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Kyoreh Yoo (fourth from the left) at the opening of tennis and basketball courts with Child-Friendly Cities Initiative dedicated team at Kokkadicholai, Sri Lanka.

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## UN Volunteer raises awareness on Act Local to Go Global

World Cities Day celebrated annually on 31 October— is an occasion to raise awareness on global urbanization and urban development sustainably. Sustainable Development Goal 11 specifically aligns with this day. This year's theme — Act Local to Go Global — highlights the importance of local action to create greener, more equitable and sustainable cities. To mark this day, we share the contribution of UN Volunteer, Kyoreh Yoo, who supports the local government in Sri Lanka to create a child-friendly city.

International UN Volunteer Kyoreh Yoo serves as Project Coordinator with UNICEF. Based in Batticaloa, Kyoreh supports implementation of [Child-Friendly Cities Initiative](#) (CFCI) in the Eastern province of Sri Lanka. A UNICEF-led initiative, CFCI first launched in 1996 to respond to the challenges of children's rights in an increasingly urbanized world.

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This initiative launched in Sri Lanka in 2018 with the Batticaloa Municipal Council. Kyoreh's team closely interacts with local government — assisting in data collection to develop social services for vulnerable children and families. The team also ensures that all aspects of the legal framework reflect children's rights.

Kyoreh supports regular monitoring, coordination and communication with the local government.

“ I feel privileged to join the journey towards creating the first child-friendly city in Sri Lanka. Coming from the Republic of Korea where many cities and towns are recognized as child-friendly cities, I am proud and happy to share experiences from my country as well.

The successful teamwork of Kyoreh and his peers saw the creation of a CFCL team within the local government. Children and youth perspectives were made part of the local government's budget consultation. This led to additions in child-friendly spaces such as libraries and children's parks. Kyoreh's team also introduced community gardening, the provision of food packs to children with acute malnutrition, and basic numeracy and literacy boosting programmes for the underperforming students.

“ Kyoreh's has been a great addition to the Child-Friendly City team in the Batticaloa field office. He took no time to adapt to the team and the local community. He is very agile and maintains a good rapport with local authorities and implementing partners. His support to the team in maintaining the monitoring tracker, producing human interest stories and overseeing the programme implementation has been a timely addition. He brings new ideas and

“ perspectives to the programme from his experience in child-friendly cities in the Republic of Korea. -- Refinceyaa Patterson, Chief, Field Office – Eastern Zone Office with UNICEF in Sri Lanka.

Rapid urbanization has made cities diverse but has also added to many social issues. Disparity continues to rise in urban centers. Kyoreh is of the belief that sustainable and inclusive urban development begins with the understanding of gaps between different classes of society. Systems need to be strengthened to address such challenges, and he feels, volunteerism can play an important role in this realm.

“ To me, volunteering is to care for people around us! It contributes to establishing a social network, which in turn gives a sense of security and belonging. Thus, volunteerism can help build and strengthen social cohesion, making cities a better place for all. I hope that my volunteer action will inspire local people to take part in creating an inclusive and sustainable community.

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### Asia and the Pacific

- World Cities Day • SDGs • children rights • UNICEF • Sri Lanka • Republic of Korea • urban development

Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities](#)