

The situation of Korea Community Currency and the activities of Hanbat LETS

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1. Current situation of community currencies in Korea

1) Birth of community currencies in Korea

The motive to create community currencies varies from economics reasons to the development of organizations, from the creation of the social safety net to the environmental preservation and from social movements to personal interests, but they are unanimous in the point that they try to transform the contemporary society(Lee, Chang-Woo, 2000).

The community currency movement has economic characters(stimulation of the local economy, creation of a new market, increase of job opportunities and others), communitarian characters(such as the reevaluation of human activities and networking), ecological one such as the environmental preservation, on top of that of the social welfare and consumerist one(Lee, Deug-Eon, 2000).

The strength of the community currency movement is, above all, that it is an “excellent social skill” in which inhabitants without money can satisfy their basic needs in their life. In the community currency system one does not need to give up although he/she is without cash, since he/she will be qualified to get services and/or goods from others within the community as a prize for a small favor to somebody else.

Korea has the traditions of “Dure¹” and “Pumasi²” as well as “kae” to help and take care mutually, so we can say that community currencies are a multilateral Pumasi in which our tradition has been reinvented as a modern system in accordance to our reality today. In other words, community currencies are a modern representation of barter, a long tradition of Korea.

Community currencies were introduced for the first time in Korea in 1996 when the magazine “Nok-saek Pyeong-non”(Green Review) published an article about the relationship between the community and money(Barbara Brant?(1996), Patricia Nox & Nick England?(1996)) where LETS, a system of community currency, was depicted. And two years later, in March 1998, “the Gathering of those who gaze at the Future”(Minaisa Club) started Future Money, the first community currency in Korea. This period coincided with the most hard domination of IMF’s monetary relief regime, community currencies were regarded as an alternative economic movement to cope with the economic crisis, there was a huge interest from newspapers, broadcasting stations and NGOs, and these currencies were presented as one of the policies to rescue the unemployed. There is a consideration that it would have been very difficult for community currencies to be introduced and diffused so quickly in Korea without the IMF regime.

2) The development of community currencies in Korea

1 Both “Dure”(두레) and “Pumasi”(부마시) stands for the mutual help of farm work, and Pumasi is used to refer to a LETS system too(such as Gojan Pumasi).

2 Kae is a credit union in which a meeting is held periodically and participants(especially woman) pay a certain amount of money so that one in the group can take the whole amount.

The first community currency in Korea was organized by Minaisa Club followed by the “Buddhist Academy for Ecological Awakening,” “Inchon³ Information and Communication Education Center(IICEC)” at Inha University, Incheon, Gyeonggi-do, “Skill and Technology Bank” at the attached integral social welfare center of Chung-ang University, Seoul, “Gwanak Local Currency” in Seoul, “Taebaek Local Currency” at Taebaek, Gwangwon-do, “Local Pumasi” at IICEC, “Small Market” by the publishing house “Small is Beautiful,” “Mindlle⁴ Educational Currency” at Mindlle, a publishing house on education and other community currencies. Similar systems were also implemented at the Daegu Rotary Club and Guri YMCA too. There were also initiatives by local governments, such as “Songpa Money” at Songpa Pumashi, Songpa-gu Volunteer Center, Seoul, “Welfare Pumasi” at Tonggu Office, Daegu, another one at the Anyang City Hall Volunteer Center, Gyonggi-do and others(Pak Yong-nam, 2001). On top of that “Encounter LETS” at Jinju, Gyeongsangnam-do, “Green Money System Love” by the Green Network, “Sharing” at Gwangju, Chungcheongnam-do were implemented as well as initiatives by the Promotion Headquarter of Green Money in Busan, by the Cheongju City Hall, by the Foreign Workers’ Center of Ansan, Gyonggi-do and others.

There was 31 community currency systems according to the “Workshop to stimulate local currencies” which was held in November 2001 in Seoul by Minaisa Club and Buddhist Academy for Ecological Awakening. But ordinary people and media lost their interest in community currencies after Korea got over the IMF regime(Lee, Changwoo, 2002) and today the Future Money by Minaisa Club, the “Small Market,” Green Money System Love,” “Hanbat LETS” and others are still alive(So, Byeongcheol and You, Chang-soo, 2004). The first pedagogical currency “Mindlle” is now suspended as well as “Jeonju Pumasi” and many other community currencies(So, Byeongcheol and You, Chang-soo, 2004). Taebaek community currency and another project at the Community Activation Center, Chunggu, Daegu are also suspended currently, the Dure at the Buddhist Academy for Ecological Awakening stopped its operation when the person in charge quitted in early 2001, and the pumasi at Anyang Voluntter Center also gave up its service in 2001. Some are still operational but not growing. Minaisa still keeps its operation and Gwanak local currency, although still alive, is not successful in activating transactions as the management became sloppy when the person in charge left and the administrative committee was in charge of the operation. On the other hand the increase of insolvents and unemployment raised people’s awareness on social welfare, people were once again interested in community currencies, some supports for community currencies are available both in submunicipal(such as Gwacheon Pumasi in Gwacheon and Gojan Money at Ansan which started in June 2002) and municipal(such as Gwangmyeong Geuru in Gwangmyeong and Neulpum at Daegu) level. A new community currency was established in 2004 in Busan and a foundation seminar for the community currency movement was held on April 22, 2005 mainly by the Bondong Welfare House, Dalseo-gu, Daegu under the auspices of the Social Welfare Common Funds.

3) Korean community currencies today

Most community currencies in Korea are LETS-style because this movement began when a LETS was introduced there, and Time Dollar was introduced when “Love Ring” started at

³ This article has two spellings for the same place name “인cheon,” now famous for Korea’s biggest international airport: It is transcribed to Incheon according to the current Roman transcription system, defined by the Korean Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2000, but the spelling “Inchon”(without e) is used at IICEC’s official site, presumably due to the fact that different spelling systems were already available by then..

⁴ “Mindlle”(민들레) means “dandelion” in Korean.

Gumi, Gyeongsangbuk-do, today with some local governments running this mutual help system in the form of the Resource Volunteer Bank. There are more than 10 active community currency groups in Korea, such as Future Money of Minaisa Club, Mindlle Educational Currency, the Small Market, Songpa Money, Gwacheon Pumasi, Ansan Pumasi, Gumi Love Ring Bank, Local Pumasi Gwangmyeong Geuru and Daegu Local Currency Neulpum.

Graphic 1: The current status of Korean community currencies

System name	Operated by	Currency's name	Introduced in	Characteristics
Minaisa FM	Minaisa Club	Future Money	May 1998	Non-profit
Mindlle Educational Money	Publishing House "Mindlle"	Mindlle	January 1999	Non-profit
Seocho Pumasi	Seocho office, Seoul	Green Money	February 1999	Local gov't
Small Market	Green Alliance Publishing	None	March 1999	Non-profit
Songpa Pumasi	Songpa Help Welfare Center	Money	August 1999	Local Help Welfare Center(established by the Ward and run privately)
Dongjak Help Welfare Bank	Dongjak Help Welfare Center, Seoul	None	November 1999	Local gov't
⁵ Hanbat LETS	Inhabitants	Duru	February 2000	Civilian
Gwacheon Pumasi	Inhabitants	Ari	November 2000	Civilian
Ansan Gojan Pumasi	Gojan 1-Dong Office, Ansan	Gojan Money	June 2002	Civilian
Gumi Love Ring	Gumi John Center	Gori	August 2002	Non-profit
Local Pumasi Gwangmyeong Geuru	Gwangmyeong Lifelong Study Center	Guru	March 2004	Local gov't
Daegu Local Currency Neulpum	Integral Social Welfare Center, Dalseo-gu, Daegu	Neulpum	April 2005	Local gov't

⁵ Translator's note: it means "universally, generally."

⁶ Translator's note: it means "ring."

Most community currencies in Korea were established by the will of community members who run them, but some were set up mainly with the help of local governments which evaluate its motive and significance. Each group is active in different geographical area with different community currency name and monetary unit. They gathered the “National Gathering of Community Currency Movement Network KOREA”(NGCCMN Korea) based on the “Hanbat LETS 5 Anniversary Commemorative Seminar” which took place in Daejeon in November 2005 to share each other’s information and to discuss difficulties in operation.

Graphic 1 shows details on the current operational status of recently-active community currencies in Korea. I will depict mainly those group who took part in NGCCMN Korea which was held twice on September 27th and October 7th, 2005.

4) Characteristics of Korean community currencies

Some characteristics can be found on studying Korean community currencies. First of all, they emerged in the period of IMF crisis like in most other community currencies who came into existence in the time of economic depression as a relatively-new social movement in the 20st century.

Some community currencies take the form of Time Dollar or Hours, but the most popular one is LETS. Korea has both LETS and Time Dollars, Gumi Love Ring and Dongjak Help Welfare Bank as Time Dollar make use of volunteers’ time with community currency while in most other cases people share different lifestyles with the community in LETS.

In the second place, Korean community currencies show a difference from other countries’ experiences. German, Italian and Swiss initiatives try to include corporations and banks into community currency’s operational program development and the Japanese experience of Senhime Project in Himeji, Hyogo also makes an effort to create an engagement of corporations and the governmental sector, but no Korean initiative has achieved so far to involve corporations. Local Pumasi Gwangmyeong Geuru receives the financial support from the Gyeonggi Cultural Foundation and the Movement Resource Volunteer Bank is operated with the support of the local government, but there is still no program at all in affiliation with corporations. ???, but community currencies cannot be used in affiliation with corporations’ management as are the cases abroad. Such an involvement would allow community currencies to be operated more dynamically and efficiently and would have quite a few to suggest for us.

The realm of support differs from country to country too, but generally speaking states recognize the need of support for jobless people or low-income group by way of the community currency movement, and there are more and more efforts to make use of community currency into the educational and welfare fields. In Japan where this movement is still rather new, people pay more attention to the environmental improvement and preservation, i.e. the activation of local resources and communities, than to enhance people’s communication by using this tool, with less tendency for the government to try to make use of this community currency. In Korea people are concerned with the social unfairness and the improvement of welfare level and local governments are eager to introduce community currencies or show their will to help the operation, which is in fact still not enough. So we need to look for methods to activate local resources and to run an effective social system by making use of community currencies for the

local government's policy-making.

These systems of community currency emerge according to different characters of running entities, and in most non-Korean cases it is local inhabitants who set up community currencies on their own before receiving the financial support of the state or local governments while in Korean cases some local governments are running their own local currencies. There are some other cases in which local governments help non-profits or others in which inhabitants set up their own ones. Hanbat LETS, Gojan Pumasi and Gwacheon Pumasi were inaugurated by local inhabitants themselves while Songpa Pumasi and Yangcheon-gu Pumasi, Seoul are managed by inhabitants who receive the support of the local government. On the other hand, Local Pumasi Gwangmyeong Geuru, Daegu Talseo-gu Bon-dong and Busan are examples in which the local governments are actively involved with the operation. In most of such cases the local government's volunteer center starts its community currency which will be managed by volunteers.

Another point is that many countries tend to select only one form of community currency while Japan uses booklet-style, billnote-style, mixed-style, card-style and other forms of community currencies. As far as Korea is concerned, Songpa, Gwacheon, Ansan and Gwangmyeong use booklets to register transactions in community currencies while Hanbat LETS switched from booklets to online registration. It can be said that in booklet-style it is difficult to manage and control the whole transactions as the headquarter office cannot learn transactions between the seller and purchaser.

2. Hanbat LETS' activities

Hanbat LETS is a community currency system which started two years later than that of Minaisa Club, Korea's first one which dates back to 1998, and was established by inhabitants' own demands without supports of the local government or non-profits. It has more active members than any other community currency system in Korea. It works in affiliation with the Mindlle Medical Cooperative, its location in the suburbs allows more rural people to join it, it has more variety of traded goods than other systems, and members are more active. The number of transactions, of members and the sort of traded goods and we can say that it is a ever-growing system.

1) Goal of Hanbat LETS

Hanbat LETS was introduced as LETS system, economic principle of sharing and caretaking in Daejeon area, with the aim to create an autonomous community and to be the pioneer to show how to build up sustainable societies and people's goodwill.

Hanbat LETS has been doing different projects to achieve such goals: 1) creation of a communitarian lifestyle in the city, 2) creation of a sustainable economic system by setting up a process of production, circulation, consumption and recycle, 3) projects to create jobs for the unemployed, housewives and the elderly as well as the development and utilization of unused workforce, 4) projects to diffuse the LETS movement, 5) participation to alternative movements to solve different social issues, 6) Accomplishment of other projects which are necessary to achieve the goals.

Hanbat LETS has three slogans to make its principles come true: 1) a happy village where

my neighbors and I work together, 2) a fine village in harmony with the nature, 3) independent and autonomous communitarian village.

2) A brief history of Hanbat LETS

“Hanbat LETS” is a community currency system which was planned in October 1999 by inhabitants around Daejeon by themselves without the support of local government or non-profits and which started in February 2000 with more than 70 members. The LETS registration office became independent from the Daejeon 21st Promotion Association in May 2001, it was registered as a civil organization in Daejeon in March 2002 and moved to Beobdong, Dong-gu, Daejeon together with Daejeon Medical Cooperative in April 2004.

3) Characteristics of Hanbat LETS

Hanbat LETS has its own characteristics. The value of neighborhood is rediscovered by way of Hanbat LETS which cherishes trust more than anything else, and such trust is proportional to communitarian activities and the number of trades. The importance of community is stressed so that it can be developed furthermore and people should be willing to share even more. Such a relationship is not an unilateral giving but is a reciprocal give and take. Everything is established by Hanbat LETS members' spontaneity and they create what they need for their life by their human relationship.

Duru, a community currency of Hanbat LETS, has characteristics on trade such as agreement, interest-free, sharing and disclosure. “Agreement” means that participation, and withdrawal as well as any trade is based on the agreement. “Interest-free” means that neither the positive nor the negative balance is subject to interests. “Sharing” is the collective possession with other members of individuals' capabilities and wealth as well as other assets for the administration of the system. “Disclosure” means that individuals disclose to the community information which is necessary for trades, including the office's work program and minutes of administrative committee(Nishibe(2000)).

4) How Hanbat LETS is operated

Hanbat LETS allows each other's lifestyle to be shared by way of “Duru,” their community currency. Duru is spent to satisfy their needs of clothing, food and residence, medical service, recycle, education and other forms of labor and goods, or sometimes it is used as a means of gratitude or congratulation. The community currency “Duru” was created in February 2000, the meaning of “universal” or “without exception” is attached to this word and 1,000 duru is equivalent to 1,000 Korean won(approximately 0.83 euro, 0.56 Sterling pound and 1.06 US dollar as of Sep 26, 2006) to make it easier to see the value of this money. This currency is not only used for person-to-person(P2P) trades but also given to those who contribute for the local community(Kim, Seonghun, 2003).

Hanbat LETS is managed under the following rules because it is understood in different ways, such as the aid for the jobless people, an alternative to the elderly welfare and a method for the

environmental preservation: 1) those who have understood the significance of community currencies gather to create a currency to be used only among themselves, 2) Skills, goods, services, resources and other things that members can offer or want someone to offer for them will be listed and this list will be delivered to members, 3) A member can trade with another member by offering him/her some community currency whenever necessary, 4) after settling a transaction the person who received a favor notices it to the office who sends members newsletters on details of transactions periodically, 5) the community currency system is a non-profit and interest-free because it is basically not a credit-debt relationship, 6) all members have the right to be noticed of any other member's financial balance and his/her trade history.

You can join Hanbat LETS by contacting the office and sending the membership form. The inscription fee is 10,000 won or 10,000 duru and the membership fee is 20,000 won/year or 2,000 won/month. The registration office will put you in touch with those who want to trade with you after you tell the office what you offer and/or want.

The registration office both performs office works and is a place of transactions. You can learn more about transactions by visiting "Members' miscellaneous" at the website as well as by reading the "Pumasi Toumi" pamphlet which is issued twice a year, but you can still trade with someone without showing your eagerness to do so. It is indeed possible to see what others want online, but the pamphlet is issued for those without Internet access. This pamphlet gives information such as trades that members offer, their addresses and businesses who are members of Hanbat LETS, so you can learn quite easily what others want.

Members who wish to trade do so after contacting their partner either by phone or on Internet to settle how much it is in won and duru. The person who offers either goods or services contacts the office to tell about the transaction after establishing an autonomous trade among members. Details are notified to each member and account balance is calculated. It is both the record of establishing a sharing and also its announcement.

There is a rule to pay at least 30% of value in duru because in most cases they pay both in cash and duru, and 5% of each transaction is levied as commission. Generally speaking, articles which are usually trades in official currency are exchanged among Hanbat LETS members in duru and cash while some payments are done exclusively in duru for recycled goods among members.

5) Current status of transactions in Hanbat LETS

Below is the current status of transactions in Hanbat LETS, i.e. amount of trades by year(2000-2005), amount of trades by month(January to December 2004), details on sort of trades.

a. Amount of trades by year

The graphic 2 shows transactions by Hanbat LETS members by year from 2000 to 2005.

<Graphic 2> Transactions by Hanbat LETS members by year, 2000-2005

Year	Transactions	Amount in Duru	Amount in Won	Total amount (duru+won)	Duru percentage
2000	287	4,866,000	5,427,900	10,293,900	47.3
2001	553	8,813,300	8,677,500	17,490,800	50.4
2002	1,503	28,403,130	20,493,450	48,896,580	58.1
2003	2,674	37,516,285	36,955,940	74,472,225	50.4
2004	4,919	53,211,295	41,045,495	94,256,790	56.5
2005	4,745	65,160,426	56,115,250	121,275,676	53.7

The year 2000 saw 2878 transactions among members, 2001 saw 553, 2002 saw 1,503, 2003 saw 2,674 and 2004 as many as 4,919, with more than 100% of growth rate. The total amount of transactions too increased from 10,293,900 in 2000 to 94,256,790 in 2004, with more than 10 times trades in 5 years. On switching the attention to the percentage between duru and won, it is easy to see that people spend more and more duru gradually.

b. Transactions and amounts by month

The graphic 3 shows transactions and amounts by month in 2004, showing clearly that they vary from month to month. It is because more transactions are done when a dinner party is held, so a month with a dinner party has more trades both in duru and cash. October has the biggest amount of transactions because of the harvest season(so much crop is exchanged), on top of a pumasi dinner party and a duru kitchen. We can see that October, November and December saw more trades than other months.

<Graphic 3> Transactions and amounts by month(2004)

	Trades	Total amount (duru/won)		Providers	Demanders
Jan	325	4,512,000	3,748,580	35	128

Feb	294	4,577,210	3,403,400	41	104
Mar	221	2,943,950	1,218,600	46	92
Apr	605	4,725,980	3,417,620	62	174
May	192	3,443,750	1,260,750	43	108
June	425	3,671,070	1,986,820	63	119
July	243	4,109,100	2,533,650	49	120
Aug	330	3,211,250	2,518,200	59	130
Sep	479	4,087,180	2,911,420	58	142
Oct	833	6,278,100	5,286,870	67	212
Nov	432	6,024,530	8,291,460	67	167
Dec	540	5,627,175	4,468,125	70	172
Total	4,919	53,211,295	41,045,495	660	1668

c. Trades by month and sort

The graphic 4 shows the trades in Hanbat LETS by month and sort in 2004. The most popular case is transactions at member businesses(25.9%), followed by medical service(24.7%), recycling(16.2%) and agricultural goods(14.0%). Some sorts are more popular in some months than others, for instance member businesses was more popular in January and September while medical service and recycled goods as well as agricultural goods in October and April. New sorts of trades started such as delivery, education and commission, showing that new archetypes have been always developed.

<Graphic 4> Trades in Hanbat LETS by month and sort(2004)

Sort	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Transa.	Percent
Member businesses	213	59	60	151	43	68	48	59	221	183	103	78	1286	25.9
Medical service	68	99	89	125	82	77	78	68	115	183	120	121	1225	24.7
Recycle	12	27	42	122	19	98	37	105	13	241	20	69	805	16.2
Agri. Goods	2	67	6	127	4	38	5	48	58	88	129	121	693	14.0
Member s' goods	7	-	-	9	3	77	2	-	4	83	1	43	229	4.6

Resource activity	1	5	5	15	7	32	8	15	24	10	15	31	168	3.4
Salary	8	8	9	10	9	7	8	8	12	13	13	12	117	2.4
Education	-	7	-	-	-	-	36	12	2	16	7	8	88	1.8
Delivery	-	-	-	19	11	15	5	6	14	7	1	4	82	1.7
Service	2	3	2	6	4	8	6	6	5	6	7	14	69	1.4
Fabrication	4	3	2	14	4	1	2	1	4	5	3	22	65	1.3
Sponsorship	5	5	4	6	5	-	2	-	7	2	15	1	52	1.0
Commission	-	0	-	7	1	4	2	2	2	8	4	8	47	0.9
Loan	3	1	1	1	1	-	3	2	1	3	1	4	21	0.4
Others	-	1	2	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	-	4	10	0.2
Month total	32	29	22	61	19	42	24	33	48	849	439	540	4957	100.0
Percentage(%)	7	6	4	12	4	9	5	7	10	17	9	11	100	Total

6) Current status of Hanbat LETS member businesses

Businesses which accept payments in the community currency “duru” from Hanbat LETS members are called member businesses, and a list of businesses is provided at the website “member modum information” as well as the “pumasi doumi” to be published every six months where individual members can visit and buy in duru. Types of businesses who accept duru vary, including medical service, construction, education, bookstore, real estate, movie theater, foods, restaurants, physical training center, automobile repairing, clothes, wedding, photo service, stationery, computer repairing center, craftwork, printing, cooking furniture and others.

Currently there are 51 member businesses on top of 11 individual businesses who accept duru. A variety of businesses join, including medical institutions, educational ones, car center, real estates, printings, stationery, kitchen furniture and construction, all of which accept duru.

7) Hanbat LETS activities

A variety of activities have been developed at Hanbat LETS. Such information is provided in member introductions, events and trades announcements by way of bimonthly newsletter and people communicate each other at the Pumasi Dinner Party to be held every two months, Sports Festival, Meal Exchange, making of soy sauce, miso and gochujang⁷, cucumber pickling, rice cookie and steamed bread cooking and other seasonal activities, exchanging their idea, opinion and lifestyle.

⁷ Miso with red pepper, a typical condiment of the Korean cuisine.

A number of schools are held in different interest areas: photographing, Korean folksong, website making, folk?, classic dance, handcrafts, woodwork, pressed flower, “das Kapital” course, porcelain, farmer’s music, cultural exploration, baking, knotting, PC literacy education, handmade clothes, English conversation, tea ceremony, Japanese conversation, cookie baking and others, allowing student to learn skills and capacities in duru without having to pay won. Anyone can become teacher or student. Here is also a place to show what you have acquired and you can live a student life if you are eager for it.

Three small groups by quarter(currently Noeun-dong, Taepyeong-dong and Beop-dong) have been set up because the whole area of Daejeon is sometimes too big. There are also small groups by interest area, such as song group, mothers and babies group, collective childcare group, cultural heritage exploration group and excursion group, enriching their life by sharing it each other.

Hanbat LETS departs from personal needs like economic trades of goods and/or services, trying to enhance people’s interest area by their communitarian awareness to improve the community together.

The “collective child caring” is tried from people’s awareness on its socialization, the “Mindlle Medical Cooperative” is set up and managed to try the reformative change of the medical sector, a life improvement movement towards organic food has been developed by way of “duru kitchen” and a reform is being developed in the educational field too by way of “Flourishing School”, an alternative school.

Beside them, “ambulant movie theater,” “Mindlle attendance companion for patients,” “Sharing duru market” and other projects are practicing the communitarian awareness and life values by way of sympathy to excluded community inhabitants.

In this way, Hanbat LETS consists not only of activities to strengthen its solidarity with the community but also of activities which originate from members’ personal needs, of volunteering to the outer society and other sorts of activities.

The graphic 5 shows activities which have been so far performed at Hanbat LETS.

<Graphic 5> Hanbat LETS activities

Area	Contents	Note
Communitarian solidarity	Pumasi dinner party, outdoor sports festival	Bimonthly
	Publication of the newsletter “good neighborhood”	Monthly
	Mindlle Medical Cooperative	Founded in Apr 2002
	Duru Kitchen (Seasonal meal, soy sauce, gochujang and miso making, different sorts of tea)	Started in July 2004
	Weekend Farm (seeding, seedling, natural dyeing, tofu-making)	
	Quarter gatherings (Pumasi gatherings at Noeun-dong, Beop-dong and Taepyeong-dong)	Started in Dec 2004

	Small groups (song group, mothers and babies group, collective childcare group, cultural heritage exploration group and excursion group)	
	Flourishing school (12-year alternative school)	Started in March 2004
Social contribution	Ambulant movie(project for the culturally-excluded social class)	With the rent support from the Social Welfare Public Fund
	White Mindlle Club(socialization with the elderly)	Weekly
	Mindlle Attendance Companion for the elderly	Support the project by the Homecare Welfare Foundation
	Egalitarian school for the handicapped, free medical checkup by home helpers	Sep and Nov 2003
	Sharing Duru Market, Drawing Exhibition, Trades Check, Community Plays	Oct 2005
Personal needs	Pickle making, soy sauce / miso / gochujang making, cucumber pickling, songpyeon making, steamed bread cooking and other seasonal events	Realized at duru kitchen and quarter gatherings
	Pumasi School photographing, Korean traditional song, website making, U.S. folk, classic dance, handcrafts, woodwork, pressed flower, “das Kapital” course, porcelain, farmer’s music, cultural exploration, baking, knotting, PC literacy education, handmade clothes, English conversation, tea ceremony, Japanese conversation, cookie baking and others	There is no restriction on the subject and a new school can be opened whenever there is an instructor and students

3. Recent trends of Korean community currencies

Earlier this year, Mindlle Medical Cooperative of Hanbat LETS reinforced its facility to enhance the variety of its service of internal medicine. The dental clinic, to be opened in October, is under construction. There are ongoing efforts to realize inhabitants’ demands in Hanbat LETS.

There is an interesting initiative to be launched soon at a district of Incheon. Inhabitants there agreed on the idea to make use of community currencies to activate their community, and they developed the idea of exchanging services and goods into the one that they themselves will become the productive actors. It is about merchandizing “baking bread,” “processing foods” and “handicrafts” systematically so that consumers can turn into producers. Such an effort will reinforce inhabitants’ capacities by way of community currencies, and will be a catalyst to enhance the dynamism of the community. Such an effort has been influential to other community currency systems, and Hanbat LETS is trying to plan and practice producers’ gatherings on the following four subjects: “baking,” “kitchen handicrafts and knotting,” “processing foods” and “natural dyeing.”

Traditionally communications and trades have been done only within each community currency system. The “National Gathering of Community Currency Movement Network

KOREA”, founded in 2005, has been accumulating the collaboration among different community currency groups and studies about trades among themselves. Recently a trade relationship of agricultural goods between Hanbat LETS, Daejeon and Gwacheon Pumasi, Gwacheon has been established. In this way, methods have been researched to enable trades and communications among different community currency groups.

On the other hand, there is also an initiative to introduce again a sort of “merit currency” which was used at the parliament of the Silla Dynasty(?-935) on the decision-making process. It started in 2002 at Boeun, Chungcheongbuk-do to revive a currency which had been suspended for a while. Although this differs from community currencies in which participants contribute and/or donate to the community, these two types of systems are similar in the sense of joining the community and sharing. A trial has been under way to celebrate Daecheong-lake Music Festival in which each one is asked to pay some amount of contribution.

And recently the Korean government started to show its interest in community currencies and last year the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family had an interview with community currency groups in Korea. It was part of the effort to find out methods to make use of community currencies. Although it lead to no specific project, it indeed became the first motive for the government to get involved with this subject, so it is expected that more programs will come up from the governmental side for community currencies. And the Ministry of Labor has been promoting the regional specification as one of different plans and projects to create jobs, and some methods are to be suggested in the future to enhance the government’s involvement by stressing that community currencies contribute to the regional activation.

The community currency movement in Korea, although diminished in number, has developed different ways of operation on the basis of participants’ demands and Hanbat LETS is the leading figure.

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