As the international reputation of Korea continues to grow, the Korean government continues to play active roles on the world stage. Even though colonization and war pushed the nation to the periphery for the first half of the 20th century, Korea rapidly emerged to distinguish itself as an economically stable democracy. This truly symbolic event that highlights Korea’s emergence in world affairs was the 1988 Seoul Olympic Games. Another benchmark accomplishment is Korea’s membership in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1996. Korea’s development path is quite different from those of many other western countries, and it may serve as a role model for many of today’s developing countries. 

Korea’s development and welfare of developing countries on concessional terms. Korea, as a member of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD, has provided grants and loans to many developing countries all around the world. The map shows the cumulative amount of Korea’s grants from 2008 to 2017, normalized by the populations of the receiving country. It also shows the number of Korean volunteers and the sector in which they are engaged within each country. Many volunteers at present are involved in education, agriculture, fisheries, and public health. The graph presents the ratio of ODA to Gross National Income (GNI). We can see that the ratio has increased continuously since 1990. An exceptionally high value is observed in 2005 due to the tsunami disaster in South Asia. The ODA per capita shows how much an individual in the donor country pays for ODA. Korea’s ODA per capita was just USD 1 in 1990 but dramatically increased to USD 46 in 2018. The ODA may be classified into two categories: bilateral and multilateral. Bilateral and multilateral bilateral assistance can be further divided into grants with 100% donation and loans with a grant rate of 25% or more but less than 100%. Multilateral assistance is subdivided into loans, contributions, and concessional loans. The graph shows that Korea has increased assistance in all types of ODA. Bilateral aid, which was USD 13 million in 1990, was about USD 1.73 billion in 2018, and multilateral aid, which was USD 40 million, surged to roughly USD 63 million in the same period. For reference, in 2018, the ratio of grants to loans in the bilateral aid increased to one. All in all, the data shows that Korea has expanded its role as an active donor for global development.
The map shows Korea’s Multilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In 2017, the darker colors represent the countries that received larger grants from Korea than other DAC member countries. What becomes clear is that Korea provides more contributions to Asian countries such as Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Mongolia than do the other DAC member countries.

The map also shows that a significant amount of Korea aid goes to Vietnam, Afghanistan, Laos, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Mongolia than do the other DAC member countries.

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but the economic infrastructure and production sectors also receive assistance in several countries. A good example of the social infrastructure and service sector support is The First Korea-Peru Health Center Construction Project. The total amount of the grant was about USD 2.4 million, which was distributed gradually (see the graph). More than half of the grants fund social infrastructure grants. Contrary to the clustered geographical pattern of the aid distribution in Latin America, Korea’s grants are relatively evenly distributed to the African continent. The pie charts of Korean aid represent countries, dollar amounts, and sectors that received Korean grants. An example of the projects in the social infrastructure and service sector support is a USD 2.9 million to help prevent tuberculosis, particularly in the city of Addis Ababa. Korea has also helped Rwanda with a variety of education and training programs. An example of these efforts is constructing the ICT innovation center in the Kigali special economic zone.