South Korea’s response is considered by many as one of the most effective models against COVID-19 (UN News, 2020). South Korea has flattened the curve of COVID-19 by combining testing, early isolation, and free treatment of positive cases combined with digital technologies without taking to “lockdown” measures. Second, South Korea has been holding press briefings twice a day and disclosed all information on COVID-19 to the public in an open and transparent manner. Third, South Korea has worked to secure the civic participation and voluntary engagement of citizens and businesses. The South Korean approach to COVID-19 may be difficult to emulate even for countries like the U.S. and U.K., but provides important policy implications for developing countries and needs for strengthening three core competencies against the outbreak of an epidemic: digital technology, efficient health governance, and civic partnership. It is a great challenge for developing countries to fight alone against COVID-19. As such, the international community should work to strengthen these core competencies accordingly.

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organizations. Samsung and LG allowed its training facilities to be used as treatment centers for COVID-19 patients with mild symptoms and NGOs have provided food and survival kits for those under self-quarantine order. The high level of civic awareness and voluntary cooperation was essential in adhering to personal hygiene measures, observing self-quarantine measures and maintaining social distancing.

Lastly, the developing country should gradually and carefully ease quarantine and immigration procedures in line with the health and medical conditions of the country and the local and global spread of COVID-19. Without a complete shutdown of borders, South Korea has managed the risk of the virus arriving from overseas by continuously adapting and fine-tuning measures in border controls. It is critical to ease social distancing and border control measures carefully in stages.

The South Korean approach to COVID-19 may be difficult to emulate even for countries like the U.S. and the U.K. (Majeed et al., 2020), but provides important policy implications for developing countries and needs for strengthening three core competencies: digital technology, efficient health governance, and civic partnership. Digital technology in developing countries will be critical in responding to future crises including pandemics. When establishing the legal basis for contact tracing, the developing countries should prepare adequate measures safeguarding the privacy of infected individuals. The developing country should reorganize its epidemic response governance and maintain decent quarantine and hygiene practices. In particular, health authorities should consider the reorganization of hospitals by the types and severity of diseases to prevent the spread of the virus within the hospitals. And finally, the developing country should strive for cooperation and capacity building in civic organizations. It is a great challenge for developing countries to fight alone against COVID-19. As such, the international community should work to strengthen these accordingly.

**Conflict/Declaration of Interest Statement**

We (D. Lee, K. Heo, Y. Seo) confirm that this paper does not have any issues relating to the journal’s policies and any potential competing interests along with no funding from other external sources.

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