

*Korean CSO's Peace and Humanitarian Movement—The Case of Good Neighbors*¹

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Abstract

As an extension of constructivist discussion, this paper aims to explore the theoretical debate to examine how Good Neighbors, as one of the South Korean Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), contributed to the creation of a peace foundation on the Korean Peninsula. Using the framework of *humanitarian diplomacy* introduced by Larry Minear and Hazel Smith, this paper aims to reinterpret the role of humanitarian operations and campaigns for North Korea by Good Neighbors in the areas of information gathering, mediating, and foreign policy implementation. The findings of this paper suggest that Good Neighbors created an opportunity to recognize North Korea as a partner of support and cooperation rather than an adversary by informing domestic civil society of the reality of North Korea's food crisis. It also played a role in supporting the *Sunshine Policy* by framing North Korea as part of the movement for the peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula and spreading this message through various campaigns. As a result, the inter-Korean summit in 2000 was possible despite North Korea's continuous military provocations from 1998 until the summit meeting.

Article History:

Published: 04.02.2025

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Keywords

Humanitarian Diplomacy, CSOs, Good Neighbors, North Korea, Peace Building, Korean Peninsula

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I confirm that this paper is reconstructed through the lens of humanitarian diplomacy and draws on data from the Good Neighbors' white paper project, in which the author participated in 2021. Source: *Good Neighbors. Good Neighbors 30 Years History*. Seoul: Good Neighbors, 2021.

1. Introduction

After North Korea requested assistance from the international community in 1995, the Kim Young-sam administration (1993-1998) urgently provided 150,000 tons of rice. However, North Korea's negative response (such as the detention of South Korean aid crews on charges of espionage, North Korea's nuclear development program, and other related issues) and the IMF economic crisis at the end of 1997 created challenges that made it impossible for South Korea to continue providing additional aid to North Korea. Since then, the Kim Young-sam administration adopted a more cautious approach, implementing a policy that centralized aid efforts at the government level while prohibiting the direct provision of rice and cash assistance. Subsequently, the Kim Dae-jung administration (1998-2002), which took office in 1998, implemented measures to diversify the aid channels for North Korea and in February 1999, new measures to support the inter-Korean cooperation fund for CSOs' aid operations in North Korea were implemented. These became the basis for revitalizing CSOs' aid activities for North Korea. Even during the Roh Moo-hyun government (2003-2007), which had inherited the engagement policy of the former Kim Dae-jung government, South Korean CSOs' aid campaigns remained active.

In the midst of these changes in support policy toward North Korea, Good Neighbors was established in 1991 as a native CSO of South Korea. Despite its relatively short history and limited experience in international aid operations, it was the first and most active South Korean CSO to carry out aid projects for North Korea. In 1995, while direct aid through CSOs to North Korea was not allowed in the aftermath of the Kim Young-sam administration's failed rice aid project, Good Neighbors established a bread factory in Dandong, China, creating a bypass channel to directly help starving North Koreans. This project was the start of Good Neighbors' aid operation for North Korea, providing 150,000 loaves of bread per month to elementary schools in Sinuiju, North Korea, for about 7 months starting in August 1995. Since then, Good Neighbors has initiated a comprehensive development cooperation project with North Korea, and in 1998, implemented the first-ever livestock exchange project in the history of the two Koreas, successfully supplying 200 cows to North Korea. Starting with this project, Good Neighbors provided a total of 510 cows from 2002 to 2005, supplied 60 tons of soybean feed in 1999, pharmaceuticals and herbicides in 2000, milk processing facilities in 2004, and facilities to produce proteins for cows to cooperative farms in Gubin-ri in 2008. In the field of humanitarian assistance, Good Neighbors carried out activities for 4,700 children in 14 childcare centers from 2001 to 2003 and 9 centers from 2004 to 2010. In addition, Good Neighbors provided about 870 million won worth of construction materials and medical equipment for the construction of an ophthalmic hospital from 2002 to 2003, starting with a project to improve underdeveloped facilities for the

2nd People's Hospital in Pyongyang. In 2004, Good Neighbors decided to build Pyongyang Children's Heart Hospital and donated approximately 400 million won in materials for the construction of the hospital. Additionally, the organization decided to establish the Jeongseong Pharmaceutical Plant in February 2003 for the production of medicines in cooperation with North Korea. The plant, which can produce 15 million bottles of antibiotics per year, was completed in 2005, aided by the supply of construction materials and pharmaceutical facilities.

Looking at Good Neighbors' activities, the question is raised as to whether Good Neighbors, as a relatively new CSO, could play the role of a messenger of peace and reconciliation in a difficult environment at the time. Above all, Good Neighbors reframed the North Korea aid project as a peaceful campaign for reunification and national reconciliation with the goal to overcome hostility towards North Korea, which was dominant in the South Korean civil society after the Korean War. Such strategies and achievements were only possible through the endless efforts and commitment of Good Neighbors' founding members and employees.

However, in 2008, the Lee Myung-bak administration (2008-2012), a conservative government, introduced the May 24 measures, which disallowed all exchange and cooperation projects except support projects for infants and toddlers in North Korea, and prohibited other humanitarian and development support for North Korea. Although the Park Geun-hye administration (2013-2017) expressed its intention for revitalization of aid to North Korea through the Dresden Declaration, it adhered to a more passive policy than the Lee Myung-bak administration when it came to actual government and private aid to North Korea. As a result, the amount of support from South Korean CSOs, which had exceeded 150 billion won in 2004, dropped significantly to 5 billion won in 2014. This study does not explore the details of the Moon Jae-in and Yoon Seok-yeol administrations in depth but includes data up to 2020, as it draws extensively from the Good Neighbors' white paper project, in which the author participated in 2021. The data indicates that the support for humanitarian aid actors in South Korea has not improved since then, primarily due to enduring sanctions in response to North Korea's nuclear program. These challenges have been compounded by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and heightened tensions from ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza.

Under these circumstances, Good Neighbors is functioning as the last lifeline of humanitarian aid to North Korea by continuing its efforts through Good Neighbors International in the United States even to this day. To overcome the internal and external negative environment and growing fatigue around the issue, Good Neighbors introduced an economic cooperation initiative that incorporates a social and economic model, going beyond simple development assistance to consider a sustainable development cooperation model. However, even the least amount of humanitarian aid is impossible due to sanctions imposed by the United States and the United Nations in response to North Korea's nuclear development. The aim of this paper is to examine the significance and commitment of Good Neighbors, a native South Korean CSO, which played an active role as a humanitarian agent amidst the ups and downs of aid policy towards North Korea (*Sunshine Policy* vs deterrence policy) from 1995 to 2020.

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Hazel Smith, "Humanitarian Diplomacy, Theory and Practice," in *Humanitarian Diplomacy: Practitioners and Their Craft*, eds. Larry Minear and Hazel Smith (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2007), p.38, pp.52-53.

2. Humanitarian Diplomacy and CSOs

In international political theory, the discussion of whether the interests pursued by states and groups are fixed or changeable is a core topic of constructivist political theory. In this discussion, constructivism posits that social interaction can form or change the interests of the state or group, and as far as possible, non-state actors, or CSOs, are included in the category of analysis. As an extension of this constructivist discussion, this paper aims to shortly give an overview of the theoretical discussion in order to develop a tool for understanding how Good Neighbors as a CSO contributed to the creation of a peace foundation on the Korean Peninsula.

It can be said that interest in CSO research increased alongside research on the role of norm entrepreneurs, which examines how the interests of the state as the basis of national foreign policy, are formed. There are numerous studies on the campaign activities of CSOs active in various areas such as environment and wildlife protection, gender, human rights, and removal of land mines. As an extension of these studies, humanitarian aid organizations are at the core of the concept of humanitarian diplomacy, in addition to the achievements of their humanitarian mandate within or between countries.

Hazel Smith, who served as the head of the WFP's Pyongyang office in the early 2000s, argues that humanitarian aid activities by state and non-state actors in the target country have diplomatic function and effectiveness in the realm of diplomacy, which has traditionally been the exclusive domain of the state and its diplomatic institutions and diplomats.² In that way, humanitarian diplomacy of aid organizations includes information formation, a mediating function, and foreign policy enforcement as a supporting agency.

First, these organizations contribute to the formation of information, which is the core of foreign policy, by accessing the site relatively freely, while the official agency of the donor government providing aid is in conflict with the recipient country for diplomatic, security, or military reasons. Of course, the collection of political information by humanitarian aid organizations is an issue that requires a very high level of attention because it violates the humanitarian spirit if it deviates from the purpose of humanitarian activities. However, the collection of information through organizations in the humanitarian field must at least lead to relevant information that influences aid policy decisions as a sub-element of the donor country's foreign policy. In this context, it must be acknowledged that the report on the humanitarian situation in North Korea done by Good Neighbors served as a key piece of information and basis for the South Korean government's decision to provide large-scale food and fertilizer assistance.

Second, humanitarian aid organizations also serve as mediators between governments in situations of intergovernmental friction and conflict. When two countries are at odds in the area of hard security, it is often difficult for them to find a point of contact for dialogue. In such situations, addressing humanitarian crises can create opportunities for engagement and create dialogue between them. It is here that the value of CSOs as mediators, as non-state actors, becomes evident.

Third, these actors function as a channel for aid execution, and a means of national foreign policy. In particular, humanitarian CSOs play a role in implementing government diplomacy by carrying out aid activities based on their relative autonomy to access areas or targets that are difficult to access for state aid agencies in situations of disputes and tensions between countries.

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With this awareness of the problem, Kyungyon Moon, the author of this paper, has studied the activities of CSOs supporting North Korea from the perspective of establishing a foundation for unification on the Korean Peninsula, and related studies include the following: Kyungyon Moon, "Reinterpretation of Humanitarian Assistance to North Korea from the Perspective of Human Security," *The Journal of North Korean Studies*, Volume 16, No. 2, pp.295-328; Kyungyon Moon, "The role of private organizations supporting North Korea in the policy-making process for food aid to North Korea," *Proceeding of the Association of North Korean Studies*, December 2011, pp.48-57.

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This part is based on the chapter of 'Cooperation with North Korea' in *Good Neighbors 30 Years History* which the author participated in as the main analyst of the chapter, and in particular, the figures, years, stories, testimonies, achievements, activities, and projects cited here are based on interviews with Good Neighbors executives and internal data.

Despite the fact that humanitarian aid CSOs provide more than just the delivery of supplies, studies that have analyzed the Korean CSOs' activities to North Korea through the lens of humanitarian diplomacy as aforementioned have been limited.³ In particular, there has been little evaluation of the significance of aid activities to North Korea in terms of establishing a foundation for peaceful unification on the Korean Peninsula by CSOs, which is the subject of this paper.

3. Good Neighbors—Building a Foundation for Humanitarianism and Peace on the Korean Peninsula

Based on the above theoretical discussion, this chapter assumes Good Neighbors as a subject of humanitarian diplomacy, and analyzes its achievements in laying the groundwork for peaceful unification on the Korean Peninsula the organization made through their campaigns and operations.

3.1 Good Neighbors—Opening National Reconciliation Beyond Humanitarianism⁴

In 1995, North Korea requested official food aid from Japan and the international community, as news of North Korea's food shortage began to surface, mainly through domestic and foreign news articles as well as CSO reports. In June 1995, the Kim Young-sam administration took the lead in providing 150,000 tons of rice to North Korea, citing compatriot reasons for their aid. However, the effort faced backlash when North Korea detained South Korean sailors involved in transporting the rice, accusing them of espionage during the process. In 1998, the domestic environment for aid deteriorated due to the IMF economic crisis, leading to a substantial further reduction. It was not until the first inter-Korean summit in 2000 that large-scale aid from the South Korean government and CSOs to North Korea resumed.

In the midst of all this, Good Neighbors continued to advocate assistance to North Korea through various means, methods, and endless efforts to support the struggling country, regardless of the obstacles arising from inter-Korean political and military relations and South Korea's economic crisis. Good Neighbors was the first CSO to provide humanitarian assistance to North Koreans in a leading, unique, and sometimes reckless manner—occasionally crossing the borders of domestic law—in its efforts to aid North Korea during a period of hardship. North Korea was in desperate need of assistance from the international community due to severe economic difficulties, especially when the country experienced the worst food shortage in 1999. In addition to providing humanitarian assistance to North Korea, Good Neighbors played a leading role in forming national and international consensus on the need for assistance to North Korea, especially among the Korean government and South Korean civil society.

The establishment of a bread factory in Dandong, China in 1995 was a symbolic operation at a time when not only South Korea but also the international community were in sharp conflict with North Korea over the country's nuclear development issue. The effort can be understood as the practical implementation

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NGO Council for North Korea Cooperation, "10-Years White Paper on the Cooperation with North Korea," 2005, p.40.

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First delegation: Chairman Lee, Il-ha, Pastor Lim, Taek-kwon (Korean Church of Philadelphia) and two other members of the group visited North Korea.

of US President Ronald Reagan's slogan "hungry children do not know politics" from 1984.

Around that time, the Korean government took measures to unify the channels of assistance through the South Korean Red Cross, while denying direct assistance from private organizations. The atmosphere of the South Korean government and civil society toward assistance to its neighbor was particularly cold due to the aftermath of the failed rice donations in 1995. Above all, the hostility between the two Koreas, which persisted for half a century after the Korean War (1950-1953), along with North Korea's continued armed provocations were sufficient to encourage the South Korean society to build and sustain hostility toward North Korea. In the midst of this, North Korea's economic difficulties and repeated natural disasters, which began with the dissolution of the Cold War in the early 1990s, caused severe food shortages. North Korea finally made a request for food aid in 1995, but the hostility towards North Korea, that had solidified for half a century, was sufficient to overturn the decision to provide humanitarian assistance.

Under these circumstances, Good Neighbors' efforts to provide humanitarian relief served as an opportunity to alleviate hostility toward the North, which had continued and solidified for half a century since inter-Korean relations were cut off. Starting with the operation of the bread factory in Dandong, China in 1995, Good Neighbors expanded its efforts in 1998 by initiating a project to supply cows. This was the first sustainable North Korean development cooperation model, later evolving it into a regional development project incorporating a social economy model. In 2001, educational support projects provided assistance to 1,800 children in 9 childcare centers and 4,800 students in three schools. Furthermore, in 2006, plans were laid for the construction of the Jeongseong Pharmaceutical Plant to establish a sustainable health and medical system in North Korea.

Through the previously mentioned projects, Good Neighbors was able to expand contact with North Korean authorities and residents. Above all, Good Neighbors' commitment to developing a leading business model based on a sense of mission and establishing these project and program models in North Korea despite the difficult political and military environment between the two Koreas was sufficient to convert half a century of hostility into trust and patriotism. In this context, the "10-Years White Paper on the Cooperation with North Korea" issued by the NGO Council for the Cooperation with North Korea evaluated Good Neighbors' bread factory in Dandong as one of the main driving forces behind the spread of awareness among the Korean government and other CSOs about supporting North Korea in the early days when such awareness was minimal.⁵

Another reason Good Neighbors can be evaluated as an organization that has opened the door to national reconciliation beyond humanitarianism is that it recognizes aid to North Korea as a movement towards national reconciliation and peaceful unification. To this end, Good Neighbors facilitated mutual understanding and trust building through contact between South and North Korean residents and authorities. Lee Il-ha, the chairman and founder of Good Neighbors, first visited North Korea in March 1997 after meeting with North Korean officials to discuss the project for the bread factory in Dandong, China in May 1995.⁶ Since then, he has continued to visit North Korea, building trust as a dialogue partner, aiming to resolve the country's food shortage and humanitarian issues. In particular, Lee Il-ha served as a link to connect the North Korean authorities and South Korean CSOs in the formation of support projects for North Korea through other CSOs.

Above all, Good Neighbors contributed to the establishment of a foundation

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Lee, Il-ha, "[Special Article] Progress in Inter-Korean Relations and the role of CSOs," *Kookmin Ilbo*, June 27, 2000.

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Lee, Il-ha, "Let's Talk about Unification on Saturday," Seoul: Kyobo, 2003.

for national reconciliation through contact between South and North Koreans. It organized ten South Korean volunteer teams, each consisting of seven to ten patronages. They were sent to assist at the bread factory over a seven-month period, creating an opportunity for South and North Koreans to have special meetings. In this way, Good Neighbors allowed 2,045 South Koreans to visit North Korea over the course of 192 times until 2010, when the North Korean aid project was the most active. Such contact between residents was significant because it was the first step towards mutual understanding, building a base for national reconciliation. The North Korean side also reported the visit of 100 Good Neighbors delegates in the *Rodong Sinmun* in 2003, acknowledging the fact that a South Korean CSO was working together with their government to help North Koreans in need.

Good Neighbors' efforts also became meaningful when aid to North Korea faced a crisis due to the ups and downs of inter-Korean relations. In the early days of aid, Good Neighbors actively participated in a pan-national campaign to support North Korea. Prior to this, Good Neighbors had continued the '*Hungry for Love*' campaign since 1993, informing Korean civil society of North Korea's food shortage. In addition, it helped promote the idea amongst Korean civil society that support for North Korea was an act of love for compatriots based on the humanitarian spirit and the beginning of the peaceful unification movement on the Korean Peninsula. Good Neighbors' independent and joint campaigns with other CSOs served as an opportunity to recognize North Korea as a partner worthy of support and cooperation rather than an adversary by informing South Korean civil society and highlighting the broader humanitarian crisis affecting their neighbor. At the same time, the CSO played a role in supporting the Sunshine Policy—the engagement policy of the Kim Dae-jung administration—by framing aid to North Korea as a movement for peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula and spreading it through various campaigns. Even throughout the inauguration of the Kim Dae-jung administration in 1998 and the declaration of the Sunshine Policy, North Korea's military provocations continued, and criticism from conservatives in South Korea against a policy of engagement spread. Despite this situation, the government was able to continue the course of its Sunshine Policy because Good Neighbors along with other South Korean CSOs continued campaigning to help North Korea and supported the Sunshine Policy. Consequently, this support became the momentum that enabled the two Koreas to hold the first inter-Korean summit in 2000 after the Korean War in 1953.

While large-scale government-level aid to North Korea was expected after the historic first inter-Korean summit in June 2000, Good Neighbors' Chairman Lee Il-ha wrote a special article reminding readers that the main agents of dialogue and reconciliation between the two Koreas were South Korea's CSOs.⁷ In this contribution, Chairman Lee assessed that the North Korea aid projects and the campaigns of South Korean civil society contributed to the creation of an atmosphere for national reconciliation through dialogue and cooperation, rather than confrontation and coercion between the two Koreas. In addition, he took the lead in stressing the importance of inter-Korean exchange and cooperation projects through the CSOs channel, along with concerns about the mainstreaming of exchange and cooperation centered on the two Korean government authorities after the summit. In 2003, Chairman Lee published *Let's Talk about Unification on Saturday*⁸, a significant work that recorded the stories, testimonies, difficulties and concerns he and other members of Good Neighbors experienced during

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Lee, Il-ha said in an interview with *Munhwa Ilbo*, "Helping the poor is not just a relief project. It is at the heart of a peace movement that relieves conflicts and instills trust among people."

Source: Lee, Young-hee, "Peaceful Person Lee Il-ha, Chairman of Good Neighbors, 'Relief in poverty is a peace service.'" June 20, 2003.

their campaigns. In his book, Chairman Lee Il-ha presented the North Korea aid project as a peace movement. Above all, the publication of the book was crucial because it was the first effort to share Good Neighbors' concerns about national reconciliation between the two Koreas and the peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula, as well as the future direction of aid, exchange and cooperation with the public.⁹

3.2. Good Neighbors—Building Institutional Foundation for CSO Movement

Around 1995, when aid projects to North Korea began, the working environment of domestic CSOs was very poor. In fact, until North Korea requested support from the international community, the support of CSOs and the Korean government to developing countries was insignificant. The government, in particular, had imposed regulatory measures against CSOs' fundraising to support North Korea and developing countries, public campaigns, and the allocation of raised funds for administrative expenses. Furthermore, the organizational capacity of the Korean government and CSOs to support developing countries was also in its infancy. For example, the Korea Food for the Hungry International (KFHI) was established as the first CSO for overseas development cooperation in October 1989, and Good Neighbors, which actively participated in supporting North Korea since 1995, was established in 1991. In addition, the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), which is the South Korean government's grant aid agency, was not established until 1991. In the same year, World Vision started its first overseas support project, and in 1995, the establishment of overseas aid organizations such as Habitat and Save the Children began in earnest. Given that North Korea requested support from the international community before and after this period, the institutional environment of domestic CSOs at that time was only in its early stages.

Despite the domestic institutional underdevelopment, Good Neighbors engaged in activities to expand aid to North Korea and to alleviate institutional barriers that restricted the activities of CSOs. Through this, Good Neighbors contributed to the establishment of an institutional foundation for the development of CSOs for overseas development cooperation, as well as CSOs participating in domestic aid projects to North Korea. Above all, it carried out a large-scale campaign to advocate for a diversification of aid channels, which at that time were monopolized by the government. In 1995, the Kim Young-sam administration had adopted a policy of providing minimal aid to North Korea, restricting direct involvement through CSOs and instead channeling assistance through international organizations. This approach reflected caution following the aftermath of the espionage accusations and detainment of South Korean sailors delivering rice to North Korea. This act had provoked outrage among South Korean civil society, which saw the detentions as unjust actions against individuals involved in a humanitarian mission, further straining inter-Korean relations.

Good Neighbors further campaigned for the unification of channels for delivery of emergency relief goods raised by CSOs with the South Korean Red Cross. In August 1996, nine Protestant organizations, including Good Neighbors, appealed to open more delivery channels, while urging the government to permit visits to North Korea for operational consultations with North Korean officials. They also campaigned for the right to pursue public-private cooperation projects.¹⁰

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Jung, Nam-ki, "Protestantism, let's set up a single window for North Korea support," *Hankyoreh*, August 18, 1996.

After all, the establishment of the bread factory in China in 1995 and the supply of 200 cows in 1998 only came to fruition after Good Neighbors could consult with North Korean authorities. For this reason, Good Neighbors has continuously requested visiting rights to North Korea to be able to consult and monitor assistance progresses.

Good Neighbors' continuous efforts to improve the institutional environment for humanitarian aid started during the Kim Young-sam administration, which was a conservative government. In March 1997, the Kim Young-sam administration took measures to expand the scope and items of aid to North Korea. The Kim Dae-jung administration, which took a favorable position on North Korea support through the Sunshine Policy in 1998, allowed the expansion of aid items—following a longstanding request of CSOs such as Good Neighbors—and approved visits to North Korea for the purpose of operational meetings and monitoring aid. In March 1998, measures to revitalize private-sector aid to North Korea were implemented, and by February 1999, the Kim Dae-jung administration approved the opening of channels for independent aid projects and programs to North Korea.

Since its establishment in 1991, Good Neighbors has been the most active organization in humanitarian aid and development cooperation, and acquired the UN's comprehensive consultation status and received the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Award. Another significant achievement of Good Neighbors is the establishment of an umbrella body to South Korean CSOs. Since 1995, as public interest in supporting North Korea has expanded, various CSOs have participated in the North Korea support campaign, launching donations and goods fundraising projects. After the Kim Dae-jung administration allowed CSOs to directly engage in projects to support North Korea, the number of CSOs increased dramatically, raising awareness of the need for cooperation and coordination among these CSOs. Good Neighbors served as the first presidential organization by forming the Korea NGO Council for Overseas Development Cooperation (KCOC), a consultation channel for CSOs participating in overseas aid projects, in February 1999. In April of the same year, Good Neighbors initiated the establishment of the NGO Council for North Korea Cooperation centered around 20 CSOs, and the organization functioned as a channel representing CSOs in consultation and coordination with North Korea support projects, the introduction of consortium projects, and public-private cooperation with the South Korean government. In particular, the *Measures to Support Inter-Korean Cooperation Fund for Humanitarian Assistance Projects by the Civil Society Organizations*, implemented by the Kim Dae-jung administration in October 1999, were something that Good Neighbors and the NGO Council for North Korea Cooperation had consistently advocated for.

4. Conclusion

Founded as a South Korea-based CSO in 1991, Good Neighbors was the first and most active organization amongst South Korea's CSOs when North Korea appealed to the international community for assistance in 1995. Despite its short history of establishment and minimal experience in the field of international assistance, it became one of the leading organizations during that period. This

paper attempted to examine the activities of Good Neighbors, which played an active role as a humanitarian actor during the tumultuous times of various administrations and their support policies (Sunshine Policy vs deterrence policy) from 1995 to 2020. For this purpose, the paper used the concept of humanitarian diplomacy as an analytical framework.

In order to change the public opinion of the South Korean government and civil society, which had been lukewarm about supporting North Korea, Good Neighbors informed the public about the seriousness of the catastrophic humanitarian situation in North Korea in the late 1990s. The organization also contributed to the large-scale support of the government and civil society by continuing to provide aid in difficult conditions. Above all, Good Neighbors carried out various means, methods, and constant advocacy activities in order to support North Korea even before 2000, when the South Korean government and CSOs began to provide assistance to the North, regardless of the obstacles arising from inter-Korean political and military relations and South Korea's economic crisis. In other words, Good Neighbors was a pioneering organization that provided humanitarian assistance to North Koreans at a time when the country desperately needed support from the international community due to severe economic difficulties.

In addition, Good Neighbors led the South Korean government, CSOs, and civil society to form a national and international consensus on the need for aid to North Korea. Good Neighbors' humanitarian efforts to support North Korea, framed as a movement for national reconciliation and peaceful unification, were reaffirmed during periods of instability in inter-Korean relations that threatened aid to North Korea. Since 1993, Good Neighbors has continued to campaign for the '*Hungry for Love*' campaign to inform South Korean civil society of North Korea's food shortage, and to spread the message that support for North Korea is an act of fraternal love based on the humanitarian spirit and could be the beginning of a peaceful unification movement on the Korean Peninsula.

Their message served as an opportunity to recognize North Korea as a partner worthy of support and cooperation rather than an adversary by informing domestic civil society of the reality of North Korea's food shortage. It also contributed to a broader discourse on inter-Korean reconciliation by framing North Korea as integral to the movement for peaceful unification on the Korean Peninsula and amplifying this narrative through various campaigns in support of the Sunshine Policy. As a result, the inter-Korean summit in 2000 was possible because of the campaigns and cooperation projects by Good Neighbors and other CSOs, despite North Korea's continuous military provocations from 1998 to 2000 before the inter-Korean summit.

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