

The National Institute for Lifelong Education (NILE) has published “Lifelong Learning in Korea” since 2013. This is to share Korean lifelong education projects and cases with policy makers, researchers, experts, and practitioners worldwide. NILE wishes to contribute to the development of lifelong learning internationally by sharing its vision and efforts for the promotion of Korean lifelong education. In the third issue for 2014, we introduce project cases on the theme of ‘Lifelong Learning Centers for Happiness.’

Lifelong Learning for All : Focusing on the Cases of “Lifelong Learning Centers for Happiness”

Introduction

At its inauguration in February 2013, the Park Geun-hye administration put “Establishing a national lifelong learning framework in the centenarian era” on the national agenda. This intends to implement a lifelong learning system where anyone, regardless of age, can enjoy learning anytime, anywhere.

The Lifelong Education Act of Korea mandates to establish the National Institute for Lifelong Education (NILE) at the national level, lifelong education promotion institutions at the provincial/metropolitan level, and lifelong education centers at the municipal/district level. In 2014, the Act was amended to include



village lifelong learning centers in order to guarantee access to learning and reinforce the nationwide network of lifelong learning centers, ultimately completing the national framework of lifelong learning in the centenarian era. Named as Lifelong Learning Centers for Happiness, the village-level centers were piloted in 2013 and have been deployed across the nation since 2014. This is part of NILE's program to promote and support local lifelong education efforts.



Concept of “Lifelong Learning Centers for Happiness”

Lifelong Learning Centers for Happiness began to spread throughout small villages in 2014 to provide lifelong education services for every citizen. Located close to the residents of villages, the centers accommodate local desire for lifelong learning, and provide customized education services.

Lifelong Learning Centers for Happiness guarantee residents' easy access to lifelong learning within their neighborhood, accommodate their demands for learning, and discover and connect local resources for lifelong learning. Roles of the centers are summarized as below:

- Guarantee easy access to lifelong learning: every citizen, regardless of their age, income, or address, shall be guaranteed the right to learn.
- Accommodate residents' demands for learning: the centers will listen to residents' voice and provide lifelong learning services customized to the demands.



- Discover and connect local resources: the centers will reinforce social capital by associating learning communities, receiving residents' talent donation and carrying out local community projects, to name a few.

Operation of “Lifelong Learning Centers for Happiness”

NILE leads the efforts to implement Lifelong Learning Centers for Happiness as part of its local lifelong education promotion initiative. The Institute develops a roadmap for ordinance revision and operation of the centers; and transforms idle facilities into Lifelong Learning Centers for Happiness in small villages or designates existing education facilities as community centers or lifelong education centers. For example, some villages tapped into community centers, women's centers and local libraries for lifelong education in 2013, while others utilized senior centers, commercial buildings within apartment complexes and university facilities.

NILE designates municipal/district lifelong learning centers as hubs to promote and support operation of Lifelong Learning Centers for Happiness. To this end, the Institute associates municipal/district lifelong learning projects, and develops and propagates necessary programs. It also helps secure instructors.

For successful operation of Lifelong Learning Centers for Happiness, it is paramount to nurture key personnel who are capable of running the centers. NILE dispatches lifelong education specialists to the hub centers, and Happy Learning Managers to the village centers. Happy Learning Managers are local activists who reinvigorate their lives and local communities through

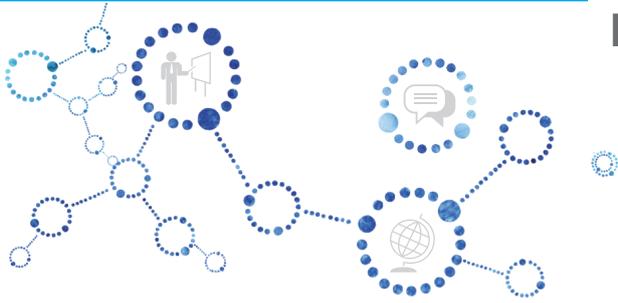


lifelong learning. In other words, they are promoters who communicate with village residents and support their growth, networkers who discover and connect local resources, strategists who plan local activities and programs, and managers of change who help facilitate positive changes for the residents and the village. Happy Learning Managers carry out the following seven roles: discovering resources within villages, forming networks, invigorating lifelong learning clubs, counseling adult learners, surveying residents' requests, planning and operating learning programs, and managing learning centers. To truly and faithfully communicate with local residents, they must internalize five shared values, namely HEART: ①**H**ear and communicate, ②**B**e an **E**xpert with passion, ③**A**dvice from the heart, ④**R**elationship through networking, and ⑤**T**rust people.



Learning materials are branded education programs of Lifelong Learning Centers for Happiness and comprised of common education and customized local courses. NILE develops and distributes teachers' manuals of the core courses where components of happy learning, as well as universal education models, are elaborated, including:

- For self-development (lifelong growth):
health, finance, safety, family relationship, etc.,
- For social participation (lifelong participants):
avocational/recreational works, local leader, social donation,
etc.,



- For local communities (lifelong neighbors):
local, environmental and/or village projects, etc.

Customized local courses are developed by each local/village center in communication and cooperation with residents, such as courses customized to rural areas, remote areas/islands, or isolated urban areas.

Case Studies of “Lifelong Learning Centers for Happiness”

The following are case study results of Lifelong Learning Centers for Happiness pilot programs in 2013. Eup, Myeon, Dong, and Ri represent the smallest administrative units of regional municipal systems.

Samcheok City in Gangwon-do Province

Samcheok designated the Women's Center building in Dogye-eup as its Lifelong Learning Center for Happiness. Located in the mining town of Samcheok, the Center pursues happy lives for the residents. Living up to the spirit, it offers customized programs, including training for stonemasons and hard copper station workers, and parenting skills and coaching programs specifically designed for the closed mine area.



Samcheok City
in Gangwon-do Province





Inje County in Gangwon-do Province

Inje cooperates with community centers and offices of each Eup and Myeon within the town. Operation of the Hub center is led by the community leaders, and “Ri” centers are run by the village officers who know residents’ needs the best. That is, Ri center leaders serve as Happy Learning Managers, and operate differentiated programs for their own villages. In particular, Inje has set up “Happy Ri Centers” to fully tap into the well-established but under-utilized infrastructure for IT, village enterprises, new and excellent farming/fisheries village movement, and experience programs and facilities, etc.

For example, Hachu-ri in Inje, a small farming village with the population of around 200, was designated as an “IT Village” and became equipped with experience facilities and IT systems. Hachu-Ri Center provides education programs for women in their 50s and 60s who have not benefited from formal education. One of its flagship programs is the “medical herb tea” course that attempts to nurture medical herb experts by using ginger plants.



Inje County
in Gangwon-do Province



Namyangju City in Gyeonggi-do Province

Namyangju launched the “Learning Lighthouse” project since 2011 before Lifelong Learning Center for Happiness project was launched in 2013. Learning Lighthouse was proven to be effective and used as a benchmark. It turned



Namyangju City
in Gyeonggi-do Province



idle facilities, such as apartment offices and community centers, into village learning spaces and offered them to the residents. Such places are accessible within ten minutes from residents' home or workplaces, and provide lifelong learning programs by resident instructors and Learning Lighthouse managers. Starting with ten Lighthouses in 2011, the program has continuously grown to 85, including the newly-added 25 in 2014 in association with the Lifelong Learning Center for Happiness program.

Namyangju fosters and dispatches Learning Lighthouse managers to each Lighthouse, supported by resident instructors' talent donation. Some full-time housewives became talent-donation instructors. Residents voluntarily formed the Learning Lighthouse Operating Committee, which is responsible for discovery of learning demands, learner management, and Lighthouse operation, maintenance, and PR. This project is benchmarked as the best practice of the Lifelong Learning Center for Happiness as it not only served readily accessible learning facilities, but also reinforced bonds between residents.

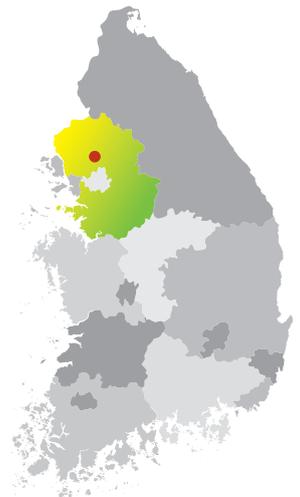




Uijeongbu City in Gyeonggi-do Province

Uijeongbu remodelled senior centers into Lifelong Learning Centers for Happiness, and proactively encourages residents' participation. Considering the small population, it tries to attract visitors from outside by offering farming experience programs. The programs are closely linked with senior citizen job programs. They include not only farming activities, such as rice planting, lettuce planting, sweet potato picking, and corn harvesting, but also preparing and cooking the harvests.

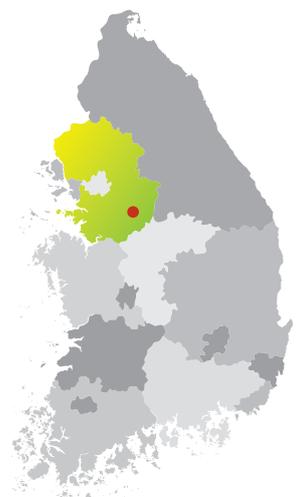
Unique programs that harness specialized industry of the town, such as rice-flour milling and gardening, are also offered. Residents, program operators, administrative workers, and senior center managers have formed a consortium to operate Lifelong Learning Centers for Happiness. As such, the city has been striving to create its own model of Lifelong Learning Centers for Happiness.



Uijeongbu City
in Gyeonggi-do Province

Icheon City in Gyeonggi-do Province

Icheon designated the Janghowon-eup community center as a pilot Lifelong Learning Center for Happiness. Janghowon-eup has been protected as Nature



Icheon City
in Gyeonggi-do Province





Conservation Zone under the Seoul Metropolitan Area Readjustment Planning Act and restricted from development. With the pilot project, the village renamed its community center into Community Learning Center and witnessed middle-aged women actively participating in culture programs.

Seo-gu in Busan Metropolitan City

Seo-gu designated and pilot-operated three Lifelong Learning Centers for Happiness in 2013. The district has worked on urban regeneration projects to restore village communities since 2010 to turn itself into a happy town. Built upon such commitment, Seo-gu operates lifelong learning centers as the hub to manage and supervise Lifelong Learning Centers for Happiness.

Happy Learning managers are assigned to each center and provide learner-oriented programs to encourage participation of residents. All three centers offer specialized programs for marginalized people. In particular, the “Open



Seo-gu in Busan
Metropolitan City



"Village, Live Together" program provides learning opportunities for immigrant women of international marriages so that they can participate in social and economic activities in Korea.



Sasang-gu in Busan Metropolitan City

Sasang-gu utilized idle facilities, like apartment offices, senior centers, and mini-libraries in five apartment complexes in 2013 as Lifelong Learning Centers for Happiness, and provided programs targeting senior citizens and women with interrupted careers. Programs for middle-aged women included yoga, ribbon art, home teaching skills and Total Art (arts and crafts for parents with pre-school children) classes.

Sasang-gu has created and implemented plans to leverage its lifelong education programs, such as Lifelong Learning Village project, support for lifelong learning clubs, and Lecture Delivery, to better tap into Lifelong Learning Centers for Happiness.

Nam-gu in Busan Metropolitan City

Nam-gu utilized facilities of Pukyung National University as Lifelong Learning Centers for Happiness, reinforcing university-community cooperation.



Sasang-gu in Busan
Metropolitan City



Programs of the Center cover every generation. Another Lifelong Learning Center for Happiness is located in the Chamsali Maul village (Gamman2-dong, Nam-gu, Busan). This center uses the second floor of Gamman Well-being Happy Center, a culture and leisure space for the less privileged residents of the village. It offers basic knowledge and skill training programs, notably blueberry cultivation and economics classes.

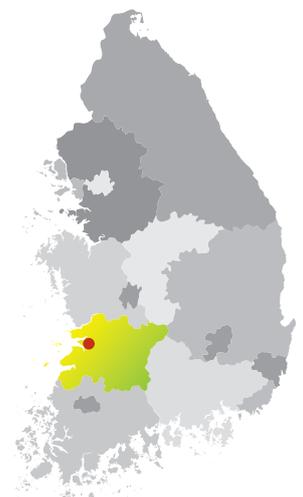
Another center is operated in the second basement of the commercial building within the Kukje Apartment complex in Gamman2-dong, where residents formed learning clubs, and developed and carried out voluntary activity plans for the community.

Gunsan City in Jeollabuk-do Province

Gunsan designated 20 Lifelong Learning Centers for Happiness by tapping into senior centers, community centers and apartment maintenance offices, and ten Lifelong Learning Cafés under the pilot program in 2013. The city fostered and dispatched Lifelong Learning managers to each Center. It has also run Mural Painting to decorate village learning centers where literacy education programs—once only for senior citizens—are offered to the public.



Nam-gu in Busan Metropolitan City



Gunsan City in Jeollabuk-do Province





Conclusion

Lifelong Learning Centers for Happiness are premised on the principal that each Eup, Myeon or Dong operates its own Center to guarantee easy access for the residents. Operation of Lifelong Learning Centers for Happiness at the Eup, Myeon, Dong and/ or Ri level is dictated by Article 21-2 of Lifelong Education Act, amended in January 2014, which states that “the head of a Si/ Gun/autonomous Gu may establish or designate, and operate a lifelong learning center that runs lifelong education programs and provides relevant consulting services for its local residents.” Under the Lifelong Learning Centers for Happiness project run by NILE, a metropolitan city or a province may recommend a city or a district, and the Ministry of Education deliberates the applicants and makes the final decision. The criteria for such decision include the number of lifelong education centers, facilities and operation support system, resourcing, planning for such education (e.g. voluntary participation of the residents, convergence of local resources, experts and expertise, and the number of education programs) and assessment and operation plans for efficient management.

Lifelong Learning Centers for Happiness represent a commitment to protecting the universal right to learning, and addressing educational imbalances between regions. The Centers help local residents to juggle work and learning, and they encourage social participation so residents can gain practicable education and for use in their daily lives. It is also expected that such learning contributes to individual development and opens greater opportunities for social participation, ultimately creating more jobs in the region and invigorating the lifelong learning culture.



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Contact : Office of Global Learning(global@nile.or.kr)
Homepage : <http://eng.nile.or.kr>