



## Street Classrooms

Andong City

### LIFELONG LEARNING AT LOCAL BUSINESSES

## Summary

The city of Andong (Republic of Korea) has been implementing a long-term strategy for almost twenty years to guarantee an educational programme that responds to the lifelong personal development needs and interests of its entire population. The process to ensure that all citizens have opportunities to continue learning regardless of their situation or stage of life comes to fruition with initiatives such as 'Happy Learning Centres' and programmes such as 'Learning Circles', which are groups of adults who meet regularly to learn about a particular topic.

However, despite the efforts made by these centres and programmes, the city detected that some training needs are still not adequately covered, due to the geographical distance of potential users, time

constraints or the topics addressed. To answer these needs, the 'Street Classrooms' project was launched in 2019, which sets out to provide local educational opportunities based on the direct demand of citizens.

'Street Classrooms' is a groundbreaking partnership between municipal education institutions and local commerce in order to provide complementary training spaces. The training sessions are organised according to the demand of people interested. They address a whole host of topics and allow groups of people to meet in informal settings (local businesses) close to their homes. The courses cover varied subjects such as Chinese language, calligraphy, reading groups, sewing, embroidery, drawing and painting, aromatherapy, crafts, etc.

In addition to promoting lifelong education, the project supports the local economic network and helps generate positive community ties among residents of the same area.

**City:** Andong  
**Country:** Republic of Korea  
**Inhabitants:** 162.000

**Topics:** Lifelong learning, Cultural activities, Leisure, Creativity, Personal development, Economic development, Living together

**Principles of the Charter of Educating Cities:** 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 17, 19.

## Context

Andong is located in the province of North Gyeongsang. It has a population of 162,000 inhabitants and a surface area of 1,521.92 km<sup>2</sup>. The city is divided into 23 districts.

Since the 90s, Andong has gone through rapid population and economic growth and has become a tourist and cultural centre. It is also the commercial centre of a mainly agricultural region.

Although it's a project open to the entire city, most of the collaborating businesses are located in the city centre, where the majority of economic and social life is concentrated. Some classes take place at venues outside the centre, which are interesting as they provide training opportunities in quieter areas of the city and mean that participants don't have to travel by public transport or private vehicle.



## Goals

- ▶ To foster the quality of life of citizens through a local strategy to promote lifelong learning, in coordination with public institutions and the local economic network.
- ▶ To ensure access to training activities in the immediate environment of people residing in different areas of Andong.
- ▶ To provide training based on the citizens' own needs and interests.
- ▶ To foster the role of local commerce as a generator of neighbourhood ties and social cohesion at a local level.
- ▶ To offer job opportunities for specialised teachers.



# Methodology

Following a public call for bids, interested businesses can present themselves as potential venues to host courses.

Once the applications have been received, a selection process is carried out by a municipal team in which the premises are visited and their accessibility conditions, opening times and spaces are assessed for holding the training activities. Among the businesses that meet the necessary requirements, priority is given to those experiencing difficulties, with a view to helping ensure their livelihood.

Participating businesses don't receive any financial compensation for joining the programme by offering spaces for classes, but their collaboration is published on the project website and other publicity materials, making their location and their services

known. What's more, a bus has been outfitted as a multipurpose mobile classroom for areas where there are no adequate facilities.

For a class to start, a group of at least five people need to inform the municipal educational authorities of their interest in taking part in a course on the subject they propose. The proposal is assessed by the local government which, once approved, allocates the teacher and the local business that best responds to the space and geographic proximity needs of users. Classes are free and participants only need to pay for materials (with an estimated average cost of between €10 and €20 per course). People who attend at least 80% of classes receive an official certificate of achievement.

The list of available courses is published on the project website,

where interested people can sign up. People who struggle to use IT tools can also enrol over the phone. The courses are also advertised in the monthly magazine published by the local government, with a circulation of 70,000 copies.

People interested in participating as teachers can also sign up on the website to be included in the pool of instructors and take part in recruitment processes.

The municipal education department is responsible for the overall coordination of the project and logistical aspects (managing enrolments, selecting premises, publicising the courses, etc.), as well as for selecting and paying the teachers.



## Mobile Maker Space

- 이동형 체험버스 -



[ 체험버스 외관 ]

## ★ Evaluation

The project, launched in March 2019, has had a very positive reception among the inhabitants of the city of Andong. 'Street Classrooms' have been held at thirteen businesses, which have hosted forty courses attended by a total of 277 students.

The courses taken have addressed very diverse topics: Chinese language, calligraphy, reading groups, sewing, embroidery, drawing and painting, aromatherapy, crafts, etc. Participants have especially valued the experience as an opportunity to learn new things and interact with other people.

As for the profile of participants, the vast majority on morning courses have been women between the ages of forty and fifty. On afternoon courses, the participation of men has increased, reaching around 30% of all students.

Strengths of the initiative include making educational opportunities available to citizens without the need to build new facilities, helping local businesses survive as spaces for socialising and harmonious living, and offering professional opportunities for teachers. Other successful aspects are the role played by citizens in designing the courses available and the flexibility inherent to the proposal.

One weak point is the high level of internal management and coordination required by the project to ensure its proper functioning, given the high number of courses that take place simultaneously in different places. It's also necessary to bolster the presence of the project in areas further away from the city centre to make it more accessible to areas which, in this first phase, were not covered.

## ➔ Future proposals

In the future, the idea is to run 'Street Classrooms' at a total of twenty businesses in order to attract around five hundred participants. A pilot test will also be carried out to incorporate longer and more stable training itineraries, which include courses with a less experiential focus.

Meanwhile, the authorities are studying how to strengthen the connection of the 'Street Classrooms' with other local educational resources, such as the 'Learning Circles'.



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