

# GIST-Chonnam National University student team wins national startup competition with pathfinding app for people with developmental disabilities

- The 'Assist' team consisting of GIST student Joo-sung Park and Chonnam National University student Yu-kyung Lee were selected for the 2024 National Happiness Service Discovery and Startup Competition Encouragement Award and Hana Social Venture University Excellent Team



▲ The 'Assist' team is taking a commemorative photo after receiving the Encouragement Award at the '2024 National Happiness Service Discovery and Startup Competition'. (From left) Yu-kyung Lee, a student at Chonnam National University, Professor Ki-yong Han at Dongguk University, and Joo-sung Park, a student at GIST

The Gwangju Institute of Science and Technology (GIST) announced that the 'Assist' team (Supervisor: Je Ha Ryu, Team Leader: Joo-sung Park), consisting of Joo-sung Park, a student from the School of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, and Yu-kyung Lee, a student from the Department of Design at Chonnam National University, achieved excellent results at the national startup competition with the 'Safe Pathfinding App for People with Developmental Disabilities.'

They won an encouragement award at the '2024 National Happiness Service Discovery and Startup Competition' held on August 7th and received a startup support fund of 1 million won.

This app, developed by a GIST-Chonnam National University student team, provides a wayfinding function designed to be intuitively used by people with developmental disabilities, as well as a function to share real-time location with guardians and detect dangerous situations.

People with developmental disabilities are more likely to become confused or put in dangerous situations while finding their way around, so there is a great need for an app that can help them reach their destination safely.

The 'Assist' team experienced firsthand the difficulties faced by people with developmental disabilities through volunteer work at a day care center for the disabled, and proposed innovative solutions that combined software and design to

resolve the difficulties that people with developmental disabilities may experience.

This app was developed with inspiration from a compass to help people with developmental disabilities move safely, and focuses on solving the walking difficulties of people with developmental disabilities who lack a sense of direction.

In addition, the 'Assist' team was selected as one of two excellent teams by 'Hana Social Venture University\* (Regional Base University: Chonnam National University)', which supports excellent youth entrepreneurship with an idea for a wayfinding app for the developmentally disabled, and received a voucher worth 3 million won. They will participate in the final performance sharing session scheduled to be held in December of this year and compete for a total prize money of 150 million won.

\* Hana Social Venture University: Korea's first youth entrepreneurship fostering program linked to a hub university that discovers and fosters 1,500 local entrepreneurial talents every year in cooperation with 30 hub universities to respond to the crisis of rural attrition caused by youth exodus.

Assist team member Joo-sung Park said, "I am glad that the value of a startup item that can alleviate the practical difficulties of people with developmental disabilities has been recognized. I want to continue to challenge myself to create social value in the future."