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Korea's School Grounds Projects

Joohun Park

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The school is entirely accessible to staff or students with physical disabilities.

The building has a gross area of 702 square metres and construction took seven months at a total cost of AUD 780 000, which is AUD 1 112 per square metre or AUD 26 000 per student. Construction costs per student are particularly high by Australian standards; however this is a by-product of the specialist nature of the school, *i.e.* offering a full curriculum to just 30 students.

The areas where costs came under the most pressure were the budgets for garden landscaping and loose furniture which are seen as interim installations to be supplemented in the future.

The building has been in use for almost one year and has proven both to be spatially efficient and to promote interconnectedness between students and between staff and students.

It is hoped that a similar school offering facilities for boys who require like support will be built in Perth in the near future.

For further information, contact:
Eamon Broderick
Michael Broderick and Partners Architects
Fax: 61 8 9381 3022
E-mail: eb brodarch@iinet.net.au

Once the project plan was finalized on 20 March 2003, directives were sent to the provincial offices of education. The plan provided for the provincial offices to designate pilot schools for the next two years (2004-5) and to provide incentives for participating school staff.

One hundred and one schools from a total of 417 applicants were selected following review by a committee in each region. The level of education was taken into consideration to include facilities from elementary, lower and upper secondary schools as well as schools for students with disabilities. Also considered was the type of project the schools planned to carry out, such as creating areas for learning about nature, ponds with their own ecosystems, parks for relaxation, gardens dedicated to study, and wooded and grassy areas.

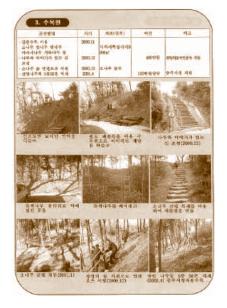
The selected schools receive a two-year budget of KRW 50 million as well as technical advice. Recommendations for basic design and for purchasing and planting trees and shrubs are provided by the School Grounds Committee of *Hak-Gyo-Sup Wi-won-hye* (Forest of Life), a non-governmental organisation founded by a group of concerned citizens.

MOE&HRI set aside KRW 2 billion for special local education financial subsidies for the first year of the Green School Project. In addition, the ministry has applied for KRW 5 billion from the general accounting budget for 2004 in order for the project to reach more schools.

KOREA'S SCHOOL GROUNDS PROJECTS

Korea has undertaken two projects to improve its school grounds: the Green School Project and the School Forest Pilot Project. The Korean Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MOE&HRI) recently launched the **Green School Project** centred on existing urban schools with poor outdoor environments. The project encourages schools and local community members to work together to improve school settings, with the intention of cultivating students and creating a sound relationship between the educational and local communities. By developing wooded areas, ponds, grassy areas and places for growing study plants, the project aims to improve the learning environment and create environmentally-friendly schools.

Urban schools are developing green spaces similar to those at rural schools







Entrance to the Fragrance Garden at the Gochang Girls High School in North Cholla Province







Weonil Elementary School in Gyeonggi Province: Walking path, Pond with a living ecosystem

Expectations about the effects of the Green School Project are growing. It is hoped that the project will serve to improve educational activities and the urban environment, restore a local-community culture and expand green areas. The project is expected to be a turning point for increasing educational attainment levels in addition to enriching the learning environment.

A second project for improving the outdoor school environment by developing wooded areas is currently being promoted by Forest of Life's School Grounds Committee. The School Forest Pilot Project is co-financed by the government (Office of Forestry) and a private company (Yuhan-Kimberley, Corp.). For this project, 127 schools were chosen out of 298 applicants.

The national government plans to reward efforts to improve school grounds. The Minister of Education's Award will be given to school staff and community groups that actively participate in the two projects. And to encourage local authorities to invest funding in school grounds, the ministry will acknowledge local authority heads with an official letter of recognition.

In an effort to exchange information and develop contacts between those responsible at the provincial offices of education and schools participating in the Green Schools Project and School Forest Pilot Project, a workshop was held at the Education Information Institute in Kyeonggi Province in June under the aegis of the School Grounds Committee.

For more information, contact: Joohun Park Director, Education Facilities Planning Division Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development Korea

Fax: 82 2 730 6068 E-mail: parkjooh@moe.go.kr