

What Influences Teachers' Commitment to 'Joined-up' Educational Welfare Projects?: Findings from the Educational Welfare Priority Project in Korea.

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<https://hdl.handle.net/2324/7164761>

出版情報 : 国際教育文化研究. 20, pp.1-12, 2021-02. 九州大学大学院人間環境学研究院国際教育文化研究会
バージョン :
権利関係 :



What Influences Teachers' Commitment to 'Joined-up' Educational Welfare Projects? : Findings from the Educational Welfare Priority Project in Korea.

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1. Introduction

After the Asian financial crisis of 1997, South Korea witnessed a remarkable rise in poverty and inequality in educational opportunities. In response, the South Korean national government launched a school-based social work program, known as the Educational Welfare Priority Project in 2003 (hereafter EWPP). The EWPP was designed to strengthen between-school networks and form within-community networks so that it could better serve disadvantaged students in socio-economically underdeveloped areas. The idea of a zone-based educational welfare project is not a new concept and the South Korean national government borrowed a policy from Education Action Zones (EAZ) in England and Zones d'Education Prioritaire(ZEP) in France (Sung, 2015).

As a representative of educational welfare policy in Korea, the EWPP has provided various programs related to educational support, cultural experiences, psychological and emotional support, and social services. As of 2019, there were a total of 3,513 schools (approximately 29% of the total schools) across the country implementing the EWPP and 333,290 'educationally disadvantaged' students, which included free school lunch recipients, students from multicultural families, dropouts, and students with maladjustment, participating in the project (Central Educational Welfare Research Support Center, 2019).

Compared to previous educational welfare projects that mostly focused on direct financial support, the EWPP connects education with culture and welfare services to improve quality of life and adopts methods tailored to each student's needs. Various researchers have evaluated the effectiveness of the EWPP and the outcomes have been widely reported in scholarly literature. Although there have been mixed results in its effectiveness, especially with respect to the improvement of the students' cognitive performance (Kim,H.H., 2018), many studies have identified positive influences on students' affective aspects such as self-esteem and adaptation to school life (Ryu, 2013; Kim,K.A., 2015;Lee, 2008).

As many researchers and practitioners have rightly pointed out (Sung, 2015; You, 2018), however, a lack of communication between teachers and newly hired social workers within schools has been observed. The EWPP's strategy was to form a network of partners from various agencies in the community with the understanding that the problems occurring in a low-income area cannot be solved by a school alone. In this respect, a collaborative partnership has been considered crucial for promoting educational welfare projects, but recent literature points out the need to strengthen not only the networks between the school and local welfare agencies but also the networks among the members within the

school. Needless to say, the participation of teachers in the EWPP is indispensable to comprehensively address disadvantaged students' educational needs.

Considering all of the above, this paper investigates the current situation of teachers' involvement in the educational welfare projects in Korea. It also explores how teachers' participation can be promoted to maximize the quality of the projects. Based on these interests, the following research questions were asked:

First, what are the characteristics of the EWPP concerning the teachers' involvement?

Second, what are the barriers and facilitators to the teachers' commitment in the EWPP?

2. Literature review

2.1. Teachers' involvement in the EWPP

In recent years, there has been an explosion of interest in 'joined-up' policies aimed at tackling inequality (Yasuda 2014; Suetomi, 2016; Ogawa, 2018). As such integrated services of education and social welfare at schools have received increasing attention in many countries with the development of full-service community schools. However, to date, relatively little attention has been paid to teachers' roles in the school-based intervention practices.

Before exploring the characteristics of teachers' involvement in the EWPP, this paper briefly describe the current situation regarding the collaboration between social social workers and teachers in Korea. The EWPP mandated the employment of new staff (namely educational welfare workers) and this was the first-time social welfare practices adopted in a public school setting. Educational welfare workers play a crucial role in the planning, evaluation, identification of community resources, network establishment, identification of students who require intensive support, case management, and the promotion of school-home communication. These are similar to the tasks of school social workers (SSWer) in Japan, except that educational welfare workers in Korea can implement various programs in school at their discretion and get more actively involved with teachers and all students.

However, research about the educational welfare workers' effectiveness has produced valuable information about some aspects of collaboration with teachers, notably a discrepancy between role perceptions (Kim,J.S.,2011; Choi et al.,2019). On the other hand, some argue that teachers' participation is a complicated matter, so it is necessary to explore the challenges and issues facing teachers in the implementation of the EWPP. Interestingly, in the case of EAZ (Education Action Zones) in England, there was a similar controversy surrounding the teachers' roles. As noted by D.Halpin et al (2004b):

There was, amongst head teachers in particular, a sharp division between those who embraced the reform and those who resisted it -'believers' who located themselves inside the policy and 'cynics' who remained outside... The orientation of the 'ordinary' classroom teacher within zones was more complex and reflects their paradoxical positioning as both part of the solution and part of the problem. It was not clear within the policy whether they were inside or outside the new partnerships.

Regarding issues facing teachers in Korea, major findings from previous research can be summarized succinctly. First, teachers often experience difficulties such as limited budget and

information, inflated expectations of the role, an isolated work environment, ambiguous goals of the policy, and reluctance of students to participate (Kim, H.S., 2014; Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education, 2019). Second, to cope with such conditions, several studies showed that some teachers used the following mechanisms to help them adapt: changing policy goals, using red-tape, running programs selectively with engaged students, adapting to the evaluating measurement (Song et al, 2019).

2.2. EWPP's positive effects on teachers

While the aforementioned studies reveal the negative aspects of teachers' responding toward a school-based educational welfare project, others view the EWPP as an effective school-based practice that can promote teachers' affective, motivational, and well-being factors, despite some limitations.

Kim I.H. (2012), for instance, stresses that teacher efficacy can be formed through significant factors in the EWPP. Generally speaking, teacher efficacy has been empirically identified as a significant indicator in enhancing student achievement through mechanisms such as interaction with students, a positive impact on student motivation, a warm classroom environment, innovative classroom management, and generally supportive attitudes (Jeon, 2017). Kim I.H. argues that teachers can promote their efficacy through planning, implementing educational welfare programs, collaborating with other community education specialists, exercising their autonomy in deciding a budget, and recovering the teacher's sense of pride for the positive changes in the disadvantaged students.

In a similar vein, Jung et al (2019) also analyzes the EWPP from a teacher's perspective. The findings indicate that the EWPP improved the students' quality of life, built a good relationship between school and parents, expanded the role of the school, implemented universal social services, and provided care in a more consistent way.

Furthermore, Lee M.S. (2017) argues that the emotional intelligence of the teachers can be reinforced through the EWPP with an innovation-oriented school culture. Given the recent literature review, this paper aims to explore what promotes or hampers the teachers' commitment to the EWPP in the next section.

3. Methods

A variety of methods for data collection and analysis were used. Data were collected at the local level and derived from case study research in two selected regions: Seoul (a large urban area) and Sokcho city of the Kangwon-do province (a small town). These two regions were selected because they have different program content and annual budgets, so a more complete picture of the EWPP can be obtained through a comparison of the two regions (the central government launched the EWPP in 2003, but with the growing call for local autonomy, there was an intergovernmental transfer in 2011. Since then, the heads of the local educational administration in 17 regions have decided the content of the EWPP).

Four kinds of data were collected:

Documentary data. These were gathered from the Kangwon-do Office of the Education, Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education, Gwangju Metropolitan Office of Education, and a government think tank known as KEDI.

Interviews. The data collected to investigate the teachers' involvement in the EWPP were mostly drawn from elements of semi-structured (audio-recorded and transcribed) interviews conducted with an education administrator in Seoul, as well as 3 teachers and 4 educational welfare workers in the two regions.

Focus Group Interview (FGI). A FGI was conducted with an educational administrator of Nowon-ward in Seoul, a project leader (an educational welfare worker), and a representative of an NPO on January 22, 2020.

Teachers' essays. An essay book "Stories of the Gwangju Hope Class" published by the Gwangju Metropolitan Office of Education in 2018 was used to determine the impact of the teacher-led program in the EWPP. They were analyzed through thematic coding.

4. Results

4.1. Changing teachers' work: two types of teacher involvement in the EWPP

Teacher involvement in the EWPP primarily falls into two categories: Teacher Accompaniment and Teacher Mentoring (including the Hope Class). The following describes key characteristics of them.

First, Teacher Accompaniment refers to extracurricular field trips based on teacher-student accompaniment, which are carried out in close collaboration with an educational welfare worker. As of this writing, Teacher Accompaniment has been implemented in one form or another in all regions, which can be confirmed in the guidelines of a regional Office of Education. Teacher Accompaniment has been implemented in the Kangwon-do province as well, and in one of the schools investigated, 'target' students had a chance to have an outing with their teachers and classmates several times a year with the help of the educational welfare worker.

Second, there is another type of teacher-involved program named Teacher Mentoring. Teacher Mentoring generally refers to a teacher-led afterschool program to improve a student's socio-emotional health and academic performance. As shown by the annual report of the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education in 2019, there are 6 types of programs in the EWPP, including Teacher Mentoring. Table 1 provides the average rate of implementation of the EWPP in Seoul.

Table 1. Programs of the EWPP in Seoul (Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education, 2019b)

Program	Average rate of implementation
Educational support	30.1%
Cultural experience	65.9%
Psychological & emotional support	25.3%
Social services & welfare	29.1%
Career consultation & Teacher Mentoring	38.0%
Parenting class	17.3%

The most well-known of the Teacher Mentoring programs is the Hope Class. First launched in Gwangju in 2013, the Hope Class refers to a classroom teacher-led one-year project with government financial support. It is worth noting that the Gwangju Hope Class was considered a good practice and successfully disseminated to other regions (Seoul, Pusan, Daejeon, Sejong). In Seoul, for example, 6,000

groups were selected in 2018 and the local government spent 4.2 billion Won (approximately 420 million Yen), giving each group 600,000 Won (approximately 60,000 Yen) on for a year. Figure 1 indicates a simplified structure of the EWPP.

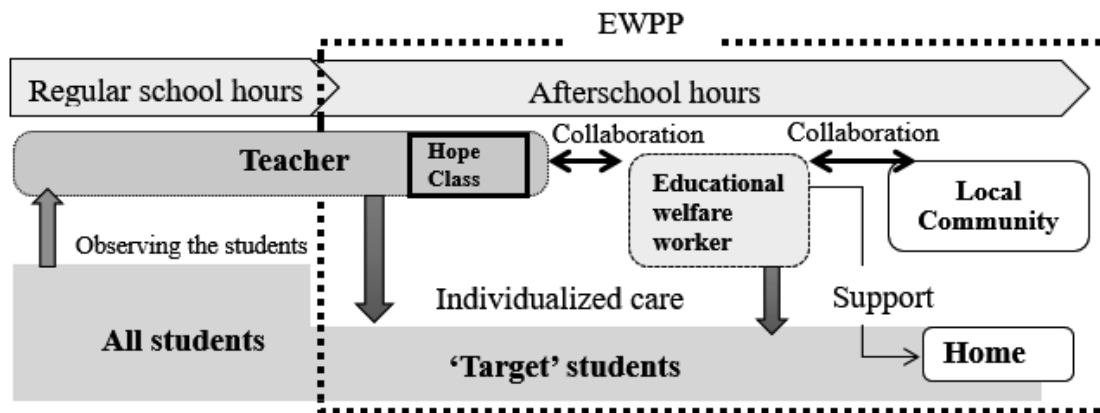


Figure 1. Structure of the EWPP

As previously mentioned, the EWPP originally started as a school-based social work program by a newly-hired social welfare worker (an educational welfare worker). In the beginning, teachers' positioning was not clear, but as it evolved, there was an increased need for teacher involvement. The classroom teachers are spending most of their time with the students, so they can observe the students well and act as a service hub for addressing student well-being. Moreover, it was thought that teachers could increase their ability to blend a targeted and universal approach in the everyday classroom, through participating in the EWPP (Kim, K.H., 2017).

Even so, there has been a tendency for teachers to consider educational welfare projects as an 'additional' social welfare service, which has little to do with their teaching in a formal school setting. However, this attitude has often been criticized as it can lead to fragmented services and a failure to effectively 'join-up' provisions in achieving holistic development of children.

For this reason, as a way to promote teachers' active participation, teacher-level autonomy and flexibility in budgets have been emphasized in the Hope Class. For instance, among the six types of programs suggested by the Gwangju Metropolitan Office of Education (after-school tutoring, volunteer activities, emotional support, cultural experience, career development programs, welfare services), teachers can decide the content of the program at their discretion (Gwangju Metropolitan Office of Education, 2018),

However, because the Hope Class is a relatively new practice, there remains much to learn about the program's effectiveness and how this new type of program might contribute to promoting teacher involvement. To gain a more comprehensive picture of the Hope Class, this paper uses evidence from an essay book "Stories of the Gwangju Hope Class" published by the Gwangju Metropolitan Office of Education in 2018. The book contains 40 teachers' essays regarding the Hope Class and this paper analyzes essays with thematic coding. Here it focuses on (a) types of 'target' students (b) the content of the program (c) teachers' perception of students' change (d) teachers' learning gains from the program.

First, in the Hope Class, the majority of the 'target' students were selected from a poor family, but other types of students were included as well, such as children with low self-esteem or low social

competence. It indicated that teachers' perception of the children's problem was multidimensional, so a multi-faceted approach was taken accordingly. More intriguing was the fact that 'ordinary' students were also invited to join the program to avoid any stigma against the 'target' students. As the EWPP evolved, many researchers and practitioners stressed that the stigma could keep students from participating in the program, and that this may have harmful effects on the 'target' students (Kim, K.H., 2017). As such, there has been an increasing emphasis on a universal approach. In the guidelines of Gwangju's Hope Class in 2020, for example, it is emphasized that teachers can invite 'ordinary' students (less than 50% of the total participants) to join the program so that the 'target' students would not experience any stigma.

Second, this paper identified two types of activities in the Hope Class: one defined by providing personal care in a daily school life, the other by offering various extracurricular activities. The former includes one-to-one or small group tutoring by a teacher, having a playtime after school, and the provision of study material. The latter is related to extracurricular activities, such as visiting various places (e.g., zoos, movie theaters, and amusement parks), having career experience, and volunteer work. The latter is more common in practice and sharing an experience in an 'informal' way is considered important to result in increased student engagement.

Third, although there is some ambivalence about whether students demonstrated visible results, most teachers illustrated in their essays that there were some significant shifts in students' attitudes towards school life. Positive comments were forthcoming from the teachers participating in the Hope Class, regarding improvement of school adaptation, increasing empathy, improvement of attitudes in the class, and recovering confidence.

Fourth, when it comes to teachers' appreciation of the Hope Class, most teachers described the significant learning gains not captured by standard performance measures. As most teachers highlighted, the Hope Class gave them a chance to rethink the importance of a deeper understanding of individual students, the significance of having a true concern about the children, and a role as a facilitator to connect to other students.

However, although the Hope Class has been found to have a positive impact on behavioral and academic aspects of students' engagement, there were also some negative opinions expressed in the interview data collected. In the following section, teachers' orientations to the EWPP are explored mostly through interview data.

4.2. Barriers and facilitators to teacher involvement in the EWPP

This paper finds that all too often attempts to build a 'joined-up working' in the EWPP are hampered by the culture that has existed in the public school system. For the teachers' disengagement, an educational welfare worker interviewed expressed her concern:

For targeted intervention, we have to figure out who needs help right now. But, all we can get from a school office is a list of the students whose parents are on welfare. Students who might be experiencing issues are often overlooked in schools due to the fragmented system. Teachers can play a crucial role to identify and refer students in their classroom and give us background information about them. But, elementary school teachers too often resist the idea of joined-up

practices, insisting target students are ‘their’ students, not ours.

In addition, the findings in this paper highlight the tension between school managers and educational welfare workers at the daily level. Where actual attempts are made to promote collaborative works, the educational welfare workers in schools often encounter operational difficulties in gaining the trust and respect of school teachers, particularly school managers. Educational welfare workers indicated the following:

In reality, three key persons of the school (principal, vice-principal, the head of the instruction department) have great influence. Each year, the content of the educational welfare projects are decided by school managers. When they oppose, we can’t carry out anything. Their understanding and mindsets are everything.

We had this new principal last year who had no understanding of the network. To improve the collaborative network, we must engage in various activities outside the school, but he seldom allowed us to go outside the school. He keeps saying things happening outside the school are none of our business. He never understands how vital parental involvement can be when it comes to children’s well-being.

On the other hand, these kinds of concerns were refuted, as illustrated by the following comment made by a classroom teacher:

I think school-based education policy is a product of politics and it has little to do with education itself. As you may agree, the budget of educational welfare has been greatly expanded by election and I can tell it is a waste of public money. I don’t see a reason for teachers to get involved with welfare in the first place. We are here at school to teach, not to feed them or provide welfare benefits. Besides, they keep saying forming a network is important, but there is no expected role for teachers.

As mentioned earlier, the last two decades have seen a great expansion of government-funded initiatives under the name of ‘educational welfare’ in Korea. However, because school-based educational welfare projects were introduced mostly by the central government, there is no agreed-upon definition of what ‘educational welfare’ is, nor has there been much empirical research on the effects of teacher involvement on students. As this paper finds, due to the government’s top-down approach since its inception, the impact of the educational welfare policy on teachers has been limited and patchy.

Despite these limitations, some interviews with teachers indicated a high degree of approval of the benefits of participating in the EWPP; notably, an emphasis was placed on the opportunity it created for knowing the ‘target’ student better. As a supervisor at the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education observed:

When I ask the teachers what they have learned from the participation in the EWPP, surprisingly,

most of them give me the same answers. Discovery and connection. These are two keywords. They said after spending extra hours with their ‘at-risk’ students, they had more chances to truly ‘see’ their students. Knowing their situation in person also made it easier for the teacher to ask for help in other places. I will tell you a story. A teacher happened to know a target student’s father was a serious alcoholic, so the teacher consulted to the educational welfare worker in school. They made the father to get professional help from a public institution dealing with alcohol addiction. Luckily, the father could get over and the ‘target’ student could successfully get into the university.

Another school teacher who participated in Teacher Mentoring also described the positive aspect of the EWPP:

I was a role model student, growing up in a typical middle-class family. So, I didn’t have any idea what the ‘target’ students were undergoing every day. You may say I was lacking imagination, but to be honest with you, I didn’t know where to start. And here comes a Teacher Mentoring. Before I went out a field trip, the educational welfare worker in our school gave us some lectures about our roles as a teacher in the educational welfare projects. The burden I felt got lighter, knowing my role clearly. After I came to know that taking care of the ‘target’ student can be a shared work with other members in school, I was more able to commit.

Overall, analysis of the interview data above indicated that teachers’ personal values (i.e., how they view their role as a teacher) were barriers to teachers’ participation in educational welfare projects, while some strong interpersonal relationships developed between the teacher and the ‘target’ students or positive experiences with the educational welfare workers promoted teachers’ commitment. As Kim J.W. (2007) once pointed out, educational welfare projects may be implemented differently based on a teacher’s personal values. That is, teachers who think their main role is to transmit knowledge and stress narrow educational goals tend to have a negative perception of the educational welfare project and are instinctively lukewarm about joined-up practices, which might threaten their boundaries. This suggests that teachers need to readjust their mindsets and recognize that ‘educational welfare’ is for enhancing disadvantaged children’s holistic development through collaboration.

5. Overall conclusions

As highlighted by the practice of EWPP, the implementation of the educational welfare projects at the ‘street level’ has presented challenges. Some of them are related to the teachers and the purpose of this paper is to elevate the often overlooked role of classroom teachers. Taken together, the results of this study suggest that there are three key characteristics of the EWPP in Korea.

First, the EWPP has produced a flexible model such as Teacher Accompaniment or Teacher Mentoring (including the Hope Class), taking into consideration that teachers’ appreciation, even commitment, of the educational welfare practices can inevitably be varied. Teacher Accompaniment, for example, was praised by one group but criticized by another. Similarly, some teachers volunteered the Hope Class with enthusiasm, while others were largely indifferent, or only vaguely knew about it. Hence, it has been considered that the effective realization of a teacher's commitment requires different

modes. Instead of a naïve assumption that every teacher has a common set of objectives, strategic efforts have to be made to encourage the teachers' participation.

Second, the evidence of the EWPP indicates that greater consideration needs to be given to conditions that are likely to encourage teacher autonomy. That is, to create a 'real' commitment to the educational welfare projects, the EWPP put a greater emphasis on teacher autonomy which allows teachers to make decisions concerning the budget and program planning. However, teacher autonomy is professional freedom, so the government needs to find a way to enable and support professionalism, by enhancing the capacity and expertise to deliver on it.

Lastly, this study reveals that new ways of thinking are required to realize 'educational welfare' in Korea. It implies leaving behind traditional teaching models and developing new skills. The new role of teachers requires us to redefine the attributes, behaviors, areas of knowledge, skills, and abilities required for successful educational welfare projects (Whitty, 2000; Lee, 2019). As Kim et al (2011) once observed, those new skills can be different from the traditional ones, focusing more on affective and social-behavioral aspects.

In conclusion, educational welfare projects to address social justice and equity cannot hope to succeed if teachers ignore the new social context in which the new roles of teachers are required.

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教育と福祉の連携における教師の参加について

－韓国における「教育福祉優先支援事業」からの示唆－

金 美連

本稿は、格差是正に向けた教育と福祉の連携において、教師参加型の教育福祉事業を進める韓国に焦点を当て、制度の特徴を調査するとともに、教師参加の促進・阻害要因を明らかにすることを目的とする。研究対象は、韓国の代表的な教育福祉の取組みとして、学校を基盤として行われる「教育福祉優先支援事業」（全国の約 29%の小中高で実施）である。調査方法は、教師と教育福祉の専門家（教育福祉士）へのインタビュー調査、教育行政を対象としたフォーカスグループインタビュー(FGI)、教師の手記分析、文献研究である。

「教育福祉優先支援事業」は、1997 年のアジア通貨危機以降、急激に広がった経済・教育格差を背景に低所得層や多文化家庭の子ども等を対象として、学習のみならず、文化や心理・情緒的サポートを通じて教育における格差の是正を目指して 2003 年に導入された。

本稿の調査により、長い時間を子どもと過ごす、教師の本事業への参加の重要性が確認されたほか、子どもに対する理解の促進や教育福祉の専門家との連携による知見や経験の蓄積が促進要因として示唆された。一方、現場との十分な議論がないまま、政府主導のトップダウンにより本事業が始まったことや、「知識を教える」ことを教師の本分とする教師側の認識、また他の専門家との協働に関する学校の排他的な組織風土が教師参加の阻害要因となっていることが示唆された。

このような阻害要因を克服し、教師参加促進のための制度的工夫として、第 1 に、教育福祉士の企画のもとで教師が参加する「師弟同行」と、教師が企画・主導を行う「教師メンタリング」（「希望の教室」を含む）など、教師の考え方や多忙感等の違いを考慮した選択肢が教師に与えられていること。第 2 に、教師主導の教育福祉プログラムを進めるにあたって、教師の自律性を重視し、予算の使用用途やプログラムの内容など、可能な限り現場の教師に裁量を持たせ、個々の子どものニーズに即した対応に必要な柔軟な権限（autonomy）を付与していること。第 3 に、社会的・経済的に不利な立場に置かれている子どもへの個別の支援を重視し、文化体験や職業経験など、学校外における多様な活動を積極的に取り入れることで、教師が子どもとの関係を通じた教育者としての成長を実感していることを確認できた。

また、急激な社会の変化を踏まえた新しい学校づくりにおける教師の位置づけが重要となる中、本事業を効果的に進めるためには、従来とは異なる力量形成や価値観が教師に求められる現状が浮き彫りとなった。