Open Governance for inclusive lifelong learning policies – Seodaemun’s Experience

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Seodaemun’s today

- One of the 25 districts in Seoul, Republic of Korea
- “Great West Gate” (서대문/西大門) of old Seoul Fortress Wall
- Population: 324,304 (2019) | Area: 17.6 km²
- Rate of Senior Population: 15.8% (2015)
- Rate of College Graduates: 58.5% (2015)
- The first local government in Seoul that enacted an ordinance for literacy education program
Korea’s today: Lifelong learning

• **Institutional framework**
  - Lifelong Education Act
    “... The State and local governments shall establish and promote the lifelong education promotion policy to provide all people ... ” (Article 5)
    “A national lifelong study city council may be established ...” (Article 15)
  - Related legislation (e.g. Continuing Education Promotion Act)

• **Organizational framework**
  - National Institute for Lifelong Education (NILE)
  - 17 Metropolitan Institutes for Lifelong Education
  - 169 Learning Cities with the Korean Association of Lifelong Learning Cities
  - Local governments play a key role in implementation of lifelong learning policies.
Multi-level governance in Korea

- Example: Continuing Education Voucher Support
  - State-level: Ministry of Education
  - National Institute of Lifelong Learning
  - Local Learning Centers

- Example: Learning cities
  - Metropolitan Provincial Institutes for Lifelong Education
  - City/County/District Lifelong Learning Cities
  - Town/Neighborhood Happy Learning Centers

http://www.nile.or.kr/eng
Example of Multi-level Governance

- **Literacy education programs**
  - Learning cities have collaborated with MOE and NILE in order to provide more literacy programs in the communities.
  - 50% of the budget: a local government / 50%: the central government.
  - The Annual survey on lifelong learning, including literacy rate

- **Expansion of Literary Education to New Types of Literacy Skills**
  - Adoption of “Life literacy”: digital literacy, media literacy, financial literacy, etc.
  - The Seoul Metropolitan Government adopted life literacy education programs from the municipal governments.
Seodaemun’s Support System

- Lifelong learning support system of Seodaemun-gu
  - Lifelong learning support is provided at every level of communities like a “learning schema” with learning neurons.
  - City provides customized service.
  - A study cell can be created with 5 residents.

Learning schema in Seodaemun-gu
1 : Seodaemun-gu lifelong learning center
2 : Town learning center centers
3 : Community operation learning centers
4 : Study cell-Small learning communities
Seodaemun’s Learning environment

• **Seodaemun-gu is a cluster of nine prestigious universities in Korea**
  - Such as Yonsei Univ. / Ewha Woman’s Univ. / Sogang Univ, etc.
  - Each university provides various adult learning programs for local residents.

• **Seodaemun Prison History Hall as a history and democracy education facility**
  - A former-prison for independence activists (during the Japanese colonial period, 1910-1945), as well as for pro-democracy activists (until 1987)
  - Now it functions as a memorial and museum where visitors can learn about history.
Community Outreach for Learning

• **Seodaemun-gu** has a set of community outreach programs for lifelong learning

  [Examples]
  - Vertical Alley Project (Sero-golmok) for the residents in the apartment complex
  - Korean Sauna Class Program (Jjimjil-bang class) for the underprivileged

• **These outreach programs** are also geared toward more inclusive lifelong learning in the city.
  - Easy access to learning opportunities for local residents and working people
  - A study cell can be created through these programs.
  - Example of ‘Open governance’ of lifelong learning: active participation of residents in the decision-making process.
Outreach 1: Vertical Alley Project

- Elevator = Vertical alley / Sero-GolMok (in Korean)

- Now many people meet their neighbors in an elevator, ‘vertical alley’.
- A resident can create a class with neighbors on their own interests for learning.
Outreach 1: Vertical Alley Project

• **Vertical Alley Project** (*Sero-golmok project*) supports small community learning classes in the apartment complex
  - A group of five residents at an apartment can ask the city of a class on a variety of topics (art, Korean history, writing, bike repair, dancing, etc.)
  - Seodaemun-gu dispatches an instructor to form a class for an apartment class
  - A class can happen either at a resident’s room or at a community facility of the complex

• **Outcome of Vertical Alley Project**
  - Since its inception in 2013, a total of 50 courses have been developed.
  - More than 600 residents each year have registered for a course.
  - Access to learning opportunities have been significantly widened, as at least 1/6 of residents in the city live in an apartment.
Outreach 2: Sauna Class Program

- **Korean Sauna (Jjim-Jil Bang)**
  - Literally means “heated room”
  - Popular spot for Korean families and tourists for hangout
  - Usually houses a big rest area, public bath, restaurant or snack bar
  - Easily found in any city
  - Oftentimes considered as a very affordable accommodation

- **Korean Sauna as a learning space**
  - Way to access the less advantaged
  - The smallest one can host hundreds of people
Outreach 2: Sauna Class Program

- Korean Sauna Class program (Jjim-Jil Bang Learning) offers diverse short lectures at a public bath for those who lack time for learning.
  - Korean Sauna (Jjim-Jil Bang) is a unique and popular place that combines public bath and rest area operated 24/7.
  - Many low-income people use Korean Sauna as a place for short stay or getting refreshed for their work, especially during the evening and night-time.
  - City government has placed a series of evening lectures for these users.

- Outcome of Korean Sauna Class Program
  - Started in 2013 and host over 6 classes
  - More than 200 residents each year have attended the lectures
Seodaemun’s open governance

• Local participants can be active decision-makers of Seodaemun’s lifelong learning policies
  - Starts as a learner of the class
  - Can become an instructor with relevant knowledge and skills
  - Can open a course as an experienced instructor, having the partnership with city government.

• Open governance allows more people to actively involve with the city’s lifelong learning programs and creates more inclusive policies.
Changes we made

- Real-life change made for participants of learning programs
  - A case of Mrs. Kang, who couldn’t read and write at all

- A sense of community increased by local participants
  - Community empowerment is realized, as residents better understand one another after participating in the courses and classes.
  - A case of Vertical Alley Project participants: could solve floor noise complaints between the apartment residents.

- More voluntary learning opportunities for locals through study cells and outreach
THANKS!

Any questions?

http://sdm.go.kr