No Shadow, No Worry

WWWSE: Helping a Nation Rethink its Approach to Education

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A fervor for education paid big post-war dividends for the Republic of Korea, but also spawned a private market that undermines public education and gave rise to the World Without Worries about Shadow Education campaign to increase knowledge and decrease anxiety among students.

At a Korean church one Sunday in 2007, a pastor was delivering a sermon about vision – about seeing how people and societies can move forward by finding solutions to problems, not only by treating them. At one point, the pastor saw many of his parishioners, teenagers, dozing off. He stopped in mid-sentence and starting speaking loudly to reach those in the early stage of sleep.

"Do you know why you are tired?" he asked.

The pastor knew the answer to his question. Of course the teenagers were tired, and the reason was the many hours they were spending preparing for the dreaded *Suneung*, the national College Scholastic Aptitude Test (CSAT), on which so much of their futures turned. Those who scored the highest marks on the CSAT were virtually guaranteed entry to one of what many regard as the country's

WWW volunteers collect signatures seeking support of national law banning preceding education.

WWW demonstrators support their cause outside government offices.

top three universities and thus entry to the top economic and social rungs of society. Low, middle or even good marks were regarded as a roadblock to high achievement, professionally, and to some unknowable extent a kind of a social branding because parents of students who score well often tend to push their children toward marriage with only those who also score well.

With so much at stake, parents go to extraordinary lengths to prepare their children for the CSAT test. Beginning with nursery school or kindergarten and on through high school, many pay large percentages of their household incomes to enroll them in private schools that begin after the regular public school day ends. The additional private schooling is designed to put them far ahead of the learning pace in the public schools and thus onto a faster track to CSAT success than those in the public schools without supplementary private education.

"Do you know why the problem of Suneung is unsolved?" the pastor continued. "It is because not one person has taken it as their calling and dedicated their life to solving it."

The pastor's words resonated particularly with a person listening to the sermon – a 44-year-old former teacher turned reformer then working on ways to improve communication among teachers, parents and students. Song In-soo was well acquainted with an education system that punished people who didn't, wouldn't or couldn't go along with it.

Shortly after he began his career as an English teacher, Song was ordered to collect 3 million won (about US$3,800) from parents of students with the highest marks in his homeroom class. Back then, this practice was customary because a law prohibiting it wasn't enforced, as it is today. The funds were used to pay for, among other things, meals and trips for teachers and "tributes" to the school's principal. Song refused to collect the money, and moved his desk into the school boiler room to avoid further argument with a school official who sat next to him in the teachers' offices.

Similar traditions across the country – lunch queues based on test marks, for instance – soured Song on the schoolhouse, but not education. In 2003, he left teaching and launched a series of initiatives that collectively became known as the Good Teacher Movement. It included the Home Visit Campaign, which called for regular visits of teachers to students' families; the Teacher Evaluation System, in which parents and students got to grade their teachers; and the Principal Appointment Policy, which said teachers could be nominated for principal positions.

The Good Teacher Movement had positive impacts, but over time Song came to the belief that the main problem with Korean education was the intense competition that existed along the CSAT-bound expressway. In addition to the top CSAT scorers entering the top universities, top companies cemented the system by linking university pedigree to prestigious employment. It was a system without much subtlety or holistic evaluation. It encouraged parents to seek every available means beyond the public classroom to increase their children's chanc-

es. The means included not only the after-school private schools, known as cram schools, but also the typical customs of anxious parents of means around the world -- specialty tutors, test-prep centers and college-admission counselors.

The private efforts became known, as they were in other countries, as "shadow education." Until listening to the pastor address drowsy students on that day in 2007, Song was like most Koreans -- he accepted shadow education as a *fait accompli*. It was too ingrained in their culture, thanks to the role education played in the nation's remarkable recovery from the devastation of the Korean War in the early 1950s. The modest initiatives the Good Teacher Movement had achieved – better communication among parents, students and teachers – were well and good, but the bigger issue was shadow education.

About the same time, Yoon Ji-hee, the leader of a similar group known as the Good Parent Movement, came to the same realization as Song. Together in 2008 they founded a new group, World Without Worries about Shadow Education (WWWSE). Their goal was to strengthen public education by reducing reliance on private education. To strengthen public education, national policies would have to change; that could only happen if minds were changed.

"Changing the conscience is the start of changing bad laws and policies," Song says today. "Eventually, good conscience serves as the lever and the power to make real change. Therefore, to change bad law and policy, we prioritize changing mindsets."

In six years' time, WWWSE, or, for short, World Without Worries (WWW), changed many mindsets across the country, from towns to cities to provinces, and, finally, to the nation's capital. WWW began with a series of lectures and research papers about the negative effects of shadow education on the nation's children, including the 40% of those aged 13 to 19 who in a government survey blamed suicidal thoughts on the premium attached to high grades and the CSAT pressure-cooker; and those aged 9 or above who in another government report rated their quality of life the lowest of those similarly aged across 31 of the world's advanced nations.

WWW also formed a group called the Citizens' Ministry of Education to enable people to report and change such customs as lining kids up for lunch based on their grades. Then came pamphlets that reached 2 million parents, a free online consulting service for worried and desperate parents seeking viable alternatives, and a 100-day street protest in the heart of Seoul that led to media and political attention. At a key moment in the protest, Song was at the head of the picket line.

In 2014, WWW's efforts resulted in an achievement few would have imagined: the passage of a national law regulating "preceding education" – or education ahead of the proscribed schedule for learning in the public school curriculum. The law was aimed at ending one of shadow education's most dramatic effects – almost 92% of students already know what will be taught in the public schools, by at least by one semester in advance and oftentimes by many more semesters.

The law, however, contained a big exemption that showed how much shadow education continued to hold sway in the national mindset. The law applied only to public schools that might want to push their students ahead by a semester or more. Thanks to fierce opposition from heavily vested interests, lawmakers carved an exemption for private schools – and so the so-called cram schools remain free today to advertise heavily and provide what hopeful parents pay them for, a faster track to success for their children.

'MUST LEARN TO SURVIVE'

Cram schools, or *hagwon*, cast by far the longest shadow in Korean education. Almost 70% of pre-university students attended them in 2014. They often stay until 10 p.m., after a seven-hour long regular public school day followed by pre- or after-school homework and, in many cases, other activities -- piano, dance or the like -- that get jammed into a student's day. Statistics released in

2014 show that an average household spent 65% of its education budget on cram schools and other forms of shadow education.

Cram schools focus on many subjects -- maths, science and foreign languages are particularly emphasized; their aim is what is known as "preceding education" -- teaching and testing on materials covered later in the curriculum of the public schools, for which the nation's Ministry of Education has established standardized syllabi for every subject at every grade level. To win the race toward success on the CSAT, those who can afford it and those who can't, but do so anyway, turn to the cram schools. The average cram school student is taught and tested at a level that is 3.9 years ahead of the pace in the public curriculum. In an amazing departure from that average, a Korean newspaper reported that a first-year primary student was studying the English syllabus at the level of a final high school year student.

In 2014, in a survey of 9,720 parents invested in preceding education, the Korea Education Development Institute found that preceding education becomes more intense as students get older. The ratio of students who study in advance is 84.1% in primary school, 87% in middle school and 89.5% in high school. The percentages are higher for primary school students who aim to enter prestigious international middle schools (preceding education ratio of 93.7%) and middle school students who aim to enter elite special-purpose high schools (90.6%).

Modern art frames entryway to prestigious Seoul National University, founded in 1895.

The national embrace of preceding education and other forms of shadow education arose in the wake of an exceptionally bloody civil war on the Korean Peninsula in which nearly five million people, half of them civilians, died. It lasted from 1950 to 1953 and resulted in two nations separated by an ad hoc border. Their economies and infrastructures were practically destroyed.

After the war's uneasy armistice, the Republic of Korea south of the border began clawing its way back from a desperate situation. The people and their leaders saw education as the only way out of poverty and devastation. They started building schools and training teachers, and adopted a national refrain: "must learn to survive."

The "fervor" for education, to use the word the government uses today on its official website, helped Korea to begin developing a pool of determined engineers, technicians and managers. The first wave created a government-backed, export-oriented economy centered around small factories and light industrial products. This brought in capital, which spawned innovation, technology and larger factories that in time began making heavy industrial products attractive to foreign markets looking for a labor cost advantage.

In less than a decade, the economy reached a 10% annual growth rate; it would continue to grow by about 10% annually for the next 30 years. The stellar comeback became known as the "Miracle on the Han River," a reference to the river that runs through the capital and the surrounding regions, now home to many thousands of factories and about half of the Republic of Korea's 50 million people.

In 1988, in a symbolic debut on the world stage, the nation hosted the Summer Olympics. In 1992, it joined the Organization for Economic Development (OECD), a then 29-member organization that included many of the world's most advanced

nations. It became known as one of the four Asian Tigers –– joining Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong as centers of high-paced economic achievement. By 2013, the value of its exports had grown from US$ 32.8 million in 1960 to US$ 560 billion.

"With the philosophy of 'must learn to survive,' education fever was the driving force of Korean economic growth," Lee Myung-hun, former Minister of Education, once said.

In addition to economic success, the fever over time created great stress among parents and students anxious for an edge on the all-important CSAT. On exam day, the entire nation gets caught up in the exhausting-for-students, day-long drama. The media provides live reports. Transit officials alter commuting schedules to make sure students get to test sites promptly (police provide escort in case some are running late). After the day is done, restaurants offer free congratulatory meals and businesses discount their merchandise. When the results come in, cram schools crow about their success stories.

Apart from its day-long length, the CSAT is similar to tests used in other countries, but the Korean view and reality is that more rides on the outcome. High scores greatly boost the odds for admission to what many regard as the nation's top three universities: Seoul National University, Korea University and Yonsei University. The first word of each forms an acronym, "SKY", by which they are informally and collectively known.

A SKY degree is a measure of talent, and many Koreans also consider it a surefire ticket to lifelong prosperity and security because of the strong alumni networks of each university. The perception is that SKY graduates benefit from SKY alums with hiring authority in government, law, education and media as well as in prestigious investment houses, banks and the industrial conglomerates, known as *chaebols*, that dominate the economy today. Socially, SKY graduates are considered good catches because they enable families to enter society's upper tier, or to stay there.

In his lectures and interviews about shadow education, Song In-soo, WWW co-founder, boils the system down to three parts: "The essence of shadow education is the overly competitive university entrance process, the system of university ranking and a labor market that recruits graduates based on academic background."

In 2009, a year after WWW was launched, some reforms in the university admission system were coincidentally introduced. In addition to high marks on the CSAT, universities could consider in their admission calculus the "special ability" students had shown in certain subjects. The intention was good, but the effect actually tilted the admission process further in favor of parents willing to spend on cram schools and other forms of shadow education to demonstrate their children had special ability. This was because of the way the Korean high school education system is organized.

Korean high schools come in three types known as special purpose, autonomous and generalized. Special-purpose high schools are what they sound like; they concentrate on subjects such as foreign languages, science and maths. Autonomous high schools are privately run; they can offer subjects tailored to their particular type of students, such as those with artistic talent. Generalized high schools follow a proscribed curriculum and are the most common type, by far – about 90% of the nation's high school students are enrolled.

Intentionally or not, the SKY university admissions process stacks the deck against students from the generalized high schools. The process basically has two tracks: prior admission and general admission. To get accepted through prior admission, students have to nail the CSAT and show special ability (in foreign languages, science or maths, for instance) or special skill (in art or music, for example). The SKY universities admit about 75% of their 10,000 freshman students through prior admission. Typically, more than half of those are from the special-purpose and autonomous schools, where just 10% of the nation's high school students are enrolled. The other 50% of the SKY freshman class is admitted through general admission. It all adds up to this: out of 550,000 high school graduates,

about 55,000 students (10% of total students) who attended special and autonomous high schools compete for the 5,000 SKY spots and the other 5,000 SKY spots go to those among the 495,000 students from generalized schools who have no edge other than to do exceptionally well on the CSAT.

Of course, the two-track admission process also means that about half of those students enrolled in the special-purpose and autonomous schools, where the competition is most intense, won't get a SKY spot. For fear they won't, they are under enormous pressure, from their parents or themselves, driving continued demand for the cram schools and shadow education, despite the reforms initiated in 2009 and despite the likelihood that more than 5,000 of 495,000 high school students in the generalized high schools have the potential to contribute to Korea's economy and society at a high level.

"To win admission to a SKY university, children have to seek extra help," Song said. To him, the post-war motto, "must learn to survive", has given way to another: "must cram to survive."

LIGHTHOUSE SCHOOL

Song and co-founder Yoon deliberated for a long time in 2008 on the name of their new NGO. Even though their goals were to strengthen public education and eliminate or at least reduce the stress of the college admission system, and decrease the role cram schools played in Korean education, they avoided terms that would make the group seem combative or discourage involvement by grassroots citizens. They wanted words that caused people to instantly recognize the subject at hand, and so "shadow education" had to be in the title because most Koreans knew the term. They also wanted to unite people under the same pleasant-sounding umbrella – a "world without worries."

They also had to settle on a fundamental approach for pursuing change in a culture where shadow education had become so deeply embedded. They came up with a two-pronged strategy -- one for ordinary citizens and one for policy makers in schools and government. The goal of both strategies was to change minds, and eventually drive policy change. The first strategy turned on producing research that encouraged citizens to think about the harmful effects of shadow education. Research would underpin the second strategy as well, but the second also would include lobbying and activism.

Song In-soo, WWW co-founder, stages one-person protest in the heart of Seoul.

WWW began its efforts with a series of lectures and forums known as the Lighthouse School. Turning to people they knew from their days in the Good Teacher Movement and the Good Parent Movement, the co-founders invited education experts and reformers to speak about the origin and evolution of the cram schools, their methods and their impacts, and to question whether they and other forms of shadow education did more harm than good for Korean society and its parents and students. The Lighthouse School also provided forums for parents and students to meet with the lecturers and discuss their personal experiences and concerns. The parents were encouraged to write summaries of the lectures, for which they received ceremonial "graduation" certificates.

In the forums, the lecturers and parents talk about many issues or consequences tied to shadow education that have been discussed in research pa-

pers in recent years. In addition to those described earlier in this case study, they include:

- Every year, on average, according to a newspaper's investigative report, four students commit suicide either right before or right after the CSAT. Other suicides, including that of an eight-year-old child, have been linked to academically induced stress. The National Teachers Labor Union said in a 2011 report that student suicidal impulses result from two factors -- too much time in cram schools and fear of poor marks. An eight-year-old boy in 2007 told researchers: "I always get 100% for English, but for maths, I always get one or two questions wrong. I got so sad about it I was going to jump off our building, but then I felt sad for my mum…"
- The birth rate in the Republic of Korea has declined sharply over the last decade, with a record low set in 2014. Some attribute this in part to shadow education and its effect on household spending and thus decisions by parents to forego having additional children. A new word had been coined to describe families with high education costs as a percentage of total household spending: "edu-poor." A 2012 report by the Hyundai Research Institute estimates that the average family spends 18.1% of total household spending on education. The edu-poor family spends 28.5%. In an interview, a mother said her family "lives on bankbooks in red" because its shadow education expenses soared once her children entered high school.
- In an analysis by Lee Jong-tae, former head of the Korean Youth Educational Research Institute that compared the academic performance of high school students with preceding-education lessons to a group with none, he said the difference narrowed as students got older. He concluded the reason is that students in the preceding education group put in less effort as they got older because they knew, or were at least familiar, with the material. In this way, he suggested, the cram schooling can actually hurt rather than help a student get into a top university.
- On the other hand, a heavy cram school emphasis on maths, three to four hours a day in some hyper-competitive communities, causes some students with no cram school experience to put less effort into maths once they get to high school, even though the subject is a major part of the CSAT. They believe they simply can't compete with cram-school maths students when it comes to solving the 70,000 to 100,000 problems that can turn up in the generalized, but still very intense, high school curriculum. A new term also has been coined to describe them -- "maths give-uppers." The National Institute for Mathematical Sciences said maths give-uppers accounted for 34.1% of CSAT takers in 2014. Since maths is a major part of the exam, regardless of what subject a student intends to study at university, the maths give-uppers badly hurt their chances for a top school.
- Regardless of debates about its value or harm, cram schools and other forms of shadow education are symbols of a growing wealth gap in Korea. Only the well-off or those edu-poor who decide to increase education costs as a percentage of household spending and forego additional children are able to pay for shadow education. Meanwhile, the country's poverty rate is increasing and government efforts to reduce it lag far behind those of its partner advanced nations in the OECD. Households that earn less than half of Korea's median income account for 19% of all households; students in those households, statistically, will end up in low-paying service jobs, having had no shot at a SKY school and not much of one at the nation's 100 or so other universities.

Since 2009, the Lighthouse School has opened in 39 locations across the country -- with 22 of them hosting lectures and forums at least once a month. So far, about 30,000 parents have "graduated." They include Lee Ju-ri, whose suspicions about the effectiveness of shadow education became stronger after she learned about the statistics, surveys and reports compiled by WWW researchers. She says she began donating money to WWW because its

lessons mean a better future for Korea and because its transparency demonstrates its commitment. She says that she and her husband can provide whatever extra instruction is needed for their children.

The graduates also include Jo Hae-young, who once sent her young children to extra English lessons. As they got older, however, she found herself increasingly comparing them to other children. She began to fear she was doing to them what adults had sometimes done to her when she was a child, judging her by the accomplishments and interests of other children rather than encouraging her to pursue her own. Her children, she decided, would instead take the number and type of lessons they needed or wanted.

Nam Hyung-eun, a mother of two, said that before she joined WWW she sent her seven-year-old daughter on an exceptionally demanding daily journey, seven different after-school classes including maths, science, soccer, music, and also for three languages: Korean, English and Chinese. She said the Lighthouse lectures were powerful evidence that "preceding education is neither necessary nor effective." Nam later became a WWW national representative of the Lighthouse program.

CITIZENS' MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

The CSAT is not the only exam some parents and students have to worry about. Students whose parents want them to attend one of the elite special-purpose or autonomous high schools (as opposed to the generalized, where 90% of Korea's teenagers are enrolled) also have to do well on an admissions test, and in follow up interviews, even though they may well already have high middle school marks. The high school admissions test is thus another reason why parents enroll their children, usually at seven years old, in cram schools. Many go to those cram schools that specialize and teach in the English language, because English is a big part of the high school admissions test they will take when they turn 12 or 13.

Because their children's English-language skills will be tested on the high school admissions exam, some parents enroll their children in English-language kindergartens, which begin at the age of 2 years in Korea, where some kindergartens fetch tuition fees that rival those of medical schools. Other parents base their choice of a post-natal care center on the quality of English-language materials available for babies to play with or leaf through. Parents with such fervor are said to suffer from "English fever." In rare instances, some have even submitted their children to "linguistic surgery," in which the frenulum, a small band of tissue beneath the tongue, is sliced open to lengthen the tongue in the belief English sounds such as "r" and "l" can be pronounced better. Many experts are highly dubious and warn that without proper post-surgery exercises, the frenulum may reattach and make pronunciation of any sounds more difficult.

English fever has three root causes, according to Park Jin-Kyu, a research professor and instructor at Korea University and Kyunghee University. In a 2009 book published by Cambridge University Press, he identified the causes as government policy changes, social and economic changes, and the increasing use of English as a teaching medium.

The changes began in 1991, when the government began placing less emphasis on English writing and translation in the CSAT exam, and more on listening and speaking ability. Then, in 1995, the government announced that some English instruction would be introduced into all primary school grades. The changes naturally caused a boom in the English cram-school business, which was fueled further by Korea's increasing social and economic integration with English-language speakers due to globalization and world trade. Finally, teachers, from university on down, began teaching partially or completely in English.

After they began using the Lighthouse School and research to examine the social and economic effects of cram schools and shadow education, the WWW co-founders and their growing number of employed staff turned to the second strategy adopted at the outset: the use of research to bolster direct lobbying of school and government officials.

They argued that the evidence showed the bar for English-language ability for the high school admissions test had simply been set too high. It did not take into consideration the different levels of English teaching available in the middle schools. This gave those who could or would pay for cram school-preparation an unfair advantage.

In 2009, the Ministry of Education agreed, and set the test's proficiency bar at the level of instruction available in the public schools. The effects were almost immediate. Some cram schools that focused only on language skills closed their doors -- and in 2010, the nation's household spending on shadow education, while still high, dropped for the first time in 20 years. Only one year after WWW launched operations, its Citizens' Ministry of Education campaign had helped bring about the adoption of a major reform.

The Citizens' Ministry served its constituents and enlisted them to serve it. As increasing donations, primarily from individuals, allowed WWW to expand its programs, the organization established a free online consulting service ("No Worry Consulting Net") and parent-education programs and materials that included pamphlets with such titles as "What a Waste, Private Education Fees!" It also launched a campaign that encouraged parents, students, and taxpayers to report and document what they regarded as inappropriate customs in schools.

The campaign turned up evidence of such practices as assigning dormitories only to those with top grades; rewarding students who informed on classmates who had broken some school rule or another, and one that was supposed to have been banished years before: students lining up for lunch on the basis of grades. The campaign exists in 22 cities. In the first two months of 2014, WWW requested corrective action at 58 schools, and 22 either abolished or amended their practices.

The campaign brought an end to such extreme practices as the one Jeong Chae-min encountered in her high school, where teachers punished students by making them remove their jackets and stand by open windows in the wintertime. Jeong, now a university theology student, said that she and her classmates were also divided into two groups – an "exempt class" for students with lower grades and a "research class" for students with higher marks. She said that the teachers disrespected the first group by not addressing them by name. "The only thing I wished throughout my high school years was for teachers who were interested in me," she added.

The Citizens' Ministry of Education's most controversial and hard-fought push for reform began in April 2012, when members of WWW took turns staging one-person protests against preceding education over 100 days in a public open space known as *Gwanghwamun* in central Seoul. Protests are a familiar sight in Gwanghwamun,

Members of the World Without Worries family celebrate publication of new pamphlet about shadow education.

which is surrounded by many historic sites as well as the offices of major financial institutions and the industrial conglomerates known as *chaebols*. The presidential residence, known as the Blue House, is nearby. The area has the heaviest pedestrian traffic in Korea, making it a natural forum for causes.

The protest against a basic fact of life in the Republic of Korea attracted media notice, which led to an increasing number of invitations for Song and Park to speak at education forums and to give interviews on national broadcast programs. Their experiences in the Good Teacher Movement and Good Parent Movement and the successes they had so far achieved with WWW, such as persuading the Ministry of Education to end the English-language test requirement that was deemed unfair to students who had not attended cram schools, gave them credibility with the nation's leading media outlets.

Their credibility was bolstered further prior to the 2012 presidential election when two major political parties, the conservative Saenuri and the liberal Minjoo, sensed an opportunity to distinguish themselves from other parties with a series of pledges including a "prohibition of preceding education." Their announcements meant that in only four years' time, WWW had helped make concerns about preceding education part of a national political debate over whether to alter the nation's education culture.

In March of 2013, WWW gave its supporters a major weapon. It held a press conference with a group of teachers it had asked to analyze essay and interview questions at 15 universities, including two of the SKY schools. The teachers said their analysis showed that 37% of the questions originated from materials that had been taught ahead of the proscribed curriculum in high schools – preceding education, in other words.

The analysis attracted attention which in time translated to the drafting of a legislative proposal banning preceding education. Political leaders in favor of the proposal asked to promote it hand in hand with WWW; the co-founders emphasized to the public that any political assistance they received would be limited only to prohibiting preceding education. Looking every bit the teacher, with his greying hair, glasses, modest suit and earnest manner, Song returned to Gwanghwamun to stage another protest. He strung a sign around his shoulders that said: "Let's be aware of the seriousness of preceding education and pay attention to Normalization of Public Education and Prohibition of Preceding Education Bill."

After two legislators were chosen by their parties to try and steer the bill to passage, their websites were immediately swamped by angry messages from the bill's opponents. When the number reached about 100,000, their sites crashed. WWW submitted the signatures of about 20,000 people who supported the bill. But opponents, including representatives of the cram schools, submitted about 200,000 signatures in opposition.

In the end, the cram schools and their supporters prevailed. The bill was passed, but legislators gave them more than a compromise. They gave them a special exemption; the law, now in effect, applies only to public schools. The cram schools continue to help students whose parents pay to put them ahead of the public school curriculum and get a leg up on the CSAT.

Even so, a bill banning at least one form of shadow education had become a law, a feat considered impossible by "99% of the experts, parents and teachers" at the start of the campaign, said Baek Sung-ju, one of WWW's now 31-member staff. "A legal ban on advance studying sounded rather irrational at that time," she added.

WWW will continue to press for reform. Despite the wind behind it, a very uphill road lies ahead. But, Song says today, from personal experience: "True energy lies within ordinary people."

LESSONS AND CHALLENGES

The first lesson to take away from World Without Worries about Shadow Education is its name. It is worth it for new NGOs to spend some time determining what to call themselves. Song and Park put a lot of thought into the unique moniker of

theirs, and it works. It may sound a bit inexplicable, but that's only if you're not from Korea, where "shadow education" is instantly familiar. "World without worries", on the other hand, implies a place free of stress, an attractive idea in a country that has been stressed out for more than 65 years, first by war and then by the frenetic pace of recovery, and now by today's high-octane lifestyle. The name the co-founders chose perfectly suits its vision and mission.

Another lesson is to combine research with services, because they can be complementary, as they are with WWW. The organization turned to many sources, including Ivory Tower papers and books as well as Korean government surveys and reports, for evidence that support its views on the complicated consequences of shadow education. Argument and analysis based on authoritative information give cause for people to listen, if not agree. In WWW's case, quality research enabled it to also devise services and programs -- Lighthouse Schools for parents to learn and meet with experts; free online consulting; a battery of publications – to spread its message about shadow education.

It also was productive for WWW to enlist the people it serves onto its team, people ready to join the Citizens' Education Ministry and report and put an end to objectionable schoolhouse customs; help stage a 100-day protest, and help collect 20,000 signatures to try and influence a national political debate.

Finally, it is also important that when issues turn political, an organization remains focused on the issues, and not necessarily its alliances with political leaders committed to change but potentially inclined to parlay the organization's success into their own. This is a tricky road to travel when the issue is one of changing national policy on entrenched national traditions, but independence preserves the organization's credibility for the next battle.

A major WWW challenge will be deciding what to focus on next and how to do it. The exemption inserted into the law against preceding education suggests that it will be difficult to take up this battle again in the near future. The political landscape would have to undergo substantial change, and even if it does, the cram schools and those who favor the system just as it is will be formidable opponents.

Those from the cram schools and others, such as parents convinced of their benefits and politicians and business leaders unwilling to tamper with traditions, would say that some of the long-terms goals the WWW co-founders speak of today – the elimination of all shadow education and the prohibition of hiring based only on academic background – are unrealistic and unreasonable.

Smaller goals exist, and WWW has many to consider. One is persuading the government to examine the three-legged high school system and come up with ways to enable talented students in the generalized schools to have the same opportunities for success and admission to the SKY universities as those in the special-purpose and autonomous schools. Another goal is some kind of system to regulate private schools that seek to take advantage of parents' fears for their children's futures with unproven or unprovable claims about the CSAT advantages of the courses they offer. Another is to promote the strengths and opportunities of Korea's other universities.

One more goal seems particularly valuable for a nation seeking to develop more creative high-tech industries: persuading school and government officials to devise exams that rely less on multiple-choice questions, and the rote memorization they tend to produce in students preparing for them, and more on essay-writing and oral presentations, which tend to encourage more critical thinking and out-of-the-box analysis that can lead to innovation.

Maybe the biggest challenge for WWW as it presses ahead is to simply make sure its message is seen as positive rather than negative. It's for education, not against it.

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QUANTITATIVE INDICATORS

Financial

Planned budget versus actual expenditure for the fiscal year*	Planned budget in 2014: 1.2 billion won (US$1.14 million) Actual expenditure in 2014: 1.1 billion won (US$1.04 million)
Income composition by source	Individuals: 75.6% Corporations: 2.8% Events: 9.3% Sales booklets/doorplates: 2.9% Other: 4.0% Balance carried forward from the prior year's accounts: 4.5% Royalties: 0.8%
Income composition: domestic versus international	Domestic: 100%

Personnel

Staff retention rate	88.6%
Turnover rate	11.4%
What is the board composition?	Men, 10; women, 2 Business, 2; medical, 1; journalism, 1; legal, 1; academia, 5; non-profit, 2
How many meetings does the board hold per year?	Three times in 2013; twice in 2014
How many employed staff?	31 (as of December 2014)
How many staff members have attended some non-profit or management training course?	Internal training: three times in 2014 for all staff External training: 23 times for 14 staff

Quantitative Indicators Continued

Organizational

Do you publish an annual report?	Yes
How many sites/locations do you currently operate in?	Head office in Seoul, with meetings held across 40 regions in Korea
Do you measure results?	Yes. Self-evaluation and member evaluation based upon an annual survey. Members score every campaign in terms of effectiveness, outcome and necessity on a scale of 0-6 Results measurement based on perceptions of parents (i.e., how they feel their relationship with their children is changed). Efforts are underway to develop indicator reflecting members' daily satisfaction levels as a result of participation in programs Planning for development of an index for impact evaluation
What types of outreach does your organization do?	Lectures, social media, email, print
Do you regularly meet with government representatives? If yes, on a scale of 1-3 how close is the relationship with government? 1 = not close; 2 = somewhat close; 3 = very close	Yes 2 = Somewhat close

* Exchange rate of 1053.2 won to US$1 in 2014