach Paper, World Bank Publications. Available from: https://ieg.worldbankgroup.org/sites/default/files/Data/reports/ap_kyrgyzrepcpe.pdf.
- Yang, Y. (2017). "Saemaul Undong Revisited: A Case of State–Society Dynamics in Social Capital Mobilisation, Focusing on the Role of Local Leaders in South Korea of the 1970s." *Journal of International Development*, 29 (7), 993-1010.
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Appendixes

Appendix A

Title: Alternatives for Local Economic Development for the Kyrgyz Republic

Dear Respondent, I am Aida Musaeva, a 3rd-year doctoral student in Regional Policy and Economics at the Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Pécs, Hungary. This semi-structured questionnaire is part of my Doctoral dissertation. The main goal of our study is to offer alternatives for Local Economic Development (LED) for the Kyrgyz Republic. The Republic of Korea's Saemaul Undong (New Village Development) model in the Kyrgyz Republic has been selected for this study. Therefore, we would like to know your opinion on the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) funded "Menin Ayilym – My Village" project in your Ayil Ökmötü. Your views are essential in our field of study. We appreciate your in-kind contribution.

1. How was your Municipality / Ayil Ökmötü selected for the KOICA My Village project?

- Kyrgyz Republic / Korea Republic Saemaul leader Seminar
- GAMSUMO (Government Agency for local self-government and interethnic relations under the Kyrgyz Government)
- Open application
- Hidden bargaining
- Being selected in advance by government authorities
- Information and demand from below (Ayil Ökmötü)
- Social contacts
- Other (please specify): _____

2. What did you primarily look for when applying to the My Village?

- Investment opportunities
- Employment opportunities
- Poverty reduction
- Business opportunities

- Study and short training in the Republic of Korea
- Infrastructure improvement
- Provision of drinking water to the villages
- ICT or the application of modern technologies to the agricultural sector
- Other (please specify): _____

3. What requirements were for selecting your Ayil Ökmötü for the My Village project?

(identification prerequisites of the donors (example: KOICA – Korea International Cooperation Agency and others)

4. How much investment did your Ayil Ökmötü receive under the My Village project?
(Identifying financial incentives)

5. How many villages participate in the My Village project in your Ayil Ökmötü?
(Identifying scale of My Village)

6. What has been done under the My Village project?

- Expansion of Village Roads (km)
- Establishment of Farm Roads (km)
- Building Small Bridges
- Building Village Halls
- Building Store Houses
- Housing Improvement
- Community Resettlement
- Installing Sewage Systems (km)
- Mini-Factories
- Other (please specify): _____

7. Which of the following best describes the My Village emphasis in your local area?

- My Village has increased emphasis on the positive mindset change of villagers
- My Village has improved the village infrastructure
- My Village has enhanced the village agricultural sector
- Nothing has happened
- Other (please specify): _____

8. Is *Ashar* (traditional voluntary participation method) suitable for the Korean-led My Village project?

- Yes (for example):

- No (reasons):

9. Who would participate in the discussion and decision-making process of the My Village project in your Ayil Ökmötü?

- Myself
- My spouse
- I, together with my spouse
- My parents
- My parents-in-law
- All male household members
- All-female household members
- Do not know
- Nobody

10. Is the private (local business) sector included in the My Village project?

Yes (for example):

No (reasons):

11. Overall, how many local inhabitants have participated so far in the My Village project in your village? Is participation through 'Ashar'?

12. Please identify which of the following you consider the most critical Local Economic Development priorities in your community (Choose only THREE)

- Climate change and the environment
- Extractive Industries
- Fragility, Conflict, and Violence
- Trade
- Communication Technologies and Information
- Education
- Social Protection
- Drinking water
- Irrigation
- Transport
- Food and Agriculture
- Governance and Anti-Corruption
- Rural development
- Energy
- Public-Private Partnerships

- Health
- Other (please specify): _____

13. Which institution is the vital stakeholder for your Ayil Ökmötü for Local Economic Development?

	Important	Not important	Neutral
Foreign non-governmental organizations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Central Government (Kyrgyz Ökmötü)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Religious institution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kin and family ties	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Private sector (business)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Court	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Police	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kyrgyz non-governmental organizations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. Most people who live in this village can be trusted

- Strongly disagree
- Strongly agree
- Do not know

15. Local self-government can be trusted

- No trust at all
- A lot of trusts
- Do not know

16. Do you trust local entrepreneurs?

- No trust at all
- A lot of trusts
- Do not know
- In our village, there are no local entrepreneurs
- Other (please specify): _____

17. How likely would you cooperate with the private sector (business) in your local area?

- Very unlikely
- Rather likely
- Other (please specify): _____

18. How likely would you cooperate with the residents of your local area?

- Very unlikely
- Rather likely
- Other (please specify): _____

19. Overall, what do you think about the My Village project? How successful and sustainable is it?

These last questions are for classification purposes only. Your responses enable us to segment our findings better.

20. In what Ayil Ökmötü do you currently reside?

Name of Ayil Ökmötü: _____

21. How does the KOICA choose local Saemaul leaders in the pilot area? (How did you get elected as the Saemaul leader of my village?)

22. Which of the following best describes your professional position?

- Local self-government
- Private sector (Company, SME, Financial Institution)
- Civil society (NGOs, Community Organizations, Private Foundations, Faith-Based Groups, Youth Groups)
- Government institution (local, national)
- Academia, University, Research Institute
- Media
- Student
- Not Applicable / Decline to answer
- Independent / Freelance worker
- Other (please specify): _____

23. What is the highest certificate /diploma/ degree you have obtained?

- Secondary general high school education (11 years)
- Primary technical / Vocational schools
- University (bachelor's degree, certified diploma, master's degree)
- Kandidate nauk or Doctorate (equivalent to the Ph.D.)

24. What is your gender?

- Woman
 - Man

25. What is your age?

- 25 and under
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56 and above
- Decline to answer

26. How long have you lived in this village?

- More than five (5) years
- More than ten (10) years
- All my life
- Other (please specify): _____

If you would like to share other opinions, firsthand experiences, and plans for the “My Village” project in your village, you can add them here.

Thank you for taking part in our study – We appreciate your input.

Appendix B

Title: Alternatives for Local Economic Development for the Kyrgyz Republic

Dear Respondent, I am Aida Musaeva, a 3rd-year doctoral student in Regional Policy and Economics at the Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Pécs, Hungary. This semi-structured questionnaire is part of my Doctoral dissertation. The main goal of our study is to offer alternatives for Local Economic Development (LED) for the Kyrgyz Republic. The European Union's Rural Development model in the Kyrgyz Republic has been selected for this study. Therefore, we would like to know your opinion on the European Union's *Rural Development* projects in your municipality/ayil okmotu, which are being implemented by the European Union's (EU) International Organizations such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the German Development Agency (GIZ - Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit), and the French Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED). Your views are essential in our field of study.

We thank everyone for their contributions to the research study.

Questions:

1. How was Kyzyl-Kiya Municipality selected for the European Union's rural development project?

- GAMSUMO (Government Agency for local self-government and interethnic relations under the Kyrgyz Government)
- Non-Governmental Organization
- Open application
- Hidden bargaining
- Being selected in advance by government authorities
- Information and demand from below
- Social contacts
- Other (please specify): _____

2. What did you primarily look for when applying to the EU rural development project?

- Having an exact project plan
- Aim to learn
- Following the suggestion above
- Having a general development plan
- Having no idea about the scheme
- Other (please specify): _____

3. Is the EU-initiated Rural Development Project on a grant basis?

- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify): _____

4. What investment did your town/village receive under the EU rural development project?

- Received € 25,000 ~ € 50,000
- € 100,000 ~ € 250,000
- € 1,000,000 ~ € 5,000,000
- Other (please specify): _____

5. How many residents took part in the EU-led project in your Municipality?

- 10~100
- 100~500
- Other (please specify): _____

6. Are you using the traditional method of voluntary participation (Ashar) in the EU rural development project in your community?

- Yes
- No
- Other (please specify): _____

7. What has been done as part of the EU-led project?

- Expansion of Village Roads (km)
- Establishment of Farm Roads (km)
- Building Small Bridges
- Drinking water

- Installing Sewage Systems (km)
- Mini-Factories
- Other (please specify): _____

8. Are there entrepreneurs in your village/town involved in the EBRD project?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

9. How do you classify entrepreneurs?

- Owner of a small shop
- A person who employs at least five people
- Other (please specify): _____

10. Overall, how important is the EU rural development project in your area?

- Extremely important
- Somewhat important
- Neutral
- Somewhat not important
- Extremely not important

11. Please identify which of the following you consider the most critical local economic development priorities in your community (Choose only THREE)

- Climate change and the environment
- Extractive Industries
- Fragility, Conflict, and Violence
- Trade
- Communication Technologies and Information
- Education
- Social Protection
- Drinking water
- Irrigation
- Transport

- Food and Agriculture
- Governance and Anti-Corruption
- Rural development
- Energy
- Public-Private Partnerships
- Health
- Poverty reduction
- Job opportunities
- Migration
- Other (please specify): _____

12. Which institution is the vital stakeholder for your Municipality for local economic development (LED)?

	Important	Not important	Neutral
Foreign non-governmental organizations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Central Government (Kyrgyz Okmotu)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Religious institution	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kin and family ties	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Businessmen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Court	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Police	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Kyrgyz non-governmental organizations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

13. Most people who live in this community can be trusted.

- Yes
- No
- May be
- Other (please specify): _____

14. Are the Kyrgyz Government development programs necessary for your Municipality?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- Other (please specify): _____

15. How would you assess the Kyrgyz Government development programs' impact on your Municipality?

	1	2	3	4	5	
very bad	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	very good

16. Our local business leaders are trusted

- Yes
- No
- Local business leaders are absent in my area.
- Other (please specify): _____

17. How likely would you cooperate with the residents in your local area?

- Cooperation is possible through _____
- Cooperation is impossible due to the _____
- Other (please specify): _____

18. What do you think about the EU project in your region? Is it successful and sustainable?

- Yes, for example, _____

- No, because _____

These last questions are for classification purposes only. Your responses enable us to segment our findings better.

19. In what Municipality's administrative territory do you currently reside?

Name of Municipality/ Administrative district:

20. Which of the following best describes your professional position?

- Local self-government
- Private sector (Company, SME, Financial Institution)
- Civil society (NGOs, Community Organizations, Private Foundations, Faith-Based Groups, Youth Groups)
- Government institution (local, national)
- Academia, University, Research Institute
- Media
- Student
- Not Applicable / Decline to answer
- Other (please specify): _____

21. What is the highest certificate /diploma/ degree you have obtained?

- Secondary general high school education (11 years)
- Primary technical / Vocational schools

- University (bachelor's degree, certified diploma, master's degree)
- Kandidate nauk or equivalent to the PhD

22. What is your gender?

- Woman
- Man

23. What is your age?

- 25 and under
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56 and above
- Decline to answer

24. How long have you lived in this community?

- More than five years
- More than ten years
- All my life
- Other (please specify): _____

If you have additional information about the project, you can add it here

Thank you for taking part in our study – We appreciate your input.

Appendix C

Title: Alternatives for Local Economic Development for the Kyrgyz Republic

Dear Informant, I am Aida Musaeva, a 3rd-year doctoral student in Regional Policy and Economics at the Faculty of Business and Economics, University of Pécs, Hungary. This field research is part of my Doctoral dissertation. The main goal of my research is to offer alternatives for Local Development in the Kyrgyz Republic. Therefore, we want to learn more about your area's Exemplary Bel Local Self-Government Initiative. Your views and honest opinions are essential for this field of research. We thank everyone for their contributions to our research study.

Open-ended interview questions:

1. What was the inspiration behind the Exemplary local self-government initiative?
2. What was the purpose of inviting the head of Bel local self-government from northern Kyrgyzstan?
3. What was the response and acceptance of the local people and deputy leaders to the newly appointed head of the Bel local self-government?
4. What projects are implemented under the Exemplary local self-government initiative?
5. What funds are available to Bel's local self-government and its local development projects?
6. How does the businessperson communicate with the Exemplary local self-government Initiative participants?
7. Age, gender, educational background, profession, and village residence (5~10 years/lifetime).

The Exemplary local self-government is followed by additional information

Appendix D

The demographic background of the respondents and interviewees

KOICA My Village Initiative						
Res_ID	Pilot_region	Gender	Age	Education	Profession	Living in village
1	Batken	Man	36-45	University	Unemployed	All my life
2	Batken	Woman	36-45	University	High school	All my life
3	Batken	Man	36-45	University	Civil society (NGOs, Community Organizations, Private Foundations, Faith-Based Groups, Youth Groups)	All my life
4	Batken	Man	26-35	University	Civil society (NGOs, Community Organizations, Private Foundations, Faith-Based Groups, Youth Groups)	All my life
5	Batken	Woman	46-55	Vocational school	Independent worker	All my life
6	Batken	Man	26-35	Secondary high school	Civil society (NGOs, Community Organizations, Private Foundations, Faith-Based Groups, Youth Groups)	All my life
7	Batken	Man	26-35	Secondary high school	Civil society (NGOs, Community Organizations, Private Foundations, Faith-Based Groups, Youth Groups)	All my life
8	Batken	Woman	26-35	University	High School	All my life
9	Batken	Man	46-55	Vocational school	Farmer	All my life
10	Batken	Man	36-45	Vocational school	Civil society (NGOs, Community Organizations, Private Foundations, Faith-Based Groups, Youth Groups)	All my life
11	Batken	Man	36-45	University	Government institution (local, national)	All my life
12	Batken	Man	36-45	Vocational school	Farmer	All my life
13	Batken	Man	36-45	University	Physician (Doctor)	All my life
14	Batken	Man	36-45	Secondary high school	Farmer	All my life
15	Batken	Man	36-45	Secondary high school	Civil society (NGOs, Community Organizations, Private Foundations, Faith-Based Groups, Youth Groups)	All my life
16	Batken	Woman	26-45	University	Civil society (NGOs, Community Organizations, Private Foundations, Faith-Based Groups, Youth Groups)	More than ten (10) years
17	Batken	Man	36-45	Vocational school	Farmer	All my life
18	Batken	Man	36-45	Secondary high school	Farmer	All my life
19	Batken	Man	36-45	University	LSG	All my life
20	Batken	Man	46-55	Secondary high school	Farmer	All my life
21	Batken	Woman	36-45	Secondary high school	Independent worker	All my life
22	Batken	Man	46-55	Secondary high school	Independent worker	All my life

23	Batken	Man	36-45	Vocational school	Private sector (Company, SME, Financial Institution-bank)	All my life
24	Batken	Man	26-35	University	LSG	All my life
25	Batken	Man	26-35	University	LSG	All my life
26	Batken	Woman	25 & under	Secondary high school	Private sector (Company, SME, Financial Institution-bank)	More than five (5) years
27	Batken	Man	26-35	University	LSG	All my life
28	Batken	Woman	25 & under	University	High school	All my life
29	Batken	Man	56 & above	University	Civil society (NGOs, Community Organizations, Private Foundations, Faith-Based Groups, Youth Groups)	All my life
30	Batken	Man	46-55	University	LSG	All my life
31	Batken	Man	26-35	University	Civil society (NGOs, Community Organizations, Private Foundations, Faith-Based Groups, Youth Groups)	All my life
32	Batken	Man	36-45	University	Farmer	All my life
33	Batken	Man	36-45	Secondary high school	Civil society (NGOs, Community Organizations, Private Foundations, Faith-Based Groups, Youth Groups)	All my life
34	Osh	Woman	46-55	University	Civil society (NGOs, Community Organizations, Private Foundations, Faith-Based Groups, Youth Groups)	All my life
35	Osh	Man	36-45	University	Private sector (Company, SME, Financial Institution-bank)	All my life
36	Osh	Man	56 & above	Vocational school	Civil society (NGOs, Community Organizations, Private Foundations, Faith-Based Groups, Youth Groups)	All my life
37	Osh	Man	36-45	Secondary high school	LSG	All my life
38	Osh	Man	36-45	University	Civil society (NGOs, Community Organizations, Private Foundations, Faith-Based Groups, Youth Groups)	All my life
39	Osh	Woman	36-45	Secondary high school	Civil society (NGOs, Community Organizations, Private Foundations, Faith-Based Groups, Youth Groups)	All my life
40	Osh	Man	56 & above	University	Civil society (NGOs, Community Organizations, Private Foundations, Faith-Based Groups, Youth Groups)	More than ten (10) years
41	Osh	Man	26-35	University	LSG	All my life
42	Osh	Man	46-55	University	LSG	All my life
43	Osh	Woman	36-45	University	Civil society (NGOs, Community Organizations, Private Foundations, Faith-Based Groups, Youth Groups)	All my life
44	Osh	Man	46-55	Vocational school	Farmer	All my life
45	Osh	Woman	36-45	University	LSG	All my life
46	Osh	Man	56 & above	Vocational school	Private sector (Company, SME, Financial Institution-bank)	All my life
47	Osh	Man	36-45	Secondary high school	Private sector (Company, SME, Financial Institution-bank)	All my life
48	Chuy	Woman	36-45	University	Government institution (local, national)	More than ten (10) years
EBRD Water project						
1	Batken	Woman	46-55	University	LSG	All my life
2	Batken	Man	25 & under	University	Lawyer	All my life
3	Batken	Man	26-35	University	Private sector (Company, SME, Financial Institution-bank)	All my life
4	Batken	Man	56 & above	University	LSG	All my life
5	Batken	Man	25	University	Student	All my life
6	Batken	Man	26-35	Vocational school	Housekeeper	All my life

7	Batken	Woman	26-35	University	Private sector (Company, SME, Financial Institution-bank)	All my life
8	Batken	Man	56 & above	University	Pensioner	All my life
9	Batken	Woman	56 & above	University	Private sector (Company, SME, Financial Institution-bank)	More than ten (10) years
10	Batken	Woman	25	University	LSG	More than five (5) years
11	Batken	Woman	25	University	Private sector (Company, SME, Financial Institution-bank)	More than five (5) years
12	Batken	Woman	26-35	University	Private sector (Company, SME, Financial Institution-bank)	All my life
13	Batken	Man	46-55	University	LSG	More than five (5) years
14	Batken	Woman	56 & above	University	Housekeeper	All my life
15	Batken	Woman	56 & above	University	LSG	Decline to answer
16	Batken	Woman	46-55	Vocational school	LSG	More than ten (10) years
17	Batken	Woman	56	University	LSG	All my life
18	Batken	Man	26-35	University	LSG	All my life
19	Batken	Woman	26-35	University	Private sector (Company, SME, Financial Institution-bank)	Decline to answer
20	Batken	Woman	26-35	University	Private sector (Company, SME, Financial Institution-bank)	All my life
21	Batken	Woman	56 & above	University	Housekeeper	All my life
22	Batken	Woman	36-45	University	Pensioner	All my life
23	Batken	Woman	46-55	High school	Vocational school	All my life
24	Batken	Woman	46-55	University	Pensioner	All my life
25	Batken	Woman	26-35	Vocational school	Vocational school	All my life
26	Batken	Woman	46-55	Vocational school	Government institution (local, national)	More than ten (10) years
27	Batken	Man	26-35	University	Government institution (local, national)	All my life
28	Batken	Woman	36-45	University	Government institution (local, national)	More than five (5) years
29	Batken	Woman	36-45	University	Private sector (Company, SME, Financial Institution-bank)	More than ten (10) years
30	Batken	Woman	25 & under	High school	Unemployed	More than five (5) years
31	Batken	Man	26-35	University	Academia, University, Research Institute	All my life
32	Batken	Woman	26-35	University	Private sector (Company, SME, Financial Institution-bank)	All my life
33	Batken	Man	25 & under	University	Private sector (Company, SME, Financial Institution-bank)	All my life
34	Batken	Woman	25 & under	High school	Nurse	More than five (5) years
35	Batken	Woman	26-35	University	Student	All my life
36	Batken	Woman	46-55	Vocational schools	Pensioner	All my life
37	Batken	Man	46-55	Vocational schools	Government institution (local, national)	All my life
38	Batken	Man	46-55	University	Private sector (Company, SME, Financial Institution-bank)	All my life
39	Batken	Man	36-45	University	Private sector (Company, SME, Financial Institution-bank)	More than five (5) years
40	Batken	Man	26-35	University	Private sector (Company, SME, Financial Institution-bank)	More than ten (10) years
41	Batken	Man	36-45	University	High School Teacher	All my life
42	Batken	Man	36-45	University	Decline to answer	All my life
43	Batken	Man	36-45	University	Private sector (Company, SME, Financial Institution-bank)	All my life
44	Batken	Man	26-35	Vocational school	Decline to answer	All my life
45	Batken	Woman	25 & under	University	Decline to answer	More than five (5) years
46	Batken	Woman	46-55	University	Government institution (local, national)	All my life
47	Batken	Woman	56 & above	University	Farmer	All my life
48	Batken	Woman	36-45	University	Private sector (Company, SME, Financial Institution-bank)	All my life
49	Batken	Woman	25 & above	University	Decline to answer	All my life
50	Batken	Man	26-35	University	LSG	All my life
51	Batken	Woman	25 & under	High school	Student	All my life
52	Batken	Woman	36-45	Vocational school	Government institution (local, national)	More than five (5) years

Exemplary Bel Ayil Ökmötü /LSG

1	Osh	Woman	36-45	Secondary high school	Unemployed	All my life
2	Osh	Woman	56 & above	Secondary high school	Branch of the village first aid health center	All my life
3	Osh	Woman	56 & above	Secondary high school	Pensioner	All my life
4	Osh	Man	36-45	University	Head of <i>Ayil Okmotu</i> (LSG)	One year and four months
5	Osh	Man	46-55	University	Businessperson	More than ten (10) years
6	Osh	Man	46-55	University	<i>ayil kenesh</i> (local council deputy)	All my life
7	Osh	Woman	25 & under	University	Head of youth center "Shyktan -Inspiration."	All my life
8	Osh	Woman	25 & under	University	Member of the youth center "Shyktan -Inspiration."	All my life
9	Osh	Woman	56 & above	Secondary high school	Pensioner	All my life
10	Osh	Woman	56 & above	University	Member of the branch of the village first aid health center, pensioner	All my life
11	Osh	Man	56 & above	University	Pensioner	All my life
12	Osh	Woman	36-45	PhD	Associate professor anthropologist, Switzerland	More than ten (17) years

Acknowledgment

I dedicate this research study to my country fellows who dedicate their time, energy, and efforts to helping the Kyrgyz Republic to develop locally.

I would like to thank the Hungarian Government for providing full support to study at the Regional Development Program, University of Pécs, through the Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Professor Ilona Pálné Kovács, who supported me throughout my research and provided constructive feedback and guidance. My supervisor has positively impacted my professional career, where I have gained knowledge and experience while learning the local development alternatives during my stay in Hungary.

Finally, without the support of my parents, siblings, and daughter, I would not have been able to pursue a Ph.D. abroad.