

## SUSTAINABLE CITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TRADITIONAL CULTURE REVITALIZATION



**LOCAL GOVERNANCE** SUSTAINABILITY  
AWARENESS **HERITAGE** CONSERVATION **CULTURE**  
TRADITION INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT **RENEWAL**  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT **INCLUSION**

### 1. Context

Jeonju is a historic city in Korea. As the city where government agencies were located during the Joseon Dynasty, Jeonju became the center of politics, economic, and culture power of the Jeolla area. After experiencing government-led economic development and consequent urbanization, Jeonju has grown into a large city with over 650,000 people.



However, Jeonju was relatively alienated from the rapid industrialization and economic growth of country. It needed an economic drive through which to promote local development. Korea's adoption of the "local autonomy" system in the 1990s, led local governments to pursue a new set of local development policies. Jeonju, facing a lack of industrial infrastructure, prioritized policies based on traditional cultural resources. A series of events led to Jeonju's implementation of the Traditional Culture City Project. In 1977, Jeonju designated an area with a heavy concentration of traditional buildings as the Traditional Architecture Preservation Zone (Jeonju Hanok Village). The construction limitation that came with the designation resulted in many residents leaving the area. Residents began to demand the removal of the Traditional Architecture Preservation Zone designation, which was finally removed in 1995. From then, the area began to attract new modern buildings. Local, cultural, and artistic experts raised the need to preserve traditional culture and demanded the re-designation of the area as a preservation zone. Property rights of residents collided with the need to preserve traditional culture, leading to serious discussions about policies on traditional culture within the local community and led to a series of policies that protected residents' property rights while preserving traditional buildings.



After 2000, the city's Traditional Culture City Project, through maintenance of the Jeonju Hanok Village, was implemented. Local experts and cultural and artistic organizations continued to raise the need and possibility of local development through traditional culture. Expert group, emphasized the use of traditional cultural resources to help local residents identify the value of local resources, strengthen local identity, and improve local developments. They played a major role in establishing cultural policies during the early phase of the implementation of the Traditional Culture City Project. Since then, Jeonju Hanok Village has been well-maintained and has become a representative place of the Traditional Culture City Project's policies, and a major cultural and tourism destination, attracting over 6 million visitors per year.

THE PROJECT AIMS TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY THROUGH TRADITIONAL CULTURE REVITALIZATION.

## 2. Jeonju and culture

Korea experienced a politically dark era that lasted for a century due to the Korean War and long military dictatorship. The advancement of political democratization (1990s) opened an era of

autonomous local governance. Due to this, Jeonju's cultural policies are sharply divided into the era before and after the implementation of the "local autonomy" system in the 1990s.

At the beginning, cultural policies were mainly implemented by the central government. Cultural policies were predominantly focused on restoring and maintaining historical assets. Other policies were confined to programs supporting the activities of master artists in various traditional cultural fields. After the introduction of the local autonomy system, policies shifted to using culture as a core part of local development. Jeonju recognized the value of traditional culture as a historic city and made efforts to link cultural policies with local development.

Jeonju boasts 45 intangible cultural properties, a large number compared to the nationwide city average of 1.7. However, the city faced a disadvantage in terms of lack of awareness in local residents toward cultural policies. Local residents equated the economy with industrialization, and often opposed the implementation of cultural policies. After many discussions and meetings among citizens and experts, the project made a broad interpretation of the value and meaning of culture and integrated various concepts such as citizen participation, cultural rights, governance, sustainability, local identity, and social integration.

The project is contributing to the sustainable development of the city through social consolidation and environmental balance. Most of the city's residents are participating in ever-increasing cultural experience and learning programs related to traditional culture. Jeonju's identity as a traditional culture city is also making a positive impact on citizens' pride for their city. The increased interest in environmentally-friendly traditional buildings is resulting in an increase in the number of repairs and new construction of traditional architecture

THE PROJECT MADE A BROAD INTERPRETATION OF THE VALUE AND MEANING OF CULTURE AND INTEGRATED VARIOUS CONCEPTS SUCH AS CITIZEN PARTICIPATION, CULTURAL RIGHTS, GOVERNANCE, SUSTAINABILITY, LOCAL IDENTITY AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION.

### 3. Objectives and implementation of the project

#### 1.1. Main goal

First, the project aims to promote sustainable development through traditional culture revitalization. In order to do so, the city actively identifies cultural resources and offers training opportunities for local residents to develop their knowledge. Second, the city focuses on increasing citizens' opportunities to appreciate culture through innovative use of cultural resources that benefit modern living styles while strengthening identity. Third, the city aims to create diverse business models with respect to cultural resources so that they can lead to more jobs. Finally, it strives to create an environmentally-friendly cultural policy model that is focused on repair and renewal of existing facilities.

THE INCREASED LEVEL OF INTEREST IN TRADITIONAL BUILDINGS, STARTING IN JEONJU, HAS SPREAD TO CITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

#### 1.2. Key stages

In the beginning, the project focused on implementing programs related to the daily embodiment of traditional culture. This helped improve citizens' understanding of traditional culture while confirming the possibility of local development through traditional culture. Since the mid-2000s, the project has shifted to the commercialization of traditional culture, focusing on economic revitalization.

The beneficiary population includes not only Jeonju citizens but also all visitors. Cultural experts, private companies, government participants, and program participants played a critical role in the implementation stage of the project.



The increased level of interest in traditional buildings has spread to cities across the country. In particular, people began to apply traditional design elements to modern buildings, thus improving the creativity of architecture. The commercialization of traditional culture has induced participation from a broad array of researchers, entrepreneurs and planners, leading to an increased number of research and development activities focused on the use of traditional culture resources.

THE REVITALIZED LOCAL ECONOMY THROUGH CULTURE, STRENGTHENED JEONJU'S IDENTITY AS A TRADITIONAL CULTURE CITY, AND IMPROVED SOCIAL INTEGRATION WITHIN THE CITY.

Education and experience programs provided opportunities for cultural experts, artists, and cultural planners. An increased demand for traditional cultural education led to the explosion of the number of experts in traditional culture. Schools, libraries, and local community centers regularly operationalize education and experience programs on traditional culture for children and elderliers as well as tourists and international residents. These programs are free of charge or at inexpensive costs. Free cultural experience programs targeting immigrants also helped them to better understand local culture and to settle in Korea.

## 4. Impacts

### 1.1. Direct impacts

#### Impacts on the local government

The project enhanced the city's brand while strengthening the identity of the city. It created Jeonju's image as a major cultural destination. The tangible results have been the designation of Jeonju as an International Slow City (2011) and a UNESCO Creative City for Gastronomy (2013).

#### Impact on culture and local cultural actors of the city/territory

The increased number of cultural facilities and programs has led to an increase in the number of people working in the field of culture. Thirteen cultural facilities have provided a stable number of jobs. Overall, the increased number of traditional cultural facilities and programs has led to an increased demand for people working in the field of culture, consequently improving economic benefits for local residents.

#### Impact on the territory and its population

Culture-led urban regeneration transformed the village into a vibrant area, contributing to the balanced development of urban space in Jeonju. Residents of the village have witnessed increased opportunities to enjoy culture, and their quality of living has substantially improved. Traditional culture is now affecting many local residents to the point of becoming a source of local pride for them.

### 1.2. Transversal impacts

The Traditional Culture City Project has substantially contributed to sustainable development of the city. It has revitalized the local economy, strengthened Jeonju's identity as a traditional cultural city, and improved social integration within the city. Additionally, the designation of Jeonju as an International Slow City has brought environmental balance of the city. In addition, according to research by Jeonju University, the direct economic impact of Jeonju's Traditional Culture City Project is estimated to be USD 40 million annually and the indirect economic impact USD 130 million per year. This equates to dozens of small and medium-sized companies in Jeonju with direct employment of 1,000 workers and indirect employment of 3,500 workers.

WHILE MOST LOCAL GOVERNMENTS DEVOTE 2% OR LESS OF THEIR ENTIRE BUDGET TO CULTURE, JEONJU ALLOCATES OVER 8% TO CULTURE ]

### 1.3. Continuity

The Traditional Culture City Project will continue in the future. During the main implementation phase of the project in 2007, the first Bureau of Traditional Culture was created. While most local governments devote 2% or less of their budget to culture, Jeonju allocates over 8% to culture. Jeonju will continue to support its Traditional Culture City Project to improve citizens' cultural rights as well as local development.

## 5. Further information

The city of Jeonju was a nominated candidate for the second 'UCLG International Award - Mexico City - Culture 21' (January-May 2016). The awards jury produced a final report in June 2016 and asked the UCLG Committee on Culture to promote this project as a practical example for the implementation of Agenda 21 for Culture.

This factsheet was put together by Kim Yeonji, International Relations and Communication Officer, Jeonju, Republic of Korea.

Contact: luckykyj (at) korea.kr

Main website: <http://www.jeonju.go.kr/>