The Governance of Urban Regeneration

From Korean War Relics to Peace & Culture Center

Anti-tank Barricades in Dobong-gu District, Seoul, South Korea (2014–2017)

After the 1950-1953 Korean War, ROK Army installed anti-tank barricades to block the invasion of the North. In 1970’s even residential apartments were built upon them to hide the structure. However, these concrete hulks have left abandoned since the demolition of the apartment in 2004. As it became a hideous thing for the city, the citizens and civil societies in Dobong-gu formed a bureau and cooperated to renew it. Thanks to their collective efforts, the horrid war relics could be finally transformed into a public space for culture and art in October 2017. With Seoul Irish Garden(Changpo-won), a sports park, and a shared space for public and local artists, it is now a symbol of peace and culture altogether.

Dobong-gu Municipal Government of Seoul
Population 345,945 (July 1, 2017)
Land area 20.84 Km² (3.44% of Seoul)
Budget 443.3 billion Korean Won (2017)
ICLEI membership April 3, 2015

The legacy of the 1950-53 Korean War remains apparent throughout the country, and Dobong-dong, Dobong-gu, a small urban community in northeastern Seoul was not exceptional as its location was on strategic corridor at that time. Fearing possible North Korean invasion with tanks, so-called ‘Anti-Tank Barricade’ was built in 1970. However, a 270m long reinforced concrete barricade was one of the country’s worst-kept military defense secrets, hovering over roads and railways in plain sight. In order to address this problem, the four-story Dobong Citizen Apartment (1970–2004), a residential facility for military personnel and their family members, was built upon anti-tank barricade and bunker. In fact, this apartment was the first residential complex built in Greenbelt Zone and flats were given to the non-commissioned officers by the ROK Army Veterans Affairs. In 1972, the ownership of these properties was transferred from the ROK Army to the Seoul Metropolitan Government, and then civilians began to move in.

Built 47 years ago, the anti-tank barricade was believed by locals to have outlived their usefulness and had become more of an obstruction to urban development and aesthetics. After Mayor of Seoul visited the military structure in 2013, its renewal projects seemed to boost, but the complicated administrative procedures were hindering it to proceed. It was a civil society that made a breakthrough. The Citizens Advisory Committee or CAC, launched in July 2017 played a pivotal role in cooperation between local governments and communities. CAC’s contributions include 50+ public hearings, 5 expert workshops, 3 field trips, and public opinion surveys. A draft of the Anti-tank Barricade Regeneration Project was submitted to the Seoul Metropolitan Government by CAC during the Public Policy and Civic Engagement Forum held in September 2014. In December, Seoul Metropolitan Government granted 2.65 billion Won to renovate the barricade in Dobong-dong. The first workshop of urban regeneration experts was held in 2014, followed by a joint meeting between the Seoul Metropolitan Government, Dobong-gu Municipal Government, and CAC in November. Four sessions of the Urban Regeneration Academy narrowed down stakeholders’ differences over urban decay, and finally, the outdated military defense asset was reborn as a space of culture, arts, and creativeness – together with the Seoul Irish Garden and Northeastern Seoul Sports Park.

〈SDGs〉
Case Study

1. Background

Dobong-dong, a small urban community in Seoul is home to one of anti-tank barricade system that was designed when the presumed North Korea’s strategy was a repeat of the Korean War Strategy, “a tank-led ground invasion.” The apartment building intended to disguise itself to look like a civilian property was demolished back in January 2004, leaving 47 years old bare concrete bunkers alone. These hulks, being abandoned for 10 years made Dobong-dong and its neighborhoods decayed and dangerous.

A close partnership with Seoul Metropolitan Government initiated by the Mayor of Dobong-gu Municipality brought citizens and public officials to a roundtable dated July 5, 2014, followed by the foundation of CAC. An active civic engagement was welcomed by the local administration and a plan for regenerating anti-tank barricade gained momentum. The public governance of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) has proven its worth in delivery of sustainable urban regeneration models, such as the Anti-tank Barricade Regeneration Project which transforms useless military installation into a place of arts, culture, and people.

2. Progress and Outcomes of the Urban Regeneration Project

Objective

The main object of this project is to create a space which citizen can actively utilize with and get benefit from through urban regeneration of the hideous structure with tenuous function as a military facility, driven by the Public-Private-Academic and Military Partnership. Dobong-gu’s case has significance for other localities as its urban renewal project creates new values from forgotten ruins, and also promotes the public good. The project is to:

1. Create a public space where everyone freely participates in cultural life
2. Support local artists and link them with communities;
3. Facilitate creation, production, and commercialization of cultural contents; and
4. Creation of a center of cultural activities promoting the sense of urban ecology, being harmonized with nearby spaces(incl. Seoul Irish Garden, Northeastern Seoul Sports Park)
Progress and Issues

Public and Private, being seated together

At the landmark meeting held on 5th July 2014, a group of representatives from the Dobong-gu and local communities as well as NGOs agreed on that a certain action must be taken for anti-tank barricade that had been abandoned for a long period of time. LEE Dong-jin, Dobong-gu’s sixth Mayor expressed his concerns over deteriorating landscapes of nearby areas, but a renovating military installation was somehow beyond his ability. Days later, a field investigation was carried by meeting attendees. They understood the gravity of the situation and reaffirmed what they are supposed to do for the good of their families and friends. Keeping away from a time-consuming bureaucratic process, a PPP-driven solution was proposed by civil society representatives, and Mayor Lee promised to give a full support to urban renewal project. A successful founding of CAC was attributable to citizens’ passion and local government’s administrative support. All CAC members had a strong commitment to the project and collaborative governance practice in every aspect of the urban regeneration project. A series of public hearing sessions organized by CAC helped more people come to know about and participate in the urban renewal process. CAC also gathered opinions and suggestions from professionals in various domains such as environment, education, ecology, architecture, arts, and culture. Some fifty plus field surveys allowed CAC members to rediscover potentials that the outdated military installation has. Each member came up with new ideas based on one’s experiences and expertise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 26, 2016</td>
<td>Case studies on the transfer of Berlin wall reviewed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 29, 2016</td>
<td>Donation request for Berlin Wall segments made by Dobong-gu to Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 17, 2016</td>
<td>Donation request for Berlin Wall segments reviewed by Public Diplomacy Bureau</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar. 21, 2016</td>
<td>Donation request letter delivered from PDB to ROK Embassy in Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr. 15, 2016</td>
<td>Request granted by German counterparts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr. 28, 2016</td>
<td>3 slabs selected by Dobong-gu</td>
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<td>Jul. 12, 2016</td>
<td>Preparations with the Ministry of Unification</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 04, 2016</td>
<td>Donation ceremony held in Teltow, Germany</td>
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<td>Oct. 07, 2016</td>
<td>Berlin Wall segments shipped out from Hamburg, Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 17, 2016</td>
<td>Berlin Wall segments arrived at Busan, Korea</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug. 16, 2017</td>
<td>Berlin Wall segments displayed in Peace &amp; Culture Center</td>
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Cooperation among community, administration, and military

Since a land ownership and rights to other improvements built on the land have been hugely controversial, Dobong-gu was limited to exercise its administrative powers. Moreover, a CAC’s urban regeneration plan suffered from the insufficient budget. Therefore, the public policy and Civic Engagement Forum held in 2014 was important for CAC because Seoul Metropolitan Government provided government grants to selected proposals from the forum for civic betterment. Thanks to the Open Mayor’s Office program, a platform to collect ideas from individual citizen, CAC succeeded in the contest and received 2.65 billion Won in December. A fresh momentum generated by the grants accelerated further formalities. Upon the receipt of a CAC’s formal proposal, Dobong-gu announced a design and engineering tender according to ideas of individual citizens. Unlike other cases, public opinions were directly reflected to architectural concepts and spatial configurations, and that approach pushed both private and public shareholders to build more confidence on what they have done. Additionally, the Berlin Wall segments – a sign of peace and reunification - were brought to and installed at PCC, thanks to the international efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ROK Embassy in Germany, and their German counterparts.

However, a partnership with military authorities was another hurdle. Converting effective defense systems into civilian use required intensive negotiations. Converting defense systems into civilian use required intensive negotiations. At the very beginning, military officials argued that the barricade must remain in place, just in case. After a year-long negotiation, an agreement was concluded by and among the Ministry of National Defense (MND), Seoul Metropolitan Government, and Dobong-gu Municipal Government on December 1, 2016. Two weeks later, a regeneration work began, bearing sweet fruits of 3 years collective efforts.

From the legacy of the division to a symbol of peace and culture

The wartime relics were abandoned for more than ten years, causing concerns in Dobong-dong and neighboring communities. On 31 October 2017, the grand opening ceremony of Peace & Cultural Center (PCC) was successfully held by all stakeholders together. New steps towards peace and co-existence will be made at PCC overcoming the tragic Korean War and subsequent division of the country. The renovated concrete bunker is not a merely symbolic rather it is actually functioning. PCC, a home to peace-lovers and creative minds comprised of several spaces – handcraft studio, exhibit hall, community hall, and peace plaza – that allow artists to share their creations, ideas, and messages with fellow citizens. Moreover, eleven local artists are invited under the PCC Residency Program which provides comprehensive support packages. The arts residencies emphasize the importance of meaningful and multi-layered cultural exchanges while creating an encounter in which citizens meet artists so that arts and culture will be always at their arms’ length.

Each and every place of PCC talks about the dark days of the Korean peninsula. At the same time, it is a rendezvous for the past and present, as well as peaceful future that Koreans should build. Archiving works to accumulate records of history, culture, and life of people and physical places they are located will be continued. Also, contents development projects will focus not only on values of cultural heritage but also undiscovered meanings of time and space they are belonged to. Core values - creativity, openness, and sharing - will make every artist and citizen inspired and motivated.
Management and Operation Plan

Renovating the half-century old Korean War relics is very demanding job. Several tumbledown buildings require additional repairs and careful maintenance for preventing any inconvenience of visitors. That must include mechanical equipment, power supply system, and communication lines. A management and operation plan is to ensure structural safety and integrity of all physical facilities, making potential hazard and related risk eliminated immediately.

1) Operation management plan
   - Building an innovative and efficient management model by combining private expertise and public administration service
   - Appointing a general project manager, and reorganizing operational bodies according to their respective duties
   - Setting up a Steering Committee, consisting of experts, advisors, and network builders

2) Facilities management plan
   - Appointing a supervisor, being responsible for overall facility operations and customer services
   - Subcontracting amenities and cleaning services
   - Conducting consistent maintenance and inspection to keep all facilities in their best condition

3. Outcomes and Achievements

Dobong-gu, Seoul has made strong progress on public governance practices that are linked to the urban regeneration project of the anti-tank barricade, conducted from July 2014 through October 2017.

1. Civic engagement, a driving force to address community issues
   Ordinary citizens played a significant role in identifying, elaborating, and publicizing an important community agenda. A driving force to renovate military installations, Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) was also established by hands of citizens. CAC, experts, and volunteers have taken decisive roles in project planning, budgeting, proposal submission, negotiating with stubborn military authorities, and project execution - so to say everything from the very beginning through a final stage. Many local governments would learn something from the landmark civilian-military collaboration agreement among Ministry of National Defense (MND), Seoul Metropolitan Government and Dobong-gu, dated December 1, 2016. Even after its opening in October 2017, PCC has been under the civic engagement.

Progress of the Anti-tank Barricade Regeneration Project

- CAC launched (July 2014)
- Open Mayor’s Office / Public Policy Proposal (Sept. 2014)
- MOU with Korea Univ. (Dec. 2015)
- 4 Urban Regeneration Academy Sessions (Nov. 2015)
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- 4 Urban Regeneration Academy Sessions (Nov. 2015)

2. Renovation and investment rather than demolition and destruction
   Over time, urban regeneration paradigm evolved into a policy based less on based on less destruction but more regeneration, and current trends value economic and environmental sustainability. Considering that abandoned military bases and installations are found in 155 out of 226 regions in South Korea, Dobong-gu’s urban regeneration project could set an important precedent for dealing with similar issues. For this reason, PCC was listed as a Seoul Future Heritage Site in 2016.
A wide spectrum of shareholders in collaborative governance

The remarkable success of the Anti-tank Barricade Regeneration Project must be attributable to close collaborations between governmental and non-governmental parties at both home and abroad. An exemplary practice of collaborative governance was presented by responsible parties including PPA&M Partnership members, MoFA, Ministry of Unification RoK Embassy in Germany, and their German counterparts, in connection with matters such as displaying Berlin Wall segments, University students’ internship program, and community-driven site surveys.

4. Sustainability

PCC has finally returned to the peace-loving citizens after a half-century. For now, the most important thing for PCC is to come up with an effective and sustainable plan of its use. As a symbol of peace, culture, and community, PCC will offer arts and cultural program, education, exhibition, and more that can connect creators and citizens. Its research activity and cultural contents development are to revisit and reinterpret peace and culture. Seoul is planning to develop the meaning of this place as complex culture space representing peace and integration, with nearby Seoul Irish Garden and Northeastern Seoul Sports Park. PCC – a home to environment, ecology, and culture – is to be managed by the Dobong Cultural Foundation and its sub-contractors until 2019.

5. Lesson & Tips for Benchmarking

Given the fact that abandoned military facilities are found in 155 out of 230 localities in Korea, and considering the peace era that both South and North Korea should ultimately pursue, results of this case study point to the possibility that wherever there is de-commissioned military infrastructure or installation, there might be potential for regeneration that facilitates a rediscovery of new values from wasteland. As noted above, what we may learn from Dobong-gu’s urban regeneration project includes:

1. Citizens play pivotal roles in identifying and addressing their own community issues;
2. Urban regeneration plan is based on less destruction but more renovation. and
3. Active participation of all stakeholders realizes effective collaborative governance.

Lastly, it is worth noting that the Anti-tank Barricade Regeneration Project has taken a bottom-up approach instead of a typical top-down process, especially with regard to the budget preparation.

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<tr>
<th>Renovation Cost [2016~2017]</th>
<th>Investment</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Government of Korea</td>
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<td>Operation Cost 2017</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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