UNECE Seminar on the Measurement of Well-being (2024. 7)

Statistics Korea
Statistics Research Institute

Quality of Life Indicators in KOREA : Challenges and Opportunities

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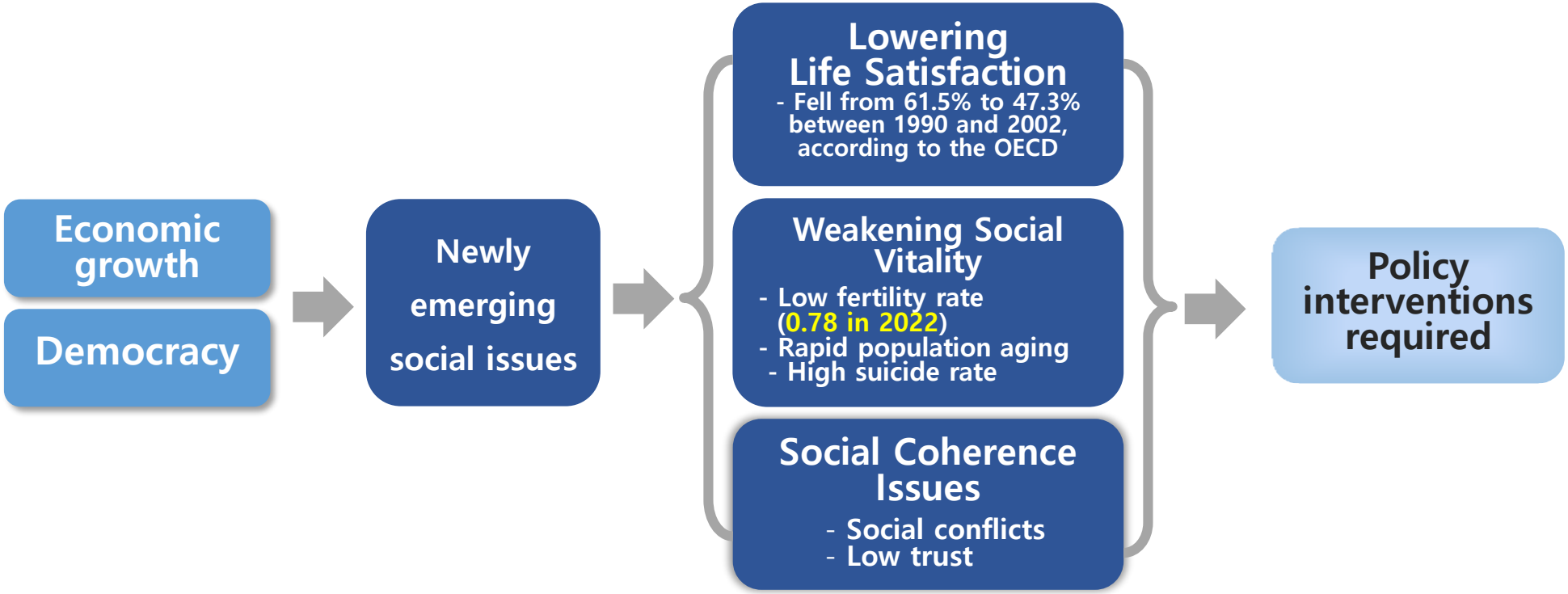
I

Background

I Background

Domestic Circumstances

Despite its successful economic growth and democracy, Korean society was faced with emerging social issues



I Background

International Circumstances: Gaining Momentum of Measuring Well-being

Growing Awareness

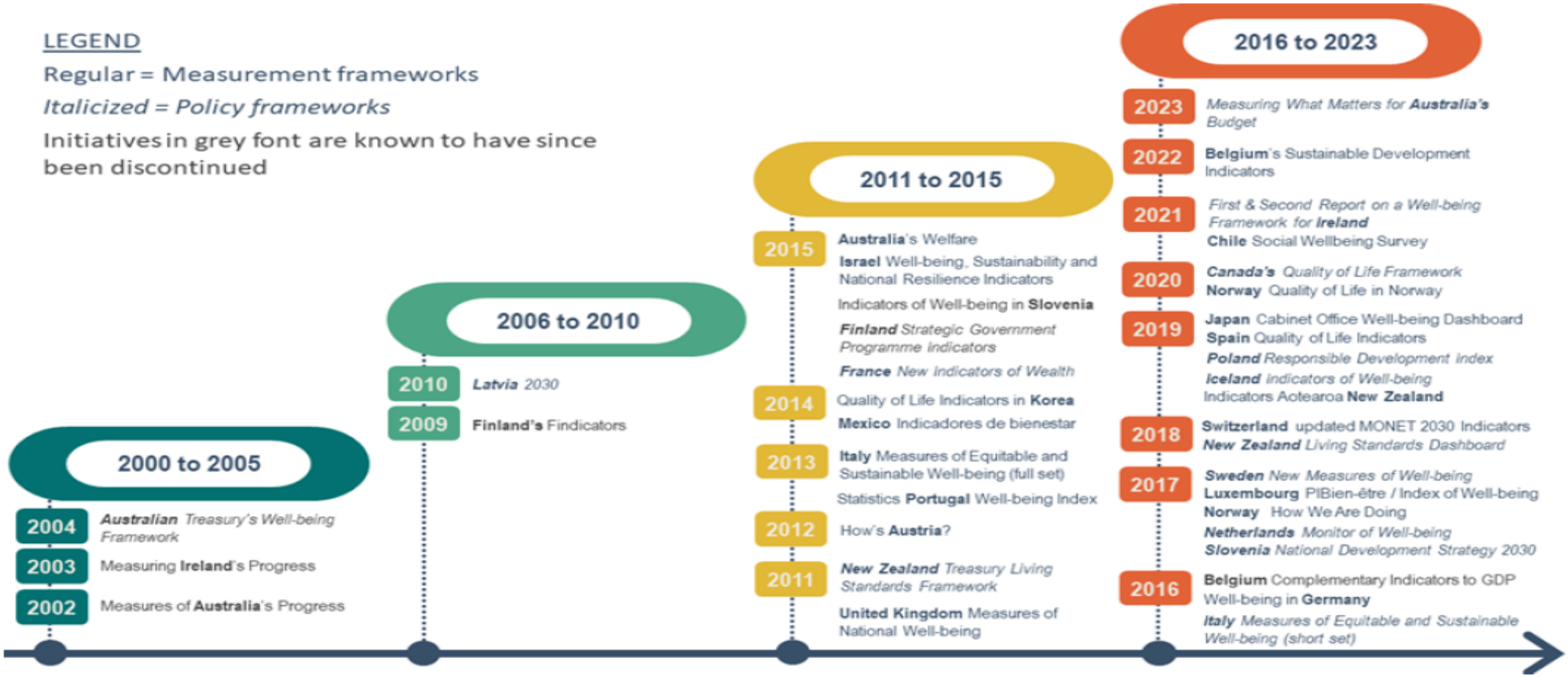
- The focus shifting from the economic growth into the QoL and environment since 90's
  - Growing recognition of the importance of QoL and sustainability
  - Need for overcoming the limitations of the GDP and its economic focus

International and National Efforts

- The OECD Global Project (2004)→3rd World Forum in Busan (2009)→ BLI Report (2011)
- The Report of Stiglitz Commission (2009)
- Country Cases
  - Canada – QoL (Quality of Life Framework)
  - U. K. – MNWB (Measuring National Well-being)
  - Japan – COWD (Cabinet Office Well-being Dashboard)
  - Spain – QoL (Quality of Life Indicators)
  - Bhutan – GNH (Gross National Happiness)
  - Italy – BES (Benessere Equo e Sostenible)
  - Norway – QoL (Quality of Life in Norway)
  - New Zealand – LSD (Living Standards Dashboard)

I Background

More than 70% of OECD countries have developed national frameworks, development plans or surveys with a well-being focus



Note: The year refers to the first published instance of the work.
Source: Adapted from OECD (2021[1]) COVID-19 and Well-being: Life in the Pandemic, OECD Publishing, Paris https://doi.org/10.1787/1e1ecb53-en.

Ⅰ Background

Social Circumstances in Korea

- Post-industrialization/ Democratization social issues
  → Demands for shifting policy interests from economic growth into the quality of life

International Consensus in Measuring QoL

- Global agendas evolved from economic development toward the QoL and sustainability
- Much effort made at international and national levels

Need for measuring well-being and social development

Build understanding on Korean QoL and societal development
Provide basic data for creating policies aimed at improving QoL

II

Progress

II Progress

What We've Achieved So Far

2011 Developed QoL framework
- Joint R&D activities with researchers
- 9 areas, 84 indicators

2012 Developed new indicators
- Civic engagement, subjective well-being
- Korea Social Integration Survey (KSIS)

2013 Incorporated experts' opinions
- Gathering opinions from internal and external experts
- 12 areas, 83 indicators

2014 Indicator services Indicator review committee
- Sharing QoL indicators on the website
- 12 areas, 81 indicators

2015 Held the 1st QoL forum
- Promoting the sharing of QoL indicators
- Theme of the forum: progress in measuring QoL and future tasks

2017 Held an international conference Incorporated public opinions
- Conference theme: GDP plus Beyond
- Gathered opinions through 'Naver Knowledge iN' and 'www. idea.epeople.go.kr'

2018 Reorganized the indicator framework
- Reflecting the results of public opinion reviews
- Ensuring the consistency with other indicators
- 11 areas, 71 indicators

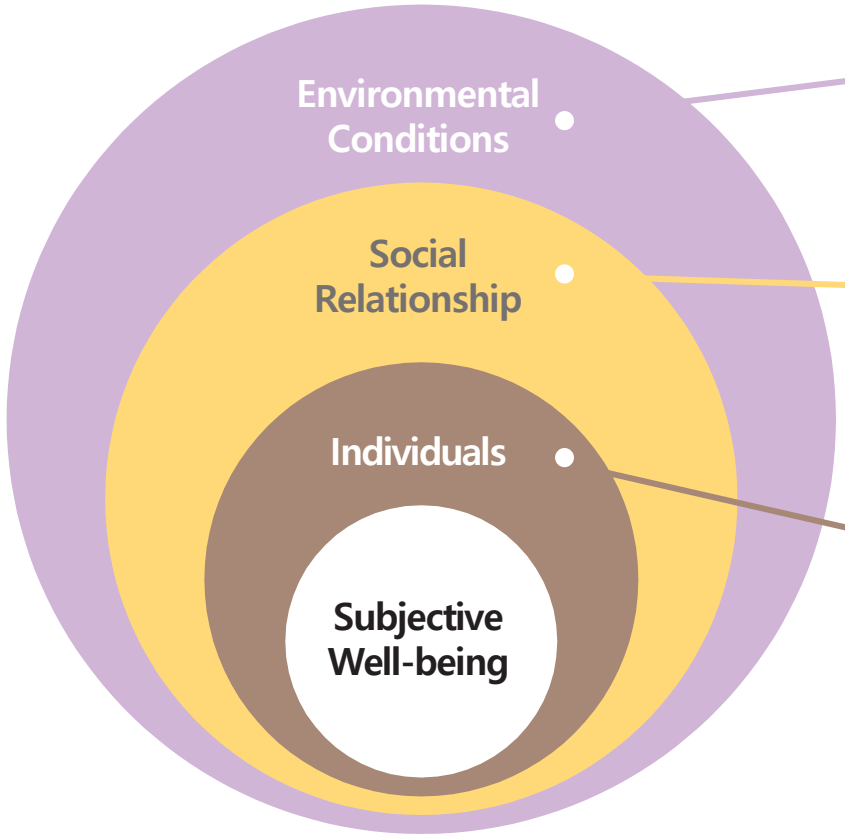
2019 Disaggregated QoL indicators
- Subdividing indicators by age (youth/seniors)
- Developing 21 common regional items

2020 Conducted regional social surveys Selected key indicators

2022 Publishing reports "Child & Youth Well-being 2022"

II Progress

QoL Measurement Mandala: 3 dimensions, 11 domains



Target	Specifications
Safe and sustainable environment Environment, Safety	**The environment will be:** • Free from dangers; and • Protected for a sustainable living
Mutually supportive and active community Civic Engagement, Leisure, Family/Community	**Communities will:** • Cultivate social coherence; • Foster civic engagement; and • Provide leisure activities and cultural experience.
Capable individuals Income/Consumption/Wealth, Health, Education, Housing, Employment/Wage	**Each individual will:** • Have education to acquire knowledge and work ability; • Benefit from economic comforts and social assurance; and • Enjoy a healthy life.

II Progress

Criteria for Selecting Indicators

Data Quality

- Official Statistics
- Coverage
- Time-series

Relevance

- Face Validity
- Output orientation
- Understandability
- Policy responsiveness
- Relevant to National context

Impartiality

- Not influenced by political orientation

II Progress

Summary of Korean QoL Indicators : 11 domains, 71 indicators

Domains	Objective indicator (42)	Subjective indicator (29)
Family · Community (3, 2)	Live-alone Elderly Rate, Social Isolation, Social Group Participation Rate	Family Relationship Satisfaction, Sense of Belonging to a Community
Health (5, 2)	Life Expectancy, Healthy Life expectancy, Physical Activity Rate, Obesity Rate, Suicide Rate	Self-reported Health, Stress Self-recognition
Education (3, 3)	Preschool Enrollment Rate, Population with Tertiary Education, Employment Rate of College Graduates	Perception toward Effects of School Education, School Life Satisfaction, Degree of Education Cost Burden
Employment and Wage (5, 1)	Employment Rate, Unemployment Rate, Average Monthly Wage, Working Hours, Proportion of Low-paid Workers	Job Satisfaction
Income·Consumption·Wealth (5, 2)	Gross National Income per Capita, Equivalised Median Income, Household Net Wealth, Household Debt Ratio, Relative Poverty Rate	Income Satisfaction, Consumption Satisfaction
Leisure (4, 2)	Leisure Time, Travel Days per Person, Ratio of Expenditure on Leisure, Participation in Culture, Art and Sport Event	Leisure Satisfaction, Sufficiency of Leisure Time
Housing (5, 1)	Residential Area per Capita, Commuting Time to Office, Dwelling without Basic Facilities, Rent to Income Ratio, Home-ownership Rate	Housing Environment Satisfaction
Environment (3, 6)	Fine Dust Concentration Level(PM2.5), Urban Park Area per Capita, Waterworks Supply Rate in Rural Area	Climate Change Recognition, Air quality Satisfaction, Water Quality Satisfaction, Soil Quality Satisfaction, Noise Level Satisfaction, Green Environment Satisfaction
Safety (7, 2)	Homicide Rate, Child Abuse Rate, Crime Victimization Rate, Child Mortality Rate from Safety Accidents, Industrial Accident Mortality Rate, Number of Fire Fatalities, Road Traffic Accident Fatality Rate	Feeling Safe Walking Alone at Night, Perception toward Societal Safety
Civic Engagement (2, 5)	Voter Turnout Rate, Voluntary Work Participation Rate	Perception of Political Empowerment, Citizenship, Corruption Perceptions Index, Interpersonal Trust, Institutional Trust
Subjective Wellbeing (0, 3)		Life Satisfaction, Positive Emotions, Negative Emotions

* Frequency: Annual 45, Biennial 23, Quinquennial 3

II Progress

Showing recent trends : A Traffic Light Dashboard

	Improved	The recent measure indicates an improved QoL compared to the previous one. $X_t - X_{t-1} > 0$
	No change	The recent QoL measure is the same as the previous measure. $X_t - X_{t-1} = 0$
	Deteriorated	The recent measure indicates a worse QoL compared to the previous one. $X_t - X_{t-1} < 0$

Key Indicators: 19

Domains	Indicators
Family and Community	social isolation
Health	life expectancy, suicide rate
Education	school life satisfaction
Employment and Wage	employment rate, unemployment rate
Income, Consumption, Wealth	GNI per capita(real), relative poverty rate
Leisure	leisure time, leisure satisfaction

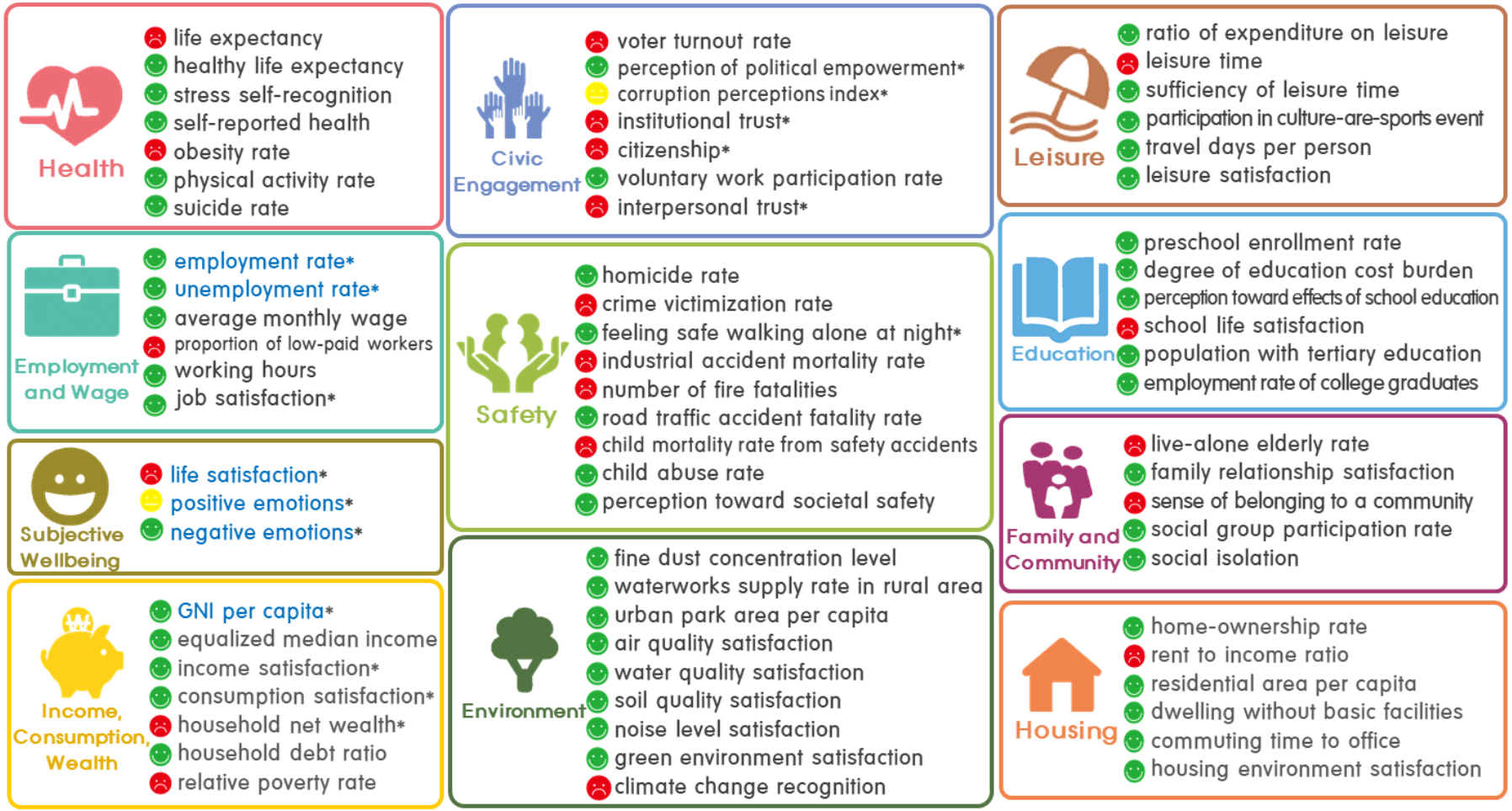
Domains	Indicators
Housing	dwelling without basic facilities, rent to income ratio
Environment	fine dust concentration level(PM2.5), water quality satisfaction
Safety	feeling safe walking alone at night, , industrial accident mortality rate, road traffic accident fatality rate
Civic Engagement	corruption perceptions index
Subjective Wellbeing	life satisfaction

III

Key Results

III Key Results

Dashboard(March, 2024)



- **Improved : 49 (69.0%)**
- **Deteriorated : 20 (28.2%)**
- **No change : 2 (2.8%)**

Total : 71

Note 1) Improved
Deteriorated
No change

2) The parts marked with * are based on the 2023 measurements.

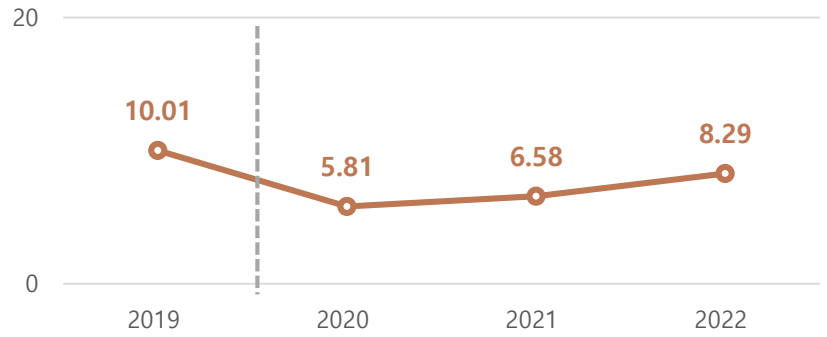
3) The blue colored parts are updated in March, 2024

III Key Results

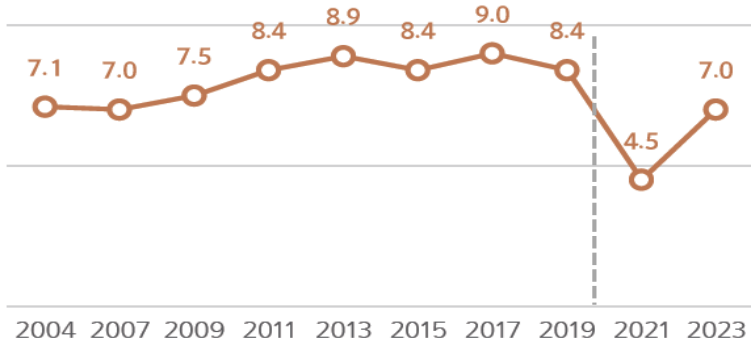
Covid-19 and QoL

Leisure activities

Travel Days per Person Unit: day/year

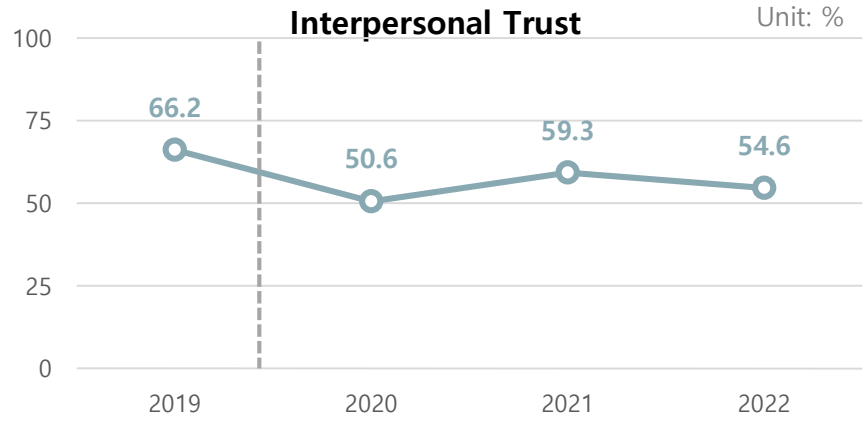


Participation in Culture, Art, Sports Event Unit: day/year



Trust

Interpersonal Trust Unit: %



Institutional Trust Unit: %

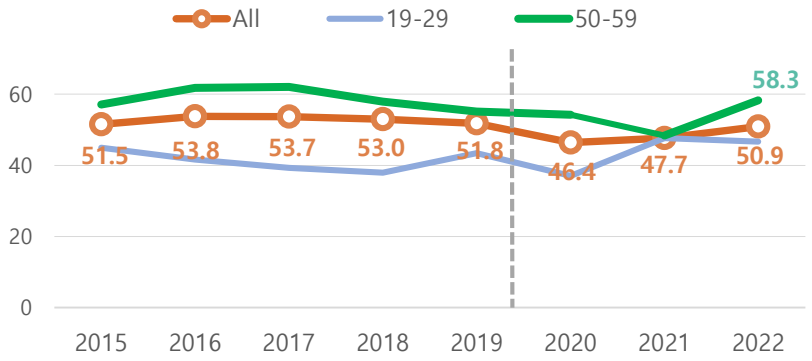
III Key Results

Covid-19 and QoL

Social Activities and Network

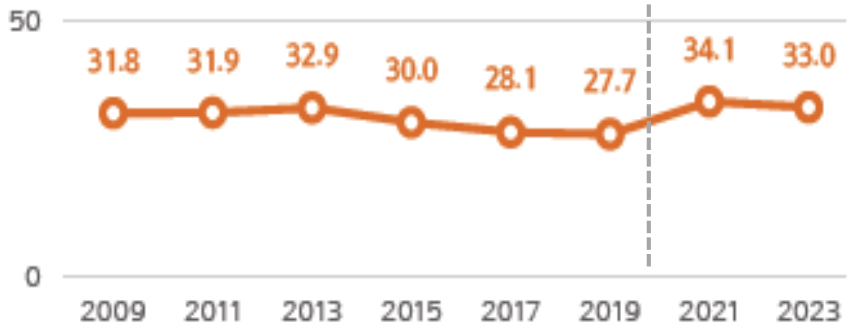
Social Group Participation Rate

Unit: %



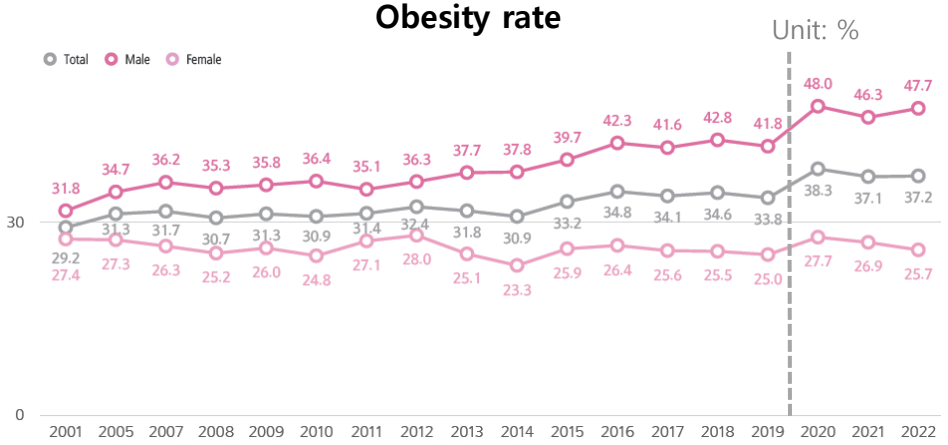
Social Isolation

Unit: %



Obesity rate

Unit: %

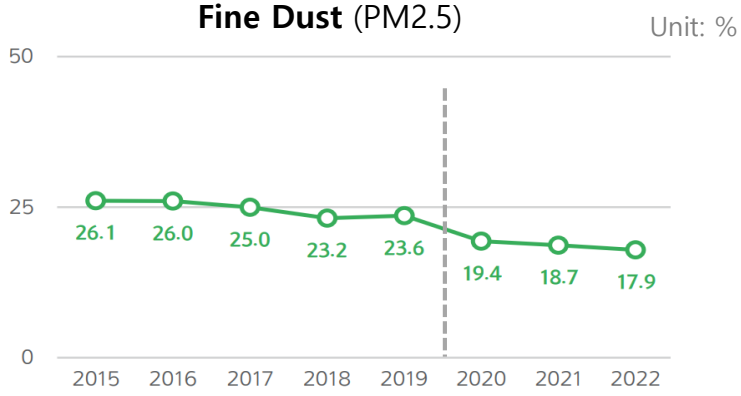


III Key Results

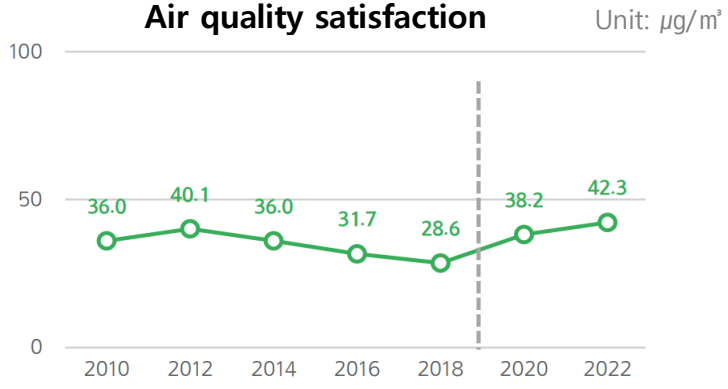
Covid-19 and QoL

Environment

Fine Dust (PM2.5)

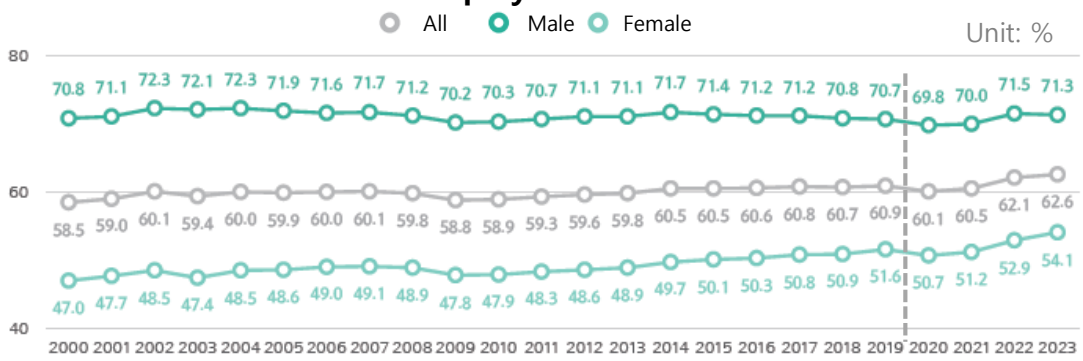


Air quality satisfaction

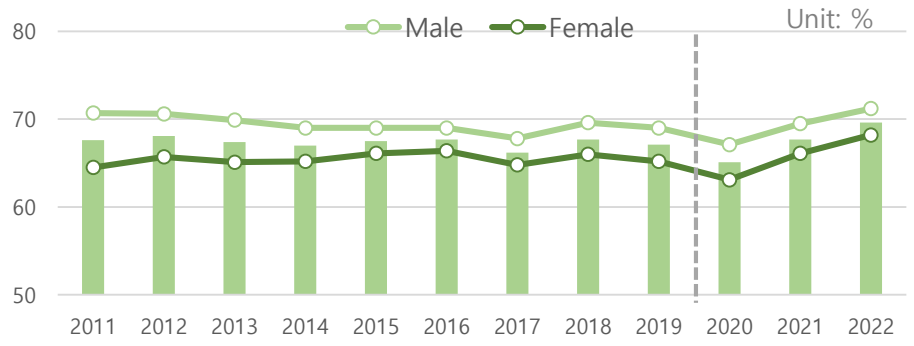


Employment

Employment rate



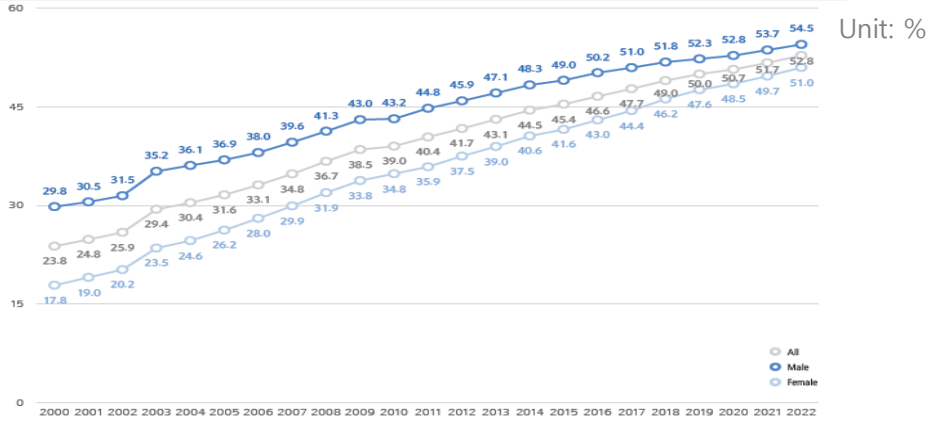
Employment rate of college graduates



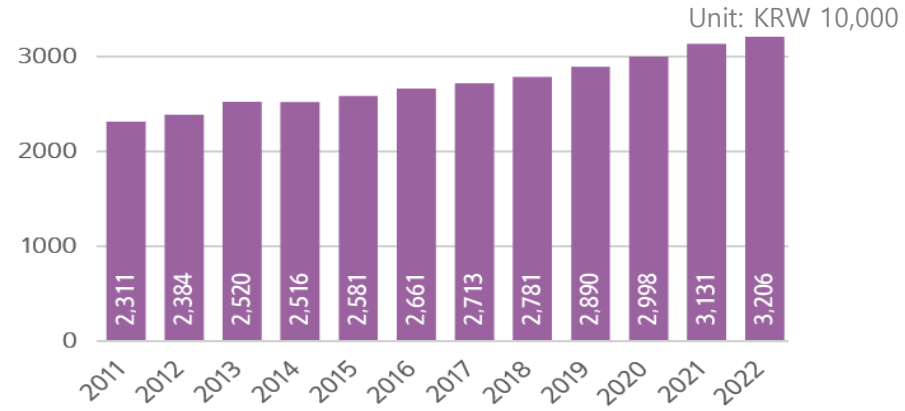
III Key Results

The Trend of the Last Decade – Constant Improvement

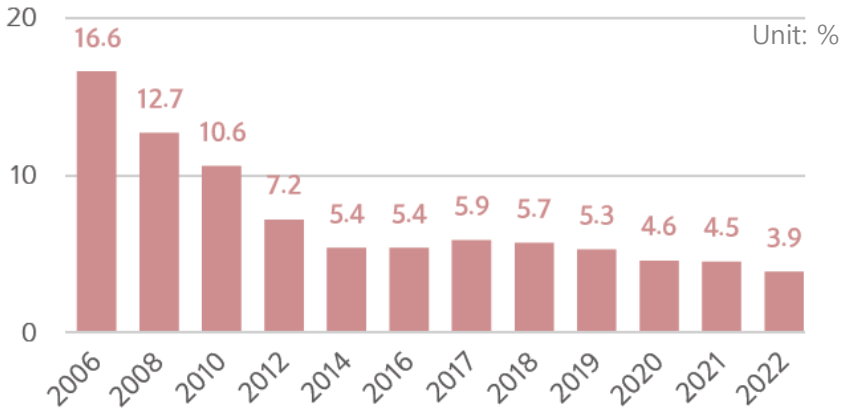
Population with Tertiary Education



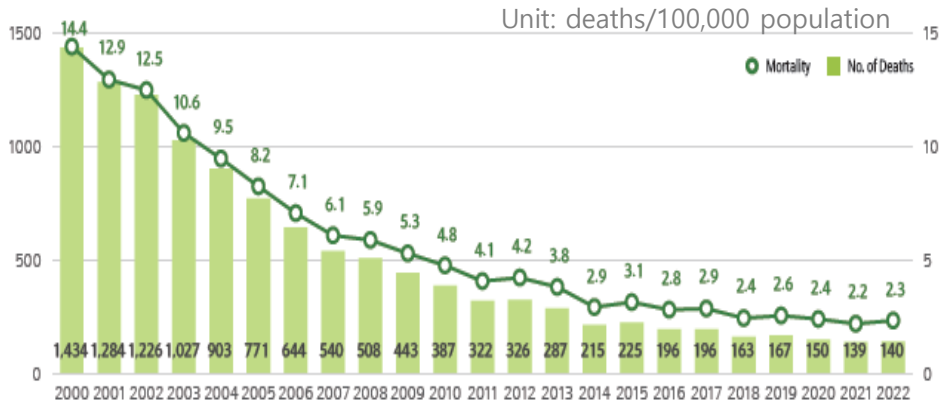
Equivalised Median Income



Dwelling without Basic Facilities



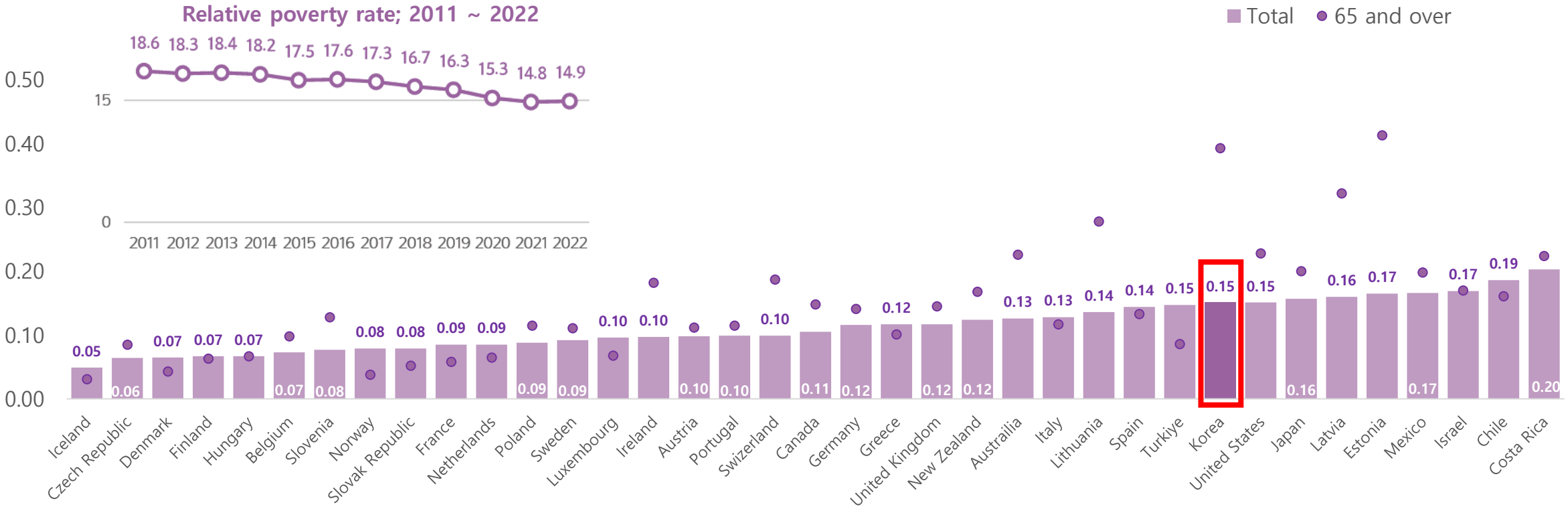
Child Mortality Rate from Safety Accidents



III Key Results

The Trend of the Last Decade – Constant Improvement, But Still Higher than OECD Average

Relative Poverty Rate in OECD(2021)



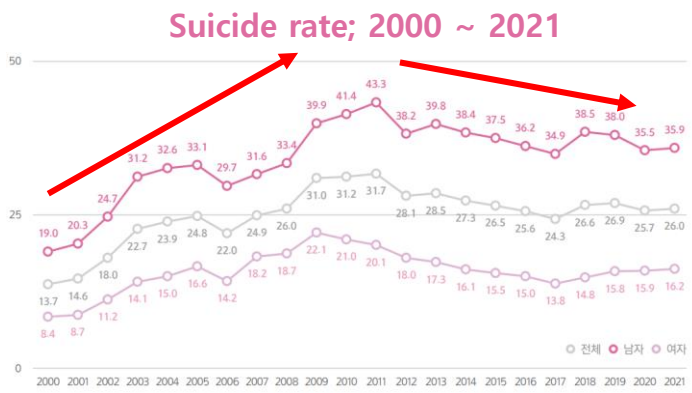
Source: OECD, Stat (OECD Income Distribution Database, retrieved in Jan 2024)
Note: ① These are based on disposable income.
② The 2017 data for Iceland; the 2018 data for Ireland, Italy, Japan, Poland; the 2019 data for Austria, Belgium, Czech, Denmark, Estonia, France, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain; the 2020 data for Australia, Chile, Germany, Israel, Mexico, New Zealand, Switzerland, Turkey and the 2021 data for the United States were used.

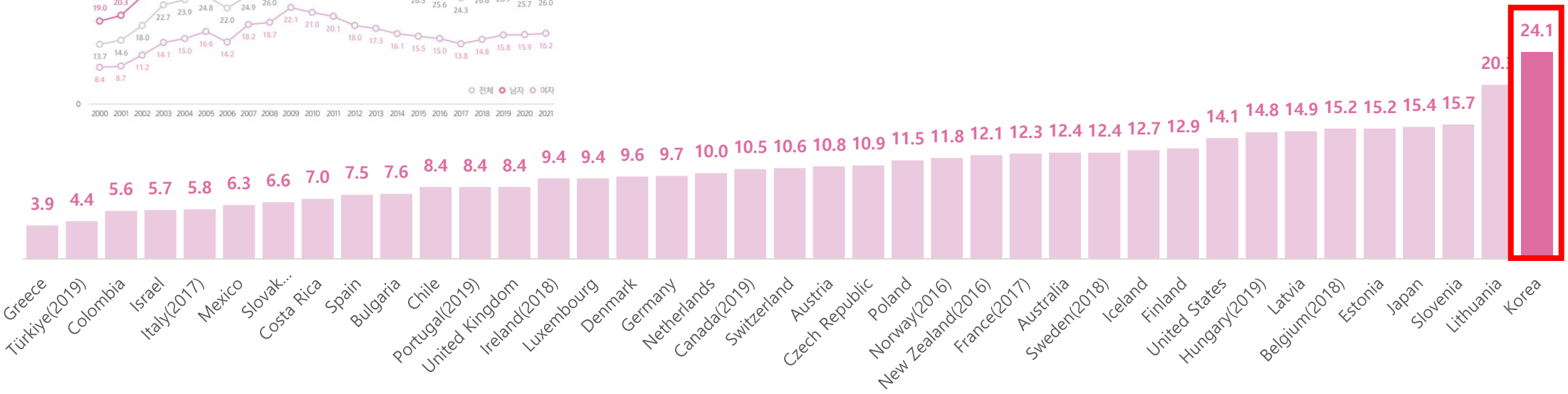
III Key Results

The Trend of the Last Decade – Constant Improvement, But Still Higher than OECD Average

Suicide Rate in OECD (2020)

Unit: deaths per 100 000 population (standardized rates)





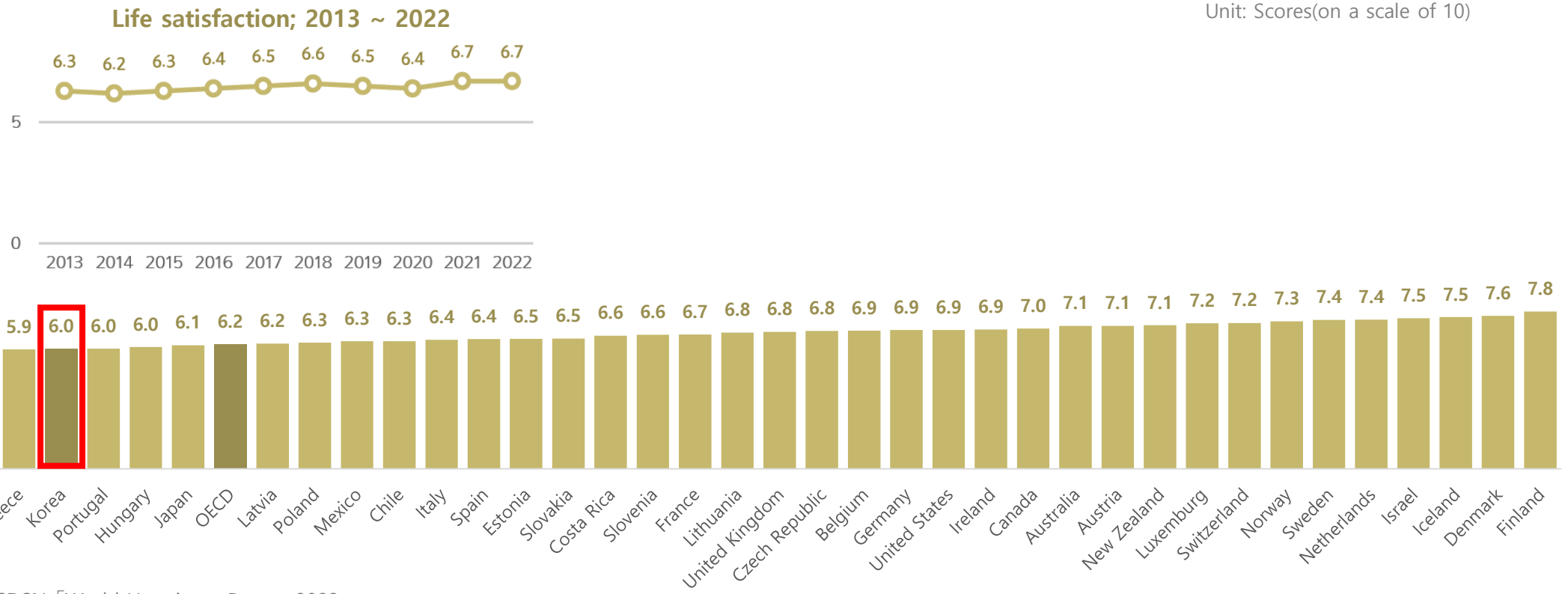
Source: OECD, OECD Health Statistics (retrieved in Aug, 2023)
Note: ① These are aged-standardized suicide rates.
② New Zealand and Norway used data of the year 2016; France and Italy data of the year 2017; and Belgium, Sweden, Ireland data of the year 2018; Türkiye, Slovak Republic, Portugal, Canada, Hungary data of the year 2019

III Key Results

The Trend of the Last Decade – Constant Improvement, But Still Lower than OECD Average

Life satisfaction of OECD(Average of 2020 ~ 2022)

Unit: Scores(on a scale of 10)

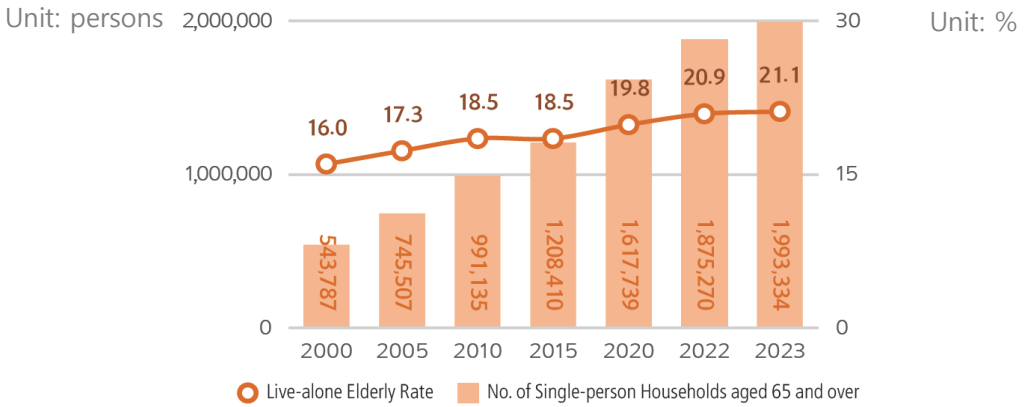


Source: SDSN「World Happiness Report 2023」
Note: ① This is based on the average values from 2020 to 2022.
② This is an evaluation item for life based on average scores on a scale of 0 to 10.

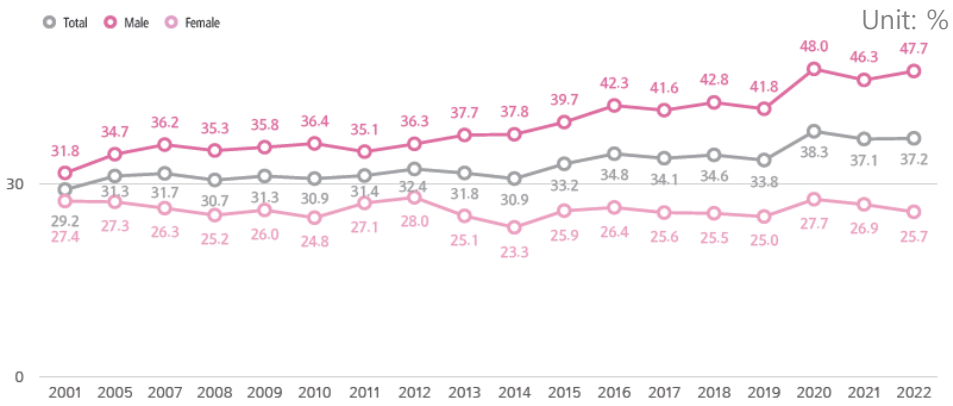
III Key Results

The Trend of the Last Decade – Constant Deterioration

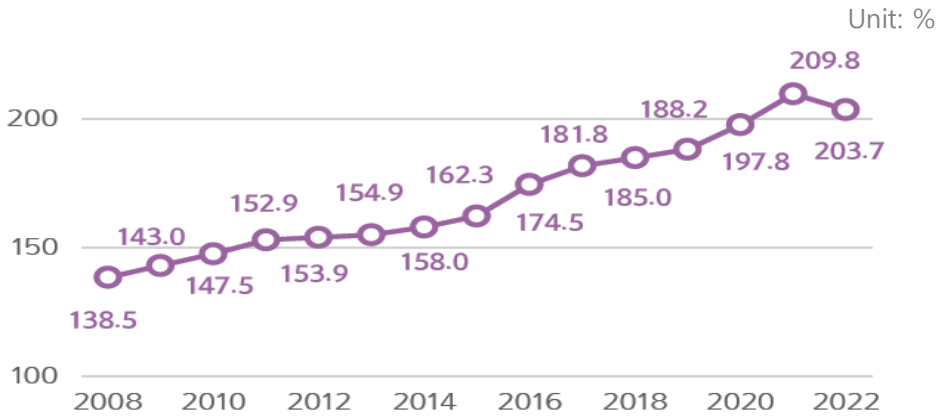
Live-alone Elderly Rate



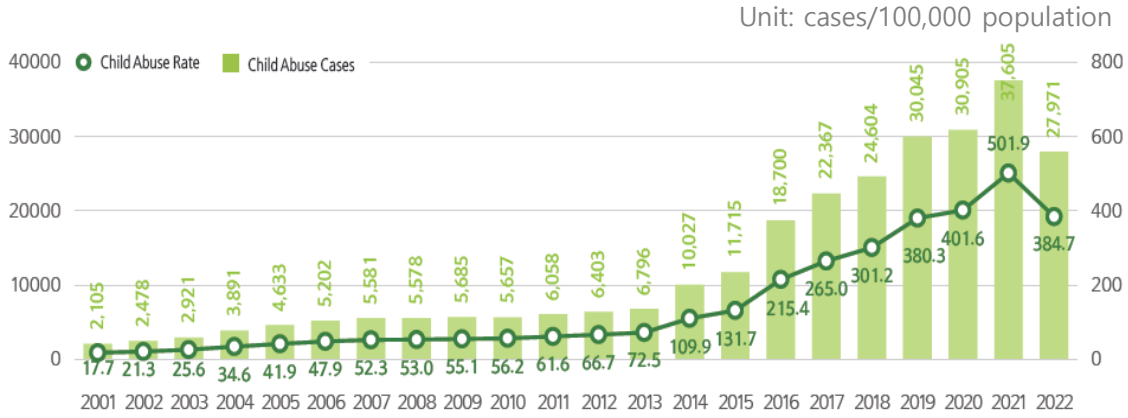
Obesity rate



Household debt ratio



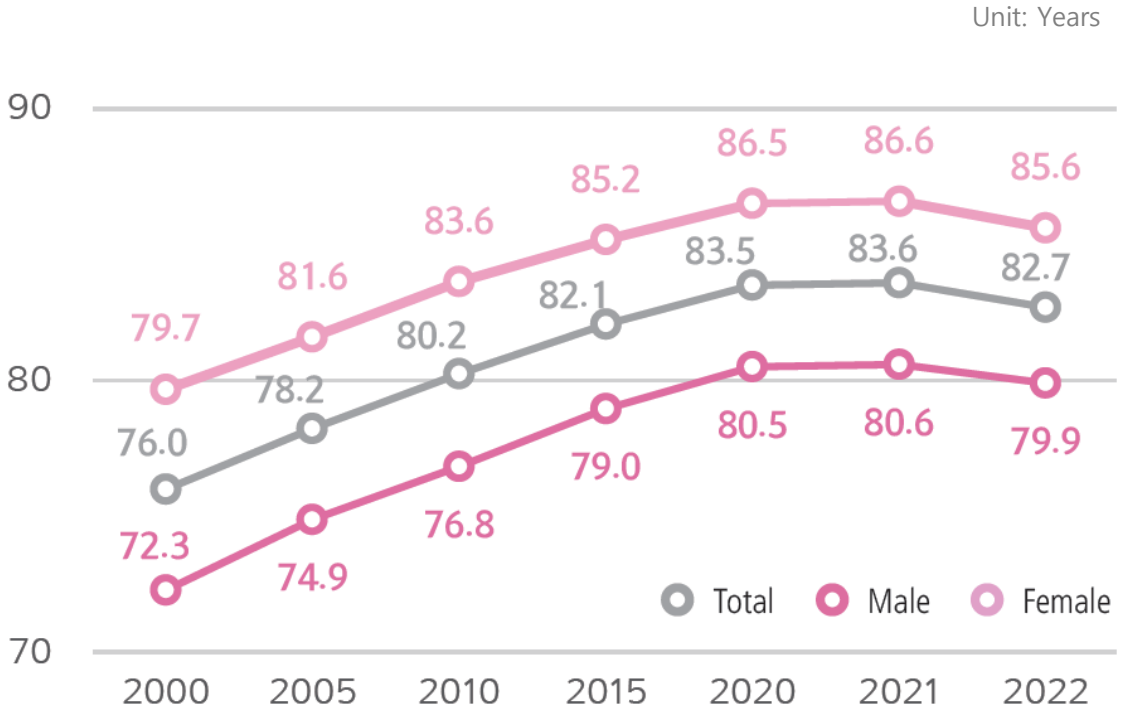
Child Abuse Rate



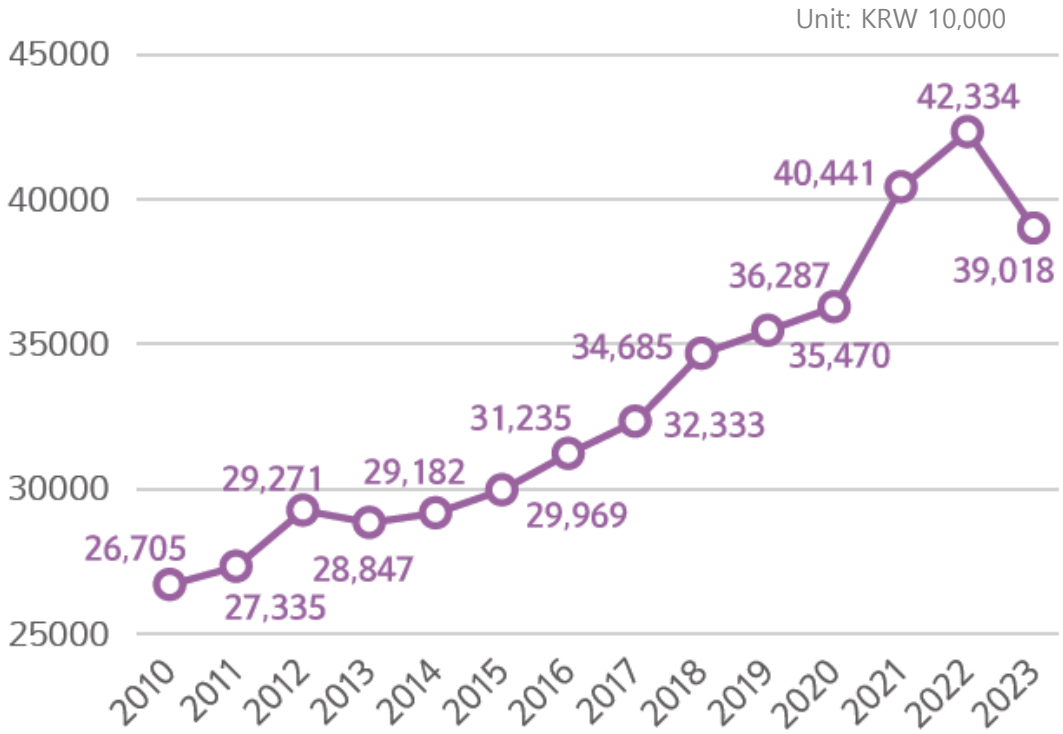
III Key Results

Recent Key Change Indicators

Life Expectancy



Household Net Wealth



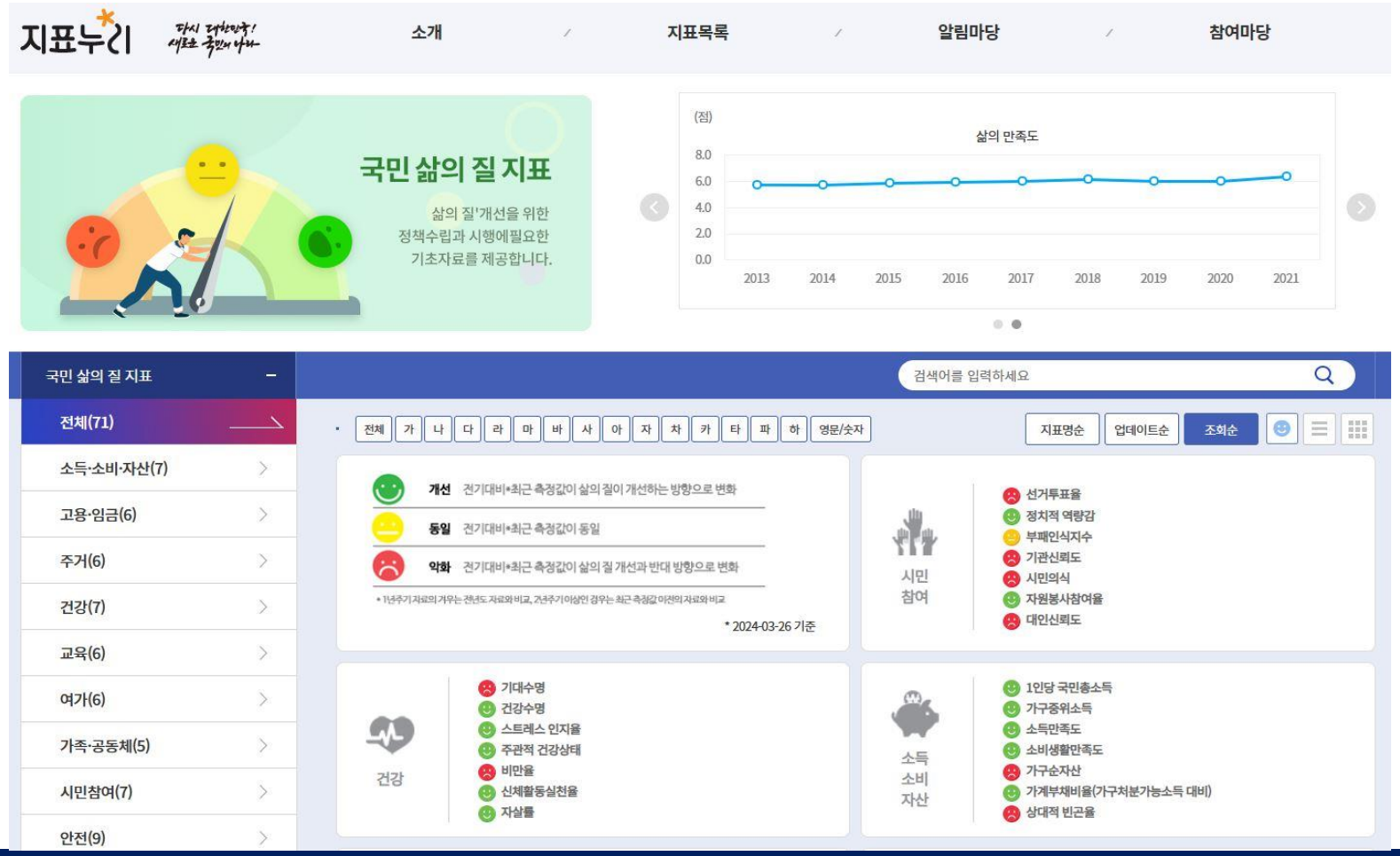
IV

Utilization of QoL

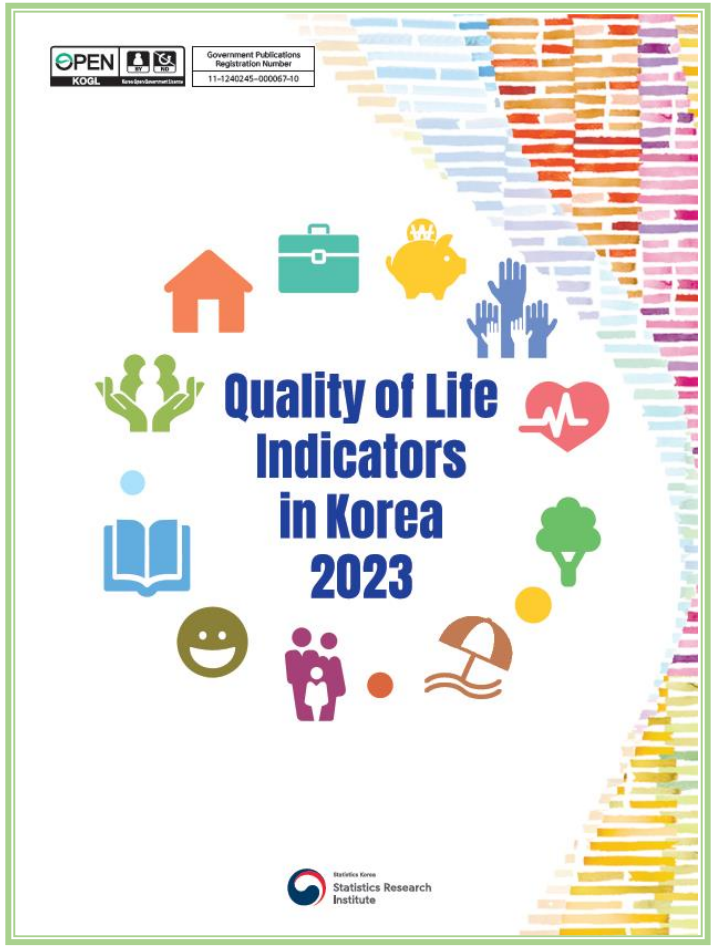
Ⅳ Utilization of QoL

Sharing QoL measures

- Quarterly update QoL indicators on the website (www.index.go.kr/life)



- Publish annual analysis reports(~2019)



Ⅳ Utilization of QoL

Korean Quality of Life Measurement Forum Held Annually

- '15 The Outcomes and Challenges of QoL Measurement in Korea
- '16 The Domestic Implementation of Beyond GDP Agenda
- '17 Relating QoL Indicators to the System of Indicators/Disaggregation of Measurement by region and life course
- '18 The Use of the QoL measurement for Policies
- '19 The direction of Social Indicators reorganization/ Disaggregation of Measurement by region and life course
- '20 Quality of Life in Korea and Youth QoL
- '21 QoL changes caused by COVID-19 and elderly QoL
- '22 Measurement of Happiness and QoL and the Utilization in Policymaking
- '23 Societal Changes and QoL During Digital Transformation
- '24 QoL Measurement, 10 years behind us and 10 years ahead

Ⅳ Utilization of QoL

Measurement Enhancement

- **Disaggregation by life stage:** measuring the QoL of specific target groups in policymaking

Children & Youths Well-being

Research in 2018
Co-Research in 2019~21
Publish in 2022

Young Adult Well-being

Research in 2022

The elderly Well-being

Research in 2019~2020

Ⅳ Utilization of QoL

Children & Youth Well-being Framework

Publish annual report

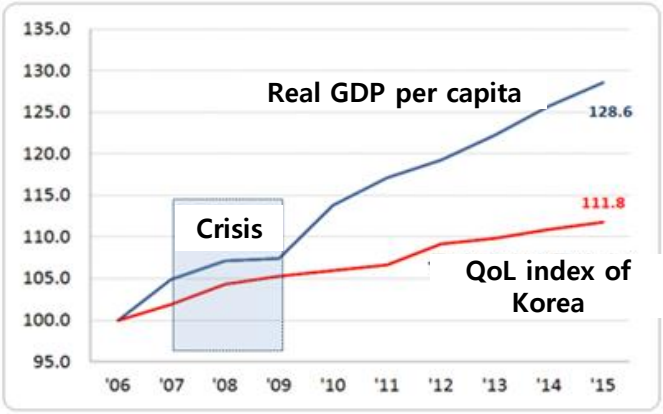
Ⅳ Utilization of QoL

Measurement Enhancement

- **Sub-national Disaggregation:** Standardizing disaggregated regional indicators by means of promoting common indicators related to QoL
  - Expected to encourage policy makers to use regional social indicators and provide consistent support for the advancement of indicators

Domains	Common Indicators (21)
Subjective Well-being	Life Satisfaction, Positive emotions, Negative emotions
Income · Consumption · Wealth	Average income of Household, Income Satisfaction, Degree of Difficulty in a Living
Housing & Transportation	Housing Environment Satisfaction, Transportation Satisfaction, Period of Residence and Permanent Intention
Labor	Sufficiency of Job, Job Satisfaction
Education	Educational Environment Satisfaction
Leisure	Leisure Satisfaction, Satisfaction with Time Use
Health	Medical Service Satisfaction
Social Integration	Interpersonal Trust, Institutional Trust(Optional Item), Social Support, Sense of Belonging to a Community, Satisfaction with Social Welfare Services
Safety	Fear of Crime Victimization, Evaluation of Safety Environment
Environment	Environmental Awareness

Ⅴ Discussion for Next Step



Is it necessary to make a composite index

- The pros and cons of composite indicator and dashboard should be reviewed.
- When making a composite index, we should consider the weight of each indicator and area, the rate of change of indicators, etc.
- We also need to examine the best case of a country making a composite index.

What efforts are required for utilization in policy-making?

- Since policy-making is processed separately by each government agency, it is difficult to promote well-being policies as a whole. When the ruling party switches, it has a possibility of suspending well-being policies.
- For the consistent promotion of well-being policies, the collaboration of NSO with the office of the Prime Minister or ministry of budget is necessary.

International comparability vs. national specialty?

- For enhancement of international comparability, standardization of indicators and development of guidelines are needed.
- Consider OECD BLI indicators and OECD KEP on well-being

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Statistics Research Institute

Thank YOU !

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