

Focus Experience

#13

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Title

Burumi

A Program that Brings Lifelong Learning Closer to All Citizens of Jecheon (Republic of Korea)

Basic data

City: Jecheon

Country: Republic of Korea

Number of inhabitants: 137.141

Topics: art and humanities, civics and coexistence, culture and leisure, environment, health and sport, lifelong learning, personal development and welfare.

Principles of the Charter of Educating Cities: 1, 2, 4, 5, 11, 14, 15

Summary

The Burumi program, set up by the Lifelong Learning Centre of the Korean City of Jecheon, offers citizens access to lifelong learning through very diverse courses.

The uniqueness of this initiative resides in the fact that it is the teachers who go where the participants are, which favours the reduction of CO₂ emissions in the city and contributes to improving environmental quality. This fact is important in a city as extended as Jecheon which has a total surface of 882.47 km².

At the same time, the Program allows people who live far away from the Lifelong Learning Centre or who have difficulty getting around to benefit from this training program, such as pregnant women, the elderly, young people, children, etc.

Objectives

- To foster lifelong learning for all citizens.
- To provide equality of opportunities in terms of access to learning to people who, due to their situation, have difficulties in getting around.
- To contribute to the reduction of CO₂ emissions in the city.
- To foster job creation.



The Burumi program offers different courses such as arts, gymnastics and foreign language learning
Photos: City Council of Jecheon

Methodology

Registration for the Burumi program courses is made online, through the website of the Lifelong Learning Centre of the City of Jecheon. Once the courses have been assigned, the teachers travel to libraries, parks, churches or schools or even private homes in order to give the classes. The Program prioritizes the most vulnerable citizens, such as the elderly, the illiterate, the handicapped, pregnant women, breast-feeding mothers, etc., who, due to their situation, have difficulties to attend the courses at the Lifelong Learning Centre. The Centre also offers training to lifelong learning teachers.

The courses are very different and are linked to the following areas:

- Environment: talks on the concept of the low carbon economy and sustainable growth in order to contribute to the reduction of CO₂ emissions.
- Foreign Languages: English, Japanese, Chinese, Russian, Vietnamese, etc.
- Health and Sport: dance, yoga, acupuncture, Qi and Qigong exercises, laugh therapy, etc.
- Humanities and Artistic Expression: fine arts, music, tea ceremony, etc.
- Culture and Art: calligraphy, literary painting, singing, dance, crafts, traditional Korean knotwork, gift wrapping technique, etc.
- Hobbies and recreation: flower arranging, origami, balloon art, beadwork, decorative quilt-making, etc.
- Parenting: parent training, how to speak to children, learning to play with children, etc.
- Certification: diplomas are given for public speaking coaching, after-school activities coaching and English for young people coaching, etc.

The City offers these courses four times per year. Each course has 10 sessions for a total of 20 hours. 150 teachers are employed, this being a job opportunity for them since most of them are unemployed. Each teacher can give a maximum of 2 courses per year (2 in each campaign). In general, the groups are made up of a minimum of 5 participants and a maximum of 10. In 2011, 420 people attended the courses and there were 800 in 2012.

All courses are free of charge but the participants must pay for the material that is used in the class.



People of all ages participate in the activities offered by the Burumi Program
Photos: City Council of Jecheon

Social and urban context

Jecheon is located in the centre of South Korea, in the province of Chungcheonbuk-do, two hours from Seoul, the country's capital. The city has 137,147 inhabitants who live in a surface area of 882.47 km², with a density of 155.4 inhab/km². The city extends, therefore, across a broad area, and also includes in its urban nucleus small rural areas far from the centre.



Pedestrian Street in Jecheon
Photo: Devin (Flickr)

Jecheon is located in a valley surrounded by high mountains and large lakes, which makes it one of the most beautiful nature sites in the country and a healthy city to live in. The BioExpo show of oriental and therapeutical products is held there each year and attracts people from all over the world.

The city is also the main logistics and transport hub in the area, which facilitates connections with other nearby provinces and the country as a whole.

Amongst the most outstanding industries in the city we find: the manufacturing of cement, automotive parts, electronic products, heavy machinery, etc. However, a large agricultural area surrounds the city, and, accordingly, rice, fruit, vegetables, tobacco, medicinal plants, etc. have also made agriculture into another major industry of the city.

Assessment

The courses offered are very popular in the eyes of the citizens, even reaching people who live in rural or mountainous areas away from urban area.

Strengths:

- The participants choose the courses and the instructors travel to the place where the people have asked to receive the courses at the desired time.
- The Program fosters family activities and coexistence amongst neighbors.

Weaknesses:

- Budget limitations.
- Each teacher can only give 2 courses per campaign.
- Given the high demand, those wishing to participate in the Program must wait a long time before they can take advantage of the courses.

Future proposals:

- To increase the duration of the courses.
- To ensure that each teacher can give 4 courses instead of 2.
- To publicize the Program more.
- To promote the creation of jobs.

Contact

Organisation: City Council of Jecheon

Contact: MrByeong-ho Kim
Specialist in Lifelong Learning

Email: nicesph88@korea.kr

Phone: +82 43 641 4841

City Website: <http://english.okjc.net/main/index.do>

Lifelong Learning Centre Portal: <http://www.okjcedu.net>

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<http://w10.bcn.es/APPS/edubidce/pubPortadaAc.do>

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