

## COMMON SEONGBUK ARTIST ROUNDTABLE'S LOCAL CULTURE GOVERNANCE AND ART COMMUNITY VITALIZATION PROJECT



GOVERNANCE **DEMOCRACY** PROMOTION LOCAL  
INSTITUTIONAL PARTICIPATION **HUMAN RIGHTS**  
**ARTS CULTURAL** TECHNOLOGY SUSTAINABLE

### 1. Context

Seongbuk-gu is northern one of the 25 autonomous districts in Seoul. With approximately 467,000 inhabitants, Seongbuk-gu is the 8th most populous autonomous district. It is a territory with a great cultural vitality and a highly developed educational system.



Cultural heritage is one of the biggest assets of Seongbuk-gu. The remains of the Joseon Dynasty period (from 1392 to 1910) can be visited and admired as sites and monuments of outstanding universal value. Jeongneung Royal Tomb and Uireung Royal Shrine belong to the World Heritage List of UNESCO, and Hanyang capital city is currently designated to be promoted. Seonjam-danji and Seongbuk-dong are other landmarks in Korean history and culture.

This district is a crossroads of many artistic ecosystems that have a long tradition, such as ‘munin-chon’, the artist’s town made up of writers, composers and artists. Also, other communities have been recently created.

Seongbuk-gu has the largest number of universities in Seoul: 7 universities which provide a unique educational environment for both experts and youths.

**COMMON SEONGBUK ARTIST ROUNDTABLE BEGAN IN 2014 AS AN AUTONOMOUS GATHERING OF 4 CULTURAL ARTISTS AND SOON BECAME THE REPRESENTATIVE COMMUNITY BASED ON CIVIL GOVERNANCE, REUNITING OVER 300 PEOPLE WORKING TOGETHER UNDER THE VALUES OF AUTONOMY, DEMOCRACY, SOLIDARITY AND DIVERSITY.**

## 2. Seongbuk and culture

Public policies aim to boost the access and promotion of the cultural rights of local residents. Since 2010, Seongbuk-gu has been striving to create a strong cultural support system and to provide cultural facilities which guarantee the development of the local cultural identity and the preservation of historic and cultural resources.

Under the suggestions and activities of Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable, Seongbuk-gu government (through Seongbuk Cultural Foundation) has launched several policies and businesses based on democracy and on the construction of active governance models for all citizens.

With the implementation of the Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable’s local culture governance and art community vitalization project, Seongbuk-gu is facing some challenges in the cultural field:



- The need of a public shared space for the sustainable development of the local culture ecosystem.
- The need of social experiment on creative cultural governance. “Community Art” based on the active cooperation among the subjects of local culture had to be vitalized.
- The need to foster the relationship between the cultural art initiatives and local residents’ life.

Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable’s aim is mostly in line with the UN 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals and the Agenda 21 for culture. It shares similarities with the key points mentioned in ‘Culture 21 Actions’:

Culture 21 : Actions	Seongbuk artist roundtable’s local cultural governance
1. Cultural rights	It was initiated to expand the cultural rights of local cultural artists and the residents.
2. Heritage, diversity, and creativity	It has been designing and operating various programmes to establish the local cultural identity, preserve and share historic and cultural resources like cultural heritage.
3. Culture and education	It is developing a lot of artistic education programs. With the cooperation of local art instructors, the cooperative union related to culture and arts is now operating actively.
4. Culture and environment	It has been considering and discussing the social expansion of environmental movements in the cultural aspect, and the connectivity between the culture and environment.
5. Culture and economy	It has made and supported the cooperative unions related to culture, social enterprise and village enterprise through diverse local activities.



	It also contributes to the vitalization of individual economic activities through cultural events and festivals.
6. Culture, equality, and social inclusion	It guarantees the universal right to access to activities for every resident on the principle of equality and openness. It converted various local cultural spaces into the governance model. For this reason, their publicness and openness has been highly improved.
7. Culture, urban planning, and public space	
8. Culture, information, and knowledge	It is planning active cooperative activities with libraries, local cultural centres and universities in order to share and circulate the knowledge.
9. Governance of culture	The governance of Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable is being carried out multilaterally from the top policy decision-making committee of Seongbuk-gu to the specific on-site programme operation meeting.

Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable is also making an effort to overcome difficulties in civil initiative governance, the priority given to administrative achievements rather than the values of culture and art, the ephemeral character of innovations and the monopoly of opportunity to minimum groups of people.

**UNDER THE SUGGESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES OF COMMON SEONGBUK ARTIST ROUNDTABLE, SEONGBUK-GU GOVERNMENT (THROUGH SEONGBUK CULTURAL FOUNDATION) HAS LAUNCHED SEVERAL POLICIES AND BUSINESS BASED ON DEMOCRACY AND ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF ACTIVE GOVERNANCE MODELS FOR ALL CITIZENS.**

### 3. Objectives and project implementation

#### 1.1. Principal and specific objectives

The main goal of the Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable is to form and to activate a sustainable and autonomous cultural ecosystem in Seongbuk area, enabling to expand the cultural rights of the citizens and the values of cultural democracy, diversity, governance and sustainability.

Other specific goals are the composition and vitalization of the local cultural art ecosystem (over 500 people), the formation of cultural art ecosystems by regions (7 regions), the creation of resident-oriented cultural spaces (6 spaces) and the foundation of the cultural policy governance in Seongbuk-gu.

Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable began 2014 as an autonomous gathering of 4 cultural artists in the area and soon became the representative community in the region based on civil governance, reuniting over 300 people working together under the values and principles of autonomy, democracy, solidarity and diversity. It is the community of local cultural artists, but it also has been activated as the cultural governance organization with Seongbuk Cultural Foundation, Seongbuk-gu Office, and other public institutions.

#### 1.2. Phases

The development of the project consists of five phases, including establishment of the foundation, planning of an agenda using local resources, the activation of the governance between local residents, cultural artists, universities and the public institutions, the practice and promotion of local democracy and the creation of an autonomous and sustainable social economic structure



### 1.3. Main actions carried out

- **Setting: establishment of the foundation.** The formation of a public sphere and network involved the creation of 7 working groups which belong to the Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable, including residents, artists, and artist organizations that participated from the initial stage and became subjects for building of the artistic village.
- Establishment of cultural governance foundation also implied launching the Seongbuk-gu Creative Cultural City Committee, enacting the law for Seongbuk-gu's creative cultural city and the participation of Seongbuk-gu governance operating committee.
- **Planning: development of the agenda using local resources.** Devising the basic plans for Seongbuk-gu cultural policy and Seongbuk Cultural Foundation entailed the research on major local cultural policies. Historical liberal, artistic and living resources had to be used for the initial projects' planning, the local characterized cultural art education program as well as for the formulation of the cultural art contents reflecting the regional infrastructure such as plays and musicals made with the local stories.
- **Intermediation: activation of governance between local residents, cultural artists, universities and the public institutions.** Seongbuk-gu's culture public facilities are used and operated as base space for local artists. Some examples of them can be shown as Miari Ridge Art Theatre, now managed directly by the local artists and citizens; the Cheonjansan Mountain Fable Theatre, converted into the main theatre after 3 years of discussion and cooperation between residents, Seongbuk-gu's library and the Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable, and the Seongbuk Dowon which was a neglected space but now emerged as a main visual art cluster space.



- **Promotion: practice and development of local democracy.** The Art Village Development Working Group of the Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable was decentralized into 7 regions in 2017. Some representative festivals in Seongbuk-gu such as 'Nurimasil Friends' have adapted into new models of governance based on cooperation and the values of cultural diversity. Local art instructors formed a cooperative union named "Maeul-on Art" and gathered to share concerns on culture and art education, meeting the local community residents related to the practice of culture and arts.

## THE MAIN GOAL OF THE COMMON SEONGBUK ARTIST ROUNDTABLE IS TO FORM AND TO ACTIVATE A SUSTAINABLE AND AUTONOMOUS CULTURAL ECOSYSTEM IN SEONGBUK AREA.

- **Self-reliance: creating an autonomous and sustainable social economic structure.** Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable has established and supported cultural cooperative unions, social enterprises and village enterprises through various local activities. By managing cultural events, local festivals and revitalization projects of traditional market, those initiatives contribute to the revitalization of local economy beyond the individual economic activities. In the long run, citizen capitalization is planned to be promoted.
- Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable, Seongbuk-gu Office and Seoul City (Seoul Housing and Communities Corporation) have established and promoted the residential supporting policies for creative cultural artists, youths and social innovation entities, enabling them to continue their stable activities in the region.





## 4. Impacts

### 1.1. Direct impacts

#### On the cultural policy and cultural administration

The Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable has deeply changed the cultural policy and cultural administration of Seongbuk-gu, transiting from agency-led decision making to decision-making based on citizen and deliberative democracy; from outsourcing-based business promotion to direct planning with local residents and communities; from policy structures based on quantitative performance results to process-oriented policy structure based on sustainability, and from a policy approach of culture as a tool for urban management to the policy approach of culture as principle and purpose of urban management.

BY MANAGING CULTURAL EVENTS, LOCAL FESTIVALS AND REVITALIZATION PROJECTS OF TRADITIONAL MARKET, THOSE INITIATIVES CONTRIBUTE TO THE REVITALIZATION OF LOCAL ECONOMY BEYOND THE INDIVIDUAL ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES. IN THE LONG RUN, CITIZEN CAPITALIZATION IS PLANNED TO BE PROMOTED.

#### On the cultural ecosystem

Regarding the local cultural ecosystem, artists have engaged in various recent cultural art related groups and meetings due to the initiatives undertaken by the Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable. Exchanging processes and cooperative system among individuals, organizations and businesses has been made, and the foundation for governance with local governments has also been realized.



As a result, cultural actors have identified the value and potential of local cultural activities, engaging actively in them. In particular, Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable has provided concrete opportunities to improve not only cultural activities, but also housing policies, job creation and economic vitality. Furthermore, this initiative is expanding toward social solidarity to solve some issues within the local community.

### 1.2. Evaluation

The majority of the activities proposed by Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable were carried out in consideration of the evaluation mechanism based on cultural perspectives.

It is continuously being evaluated with feedback based on the "Culture Impact Assessment System of the Basic Law of Culture" and the "Culture Impact Assessment System of Seoul City" institutionalized by the Korean government on demand of Roundtable members.

The Cultural Impact Assessment System is based on the following indicators:

- **Cultural Rights:** Nostalgia Rights (cultural infrastructure, accessibility, nostalgia programmes, audience development), participation rights (participation programmes, arts education, formation of community culture, budget and planning participation), landscape and environment rights (prospect right, innovativeness, harmony within the community, ecological friendliness), and infrastructure composition (personnel base, facility base, financial base).
- **Cultural Diversity:** citizen diversity (multiculturalism, hierarchy), acceptance of differences (gender, age, disability, region), identity (cultural environment preservation, traditional culture inheritance, uniqueness of local culture).

### 1.3. Key actors

Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable has planned and cooperated with Seongbuk-gu government (through Seongbuk Cultural Foundation) from the basic idea of cultural policy and governance to the





detailed activity programs, and has successfully implemented the projects which were set as the goals for each stage:

- Establishment of a culture and art ecosystem for the participation of residents with public organizations (Seongbuk Cultural Foundation).
- Transformation into a local community space through cultural revitalization and operational innovation of major cultural spaces which were neglected for a long time.
- Establishment of governance and community combining with local art and town development.
- Setting of a resident-friendly programme strengthening the governance model and the professionalism in festivals, cultural arts education and living arts programmes.
- Promotion of cultural democracy, civic value and participation through cultural arts.

#### 1.4. Continuity

**Internal Sustainability:** Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable was designed to establish a sustainable structure from the initial stage, and to secure institutional safeguards against it. It is expanding its own role and sponsorship structure, and intending to revitalize joint financial activities with the goal of establishing private local foundation in the long term.

**Sustainability of the organizations through agenda and theme:** Until now, Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable has secured its own operating system and transitioned to organization, cooperative union, and social enterprise to secure sustainability. Although there are differences between organizations, the expansion of members and participants has been proceeding, and they have succeeded in finding core business models that are appropriate to their respective identities.

**Sustainability of the Cultural Governance between the Roundtable and Seongbuk-gu Government (Seongbuk Cultural Foundation):** Common Seongbuk Artist Roundtable has been working to secure a sustainable governance system with the Seongbuk-gu government, expanding the governance based on Seongbuk-gu beyond the cultural policy, strengthening the foundation of Creative Cultural City Committee governance as a cultural policy decision-making structure in Seongbuk-gu, strengthening the governance foundation of the board of directors and local cultural cooperation team as the decision-making structure of the Seongbuk Cultural Foundation, strengthening of the Stability and

Sustainability of Sungbuk-gu's Cultural Space Consignment Activity and promoting citizen capitalization and expansion of consignment operation for core businesses.

## 5. Other information

The City of Seongbuk, Seoul, was a candidate to the third edition of the International Award 'UCLG – Mexico City – Culture 21' (November 2017 - May 2018). The Jury prepared its final report in June 2018 and requested the UCLG Committee on Culture to disseminate this project as an exemplary practice.

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