

A Decade of Partnership Strengthens Ethiopia's Pulmonary Care and Medical Education

How a KOICA long-term expert helped build clinical capacity, train thousands of doctors, and advance specialized respiratory services in Ethiopia



Since 2016, Prof. Yoo Deok Jong has served in Ethiopia under Global Doctor Program supported by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), contributing to medical education, pulmonary care, and institutional capacity development at Jimma University and St. Paul's Hospital Millennium Medical College.

Over a decade-long commitment, including eight years at Jimma University Medical Center and since 2024 at St. Paul's Hospital Millennium Medical College, his work has focused on strengthening clinical training systems and expanding specialized respiratory care services.

A KOICA-conducted impact assessment highlights significant improvements in clinical competence, service delivery, and institutional capacity, underscoring the value of long-term international technical cooperation.

Strengthening Specialized Pulmonary Care

When the assignment began in 2016, access to advanced pulmonary diagnostics and structured hands-on training in respiratory medicine was limited.

Through close collaboration with Ethiopian colleagues, key services were strengthened and expanded, including bronchoscopy, spirometry, and pulmonary diagnostic laboratories. Interventional procedures such as bronchoscopy and lung biopsies were also introduced and reinforced. These improvements contributed to better diagnostic accuracy and strengthened the management of complex respiratory conditions.



“The continuity of long-term engagement made it possible to gradually build services that could not have been established through short-term support.” - *Summary of institutional feedback from the impact assessment*

Training the next generation of doctors

Over the course of the assignment, approximately 2,000 undergraduate medical students and more than 300 resident physicians received training through lectures, bedside teaching, and clinical supervision.

Nearly 90% of trainees reported improved clinical competence, while 86% of institutional leaders confirmed long-term institutional value. Trainees consistently described the teaching approach as practical, structured, and closely connected to real clinical cases.

~2,000	300+	~90%	86%
Undergraduate Students Trained	Resident Physicians Mentored	Trainees Reporting Improved Competence	Leaders Confirming Long-Term Value

“The most important contribution was not only knowledge, but confidence in clinical decision-making and patient care.” - *Feedback from trained medical residents*

Many trainees also highlighted strengthened skills in clinical reasoning, patient assessment, and professional ethics.

Mentorship that extends beyond the classroom

Beyond formal teaching, Prof. Yoo provided close mentorship in clinical practice, emphasizing patient-centered care, evidence-based medicine, and ethical responsibility.

Several trainees who benefited from this mentorship are now serving as clinicians, educators, and mentors themselves, extending the impact across institutions.

“What stayed with us most was the emphasis on compassion and responsibility toward patients, especially the most vulnerable.” - *Trainee reflection*

Strengthening research and academic capacity

In addition to clinical service and teaching, the assignment supported academic development through mentorship in research design, data analysis, thesis supervision, and academic writing.

Three interns and ten postgraduate students received direct research supervision, contributing to stronger academic engagement and institutional research culture.

The value of long-term cooperation

A key finding of the impact assessment is that sustained, long-term deployment is critical for lasting impact.

Unlike short-term assignments, long-term engagement enabled continuous mentorship, deeper institutional trust, and progressive skill transfer.

“Long-term presence allowed knowledge transfer to become institutional practice rather than individual learning.” - *Institutional leadership feedback*

A lasting legacy in Ethiopia’s health sector

The assignment demonstrates how sustained international cooperation can strengthen health systems through partnership, mentorship, and capacity development.

Prof. Yoo's contributions have supported improved pulmonary care, enhanced medical education, and the professional growth of a new generation of Ethiopian healthcare providers.

As Ethiopia continues to expand specialized healthcare services, this experience underscores a key lesson: sustainable impact is built through continuity, collaboration, and long-term commitment.

