

## 9 Be a Game Changer

Occasionally advocates are so innovative and effective that they not only effect positive change in their desired direction, but they transform the advocacy landscape for everyone else. In the course of my research, there were a very small number of individuals and organizations that my interlocutors would refer to repeatedly. These innovators would be talked about as examples to emulate. They would be discussed as pivot points in the narrative of a country's advocacy. They were described as providing the foundations on which other advocates would build.

The efforts of these innovative advocates do not fit neatly into a particular strategy. Their power does not come from a particular tactic or technique that they employed, but rather from their transformational effect. These advocates were able to “think outside the box” of typical advocacy and do something completely different, something that had—and is having—a transformative effect not just on their issue area of interest but on the process of advocacy itself. In particular, these advocates have found ways to catalyze positive interactive effects among individuals, companies, nonprofits, and governments in ways that changes a zero-sum political game where a small group of individuals and companies win at the expense of the broader public and the planet into a positive-sum game where individual actions by consumers and companies contributed to a replenishing of the commons, rather than its degradation.

To use the language of the Connected Stakeholder Model, these game changers were able to make new networks, reconfigure old ones, and energize both. They found innovative ways to connect stakeholders who were previously disconnected, helped them discover common interests, and identified new ways to work together to promote proenvironmental outcomes.

In some cases, they were able to bring new stakeholders into networks connected to environmental policymakers. In other cases, they took on the role of the artists in the last chapter, shifting broader culture in ways that generated proenvironmental attitudes among the public and policymakers, facilitating proenvironmental policy changes.

This chapter seeks to use three stories of game-changing advocates—drawn from three different countries, sectors, and generations—to illustrate how effective advocacy may not necessarily be about developing a winning strategy over an opponent but rather be about changing the advocacy game into one in which everyone wins. Ma Jun in China comes from the non-governmental organization (NGO) sector. His pollution map has created new platforms of accountability that encourage polluting firms to clean up their act. Koike Yuriko in Japan comes from the government sector. She launched the Cool Biz campaign while she was environmental minister, tapped into the transformative effect that cultural practices can have on environmental outcomes, and has continued to be active in local and global policy transformation as governor of Tokyo. Finally, Jeong Mincheol and Kim Hyungsoo, come from the business sector in South Korea. They founded Tree Planet, an innovative social enterprise that is using gaming and social media technology to reforest the planet.

### **Ma Jun and the Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs: Building a Collaborative, Proenvironmental Policy Ecosystem**

Ma Jun began his career as an investigative journalist for the *South China Morning Post*. In 1999 he wrote *China's Water Crisis*, which has been likened to Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in the way that it raised public awareness of China's environmental problems. In 2004 he spent a year at Yale University as part of its World Fellows program, working closely with faculty in the School of Forestry and Environmental Studies to develop his vision of a nonprofit organization that would bring more transparency to China's environmental problems and develop a multistakeholder platform that would encourage collaborative improvement. As he phrased it to me during a 2010 interview in Beijing, "I am convinced that civic participation is the answer to our environmental problems, and that it starts with transparency." His concept was deceptively simple: create a user-friendly website that made official government data about pollution readily available to the

public. He incorporated the Beijing-based Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs (IPE) as a nonprofit organization in 2006 and launched its public website ([ipe.org.cn](http://ipe.org.cn)) the same year.

With a staff of three people, IPE created the China Water Pollution Map in 2006, and the map has since been expanded to include air and solid waste pollution, as well as governmental transparency measures. The map gathered official, government-reported environmental inspection metrics and made them accessible to everyone. Previously, these factory-level data were publicly available, but people had to know where to find them, and they were required to go to separate websites and government offices to get the records for different towns and companies. IPE collected all of these data in one place, allowing users to click on any part of China and find out the level of various kinds of pollutants in that area, as well as their source. With these data, IPE then listed companies that had pollution violations, making it possible for buyers, the public, and local regulators to put additional pressure on polluting companies to clean up their facilities.

The map and Ma Jun's efforts won him immediate global and local recognition, including being named Green China Man of the Year, as well as one of the one hundred most influential people by *Time* magazine in 2006. His profile, recognition, and influence have only grown over time: In 2012 he won the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize and was named one of *Foreign Policy's* Top 100 Global Thinkers. In 2015 he became the first Chinese social entrepreneur to win a Skoll Award, and he is currently a Global Fellow of the China Environment Forum at the Wilson Center in Washington, DC.

Although the pollution map itself was helpful, the "game-changing" aspect of IPE was the way that it integrated the map's data with a change management tool, which enabled multistakeholder collaborations. IPE's pollution data contain the government inspection records of individual facilities, so it is possible to search the database by company name and find out whether a specific company has met or violated China's environmental regulations, and use that information to track changes over time. The database now contains more than 1.6 million inspection records, as well as additional information from companies seeking to explain their environmental records and their plans for remediation.<sup>1</sup> Among the first groups to see the potential of this new tool were global corporations who already had commitments to green their supply chains but were having difficulty finding ways to monitor their suppliers in China.

One of the earliest multinational corporations to approach IPE was Walmart. As discussed in chapter 7, the global retail giant had made sustainability one of its corporate goals in 2005, so it was eager to take advantage of IPE's new capability to help the company green its supply chain in China. Since Walmart had thousands of local suppliers in China, frequent onsite inspections of each facility were logistically impossible. IPE's database offered a practical solution: Walmart could use it to ascertain whether its suppliers were complying with local environmental regulations. If Walmart discovered that one of its suppliers was in violation of national standards, it would send a formal letter putting the supplier on notice that it needed to improve or it would no longer be able to supply Walmart, naming IPE as an organization that could help it clean up its operations. The local supplier would then contact IPE, which would work with the supplier to develop a plan that would enable it to come back into compliance. The supplier could then take the necessary steps to remedy its environmental issue and provide supporting documentation of its cleanup actions to IPE, which would then publicly disclose the company's actions on IPE's website. This process ensured that the company addressed the problem and also increased the transparency of the process.

Through its actions, IPE shifted the compliance calculations for Chinese manufacturers supplying global multinational corporations. Whereas before, it was common for violating companies to pay fines in lieu of making changes to their manufacturing processes—a legal method for addressing the violation—local manufacturers could now be pressured by their buyers to improve their actual environmental performance even in the absence of more stringent governmental enforcement. Furthermore, polluting companies were rewarded by their buyers for improving their environmental performance; those that did not improve were punished with a loss of business.

As corporate interest in cooperating with IPE to help manage supply chains grew, it became apparent that IPE, with its tiny staff in Beijing, would not be able to meet the demand for third-party audits by itself. Therefore, in 2007 it initiated the Green Choice Alliance (GCA), a coalition of NGOs that would partner with IPE in providing information, supervising third-party audits, and reviewing audit reports. The number of NGOs in the GCA more than doubled in five years, growing from the original twenty-one in 2007 to forty-nine by 2012. The GCA also served important cross-checking,

burden-sharing, and transparency purposes, since approval of all GCA members was required for company records to be removed from “violator” lists.

Third-party audits are an important but not a perfect fix to the problem of environmental violations. Deception related to environmental audits is a serious problem in China. In fact, in recent years specialty consulting firms have formed to help suppliers find ways to pass inspections and audits without having to address their violations.<sup>2</sup> Although it is nearly impossible to guarantee that no cheating occurs, the GCA model involved many parties and created a collaborative process oriented toward improvement rather than punishment, helping to make compliance more cost effective than cheating. In his study about implementing supplier codes of conduct in China, Bin Jiang found that “most buying companies’ auditors or independent third-party auditors do not work with factories together to provide assistance or support regarding how to make the required changes.” He goes on to recommend that buyers and suppliers “set practical, step-by-step goals and give credit for incremental change; measure continuous improvement rather than compliance; [and] reward actual changes.”<sup>3</sup> This is exactly the approach taken by IPE and the GCA: by allowing suppliers to post additional documentation to the IPE website, incremental improvement is recognized. IPE reports are oriented toward disseminating examples of best practices while also documenting and publicizing success stories of how violating companies have been able to find creative ways to address their environmental problems.

IPE’s searchable database and the GCA had successfully created a transparency-based platform that enabled responsible corporations to promote greener supply chain management. However, Ma Jun soon noticed that many of the most highly polluting companies and industries were not taking advantage of the new platform—they didn’t seem to care about compliance or pollution. Therefore, starting in 2010, IPE, along with partner NGOs, decided to begin a campaign that targeted pollution of heavy metals, which is one of the worst forms of pollution from a human health standpoint. They found that the information technology (IT) industry was largely responsible for this kind of pollution in China. Strategically, targeting this industry in particular was politically useful because it helped support a national governmental effort to curb heavy metal pollutants, which had led to thirty-two mass incidents in 2009 and were causing significant harm to China’s public health, food security, and agricultural sector.

Furthermore, many of the highly polluting factories were supplying major multinational corporations with international brands to protect, making those buyers both more vulnerable to consumer pressure and more financially able to respond to the problem.

IPE's first report on the industry outlined the negative consequences of heavy metal pollution, then discussed industry responsiveness to the NGO inquiries. The report highlighted the good behavior of the most responsive companies (e.g., Panasonic and Sanyo)<sup>4</sup> while also making clear which companies had been unresponsive (twenty of the twenty-nine companies did not respond to the initial inquiry). The first IT report was published in April 2010, and three subsequent reports were published quarterly in 2010. IPE's reports, combined with its international media efforts to draw attention to the issue, were highly effective. By the fourth report, nearly every IT firm had responded, and companies were ranked on six criteria having to do with responsiveness and an additional four criteria that included action plans for not just tier 1 but also tier 2 suppliers.

By the time of the fourth report, in January 2011, only one of the twenty-nine technology companies had still not been responsive to IPE's inquiries about its supply chain: Apple. IPE's campaign then shifted its focus to target that industry leader. *The Other Side of Apple* report, published in August 2011, targeted Apple almost exclusively. It included a compelling web video clip that was circulated widely across the internet, highlighting the plight of workers at Apple supplier companies and the suffering of the residents who lived near those factories. The report received extensive global media coverage immediately after it was published. This was followed by a second report that focused extensively on environmental problems caused by Apple suppliers. The campaign worked. After years of avoidance, Apple executives met with Ma Jun in San Francisco in September 2011, and by January 2012, Apple began to disclose its suppliers in China and take concrete steps to engage in better supply chain management in China.

In keeping with its policy of focusing on improvement and rewarding incremental change, the following IPE report on the IT industry, entitled *Apple Opens Up*, highlighted three major Apple suppliers that had been committing serious environmental violations and documented the ways that they were moving to improve their practices. In an impressive turnaround, by 2019 Apple had become the top-performing company according to IPE's Corporate Information Transparency Index, which reports

transparency-related metrics for 384 companies across thirteen different industries.<sup>5</sup>

After its success with Apple, IPE expanded its campaigns to target other industries, and word of the usefulness of its platform for helping companies audit their Chinese suppliers quickly spread to other multinational corporations interested in greening their global supply chains. Companies such as General Electric, Levi's, Nike, Unilever, Coca Cola, and other large multinational corporations that purchase from tens of thousands of suppliers in China are now working closely with IPE to check whether their suppliers are violating Chinese environmental standards and offer those suppliers advice on how to clean up their facilities to move them into compliance.<sup>6</sup>

Although use of IPE's platform had begun to spread among global brands, most local firms continued to conduct business as usual—paying fines rather than cleaning up when they were caught violating environmental regulations. Ma Jun realized that another key pressure point for firms—all firms—is financing, and IPE has been at the forefront of the green finance movement discussed in chapter 7. First, IPE partnered with Chinese banks to encourage them not to provide financing to firms found to be violating environmental regulations. In 2007 the Chinese government became one of the first governments to integrate environmental concerns into its finance policy, and since 2007 it has required all companies seeking loans from the People's Bank of China to demonstrate compliance with environmental regulations.<sup>7</sup> By 2011, China's stock exchange regulators were requiring companies to disclose their environmental information with IPE before doing an initial public offering.<sup>8</sup>

Second, IPE began to target other investors by connecting firm-level environmental data to stock listings. Previously, those using IPE's database had to know the name of a specific firm (often Chinese only) in order to research its inspection records. While this worked for global multinational corporations and other corporations that knew the names of their subcontractors and suppliers, most investors do not know the specific names of suppliers; they just know the parent company's name. IPE began to explore ways to make the environmental records of listed companies more transparent. Through a partnership with the *Securities Times*, IPE developed an online tool that allows investors to research the environmental risk of publicly listed companies. Launched in 2015, the Environmental Index tracked 1,365 key monitored enterprises that were connected to 519 publicly listed

companies.<sup>9</sup> This effort has continued to expand, adding companies and supervisory records and linking individual firms to their stock ticker numbers. As of this writing, IPE's enterprise database contains more than six million firms, of which more than one million have supervisory records.<sup>10</sup> Its listed company database has almost four thousand records.<sup>11</sup>

IPE's most recent innovation has been to make all of these data dramatically more accessible through a mobile app. The Blue Map App (as it is now called) puts the information available on IPE's interactive pollution map into the hands of anyone with a phone. The Blue Map App includes several features designed to make it a very useful tool for consumers and citizens, and it also makes the data gathered useful for enforcement authorities. In addition to basic weather and pollution forecasting data, the Blue Map App includes data that help users understand the source of the air and water pollution that they may be experiencing. Users may also use the app to do the same enterprise name and stock ticker number searches available on IPE's website, enabling them to check the environmental records of individual firms and listed companies.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, the Blue Map App has been fully integrated with the Chinese government's Black and Smelly Waters program, which was launched in 2016 to allow individuals to report pollution violations directly to the Ministry of Ecology and Environment. This means that with just a few clicks, users anywhere in China who observe pollution, such as witnessing dumping, smelling stinky discharge, or hearing suspicious drilling, can upload photos and text government officials. They are guaranteed to receive some kind of response from officials within seven days.<sup>13</sup>

When I asked Ma Jun what he thought the keys to his success were, he listed three: (1) IPE relies only on open-source data. (2) IPE has positive intentions. It is not trying to destroy companies. Although it doesn't condone the belief that firms should have as their sole goal the maximization of profits and should accept pollution as a necessary cost of achieving that goal, it offers a clear path to a solution. (3) IPE always tries to collaborate with other stakeholders.<sup>14</sup>

Ma Jun and IPE have been environmental advocacy game changers. They have not only generated positive environmental policy and behavior change among companies, governments, and consumers; they have shifted the entire landscape of environmental advocacy in China and, indeed, the world. IPE's transparency-based platform has created the information infrastructure



necessary to enable consumers to pressure corporations to change behavior, even in a context in which government enforcement is still weak.<sup>15</sup>

IPE's actions have empowered others: The public interface and data-gathering capacity of the Blue Map App enable government officials to discover and target the pollution that is bothering citizens the most. The enterprise database enables investors—individuals and corporations—to direct their funds toward companies with better environmental records and away from companies that are violating environmental regulations. IPE's consultancy services, its collaborations with other NGOs, and its improvement-oriented approach enable all firms, from tiny local companies to global multinational corporations, to identify ways that they can improve their operations and then implement those improvements.

IPE's database, app, and web tools have facilitated collaborations among multiple stakeholders. They are creating proenvironmental incentives for companies, allowing consumers and citizens to reward proenvironmental companies and political leaders while pressuring those that have been slower to act. By making the connections among consumers, citizens, companies, banks, and government more visible, IPE has formed proenvironmental networks that did not previously exist. By working with each other through these networks, consumers, suppliers, global multinational corporations, banks, and governments are individually able to take meaningful proenvironmental actions, and collectively their actions are transforming the entire system of environmental governance in China.

In short, Ma Jun has catalyzed environmental advocacy in China by thinking beyond traditional dichotomies of confrontation versus co-optation. His creative interactions with the public, nonprofit, and for-profit sectors have made it possible for him not only to craft a single solution but also to build the informational infrastructure for an advocacy ecosystem that nurtures the development of policies and practices that are generating proenvironmental outcomes that are good for individuals, governments, companies, and the planet.

### **Koike Yuriko and Cool Biz: Cultural Innovation to Benefit the Climate and the Economy**

While many of the other advocates featured in this book are engaged in “bottom-up” advocacy, working first at a local, grassroots level in order to

inspire broader change, Koike Yuriko's Cool Biz campaign was a top-down effort to catalyze proenvironmental changes in Japanese (and global) culture that were instituted while she was Japan's environmental minister. Born in 1952 near Kobe, Koike was the daughter of an international businessman who gave her extensive exposure to foreign cultures and encouraged her to travel. Taking his advice to learn more about the world and Arab cultures in particular, she studied Arabic and completed her undergraduate degree in sociology at Cairo University in 1976. After graduation, she worked as an interpreter and in journalism, receiving the Female Broadcaster of Japan award in 1990 for her coverage of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.<sup>16</sup>

She ran for the House of Councillors in 1992 as a member of the Japan New Party and was elected to the House of Representatives the following year. In 2005 Prime Minister Koizumi Junichiro appointed her to be minister of the environment, and from that position she was able to enact some of her many ideas about how to promote better environmental behavior. One of her biggest and most successful was Japan's Cool Biz campaign, which has since spread globally.

Cool Biz encourages people to dress more casually in the summer, without a tie and jacket, so that they can be more comfortable in warmer temperatures. It also encourages businesses to keep their thermostats set higher than usual—no lower than twenty-eight degrees Celsius during the summer months—to save energy.<sup>17</sup> The primary goal of the campaign was to reduce energy consumption in the summer, which would reduce carbon emissions and save money. There were also anticipated benefits for public health—the Japanese have a specific word, “air-con disease” (*koola-byou*), to describe the symptoms that people get from too much air conditioning, such as headaches, dizziness, dehydration, and metabolic dysfunction.<sup>18</sup> Finally, Koike hoped to spur commercial activities as people shopped for Cool Biz clothing to wear to work.

By all accounts, the campaign has been highly successful. In its first year it reduced carbon emissions by 460,000 tons, and by 2012 it was estimated that annual carbon savings had reached 2.2 million tons.<sup>19</sup> Cool Biz spurred more business than expected. Prime Minister Koizumi wore a short-sleeved Okinawan Kariyushi shirt when he launched the campaign on June 1, 2005, and the company that made it immediately received eight hundred orders for the same shirt.<sup>20</sup> The garment industry saw sales increase by more than \$850 million in 2005,<sup>21</sup> with further benefits coming in 2011 with the

launch of Super Cool Biz, a reboot of the Cool Biz campaign that followed the 2011 earthquake and nuclear disaster.<sup>22</sup>

In May 2015, I asked Koike what gave her the idea for Cool Biz. Her response was remarkably similar to Sheri Liao's description of her inspiration for the 26 Degree Campaign in Beijing, discussed in chapter 6.

I had the idea a long time ago. So, when I became [environment] minister, I could do something about it. ... The original idea came because I was concerned about the women workers who are in the office all day. The sales people get to come and go, but those clerical women have to stay in the same place all day. They had to put blankets on their lap to stay warm in the middle of the summer. It was ridiculous!

But, you know, I wasn't the fashion minister.

The [Cool Biz] concept is to achieve the ultimate [environmental] goals and policies, but you have to have sympathy from the people. Without support from the people, even with a lot of budget, you're not going to get anywhere. And with support, it can go well even without a budget. It really didn't cost much. ...

The ministries aren't very good at marketing, but marketing is important. ...

[The Cool Biz campaign] emphasizes cool, happy, emotional things. The issue is global, meaningful, and urgent. You have to start as soon as possible.

Koike had two important insights into the challenge of environmental policymaking: (1) Many of Japan's toughest environmental challenges could be addressed by cultural change and did not need significant financial investment or new technology if people would change their behavior. (2) Environmental policymaking had a marketing problem—proenvironmental change was seen as a sacrifice rather than a beneficial opportunity. When she took office in 2005, Koike thought that the Ministry of Environment could market proenvironmental behavior that would be attractive to citizens, businesses, and the government, which in turn had the potential to generate enormous environmental benefits for everyone.

Culturally, it is impossible for junior-ranked people in a Japanese office to shed their ties and jackets if senior managers are all wearing suits and ties, so she recruited top businesspeople and senior politicians to promote the idea that more casual summer attire was not just acceptable but also desirable. After Prime Minister Koizumi launched the campaign wearing a short-sleeved shirt on June 1, 2005, he followed this up with a cabinet meeting in which all the cabinet ministers were encouraged to dress in a summer fashion, leaving their ties at home.

On June 5, 2005, several of Japan's top CEOs took part in a Cool Biz fashion show during the 2005 World Exposition.<sup>23</sup> Throughout that summer,

the prime minister, cabinet ministers, Supreme Court judges, and top business leaders were frequently seen in public and covered by the press wearing short-sleeved shirts and forgoing a tie.<sup>24</sup> Many businessmen were initially unsure about how to respond, some pocketing ties “just in case,” but as the summer of 2005 progressed, the public grew more accustomed to seeing men in more casual dress, and the younger generations celebrated.<sup>25</sup> During the first year, workers reported that fewer than a third of businesses were implementing Cool Biz, but by 2007 the figure had reached 47 percent, and by 2009, 57 percent of those surveyed were working in offices that had adopted Cool Biz.<sup>26</sup>

Koike used her international experience to collaborate with foreign dignitaries in promoting Cool Biz at home and spreading it abroad, and foreign delegations welcomed the opportunity to showcase their traditional clothing. Not surprisingly, given Koike’s connections to the region, one of the first delegations to join the Cool Biz campaign came from Arab countries. On June 16, just two weeks after its launch, a group of ambassadors, including those from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, arrived to their meeting with Prime Minister Koizumi dressed in their traditional attire.<sup>27</sup> The following year, the Environmental Ministry hosted a “Cool Asia” fashion show in Tokyo where top Asian diplomats came in designer-made summer clothing. While Shinzo Abe (who was chief cabinet secretary at the time) sported a Louis Vuitton suit, foreign guests showcased traditional attire made from local fabrics—South Korea’s Ra Jong-yil wore a stylish jacket made from *moshi*, a traditional Korean cloth, and China’s Wang Yi stole the show in a Tang dynasty–design shirt woven from summer-friendly hemp.<sup>28</sup>

Inspired by Japan’s success, in 2006 South Korea’s Ministry of Environment cohosted the Cool Biz Fashion Campaign with the Green Fund.<sup>29</sup> Three years later it conducted a public naming contest for South Korea’s version of Cool Biz, and “Coolmaepsi,” a combination of “cool” and the Korean word for style, *maepsi*, won. Also in 2006, the UK Trades Union Congress began promoting “Cool Work” fashions to allow employees to be healthier and more comfortable in the summer’s sweltering heat and encourage employers to reduce electricity use.<sup>30</sup> In 2008 UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon launched Cool UN, raising the air conditioner settings from twenty-two to twenty-five degrees Celsius in most secretariat buildings.<sup>31</sup> By 2018, Cool Biz had even spread to North Korea.<sup>32</sup>

Japan’s efforts to shift culture in environmentally friendly ways also moved beyond Cool Biz. In 2006 Koike launched Mottainai Furoshiki to

reduce the use of single-use bags and packaging. A *furoshiki* is a large cloth traditionally used in Japan to wrap gifts, carry lunch boxes, and bring shopping home from the market. *Mottainai* is a Japanese word that means “useless waste” or “wasteful.”<sup>33</sup> In 2011, Cool Biz was upgraded to Super Cool Biz, sparked by the energy conservation efforts made necessary by the shutdown of nuclear power plants following the Fukushima disaster. Super Cool Biz advocated even more casual attire—short sleeves and even shorts, not just no tie or jacket—as well as using blinds to block the sun, shifting working hours to the morning, taking more vacation time during the summer, and working from home.<sup>34</sup> The following year, the ministry promoted Cool Share—a campaign that promoted gathering together to share cooler spaces such as family rooms, malls, parks, and the beach rather than cooling many individual spaces. The idea was to promote community development while also reducing energy consumption.<sup>35</sup>

Cool Biz has become an annual event in Japan, celebrating fifteen years in 2019, and has spread across the world. In May 2015 in Tokyo, when I spoke with Doi Kentaro, the Ministry of Environment official who was in charge of implementing Cool Biz, about why the campaign was successful, he credited Koike for both the original idea and its ultimate success. “She came up with the basic ideas of no ties in the summer and then got [Prime Minister] Koizumi and [Toyota president and president of Keidanren] Okuda [Hiroshi] to come on board. It had to come from the top. It really wouldn’t have been possible if the top of government and business hadn’t been promoting it.”

As with our other game changers, Koike did not stop innovating with one successful campaign. After holding several other positions in national politics, including that of defense minister (2007), she ran for governor of Tokyo in 2016 and won a landslide victory even without the support of her party (the Liberal Democratic Party supported a different candidate). As governor, she has made environmental policy one of the cornerstones of her administration, and she is using this to position herself as not just a local but also a global leader on the issue. Every year her influence and ambitions for making proenvironmental changes have expanded.

In 2017, soon after taking office, Koike signed a memorandum of understanding with the mayor of London to promote collaboration between the two cities in a range of areas of mutual interest, including “developing and promoting Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) investment and

green finance.”<sup>36</sup> The following year she hosted the 2018 Tokyo Forum for Clean City and Clear Sky, which resulted in twenty-two mayors signing the Tokyo Declaration on Realization of Clean Cities and Clear Skies, which committed their cities to reducing waste, promoting zero emissions, and sharing best practices. They also indicated their “aim to create a social movement through comprehensive advancement of various activities, including raising enthusiasm among the citizens, cooperating with private companies that have excellent technologies, and building effective system & policies.”<sup>37</sup>

In 2019, in conjunction with the 2019 G20 meetings to be held in Tokyo the following month, Koike hosted the U20 Mayors Summit and Urban Resilience Forum. The final communiqué from that meeting was endorsed by the leaders of thirty cities, which together represented 126 million people. It committed those cities to a number of ambitious targets, including peaking their emissions by 2020 and reaching zero emissions by 2050, achieving 100 percent renewable electricity by 2030 and 100 percent renewable energy by 2050, enacting policies mandating that new buildings operate at zero net carbon by 2030, and phasing out the use of single-use plastic.<sup>38</sup>

Koike inherited an environmentally committed city from her predecessor, and she is continuing to build on that legacy. Tokyo implemented one of the world’s first municipal-level cap-and-trade programs in 2010. The goal for carbon emissions reduction in the second compliance period (2015–2019) was 15–17 percent, but under Koike’s leadership the city almost doubled that, achieving a 27 percent reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> in 2017 as compared with the base year (average of 2002–2007 emissions) among covered facilities.<sup>39</sup>

As with her Cool Biz campaign, Koike’s environmental (and other) initiatives are largely done in partnership with others. In developing and executing the programs, the municipal government works closely with individual citizens, the nonprofit sector, and for-profit companies to enhance the public good. For example, the city has a program to collect unwanted cell phones and small electronics in order to harvest the components to make the five thousand metals needed for the Olympic games; seventy thousand devices had already been collected by December 2017. As part of the governor’s effort to promote the development of a hydrogen society, the metropolitan government is cooperating with manufacturers and energy providers to expand the number of hydrogen stations in the city and the use of fuel-cell buses. The Tokyo Financial Big Bang, launched in November

2017, aimed to catalyze growth in financial technology, including green finance and environmental, social, and governance investment in the city.<sup>40</sup>

With all of her initiatives, Koike has worked to energize new stakeholders in the effort to shift consumption patterns in more environmentally friendly ways. She had created new networks that connect business, political, and nonprofit leaders in collective efforts to promote healthier, more environmentally sustainable ways of living. Through multiple efforts at the local, national, and international levels, she has facilitated cultural change, shifting the conception of proenvironmental behavior change from a painful sacrifice made by individuals and corporations to a healthy, fun, and profitable opportunity that can benefit everyone.

In sum, after many years working as an advocate at the grassroots and meta-levels of policymaking, Koike has moved to become an important environmental advocate who is a game changer operating at the top of local, national, and global policymaking. She is helping to change collective ideas about environmental policymaking as a zero-sum game of competition with stakeholders fighting other stakeholders for their small slice of the pie to one in which governments, both national and local, can act as catalysts for change, helping to incentivize proenvironmental behavior and offering models of policies that work for cities and countries that continue to struggle with developing win-win-win environmental solutions.

### **Jeong Mincheol, Kim Hyungsoo, and Tree Planet: Social Entrepreneurs Reforest the Planet (and Make Peace along the Way)**

All of the game changers featured in this chapter have developed innovative ways to direct public and corporate participation toward proenvironmental action within their own countries and across the region. Whereas Ma Jun works primarily in the nonprofit sector and Koike Yuriko acts in the public sector, Jeong Mincheol and Kim Hyungsoo are primarily in the private sector, using social and market forces to spur engagement and fund reforestation projects around the world. Similar to Ma and Koike, Jeong and Kim didn't just come up with one good idea and stop—they continue to find creative new ways to expand public awareness and direct financial capital toward improving environmental outcomes.

The idea for Tree Planet came when Jeong and Kim were bunkmates (along with thirteen others) serving out their mandatory two-year military

service in South Korea. They had both studied animation and film during college and were both interested in environmental advocacy. As they talked about nature and dreamed of trees, they began to investigate how they could use their technical and creative skills to do something about the deforestation problem. At the time (2008), the digital games Tamagotchi and Happy Farm were very popular, so the two friends wondered whether they could find a way to make trees into characters (like Tamagotchi) and somehow link a virtual tree-growing process (like Happy Farm) with growing real trees.

They began to explore the idea on their days off—traveling to Seoul and other parts of South Korea to talk with business leaders, environmental activists, arborists, and local government officials.<sup>41</sup> By 2009 their ideas were beginning to gel, and their timing was fortuitous. Two years earlier, the South Korean government had enacted the Social Enterprise Promotion Act, which was designed to support the development of prosocial businesses. Under the terms of the act, the national, city, and provincial governments would all develop social enterprise support plans every five years, and the Social Enterprise Promotion Program.<sup>42</sup>

The Seoul Metropolitan Government was quick to respond. Inspired by the establishment of the Office of Social Innovation and Civic Participation by US president Barack Obama in 2009, and seeking to address the employment fallout from the global financial crisis, the government enacted the Seoul Enterprise Promotion Ordinance,<sup>43</sup> which allowed it to identify and support potential social entrepreneurs.<sup>44</sup> The city's Social Enterprise Promotion Program offered financial support, education, and social networking opportunities for potential social entrepreneurs. The program also provided payroll support for low-income and immigrant employees, as well as matching funds for business development expenses such as market research and advertising.<sup>45</sup>

Jeong and Kim were among the first group of entrepreneurs to take advantage of the social start-up excitement in the city and South Korea's growing social entrepreneurial ecosystem. Ten days after finishing their military service, the two friends incorporated Tree Planet. Although everyone they talked with liked the idea for a game about growing trees, there wasn't clarity about how it could turn into a business model. As Jeong put it to me during a conversation in Seoul in 2019, "We got to be part of the first generation of social entrepreneurs. [Although people liked the game,] no



one believed this crazy business about making a forest. No one cared about the environment, and people didn't think it could be a business model. But then investors saw that it could work, and it took off." Tree Planet garnered immediate attention, placing third in the Global Social Venture Competition in 2011 and winning the Korea Mobile Award Grand Prize in 2012.<sup>46</sup> Its gaming app had more than one million downloads by 2014.<sup>47</sup>

The basic idea behind the Tree Planet gaming app was to connect game players who were taking care of virtual trees with the planting and care of real trees planted in places suffering from desertification. The game made money from advertising (e.g., a Prius might drive past your avatar while it is watering your tree, or a chemical company's logo might appear on the fertilizer you use to feed your tree) and from in-app purchases (e.g., to buy heroes with special powers to help your tree grow). The funds were then given to NGOs that planted the trees.

One of the first projects was a collaboration with Hanwha, a Chinese chemical and solar power company. It began with advertising through Tree Planet and then deepened its collaboration to help Tree Planet site a forest in an area of Ningxi, China, that was suffering from desertification and use Hanwha solar panels to run the irrigation system. Together they ended up planting more than four hundred thousand trees in the forest, which has seen an incredible turnaround from arid desert to rich greenery.<sup>48</sup> The game continued to increase in popularity, and by 2014, 650,000 users had planted more than eight hundred thousand trees in thirteen forests in five different countries.<sup>49</sup>

Many Tree Planet users were also K-Pop fans, and Tree Planet began to receive requests from fans to build forests not just based on their gaming characters but also based on real K-Pop stars. Kim and Jeong responded by establishing "Star Forests." Fans could establish forests for their favorite K-Pop (or other) stars to celebrate the group or mark special events (e.g., the TVXQ forest was established to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the group). Some Star Forests are symbolically meaningful, such the Paul McCartney Beatles Forest located within the Dorasan Peace Park in the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea.<sup>50</sup> Tree Planet would collect donations, work with local government officials to identify a place that needed new trees (often a section of a public park), and then contract with local nonprofits or arborists to plant the trees. The Star Forests became a place where fans could gather and the stars themselves could hold events.<sup>51</sup> There are now

more than forty Star Forests, which have been supported by fans from more than twenty countries.<sup>52</sup>

As Tree Planet was expanding its Star Forests, tragedy struck South Korea. On April 16, 2014, more than 300 people, including 250 school children, died when the MV *Sewol* sunk on its way to Jeju Island. One of the individuals who was deeply affected by the disaster was Sean Ferrer, son of Audrey Hepburn, who had spent a year in South Korea in the 1970s while working on a film project and still felt closely connected to the country. Soon after the accident, he reached out to Tree Planet with the idea of building a memorial forest. Ferrer knew of Tree Planet's Star Forests and thought they could help him build a memorial forest for the ferry victims.

Kim and Jeong loved the idea and began to study how memorial forests could work, contacting local government officials to find appropriate land on which to plant their forest and discussing other logistics related to fundraising. During their planning period, the press and the public were flinging accusations at public officials and the ferry company, seeking to assign blame, and Tree Planet realized that a memorial forest had the potential to bypass the negative politics surrounding the tragedy. A memorial forest could offer a healing moment for victims' families as well as an opportunity to contribute something lasting and positive for those, like Ferrer, who were not immediate victims but sought to offer condolences.

Planning was difficult. Not only did they have to find a location that was appropriate—somewhat near the accident, accessible enough for people to visit, in need of trees, and available for reforestation—they also had to design the forest and the memorial. They came up with brilliant branding for the project, “foRest in Peace,” and filled the forest with symbolism. The location is 4.16 kilometers from Paengmok Port, and the memorial wall with victims' names is 416 centimeters long to honor the date the ferry sank (April 16). Gingko trees were chosen to populate the forest because of their thousand-year lifespan.<sup>53</sup> Although the number of victims was 304, only 300 trees were planted. The mismatch was intentional because the forest is meant to be symbolic and collective. Furthermore, if the number of trees and the number of victims matched exactly, and a tree later got sick, damaged, or died, those natural occurrences might cause further trauma for the survivors, so the forest was planted with 300 trees.<sup>54</sup>

After almost a year of planning, Tree Planet announced its plans for the memorial forest and opened the donation platform. By the time of the

groundbreaking ceremony held on April 9, 2015, about year after the ferry went down, it had raised more than 200 million won (about \$185,000) from 2,985 people from South Korea and abroad, which was more than double its initial goal of 100 million won.<sup>55</sup>

The success of its first “foRest in Peace” opened a new chapter in Tree Planet’s business model. Kim and Jeong recognized that foRests offer a living, lasting memorial for victims and created an opportunity for a wide range of people to contribute to and be in solidarity with victims, even if they are geographically far away. They also provide a chance for some participants to gather in person for a meaningful ceremony. Efforts to remember a tragedy are frequently stymied because the media and key actors become more focused on assigning blame and avoiding responsibility than on finding a meaningful way to honor victims and care for their loved ones. foRests avoid many of the political problems that arise when a government or company attempts to craft a memorial and ceremony for victims on their own.

For example, one of the most intractable political issues in contemporary Japanese-Korean relations is the issue of comfort women, the women and girls, many of whom were Korean, who were forced to provide sex for Japanese soldiers during World War II. While governments and activists argued about how Japan could offer a sincere apology, Tree Planet planted two foRests (one in Seoul’s Peace Park, and the other in China) to honor these women and girls. The foRests are garden forests that include flowers because the “grandmothers like flowers,” and some of the victims and their families were able to gather and speak about both pain and healing at the ceremony.<sup>56</sup> In 2016 Tree Planet began working on a “foRest for peace” in North Korea. Although it has been stalled because of political tensions, the company is poised to begin again as soon as it becomes possible.<sup>57</sup>

Through their participation in the foRest ceremonies, Jeong and Kim realized that they wanted to create more opportunities for individuals to connect directly with trees—real trees, not just virtual ones. Jeong read Joan Maloof’s *Nature’s Temples* (2016) and was moved by its observation that old-growth trees have their own characters. He began to think about how Tree Planet could help people value and understand trees as having their own characteristics, to care for trees rather than seeing them as generic inanimate objects. The Tree Planet game required each player to take a personality test at the beginning of the game and assigned them a tree to care for

that had specific features.<sup>58</sup> Jeong and Kim began to think about how they could help people feel connected to the individual characters of real trees.

Their musings coincided with several air-quality scares in Seoul,<sup>59</sup> which led to a corresponding explosion in the market for air-purifying systems.<sup>60</sup> Jeong and Kim thought that rather than adding more machines to our lives, trees and natural plants do a much better job of purifying the air, are pleasant to look at, don't require electricity to run, live much longer, and won't end up in a landfill when they finally give out. They came up with the idea for a "companion tree," a tree that you could buy and care for as a kind of pet, and it would offer companionship and clean air for you.

Tree Planet selected trees that had special characteristics to become companion trees. For example, they were rare, could purify the air, and were indigenous to Korea. Tree Planet would give buyers information about the tree's unique characteristics when they shipped it to them. Furthermore, for every tree that someone bought for their house or garden, another tree would be planted in areas threatened by desertification, or in areas suffering from fine dust pollution, or in botanical gardens devoted to preserving endangered species.<sup>61</sup>

The idea of a special tree as a gift has spread in several ways. One has been to replace the giant plastic wreaths commonly given for weddings and funerals with live plants. Rather than a plastic wreath that would be thrown out at the end of a ceremony, the couple or family would receive a small tree—complete with a beautiful label and appropriate message—that could be planted or kept as a houseplant rather than thrown away. Furthermore, as with the other companion trees, the purchase of the tree for the ceremony would result in another tree being planted in a place that needed it.

Another demand for companion trees that has been expanding is in classrooms. As concerns about air pollution in Seoul grew, so did worries about indoor air quality, especially in schools. In 2018, the government mandated that air purifiers be deployed in classrooms with vulnerable populations like young and special-needs children,<sup>62</sup> and in 2019 it declared the air pollution problem a "social disaster" in order to enable the use of disaster management funds to buy the purifiers.<sup>63</sup> The significant investment is being made even though purifiers take energy to run, are often loud, can't purify all the air in the room, suffer from mechanical problems, and will eventually be added to a landfill.<sup>64</sup> Tree Planet thought that its air-purifying plants would be a better option than commercial air filters. After extensive

research, it found that nine of its plants could purify a classroom's air as well as or better than a typical commercial air filter.<sup>65</sup>

In early 2019 Tree Planet reached out to some of its corporate sponsors to suggest a clean air donation program to make these plants available to classrooms. Companies would buy the plants to donate to the schools; Tree Planet would train the teachers to take care of the trees; and the teachers would teach the students. With seventeen to twenty students per elementary school classroom, there would be one plant for every two to three students. The students would name the tree, learn to care for it, and even come to school during holidays to water it. The students would learn the importance of trees in their ecosystem and how to care for them. In only the first six months, Tree Planet created "forests" in more than one thousand classrooms.<sup>66</sup>

As its business grew, Tree Planet needed more office space, so it began to lease space in a WeWork coworking office. Once there, Jeong and Kim noticed that their employees and the other WeWork users drank coffee—a lot of coffee. Since coffee comes from trees, Jeong and Kim wondered whether they could use coffee as another way to connect people to trees. Upon further investigation, they learned that coffee is frequently harvested in environmentally harmful ways and that the coffee farmers did not make much money from the coffee they grew because they sold only the raw beans rather than processed beans. Because of Jeong and Kim's experience in reforestation projects in China and elsewhere, they knew how to build seedling facilities located off the grid using solar power. The solar power in a coffee plantation could not only power the seedling and processing facility, it could also light up the plantation at night, making nighttime picking possible when daytime temperatures rose too high. Tree Planet reached out to WeWork, Korean coffee suppliers, and the Korea International Cooperation Agency to put together a plan to promote shade-grown coffee rather than clear cutting and build local processing plants that would generate more profit for local farmers. So far, they have supported projects in Nepal, Rwanda, and Indonesia.<sup>67</sup>

Jeong and Kim's Tree Planet is less than ten years old, so they have not had as much of a game-changing effect on others when compared with Ma Jun or Koike Yuriko. However, even in this short period of time, it is possible to see the broader transformative effects of their innovations. Their gaming idea has been picked up by others—in 2016 Alipay's mobile client,

Ant Financial Services Group, offered a new game called Ant Forest that allows users to plant virtual trees in virtual forests that would then result in real trees being planted in areas of China in need of reforestation.<sup>68</sup> Between its launch in 2016 and 2019, the game has caused more than fifty million trees to be planted across more than five hundred square kilometers.<sup>69</sup> The Korea International Cooperation Agency is expanding its efforts to help South Korea's social entrepreneurs go global.<sup>70</sup> And home decorators around South Korea have adopted Tree Planet's model of companion trees, marketing house and garden plants not merely as decorations for your house but rather as special gifts for loved ones and as a replacement for plastic congratulations wreaths.<sup>71</sup>

Tree Planet is also continuing to develop new ways to leverage the market to spread public environmental awareness and craft collaborations that unlock private capital for the good of the public and the planet. It is currently working to reforest a landfill in Seoul<sup>72</sup> and is continuing and expanding its sTreet Campaign<sup>73</sup> to plant trees on city streets, as discussed in the previous chapter. As is the case with the other two game changers profiled in this chapter, Jeong and Kim have found ways to move beyond traditional advocacy "boxes." They are using commercial markets to change the ways that individuals think about trees, giving them character and personality and helping people form relationships with them. They have found creative collaborations that enable private individuals and corporations to work with governments and nonprofit organizations to reforest areas that need more trees. And as with the other two game changers, they are contributing to the construction of an advocacy ecosystem that nurtures collaborative solutions that benefit the planet. They have networked consumers, businesses, nonprofits, and local government officials together in ways that are facilitating proenvironmental behavior change across South Korea.

### **Conclusion: Transforming a Zero-Sum Game into a Positive-Sum Game**

At first glance, the game changers profiled in this chapter may appear to have nothing in common since they come from different countries, different sectors, and different generations. I selected them from among all the advocates I interviewed for this book because they are all having an outsized effect on environmental advocacy that is reaching far beyond their own efforts. They are contributing to a transformation of the entire advocacy

landscape by changing what had been a zero-sum game of environmental exploitation into a positive-sum game of environmental restoration.

All of these game changers have found ways to engage the public on a massive scale and to catalyze cooperation across sectors. In many ways, they are transforming the “tragedy of the commons” problem, in which individual use of public resources results in the depletion of those resources and their transformation into private goods, into a “replenishing of commons” solution, in which individual consumption of private goods is contributing to the expansion and enrichment of public resources.

Ma Jun did this by building a platform that enabled consumers and investors to direct their capital toward proenvironmental companies and away from those that are harming the environment. This, in turn, improved the working conditions, lives, and environments of people in and around polluting factories that were encouraged and supported in their cleanup efforts. It supported the dramatic expansion of green finance, spurring the development of innovative proenvironmental firms and catalyzing the restructuring of polluting companies. The Blue Map App has empowered citizens to contribute to the betterment of their neighborhoods and rewarded government officials who make improvements. Individual and corporate actions made out of self-interest are now directed in ways that help the public good and the planet.

Koike Yuriko enabled consumers to direct their consumption toward fashion choices that not only were stylish and more comfortable but also reduced the energy consumption of their homes, offices, and cities. This, in turn, inspired other countries to engage in similar campaigns and helped support new businesses focusing on eco-fashion and green building design. Her work at the national and international levels enabled her to reshape Tokyo’s urban policymaking to develop a city where proenvironmental choices made by consumers and companies are contributing to a healthier and a more economically prosperous city.

Jeong Mincheol and Kim Hyungsoo have channeled the energy of video gamers, coffee drinkers, and home decorators toward reforestation projects around the world. They are training children and adults to think about trees with the same love and care that they might pets. They are using forests to heal decades-old emotional wounds. As Ma Jun did with the Blue Map App, they have found ways to target individual and corporate commercial activities to directly improve the air quality of local residents (e.g., those living

on a sponsored coffee plantation, along one of Seoul's streets, or near a Star Forest), as well as the planet, through their reforestation efforts.

In short, these game changers are shifting the dichotomies that have led to the "tragedy of the commons" of our environment. They have reversed the "individual versus collective" conflict—individual actions such as playing a video game, buying clothing, and making profitable financial investments are replenishing our common environmental resources rather than depleting them. They have eliminated the "environmental benefit versus economic profit" conflict by designing products and markets that allow economic gains for individuals and companies to generate positive environmental outcomes. They have transformed "public versus private" conflicts into opportunities for collaborations by crafting modes of engagement where public, private, and nonprofit sectors can all contribute positively to common, proenvironmental goals. By connecting diverse stakeholders in novel ways, they have fundamentally shifted the political, corporate, and social environment in which everyone is operating. In sum, these environmental activists are transforming a zero-sum game where some individuals and companies win at the expense of our planet into a positive-sum game where individuals, companies, governments, and ecosystems can all win.



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# **Effective Advocacy**

## **Lessons from East Asia's Environmentalists**

**By: Mary Alice Haddad**

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