

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, and practitioners from all over the world. NILE wishes to contribute to the development of lifelong learning in the international community by sharing the vision and efforts for the promotion of Korean lifelong education. As the fourth issue of 2014, online lifelong learning in Korea will be introduced.

Lifelong Learning for All : Online Lifelong Learning in Korea

Introduction

The lifelong learning participation trend in the Republic of Korea lags far behind those of advanced countries since Korea has a primarily school-centered education system. Korea's lifelong learning participation rate stood at 35.6% as of 2013, 4.8% lower than the average for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) ([Figure 1). According to a 2013 survey by Korea's Ministry of Education regarding the trend of adult lifelong education in Korea, 23.3% of Korean adults do not participate in lifelong learning despite having the intention to do so. The main hindrance that prevents Korean adults from participating in lifelong learning is "the lack of sufficient time" (due to responsibilities of earning an income), which was cited as the main reason by 95.8% of respondents (duplicate choice). This survey also showed that 30.0%



of the adults have the experience of searching for learning-related information, 88.7% of which successfully acquired the needed information, while 25.2% failed in their search due to a lack of needed existing data.

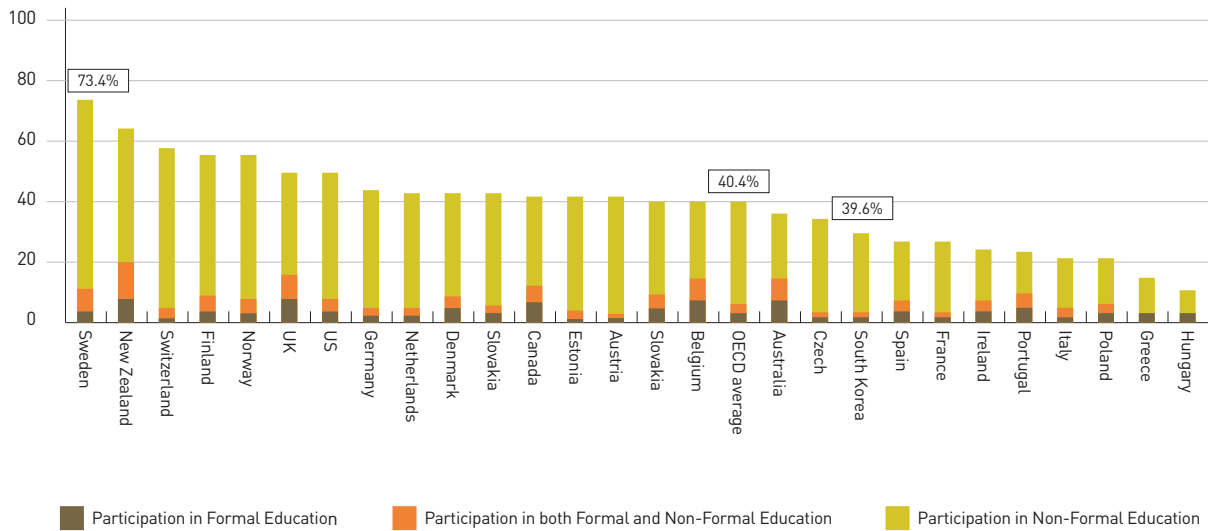


Figure 1. Lifelong Learning Participation Trend in OECD Countries

According to the National Lifelong Learning Statistics Survey (2013), conducted jointly by the Ministry of Education and the Korean Educational Development Institute, distance or remote learning facilities accounted for 23.5% (887) of the nation's total lifelong learning centers, with the number of programs the facilities operate estimated to make up 26.9% (48,162) of the total. The number of learners using these programs accounted for 77.6% (13,669,575, including duplicate lectures). When taken as a whole, online lectures are seeing a significantly high level of participation rate and becoming a general trend in Korea.



After the Lifelong Education Law was amended in 2007, the National Institute for Lifelong Education was founded in 2008 as the main body to promote the prosperity of lifelong learning on a statewide level. The Ministry of Education and the National Institute for Lifelong Education established a partnership with a variety of lifelong education affiliate organizations to carry out the lifelong education informatization project, aimed at establishing lifelong learning networks, operating lifelong learning support projects, and providing the people with lifelong education information. This paper introduces Korea's online lifelong education trend, with a focus on the online-based lifelong education informatization project.

“Damoa” Lifelong Education Information Network Project

1. Background and Objectives

As society changes due to the shift in the labor structure and population aging, people's interests and participation in lifelong education has increased. In other words, lifelong education is increasingly adopted as a survival strategy of individuals and as one of the ways to manage a lifestyle. Against this backdrop, it has become increasingly necessary to develop political supports for the promotion of the lifelong education informatization, which aims to provide a comprehensive range of lifelong education information and to systematically manage the results of learning. In accordance of Article 22 of the Lifelong Education Law, which was fully amended in 2007, central and local municipal governments have come to promote the informatization aimed at promoting the prosperity of lifelong education. The Ministry of Education, the National





Institute for Lifelong Education and municipal governments are expanding political efforts to establish lifelong education support systems in various areas, while some metropolitan city governments are actively engaged in the establishment of their own lifelong education information networks in order to create the basis for expansion of regional citizens' participation in lifelong learning.

The lifelong education information network is interconnected among nineteen regional lifelong education information centers and 328 lifelong learning centers nationwide. The network introduces state-run lifelong education projects, as well as offering information on lifelong education lectures run by lifelong education institutions. It also provides officials related to lifelong education with training programs, as well as collecting and providing the various lifelong education information needed for cyber education programs, lifelong educators and other studies.

The lifelong education information network is designed to make it easier for people to search the lifelong education information and to enhance information accessibility to promote the people's participation in lifelong learning by collecting a variety of lifelong education information operated by greater metropolitan and basic local governments and lifelong education organizations. There were attempts to develop a search bot system and to establish an ASP.NET web programming framework regional lifelong education information center as part of efforts to connect and integrate the information of various systems run individually by each basic local government and lifelong education organization.





In the early stages of the project, however, there were limits in connecting and integrating the related systems.

The problems that occurred during the process of connecting and integrating the related lifelong education information included the uncoordinated education areas established sporadically by each lifelong education organization and the incompatibility of the lifelong education information, caused mainly by 1) the lack of systematic information collection system for the lifelong education programs of each lifelong education facilities, and 2) the lack of a lifelong education information standard needed to manage the collected information with a standardized and simplified storage tool.

To overcome these limits of the lifelong education information system project, which began in 2001, the “Damoal Lifelong Education Information Network” project was launched in 2011. Under this project, each city and provincial government collects and provides the information on online/offline lifelong education lectures that are scattered within their regions to their residents, thereby enabling the residents to grasp the locations of the lifelong learning opportunities and participate in their needed lifelong education. To ensure the compatibility of the many related systems, this project sets standards for the technologies needed for storage and distribution of lifelong education information, as well as establishing a relay system for future establishment, connection and opening of information systems.

2. Project Contents

The Damoal Lifelong Education Information Network project aims to promote the standardization in storage and distribution of lifelong education information and to provide the people with the standardized information on lifelong education courses. This project aims



to enable learners to search for needed information anytime, anywhere and at one stop, by allowing them to share, distribute and use the scattered lifelong education information.

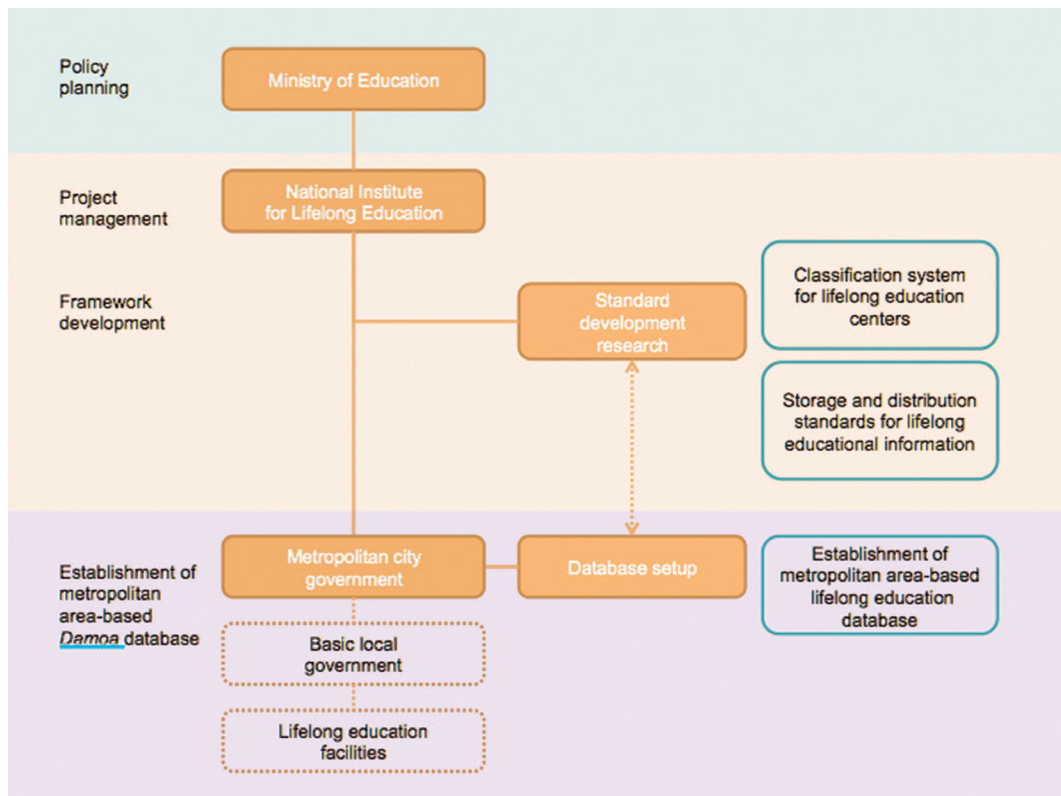


Figure 2. Damoa Lifelong Education Information Network Project

In the first year of the Damoa Lifelong Education Information Network project launched in 2011, the Busan Metropolitan City government and the South Chungcheong provincial government first established the system. In parallel with this, a research was conducted to establish the framework, resulting in the formulation of a classification system for lifelong education organizations. In addition, the lifelong education storage standard was developed, with other metropolitan cities and provinces applying the new storage standard guideline. The



guideline on the standard of lifelong education information storage, developed through the framework establishment project, has defined the technological standards needed for information storage and distribution. In addition to the cities and provinces that are covered by the Damoa Lifelong Education Information Network, the Seoul Metropolitan City government, the Gyeonggi provincial government and others that developed their own lifelong education information systems, are establishing and running their systems on the basis of the standard guideline.



As of 2014, a total of fourteen metropolitan city governments have built the Damoa Lifelong Education Information Network or currently run systems using the lifelong education information storage standards. Through the establishment of city- and province-level lifelong education information collection system and informatization support, a framework has been established to provide residents with lifelong education information-related comprehensive services, which resulted in the improvement in people's access to lifelong education information and the expansion in people's participation in lifelong learning.

Online Lifelong Learning Support System Establishment Project

1. Background and Objectives

The project of establishing the online lifelong learning support system is designed to provide the people with a comprehensive range of lifelong education services and high quality courses, aimed at enabling them to learn anytime and anywhere by establishing a comprehensive online lifelong education delivery system and using a variety of online education tools, including smart tech-based lifelong learning tools.



To this end, the central government set the “construction of a national lifelong learning system for the era of 100-years life expectancy” as one of Korea’s national tasks (National Project 74) for the year 2013, and Korea has launched projects of establishing a comprehensive online lifelong learning delivery system and providing the people with customized lifelong education using smart tech-based lifelong learning tools.

With respect to the 2014 Online Lifelong Learning Support System Establishment project, efforts are made annually to improve people’s access to lifelong learning, to create a lifelong learning environment that has no limits in time and space and to realize the “Government 3.0” push for openness, sharing, communication and collaboration through the promotion of a lifelong learning one-stop service covering the share of lifelong learning information and the connection of contents among related organizations.

Considering that the regional lifelong education facility-centered offline lifelong education leads to a gap in learning opportunities and lifelong education information, an online lifelong learning support system should be established to enhance the accessibility to lifelong education, particularly for the alienated class who lacks the opportunities to participate in lifelong learning, and the residents of the regions which have poor lifelong education infrastructure.

The Government 3.0 of openness, sharing, communication and collaboration can be realized by promoting the openness and sharing of lifelong learning information and providing a lifelong learning one-stop support center, including the connection of contents of related organizations.



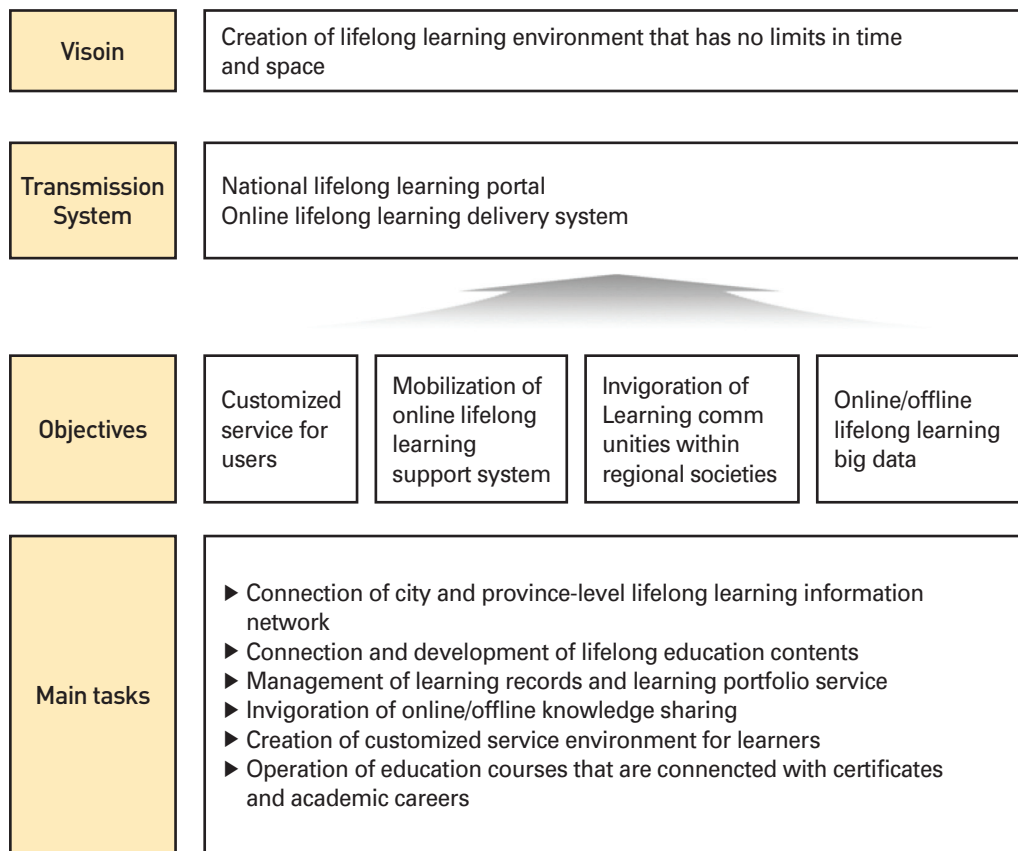


Figure 3. Basic Direction for Establishment of Online Lifelong Learning Support System and Major Tasks

2. Main Contents

The first project was launched in 2014 with creation of the online lifelong learning support system. The national lifelong learning online portal Neulbaeum (literally “always learning”), a comprehensive lifelong education service that provides the people with lifelong education contents through various online tools, officially opened on December 1.



Thus far, lifelong education information and related programs had been scattered throughout various organizations' entities, making it difficult for learners to find the information they need. It was inconvenient for them to participate in lifelong learning due to limits concerning time and proximity. Thanks to the opening of the national lifelong education portal, students now can gain full access to high quality online contents, including those related to the development of vocational capabilities, the strengthening of business capabilities, the acquisition of certificates, and lectures on foreign languages and cultures, offered by a variety of lifelong education information centers and organizations throughout the country. The national lifelong learning portal is also expected to contribute to invigorating lifelong learning by enabling users to learn any contents they want without time and location limits.



The main contents of the national lifelong learning portal are as follows. First, it provides a comprehensive range of information on lifelong education centers, lectures and lecturers that had been offered individually by individual cities and provinces, through the Damoa Lifelong Education Information Network (covers information on about 82,000 lectures offered in eleven cities and provinces as of December 1, 2014), thereby enabling users to learn what they want, anytime and anywhere.

Second, it provides 240,000 pieces of high-quality open educational materials, including the Korea National Open University's Open Educational Resources (OER) and Blended Learning programs, the Korea Education and Research Information Service's Korea Open Courseware (KOCW), YouTube EDU, TED Talk and several others, plus thirty pieces of in-house developed



contents, making it easier for users to gain access in accordance with their learning needs.

Third, the career of learning through the portal site is recorded and managed through the lifelong learning account system at the site(www.alll.go.kr). This enables users to create their own contents category, eliminating the need to search again.

In addition, a mobile app will be developed to enhance user accessibility, while a simple mobile mode (larger font size and simplified web items) will be added to make it easier for elderly people to use it. Efforts will be made to make the Neulbaeum portal site a valuable platform for lifelong learning through strenuous updates, additional development of new contents and acquisition of superior contents from private organizations.



MOOC and K-MOOC

1. MOOC

MOOC is a must-memorize keyword in higher education and lifelong education. Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) refers to the open-type online education lectures that can be used for free without limits in the number of learners. The OER movement has evolved into the MOOC movement since 2012.



The MOOC is different from existing Internet lectures. The MOOC is an education course that has no limits in the number of learners and promotes the communication among users. Students can ask questions to professors and discuss with others in various countries through communities. The students should take regular tests in the formats of homework and quiz. Such intervention to manage learning is different from OCW that is referred to as OER. MOOC started in the U.S. through edX, Coursera and Udacity in 2012, and now it is spreading throughout the world, including FutureLearn in the UK, Open UpEd in EU, JMOOC in Japan and XuetangX in China.

Korea's higher education communities are paying substantial attention to MOOC. Some universities are already providing contents through global MOOC platforms. University officials' views on MOOC differ depending on their positions and interests.

Korean society's view on MOOC can be divided into positive and negative ones. From a positive perspective, MOOC can contribute to lessening educational expenses for all students. University tuition costs have continued to rise worldwide. In South Korea, the increase in educational expenses has resulted in the increase in student loans, igniting concerns about the educational gap and social problems caused by income differences. This reduction in educational expenses can contribute to expanding educational opportunities and promoting educational welfare. Other positive effects include the creation of a competency-based educational environment, the strengthening of universities' function in lifelong education, and the expansion of universities' social contributions. In contrast, there is a negative perspective as well. The negative view is that MOOC could deepen the gap of awareness among university brands and eventually bring about a disruptive innovation to university education. While many view MOOC as new opportunities of education, others are concerned about the proliferation of MOOC.

2. K-MOOC Project

Keeping abreast with the global expansion of MOOC, Korea is also making efforts to introduce a government-led K-MOOC. By leveraging Korean-typed IT-based MOOC, K-MOOC aims to create an environment where the people can gain their needed information and knowledge without going to universities. K-MOOC is not a Korean language version of MOOC but a Korean-styled MOOC.

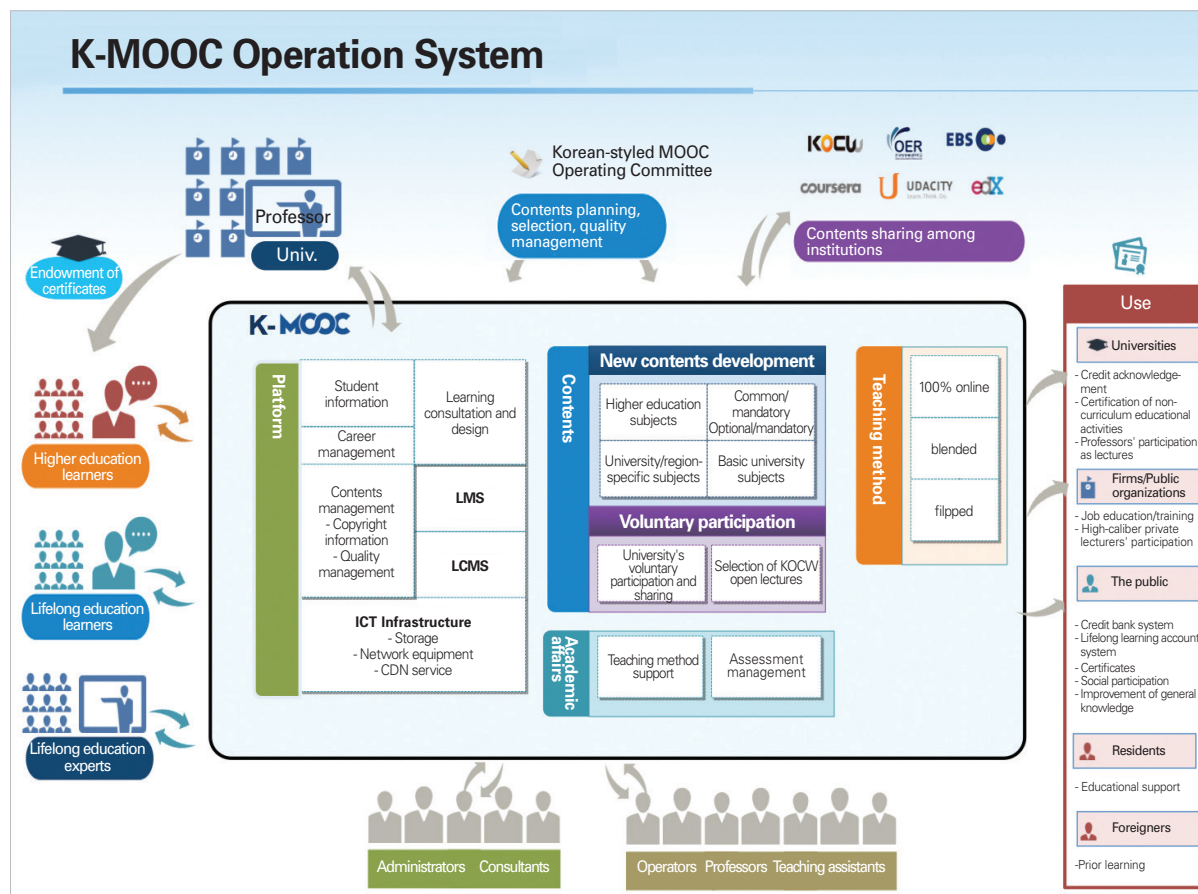


Figure 4. K-MOOC Operation System



The basic direction of K-MOOC is as follows.

First, it will be used as a tool to improve the quality of higher education and to promote innovation. By introducing the latest online/offline-integrated learning methods such as blended learning and flipped learning, K-MOOC should pursue educational innovation while attempting to improve the quality of courses and teaching methods, by actively promoting the sharing of exemplary courses.

Second, on the basis of MOOC's basic principles, K-MOOC will pursue the opening and sharing of university-level knowledge with the public. K-MOOC aims to enable the public to gain access to high quality courses without the expense burden.

Third, it aims to facilitate not only credit acknowledgements but also credit exchanges among universities. By being connected to Korea's unique credit recognizing "credit bank" system, it should maximize the effectiveness in the use of learning results. To this end, it should be added with a self-authentication function and connected with the lifelong learning account system, which also has a built-in learning career management system.

Fourth, from a long-term perspective, K-MOOC will be used for online learning to promote educational official development assistance. It will be used to cope with strenuous demands for Korea's educational contents, including those concerning the education for foreigners residing in Korea, education concerning Korean studies in overseas, and vocational education and training for experts from developing countries.

To this end, K-MOOC will be developed and operated first as a university-based MOOC and



later expanded by being connected with the online lifelong support system project (National Project 74). After establishing successful brands centering on initial universities, K-MOOC will be expanded to non-degree organizations. Institutionalization efforts will be made to make educational achievements gained through K-MOOC be used for various purposes, including credit acknowledgement at universities, employee training at businesses and lifelong learning for the general public. After Korean language service is established, multi-language support service will be strengthened and the service coverage will be expanded from the Korean people to foreign students studying in Korea, foreigners who want to study or work in Korea, and Korean expats living in foreign countries.



After collecting opinions from a number of university officials and experts, K-MOOC, led by the Ministry of Education and the National Institute for Lifelong Education and with collaboration with other strategic partners, is scheduled to launch trial services in September 2015.

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