

UNICEF Child Friendly Cities and Communities Initiative



The Child-Friendly City Initiative in the Republic of Korea

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Methodological note

The case study follows methodological guidelines developed as part of the CFCI Toolkit development project.

The visit took place in April 2016. Visits were carried out in the two accredited child-friendly cities, Seongbuk (a Seoul's borough) and Wanju, and in one aspiring municipality, Sejong City. A youth consultative group was met in a fourth city, Songpa, also a Seoul's borough. The Japanese Committee staff member responsible for CFCI joined the visit to learn from the Korean experience.

Interviews with a range of actors at all levels were conducted and mayors usually made time to meet with the team. All conversations were translated, making it impossible to have informal dialogues and limited the amount of information shared.

The visit provided very limited opportunities to directly interact with children. The one interaction with a youth consultative group, in Seoul-Songpa, took place in a formal setting in the presence of some adults. All children were given the opportunity to give their views, but comments made seemed very conventional.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), February 2017

Acknowledgements

Many thanks are due to the Korean Committee for UNICEF, and in particular to Jong-Eun Sung, Manager in the Child Rights Department, for organizing the visit and for the precious support and views and to Ms. Kyung-Hee Kim, Deputy Executive Director, for taking the time to share her insights. Warm thanks also go to Sanghee Ahn who supported the visit with translation and Mikami Tatsuru, who accompanied the visit from the Japanese Committee for UNICEF.

We are grateful to all the actors in the municipalities who shared their perspectives and let us visit their structures. Special thanks go to the Mayor of Seongbuk, Mr. Young-bae Kim, to the Mayor of Sejong, Mr. Choon Hee Lee, to the Mayor of Wanju, Mr. Sungil Park, and to the Deputy Mayor of Songpa, Mr. Young Han Kim, who took the time to meet and have in-depth discussions. We are very appreciative of the support of municipal officials: in Seongbuk, Ms. Ji-Seon Min, Chief of Education, Child & Youth Department and Ms. Ji Youn Hwang, Officer of Child Friendly Team; in Wanju, Ms. Youngsook Kim, Chief of Education Support Section, Ms. Minye Wang and Ms. Ji Young Shin, Officers of Child Friendly Team ; in Sejong, Ms., Hye Young Cho, Director of Women and Family Division, Mr. Boo Byung Kim, Chief of Child Friendly Team and Ms. Mee Kyung Lee, Officer of Child Friendly Team; in Songpa, Mr. Ju Seok Suh, Chief of Welfare & Education Department and Mr. Jae Won Kang, Officer of the Children's Department. Many thanks also to Pr. Woong Soo Kim and Dr. Moonki Hong who met us in Wanju and to Mr. Byungsoo Jung, consultant on child impact assessment. We warmly thank the parents met in Sejong and to adolescent participation committee and volunteer group members in Songpa.

The study was developed by Vanessa Sedletzki, International Consultant. It is part of the CFCI Toolkit Development project commissioned to Rights On, as one of five case-studies elaborated to inform the development of the toolkit. The project was led by the Advocacy and Innovative Partnership Unit in the Private Fundraising and Partnership Division of UNICEF, managed by Marta Arias and Louise Thivant with the permanent support of Andrés Franco and Sally Burnheim.

Executive Summary

The Child Friendly City Initiative in the Republic of Korea is recent. While the first Korean city was officially accredited in 2013, the initiative took shape and became a full programme within the National Committee in 2015. CFCI has met with great success as many mayors have endorsed the approach as a way to develop a positive image. With low birth rates and an ageing population, cities are eager to be attractive to young families with children to preserve local dynamism and population balance. CFCI has also received formal recognition at the national level, with the Ministry of Health & Welfare including it in its 2015-2017 National Action Plan for Children.

The Korean model is very close to the original CFCI framework, reflecting the 9 original building blocks with an additional one for a safe physical environment. It is organized around a two-step process. An Association for the Promotion of Child Friendly Cities (APCFC) gathers cities interested in becoming official Child Friendly Cities and agreeing to enter a partnership with the Korean Committee for UNICEF (KCU) to reach that goal. Once cities have attained an adequate level of child-friendliness, they can be officially accredited as child-friendly cities. Thus far, two cities, Seongbuk – one of Seoul's boroughs, and Wanju, a rural town approximately 150 km south of Seoul have received the CFCI label.

Municipal leadership for CFCI is very strong in all three cities visited. Involving mayors has been part of the KCU's strategy to promote CFCI. Another important structural change is the requirement by KCU for cities to have a dedicated team of at least 2 people working on CFCI. As a result, each city has a stable unit specifically in charge of promoting the CFCI framework city-wide and with leadership.

KCU provides cities within the network with overall guidance towards building a child-friendly city. It makes extensive use of existing UNICEF tools and has developed an exchange programme with the French National Committee. It supports municipalities in: (1) reviewing and enacting legislation to promote child friendly cities, (2) assessing their child friendliness by using the self-assessment tools, (3) planning their strategy for a Child Friendly City, based on the outcome of the self-assessment.

Child participation mechanisms are incipient in the country but cities demonstrate a willingness to develop them. Cities visited are in the process of setting up children and adolescents' councils. There are significant opportunities to improve practices, especially since they are still at the initial stage.

CFCI is found to have a high impact on the local situation. Strict requirements to obtain the label and the accompanying process in place to support cities have led to significant changes in municipal policies in terms of structures and mechanisms. Participating in CFCI is a way for municipal leaders and officials to access knowledge and ideas to implement on the ground.

The National Committee will soon be confronted with a dilemma, as to whether to expand rapidly an initiative that has prompted more interest than it had anticipated, or keep the slow but quality process currently in place.

1. Development of CFCI in the country

Early stages

The Child Friendly City Initiative (CFCI) in the Republic of Korea is a recent initiative. The first child-friendly city in the country, Seongbuk, was officially recognized in 2013. This first step stemmed from the mayor's willingness to build a city friendly to children and families. It primarily happened as a window of opportunity rather than as part of a broader strategy by the Korean Committee for UNICEF (KCU). However, following this first breakthrough, more municipalities started expressing interest in the initiative and the National Committee began to reflect on expanding the model. It was in 2015 that the initiative took shape and became a full programme within the National Committee.

The National Committee initially focused on disseminating information and communicating about CFCI with municipalities. It held an introduction session during the forum on child rights in July 2015, in which all 243 municipalities nationwide were invited by an official letter. The second step was to create a CFC network, the Association of municipalities for the Promotion of Child Friendly Cities (APCFC), launched in September 2015, which 27 municipalities initially adhered to. The APCFC gathers cities interested in becoming official CFCs and agreeing to enter a partnership with the Korean Committee for UNICEF (KCU) to reach that goal. Once cities have attained an adequate level of child-friendliness, they can officially be accredited as child-friendly cities. Thus far, two cities, Seongbuk – one of Seoul's boroughs (accredited in 2013), and Wanju, a rural town approximately 150 km south of Seoul (accredited in January 2016), have received the CFCI label.

As of August 2016, the APCFC has 32 members. 22 municipalities have formally entered a partnership with UNICEF. Individual ceremonies for each of them took place for the signature of the formal agreement with UNICEF in the presence of various stakeholders and constituents, the mayor, and the executive director of KCU. Ceremonies received massive local news media coverage, which have contributed to the consistent visibility of CFCI.

Momentum around CFCI

CFCI has met with great success in the country as many mayors have found it a very attractive concept. Elected mayors have endorsed the approach as a way to demonstrate their commitment to making their city child-friendly and henceforth develop a positive image of themselves and the city. Demographics are also an important factor in the rapid development of the initiative. With very low birth rates and an ageing population, cities are eager to be attractive to young families with children, in order to preserve local dynamism and local population balance. Following a study visit to France, the mayor of Seongbuk actually wrote an article in a newspaper, suggesting that France has high birth rates thanks to CFCI. The demographic element adds to a society, which like others, significantly values children, but also often sees their achievements as social symbols of family success. Informants have suggested that as a result children may be subject to tight parental control, possibly infringing on their privacy. As the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has noted in its concluding observations, this involves high social pressure on children, especially for educational achievement, affecting children's right to play and recreation.

From inception, KCU has concentrated on simple but clear messages to make it attractive to municipalities:

- What is a child-friendly city: "A city fit for children".
- How to build a child-friendly city: "By listening to children".
- Why: "Because children have rights".

Understandings of CFCI by municipal leaders and officials closely reflect KCU's communication approach to the initiative.

The initiative has received formal recognition at the national level. The Ministry of Health & Welfare included CFCI in its 2015-2017 National Action Plan for Children. During the drafting process, the Korean Committee for UNICEF approached the Ministry and introduced CFCI as a useful approach to ensure that the Action Plan be concrete. The Ministry recognized the value of the approach and the final plan recommends the adoption of the substantive components of a Child Friendly City, further prompting interest for the initiative among municipalities.

The Korean model is very close to the original CFCI framework. The National Committee has made extensive use of tools UNICEF has produced at the global level, when CFCI had a designated secretariat (at the then Innocenti Research Centre). These publications are translated into Korean and disseminated to interested cities as key guidance tools. KCU has also developed an exchange programme with the French National Committee. In 2015, a delegation of Korean mayors visited a few child-friendly cities in France and met with the French National Committee, in a study tour organized by KCU – but in which cities financed their own participation. A similar study-tour is planned for June 2016, with mayors from different cities.

The KCU has built on a number of convergent supporting factors to develop the initiative, which has contributed to its attractiveness. The primary factor is probably the positive image associated with a label delivered by a highly respected organization and eagerness by stakeholders to impress the public. UNICEF is widely known and benefits from a very positive image in the country as a UN organization. As a consequence, when it calls on cities to participate in an initiative, it builds on a solid level of trust. Last but not least, the preoccupying demographic situation, with a fecundity rate at 1.3 and alarming indicators on child wellbeing – fifth highest child suicide rates in OECD countries and low perceived happiness among children – have led national and local authorities alike to seek to better address the issue. ‘Child friendly’ has reportedly become a buzzword in the Republic of Korea for marketing purposes. CFCI is seen as an interesting way to help address these issues and has been recognized as such at the national level.

2. Management of CFCI

UNICEF’s management of CFCI

Support provided to cities

KCU provides prospective cities within the network with overall guidance towards building a Child Friendly City. The National Committee supports municipalities in: (1) reviewing and enacting legislation to promote child friendly cities, (2) assessing their child friendliness by using the self-assessment tools, (3) planning their strategy for a Child Friendly City, based on the outcome of the self-assessment. The National Committee recommends a multi-pronged approach in which measures towards child participation, child impact assessment, the establishment of a children’s rights unit and other building blocks are to be planned simultaneously.

Given the limited guidance currently available for the child impact assessment and the child-friendly assessment tools, KCU is currently carrying out research to develop guidance and methodological tools in partnership with an NGO and a consulting company, to be completed in 2016.

In 2016, the National Committee also aims to deepen the substantive support it provides to municipalities, beyond the facilitation of the network. APCFC members expressed the willingness to learn how other cities are developing CFC approaches and requested a more practical roadmap. The National Committee therefore plans to organize training and networking events for mayors and government officials. Exchange of information and best practices will be taking place through on-going meetings, workshops and forums within CFCs network.

Resources

The CFCI has received increased attention in 2015, due to the significant progress the programme has made and the interest expressed by a large number of cities to be involved. While in 2015 one staff member was managing the CFCI along with other child rights advocacy duties, in 2016, the project manager focuses virtually solely on the development of the CFCI and two additional staff members have been recruited to support the programme. As a result, the CFCI is now managed by 3 staff members, out of a total of 55 staff members in the National Committee.

In terms of budget, financial resources allocated to CFCI have increased significantly as well. In 2015, the total budget allocated amounted to approximately USD 20,000. It was mainly used to translate and publish various tools and promotional material on the CFCI and to organize the launch meeting for the Association. In 2016, the budget has reached about USD 100,000. For the study tour, each city covers the participation of its representative(s), usually the mayor, so the cost for UNICEF is limited to its own staff member's travel.

Link with other National Committee programmes

As a platform initiative, KCU sees the CFCI as an opportunity to link each local government with the National Committee's fundraising efforts. For example, KCU kicked off the 5 week-long fundraising campaign for clean water celebrating World Water Day, and APCFC members joined as supporting partners by providing places for UNICEF's Face-to-Face programme. CFCI is increasingly acknowledged internally as a valuable initiative towards visibility and fundraising.

The National Committee will soon be confronted with a dilemma, as to whether to expand rapidly an initiative that has prompted more interest than it had anticipated, or keep the slow but quality process currently in place. CFCI gives visibility to KCU and supports KCU's domestic engagement for children's rights. This in turn helps KCU expand its funding base. There is therefore strong impetus internally to further develop the initiative. While keeping expanding the membership to the Association would be sensible to promote child-friendly policies at the local level, using the CFCI extensively for fundraising purposes could potentially backlash. While officials in cities visited are aware that UNICEF is a fundraising organization, their motivation to participate in the initiative is first and foremost their willingness to make their cities attractive to families with children and ensure the wellbeing of the population – and as one mayor sincerely put it, to be reelected. The eagerness to better serve the population appears to be the key driver behind cities' commitment and UNICEF's approach should give priority to nurturing this engagement. Fundraising is likely to stem from the perceived value of partnering with UNICEF. Emphasizing the fundraising element may negatively impact efforts made, while a focus on quality is likely to further promote UNICEF brand nationally.

Municipality leadership and coordination across sectors

Municipal leadership for CFCI is very strong in all three cities visited. For each visit, the mayor took time to have a full meeting with the CFCI team. In Seongbuk, the CFCI team directly reports to the mayor, a unique position among all city programmes. Involving mayors has also been part of the KCU's strategy to promote CFCI, given the major role mayors play in the definition of city policies. For example, the study tours to France have specifically included mayors as participants. As highlighted previously, mayors have a strong interest in making their cities attractive to families, including for reelection, and have therefore taken a strong stake in making their city child-friendly.

Strong political leadership is, like elsewhere, key to the development of CFCI. In Wanju, the adoption of the ordinance for joining CFCI did not meet with any opposition in the municipal council. In all cities visited, the mayor made time to meet with the team in spite of busy agendas, demonstrating the priority mayors give to the initiative. It also means that the National Committee has direct access to municipal leadership, an important asset for the expansion of the initiative and an evidence of the solid reputation UNICEF enjoys nationally.

Another important structural change is the requirement by KCU for cities to have a dedicated team of at least 2 people working on CFCI. While municipal officials traditionally rotate every 2 or 3 years, KCU further requests that officials on the CFCI team remain for at least 5 years in the same position. Their business cards explicitly specify that they are part of the CFC team. The obligation is part of the agreement between the National Committee and the city upon its entry into the Association. As a result, each city has a stable unit specifically in charge of promoting the CFCI framework city-wide and with municipal leadership.

The requirement that a stable, dedicated CFCI team be established at the municipal level appears to have had positive results. It makes the CFC initiative visible locally. It also ensures continuity not only in interventions but also in municipal capacities. In cities visited, and in particular in Seongbuk, it seems like childhood policies largely revolve around this particular team, seen as central to making the city fit for children. Another consequence is that municipal leadership is likely to rely on the team to make policy-decisions, directly informed by the CFCI framework. In Seongbuk, the unit is the only one in the municipality that directly reports to the mayor – rather than the full hierarchical chain. Whether this approach is replicable in other contexts where child rights policies have been more developed and integrated into municipal policies for a long time, would remain to be assessed. However, the identification of a full-time team – not just one person – decisively plays a role in the fast progress made at the municipal level.

The way the CFCI framework supports coordination across sectors could not be readily assessed, given the short time spent in each municipality and the early stage of the CFCI in the country. However, evidence from Seongbuk, the longest Child-Friendly City in South Korea, suggests that there is an interest for more integrated policies.

In **Seongbuk**, 4 integrated child and youth centres were expressly established in the context of the Child-Friendly City Initiative. The centre is a one-stop shop offering a range of services for children and adolescents from marginalized families. The objective was to concentrate on the most marginalized in the city, in particular those who do not receive any social benefits, representing a major loophole. With many branches of the government traditionally fragmented, the programme aims to integrate various functions. It includes a café area run by parents themselves, where adolescents can come after school to do their homework and carry out group work and where mothers can meet during the day. The centre also hosts a library with dedicated friendly spaces for young children and a large selection of books for children and adolescents. It has a counseling centre for adolescents who have dropped out of school and a youth support centre. Counseling services work with university students to better reach out to children in need and accompany them. The centre also organizes various activities and workshops for parents. This was reported to be the first such integrated programme in the country.

Like elsewhere, local governance is likely to play an important role. It is too early in the initiative to assess the impact it has on the development of a child-friendly city in the country. However, in Sejong City for example, the specific autonomous status the city acquired in 2012 as a 'metropolitan area' has been underlined as a major asset. Sejong City is the only municipality in the country which combines the competencies of the municipal level and the provincial level. While other municipalities need to have their decisions endorsed at the provincial level, Sejong City is able to skip this step and therefore make decisions much more swiftly. The effects it will have on progress in the implementation of the CFCI framework will need to be evaluated at a later stage.

Child rights advocacy and education, dissemination and awareness-raising

Child rights education and awareness-raising in the context of CFCI in South Korea is still incipient. The rationale is that the initiative is still very new and has thus far focused on initial set up through the creation of the Association for the Promotion of CFC. The implementation phase will come as the next stage.

Seongbuk, the longest CFC, has developed a training programme for child rights education among municipal staff, local government employees, social workers and school employees. The training is composed of 3 sessions of 4 hours each, and uses a very interactive methodology. Seongbuk has also developed its own logo for CFC, which it features at the city hall entrance, on numerous street banners, on various municipal documents and on CFC staff business cards, and which contributes to making the CFCI visible.

The child rights approach, including the four Convention on the Rights of the Child's guiding principles, seems to be known thanks to the CFCI framework. Whether its full meaning in terms of policy implications and perception of childhood is clearly understood is less certain. Again the initiative is young and this is an issue that requires constant attention in all settings. However, there is a clear need to strengthen capacity-building, both for municipal leadership and for project staff. An aspect in relation to the child rights approach that could not readily be assessed in the visit is the extent to which other sectors, beyond the dedicated team, are involved in efforts to build a child-friendly city. Informants met usually knew the general meaning of CFCI – a city fit for children. Yet what it concretely involves may not be fully grasped. This is also an important element for the National Committee to consider in its upcoming implementation phases for the CFCI.

3. Accreditation process

The accreditation process features two major stages and several phases. Accreditation is granted for 3 years at the moment, although reflections are underway to make it coincide with the electoral term, which is 4 years in the Republic of Korea.

1. The city expresses its willingness to become a Child-Friendly City by joining the Association of Municipalities for the Promotion of Child Friendly City. It does so by sending an official letter to KCU. Municipalities also receive an invitation from UNICEF to attend presentation meetings in order to decide whether to join.
2. Membership to the Association involves the signature of a 'written cooperation agreement', sort of memorandum of understanding, between the city's mayor and the executive director of KCU. As mentioned above, the ceremony involves high level officials and usually takes place in the presence of local media. The signature of the agreement is non-conditional, but the city commits to undertaking various steps to become a child-friendly city in line with the CFC framework, including developing a Master Plan, adopting a dedicated city ordinance, ensuring a CFCI budget line, allocating human resources, and undertaking a self-assessment. The KCU supports aspiring cities in putting in place mechanisms and policies to meet conditions to be officially recognized as a child-friendly city.
3. KCU sends the city the self-assessment tool, translated from UNICEF's global CFCI tools, in which a checklist is provided for each building block.
4. The aspiring city submits an application, including the self-assessment report and an action plan based on the 10 building blocks. For each issue, it must present its actions and projects in favour of children aged 0 to 18. The National Committee meets with municipal officials 2 to 3 times in each city in order to better assess how the CFC framework is being implemented and whether officials fully understand the concept.

5. The application is reviewed by an evaluation committee composed of 5 members: a KCU representative (the deputy executive director), an NGO representative, and professors in different fields (e.g. law, social welfare, education). The Committee rates the application on a 1 to 5 score for each building block. The city must score at least 3.0 under each building block to pass. If the city does not meet the requirements, it is invited to further develop CFC measures and its application is reconsidered a few months later.
6. Once it has obtained relevant scores, the city is formally recognized a child-friendly city by the National Committee.
7. A public ceremony is organized to celebrate the CFC certification and partnership with UNICEF.

The current process is the result of an ongoing reflection. The first city to get the label in 2013, Seongbuk, actually initially received a conditional accreditation. It had to meet all criteria within a year. The rationale was that given the mayor's leadership on the issue, if the city was not granted the accreditation, the whole process was very likely to lose momentum and collapse. However, now other cities believe that they do not need to have the 10 building blocks in place to be accredited. For this reason, the KCU had to be very strict for the second city. With hindsight, it feels it should have set the right tone with the first one.

The Korean model interestingly mixes elements from small-scale programmes, including a very stringent accreditation process for the child-friendly city label, with larger scale components through the association of aspiring cities. This enables the National Committee to concomitantly build on a large network it can use for visibility and mobilization, and ensure that the CFCI title only goes to cities that have demonstrated a solid commitment. As a result, the National Committee can benefit from large publicity around the initiative without compromising quality. The signature of the initial Memorandum of Understanding, which marks the very beginning of the process and is non-conditional, reportedly receives significant local media attention. It helps UNICEF strengthen its visibility across the country, a major asset for fundraising. The strict conditions and long process to become a CFC aims to operate as a guarantee of cities' long-term engagement. Given the limited hindsight on the process, it is difficult to assess the strategy, but cities visited certainly demonstrate a high level of understanding – at least in their statements – that being child-friendly is an ongoing process that requires constant improvements and adaptation.

4. Core components

KCU has adopted the 9 traditional CFCI building blocks, which have formed the overarching framework for CFCI since the beginning of the 2000s. In light of the national situation in which children are frequently exposed to accidents, especially road accidents, it has added a tenth building block for safety, which concentrates on children's physical environment, in particular road safety and prevention of accidents.

The 10 building blocks are therefore:

1. Children's participation
2. A child friendly legal framework
3. A city-wide children's rights strategy
4. A children's rights unit or coordinating mechanism
5. Child impact assessment and evaluation
6. A children's budget
7. A regular State of the city's children report

8. Making children's rights known
9. Independent advocacy for children
10. A safe physical environment

5. Child participation

Main mechanisms

Child participation mechanisms are incipient in the Republic of Korea but cities demonstrate a willingness to develop them. Cities visited are in the process of setting up and developing children and adolescents' councils. The way they operate is quite similar in different cities. The municipality issues a call for applications and contacts schools to seek recommendations for potential candidates. If the number of applicants is higher than the set capacity, a committee of adults selects the final composition of the council. The selection is either random or based on motivation, reportedly not on academic achievement.

Seongbuk has been reflecting on ways to increase children's participation in municipal affairs. A child council and an adolescent council, comprising 30 and 31 members respectively, are in place and more children are joining. There are no limits and anyone can be part of the group. In collaboration with the KCU, a mentor was selected from KCU's university students volunteer group to provide support to the councils.

Seongbuk has also organized a competition for the best adolescents' policy proposal. Teams of 4 to 8 students aged 13 and 18 years old had to develop a policy. The best policy, selected by a group of academics, was adopted and a dedicated budget allocated.

Wanju is currently designing a number of initiatives aimed at promoting child participation. The students' committee is in the process of being established and officially launched on 5 May 2016, on the occasion of South Korea's Children's Day. It is composed of 24 students aged 8 to 10. In parallel, an adolescents' participation council is being set up under the youth centre. The plan is to open a "children's council school" in June 2016 to provide training sessions to council members on the CRC, CFC, the right to participation and how to voice one's opinion and have it reflected in decision-making. Furthermore a policy discussion forum gathering children and adolescents and the city's mayor and officials, will be held. The objective is to issue a joint agreement. Finally, thanks to a partnership with the local media, local news will feature on a monthly basis a report by child reporters, who are members of the council. The reporters will act as spokespersons for children, writing articles and raising awareness on children's issues and concerns.

In Wanju, the municipality held a two-day consultation with children prior to building a playground in order to seek their opinion on the 10 items they would like to have on the playground and the final design included their views.

The visit also provided the opportunity to meet with a group of children and adolescents in an aspiring CFC, Seoul-Songpa, another borough of Seoul. Songpa has two main child participation structures at the municipal level, an adolescent participation committee and a volunteer group.

The adolescent participation committee is composed of members from primary, middle and high schools. It makes recommendations on adolescent policies, welfare, and participates in exchange programmes with other municipalities. In 2015 for example, it proposed to enhance safety measures for children, expand non-smoking areas, encourage more children to use recreational cafés, and promote child rights education.

Songpa's volunteer group is made up of adolescents willing to contribute to public interest. The group is divided in 5 units. The multicultural unit consists in mentoring children from multicultural families, by helping them with the language and homework. It also helps adolescents learn about other cultures and be more tolerant. The traffic-monitoring unit monitors drivers' behaviors through observation and records findings, which are shared with the police. The goal is to identify preoccupying behaviors to awareness-raising interventions and spot dangerous locations. The environment and safety unit monitors and reports on unsafe park facilities (defective barriers, playgrounds) and conducts environment campaigns. The sports unit plays sports with children with disabilities and aims to support them both physically and mentally. The tradition unit consists in learning traditional courtesy, including how to make tea and handle tools.

Developing child participation channels and practices

While cities are fully aware of the need to strengthen child participation, on their own admission they do not necessarily know how to go about it and are eager to learn from existing experiences in other countries. Given the need for guidance, there are significant opportunities to improve practices, especially since they are still at the initial stage. For example, the idea that members of children and adolescents' councils could be elected by their peers was new to many officials and well-received. Likewise, the suggestion to let children themselves select the best adolescent policy in Seongbuk was perceived as innovative but welcome.

Child participation tends to be limited by the formal setting in which it takes place. This could only be witnessed in the one instances when an interaction could take place with children. However, it would be important to ensure that once formed, committees meet in child-friendly spaces, where children can freely voice their opinions and have various channels to do so. The objective is also to ensure that all children, not only the most outspoken, be given the opportunity to express their views.

The inclusion of marginalized children in child participation mechanisms would need to be strengthened. As it stands, recruitment processes for such committees primarily build on school recommendations. Although it could not be verified, in a context of social pressure for educational achievement, it is likely that schools will recommend high achieving students. Even if it is an open process, the fact that the opportunity exists does not mean that it will automatically be used by the most disadvantaged, those facing barriers to their social inclusion, and those who may have skills different from those required for academic achievement.

The daily participation of children, including the youngest ones, also requires increased attention. Policies are largely focused on supporting parents in their child-rearing responsibilities. Yet, involving young children as full actors in the management of day care, beyond play and recreational activities, could be better valued. The short time-frame for the visit may not have enabled to fully grasp the extent of the pedagogical project. Interviews with high ranking officials suggest that there is a willingness to promote participation among children of all ages but guidance and capacity to do so is lacking, calling for specific training.

6. Equality/non discrimination

Marginalized families are defined at the national level as those whose income is less than half the median national income. Informants reported that families in this category often include single-parent families, families with a rural background (for example in Sejong City, those who had been living there when it was a rural village, before it became the country's second capital city), and so-called multicultural families, with one of the parents coming from another country and providing support to the family in the country of origin.

Municipalities visited have often put in place mechanisms to support children from marginalized families. These include legal quotas as per national policy for day care centres of as high as 60 percent to facilitate access to these services for marginalized children, free meals at school and vouchers for meals outside school hours, and in some instances services, aiming to address their particular needs such as the integrated centre described above in the box.

Children with disabilities usually receive support from the state to support their education. Dedicated services are in place, through the ministry of education, to this end. It was not possible during the visit to assess the level of social inclusion they enjoy. However, some observations on the ground suggested that efforts were made to make buildings and other infrastructures physically accessible to persons with disabilities, through wheelchair access, lower desks, and braille writing for example.

Seongbuk was reportedly the first city to hire social workers in charge of ensuring children's welfare in each "block" (an administrative unit corresponding to 20 to 30,000 inhabitants). The official title is "children's and adolescents' welfare planner". Their role is to identify children and families in need of specific services and facilitate access to relevant programmes. To do so, they work closely with schools and communities.

Interviews have further highlighted the situation of well-off children whose parents are both in employment and do not fall under any definition of marginalization. Yet they often grow in difficult circumstances and should not be overlooked. Many of these children often spend a significant amount of time at home on their own. Due to the family's income level, they are at the bottom of the list for after-school activities and do not have access to services offered. This issue, combined with the high social pressure for achievement they are exposed to, has been advanced as an explanation for low wellbeing and high suicide rates. The rationale for the creation of a public day care centre was precisely to meet the needs of these children. The public day care centre is not obliged to accept at least 60 percent of children from marginalized groups, making it easier to register children from better off families at risk of isolation. Seongbuk has also been trying to address the issue in the context of the CFC and developed a suicide prevention programme, which has reportedly had highly positive results.

The notion of universal services in South Korea seems to be quite different from the European approach. Day care centres are all privately run – with very few, very recent exceptions. Reportedly within the context of the CFCI, cities visited have established their first publicly run centres for children in the past couple of years at most, and there are less than a handful of them. The system is entirely privatized, with a form of public-private partnership, in which private entities receive funding from the state and have an obligation to have a certain percentage (typically around 60 percent) of marginalized children in their structures. In spite of numerous questions, it was not possible within the timeframe of the visit to fully explore the issue and it would be beyond the scope of the present study. However, it is interesting to note that the role of the state has until very recently been seen as mainly indirect – delegating direct management to the private sector – but is progressively changing due to the demographic situation and the perceived need to significantly increase public support to parents. Publicly run centres were said to have slightly different financing rules enabling them to offer extra activities at a lower cost for parents in a difficult economic situation.

In most countries, equity approaches primarily focus on the most marginalized children – understood as those whose

society fails to include due to their family's socio-economic conditions or origin, or because they have a disability, among other factors. The Korean example highlights that some children may be materially well-off yet socially excluded due to societal structures and/or livelihoods. There are certainly a number of dilemmas in ways to address the issue, which is beyond the scope of the toolkit. Yet when considering this issue in the toolkit, it may be useful to refer to these types of situations, in reference to inclusive cities.

7. Partnerships

The private sector appears to have a major role in the Republic of Korea. This broad category includes NGOs, citizens, religious leaders, and the business sector.

Citizen engagement

Involvement of residents in policy-making is a major element of the political vision in Seongbuk, as part of its human centered approach. Various reports from the municipality mention a number of initiatives, from participatory budgeting to residents' committees, in which citizens are directly involved in shaping the municipality's policy. Some initiatives have reportedly directly stemmed from consultations with citizens, such as safe-return home buses for children who come back late at night from academic schools and 'yellow carpets' painted on street corners in front of traffic lights so drivers can better see the children and avoid car accidents. It was also reported that committees with representatives from various fields (community residents, religious leaders, municipal officials, businesses and associations) have helped enhance the quality of care centres for example.

Citizens' participation in policy-making seems to be receiving increased attention from municipal leadership as a tool to ensure that the municipality meets residents' needs and is attractive to families. This is a great argument to invite municipalities to multiply opportunities for citizens to voice their concerns and contribute ideas to improve their environment. A similar approach could be used to promote child participation.

Small-scale projects involving residents could be further nurtured. For example, in Sejong some mothers run their own activities with their children. They gather for an hour or two and take turns in leading the activity based on their skills. This reportedly enables them to break isolation of long days spent taking care of children on their own and socialize in a city new to most of them. Municipalities could valuably support such initiatives, by helping in the organization, making rooms available, and making it known on municipal communication material (leaflets, websites etc.).

Private sector engagement

Since 2005, the legal environment has been conducive to the development of public-private partnerships in order to enhance the welfare system, including for children and adolescents. Consequently, each borough has enhanced its collaboration with the private sector. As mentioned above, virtually all day care centres are privately run and the establishment of publicly run centres is very new and incipient.

Partnerships with the business sector is an important way for local authorities to access funding to finance CFCI related initiatives. Many companies have corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes and make funding available to communities. The two Korean Child-Friendly Cities visited, Seongbuk and Wanju, have reported having been successful in obtaining funding from businesses to co-fund various programmes. It was explained that contributing to building child-friendly cities is attractive to companies, because it is local, concrete, and child-focused.

In **Wanju**, the municipality has obtained funding from a major Korean company (Hyundai Motors) to set up a toy library. It has also worked together with the NGO Good Neighbour and Hyundai Motors to install a public lighting system in areas with higher crime rates to increase residents' security. The company initially approached the municipality seeking for opportunities to fund meaningful projects for children. The municipality facilitated contact with the NGO which provided proposals for projects, resulting in a tripartite agreement.

The role of external partnerships appears to be particularly significant in the Republic of Korea's CFCI, due to national governance approaches that facilitate public-private collaboration. A conducive legal framework and available funding from companies represent important assets in accessing financial resources and working on multi-stakeholder's responsibility to make the environment child-friendly. Beyond funding opportunities, the KCU could even further build upon the engagement of the business sector by raising awareness on the Child Rights and Business Principles and promoting employment policies that facilitate family life. It could help make UNICEF visible with businesses while keeping a local level anchor.

8. Monitoring and evaluation

In the Republic of Korea, CFCI is found to have a high impact on the local situation. As municipal leadership and officials seek to make their cities more attractive to families with children, participating in CFCI is a great way for them to have access to knowledge and ideas they are willing to implement on the ground. The perceived added value of their participation in CFCI is precisely to strengthen their capacities to design and implement relevant interventions. The CFCI framework therefore directly informs childhood policies.

Cities belonging to the Association of municipalities for the Promotion of CFC are aspiring to the CFCI status and ready to take the necessary measures to be accredited. The incentive leads them to put in place the building blocks as per the CFCI framework, which therefore has a direct impact on their approaches. For example, cities are required to adopt a specific ordinance, have a dedicated budget, conduct an evaluation and assign permanent staff to the development of CFCI. KCU uses the dynamic to promote the concrete implementation of the model and foster the development of good practices that can be shared across Association members.

A case in point is the city of Sejong. The city was virtually created from scratch in 2002, with a great acceleration since 2012 due to the relocation of major ministries. As many working parents with young children relocate there, the city has a strong interest in being child-friendly and offering a positive environment to families. Urban planning has basically consisted in designing a city on a white sheet, with all options on the table to build the 'perfect' city, which the municipal leadership is very much eager to do. KCU has used the opportunity to engage in the urban planning and development of the city. It aims to make Sejong City a 'model child-friendly environment'. While the process is still incipient and municipal officials are very keen on learning from existing practices, some steps have already been taken, such as the upcoming establishment of a child and youth council and the development of public kindergarten.

Assessment of the local situation is integral to the accreditation of a city as a CFC and therefore receives significant attention. The self-assessment tools developed by UNICEF globally are used as the main instrument to carry out such evaluations. The tools are designed as questionnaires for parents, children and other stakeholders to provide their views on the city they live in. In Sejong City and in Wanju, it was reported that over 3,000 and 2,500 survey responses respectively were received. The National Committee plans to aggregate all responses from participating cities to draw a nation-wide analysis.

The initiative is too recent to have undergone a thorough evaluation of its impact, but the National Committee is working on the development of indicators that could serve this purpose.

In Wanju, the situation analysis took place in 2015. It reviewed the 10 building blocks and relied on the self-assessment toolkit provided by UNICEF combined with regional characteristics. Parents were significantly involved through pilot interviews with 20 parents, and a series of meetings in schools and day care centres. Children also participated through preliminary interviews with 30 interviewees as well as questionnaires. A total of 1800 questionnaires were sent to 30 elementary schools leading to about 600 responses. 500 adolescents and 600 parents (200 whose children are in day-care, 200 whose children are in primary school and 200 for parents of adolescents) were surveyed. The sample involved randomly selecting one class in each school of the city. A university professor, together with a group of students, drafted a comprehensive analysis, which served as the basis for Wanju's application to CFCI.

The strict requirements imposed by the National Committee to become a child-friendly city, and the accompanying process put in place to support cities, have led to significant changes in municipal policies in terms of structures and mechanisms. Although the process is still very recent and the long term effects are still to be assessed, the obligation that dedicated legislation (ordinance), budget line and human resources be in place even before the city formally receives the accreditation enables the CFC process to have an early local effect.

As one of the informants has mentioned, not all childhood policies and interventions are directly linked to CFCI. CFCI is perceived as a framework helping cities make their interventions more effective and meaningful. Put differently, it is seen as a means to build an environment friendly to children and to be attractive to family, rather than as a goal. In this context, the partnership with UNICEF is greatly appreciated, but not necessarily seen as central to the final objective in and of itself. When asked if they would have partnered with another organization having offered similar support, one informant answered positively. Cities are primarily interested in the consultancy function UNICEF plays, although the label is also highly valued. This is a very positive finding, as it is likely to make efforts on the ground more sustainable. It also means that the willingness to make the city child-friendly is part of a larger political project.

While the evaluation process for the local situation is solid, its participatory component mainly relies on questionnaires. While this is an adequate methodology to collect the views of a large number of people, it would need to be combined with other forms of direct participation, allowing citizens to express more complex views and debate ideas. Localized consultations for example to seek adults' and children's views would be very valuable and help municipal leadership to better understand peoples' daily experiences. While most meetings were formal, an informal meeting with parents around activities with children enabled them to express the daily difficulties they face and highlight how easily they could be solved. For example, more flexibility in access to public services, when mothers who traditionally care for young children fall sick for instance and have no care solution, could be adopted. The municipality could also promote opportunities for non-working mothers caring for children to meet, especially in Sejong City where they have often moved to recently and often feel isolated. They are already doing so on an informal basis but could be better supported. These are small but meaningful examples of possible improvements that can only be identified by regularly consulting with users.

9. Key lessons learnt

The Child Friendly City Initiative in South Korea is very new yet growing fast, driven by concerns over preoccupying child wellbeing indicators and city attractiveness, and the Korean Committee for UNICEF's proactive use of the opportunity.

The study enables to draw the following key lessons:

- *An interesting format, combining membership to an association for aspiring cities open to all with a stringent accreditation process.* This enables aspiring cities to access UNICEF's tools and guidance and creates a visible CFCI movement, while at the same time preserving the quality of the label. This could serve as an inspiring practice for other National Committees. A challenge is the resources and engagement needed for the National Committee to accompany numerous cities in the process. An assessment of the model in a two to five years would be very valuable.
- *The incentives behind the willingness to join CFCI for municipalities, mixing demographic elements (low birth rate), competition for attractiveness, and political use of the label.* Yet, importantly, municipalities primarily see the partnership with UNICEF as a way to access technical knowledge for the design and implementation of child-friendly policies, a capacity they often lack. This gives UNICEF a solid entry point to influence local policies and position itself as a national expert on child rights issues. This in turn is likely to enhance its fundraising programme, as already demonstrated. Again, a more thorough evaluation would need to be carried out once the initiative has been in place for a few years.
- *The early identification of a champion – here the mayor of Seongbuk – has helped develop the initiative and stimulate other cities to follow the model.* This is a strategy other National Committees could also learn from.
- *Partnership with the private sector has supported various interventions at the municipal level.* The Korean experience shows that involving businesses in building a CFC gives access to additional resources for municipalities. A question is the level of that engagement and its explicit link with CFCI as branded by UNICEF – and the host of ethical questions that could potentially arise. However, engaging businesses beyond funding as well to promote family-friendly policies could be further explored.