Establishing Community College and Learning Community Counseling
– Taipei Community Colleges

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I. Introduction

A. Develop an Urban Vision by Learning

Starting 2010, Taipei City Government has been building a sustainable learning city based on the concept of intelligent city. The development aims at the six aspects in culture, ecology, waterfront, safety, welfare and wellbeing, and health. The first step we took in establishing a community lifelong learning system in Taipei City was to connect all 12 community colleges and started a community learning service center in each district. These 12 community learning service centers are connected with every lifelong learning organizations operated under Taipei City Government. We set up “Learning City Taipei” website serving as a platform for lifelong learning information integration to increase citizen’s participation in lifelong learning. We hope that lifelong learning will be an important power for urban development. Since learning city became a part of the city policy and action plan in 2011, we have been promoting the belief of learning is a lifelong journey to the public. Lifelong learning is to systematically pursue, update and expand required knowledge, skills, and attitudes of a modern life. We hope learning is not only limited to self achievement but is also extended to be the foundation of human and social asset of a city so the development of lifelong learning and urban development move forward in parallel.

Among all the lifelong learning organizations, the 12 community colleges are responsible for the establishment of its own community learning service centers in the districts in Taipei City. The integrated platform of community learning resources and collaborative learning system created by community learning service centers assist community colleges to develop the community further in depth as well as providing a better service for those who are interested in lifelong learning in the community. Community learning service center plays a role in community education. Community learning service centers design programs based on the characteristics of the community and promote and discover resources by carrying out events and activities. They offer professional staff training actively for a learning city, create a database of potential staff, and assist needed students or faculty in order to organize manpower effectively accordingly. The staff will be able to work together to design all sorts of programs, activities and education trainings. All the programs and events held central to community resources are important venues for interactive learning and information sharing. They contribute to the beginning of specific local studies like Beitou Study, Shihlin Study, Wenshan Study, Songshan Study, Nangang Study, and Wanhua Study. These local studies are important components of Taipei Study.

B. Promoting a Community Co-Learning System in Community College

The project of making Taipei a learning city is led by Taipei City Department of Education while the main driving force include the 12 community colleges along with the community learning service centers, and Taipei Public Library and its 73 branches. Through the six strategies of resource integration, community
empowerment, systematic motivation, knowledge management, strategy coalition, and international exchange and cooperation, we hope to achieve the comprehensive goals of building a community learning network, integrating lifelong learning resources, shortening the gap of digital knowledge among people, offering a variety of learning, providing lifelong learning opportunities, and promoting sustainable urban development.

The average student number is around 40,000 each semester in all 12 community colleges offering 2,000 courses in Taipei City. In addition to rich programs, community colleges have been involving in protecting the environment, environmental education, and protecting cultural inheritance. They also take active roles in training and empowering community staff, discussing issues related to food and agriculture education and food safety education, multi-cultures, and caring for the disadvantages. Community colleges also play the role of a rational communication channel between the local government and citizen. Community colleges are not merely a place providing lifelong learning to adults but they create intangible power in the cities and for the country. Community colleges’ courses now extend to not only cities and countryside, achieving a lot in high education for adults even compared to official colleges.

Community colleges have received positive feedback and praises because of their contributions in leading open discussions of public issues and cultivating community culture. Community colleges bring in a new trend of learning and become a place for gathering and exchange in the community. From binding the community to sharing and building local experience, culture and mentality, community colleges focus on building the community to a greater extent. It is a process about self reflection and realization. During the process, community colleges learn to find its place, accompany its community and serve as the connection between other communities and organizations by discussion and sharing of different issues occurred within the community. Through all kinds of community empowerment projects, community colleges work with experts, scholars, the local citizens, public groups and government agencies to build a co-learning system.

Ⅱ. Development of Community Colleges and Local Communities

**Develop a Vision of Sustainable City by Learning**

Community colleges have long attracted people with similar convictions who are dedicated to various community issues and changes. The 12 community colleges in Taipei have been dedicated to constructing communities, promoting city government policies, advancing city developments, and introducing innovative ideas to communities for positive changes.

Community colleges, as the power for Taipei city to progress further through intangible changes in lifelong learning, aim at promoting lifelong learning in the community, assisting people with problem solving, and improving quality of life. There are six urban development visions based on communities as a learning station: cultural, ecological, waterfront, healthy, safe, and welfare and wellbeing. The learning city development composing of understanding of an intelligent society, creative society and sustainable society begins from learning strategy in order to provide the key power necessary for a competitive city.

The positive impacts and relationships community colleges made on and with their local learning communities can be seen from six different perspectives – cultures and humanities, agricultural ecology, watersports and leisure activities, healthy living, safety, and friendly welfare:
A. An Intelligent City with Tastes

Taipei City Government has proposed several geographical development strategies in order to enhance the cultural diversity of Taipei, elevate the public’s cultural sensitivities, preserve and liven historical features, raise cultural creativity, and strengthen cultural and creativity spaces. As integral parts of the city, community colleges have long been committed to and succeeded in promoting and preserving cultures, elevating the publics’ cultural sensitivities, and providing training to build up talents. Examples of how community colleges have cultivated local cultures are summarize below:

1. Revitalize culture of local business: Zhongshan Community College and Qinkuang Market and Shuanchen Street Business Promotion Association worked together to promote a city micro trip called “City Tour” and published “The Art of Qinkuang Eat and Play” with the purpose of reminiscing local history and introducing exotic deliciousness. The school also worked with Zhongshan District to hold “Maple Coffee Festival” to bring life into the local tourist business. Another example is Datong Community College helping Kuoshun Village to develop rice culture by reviving memory for people. Rice Culture Festival further becomes a means to advocate rice culture of the community. Lastly, Songshan Community College created the “Raohe Tourism Night Market ~ Technical Guide to Delicacies,” to construct a healthier image for night market delicacies and make Raohe Night Market more accessible to the public.

![Event at Qinkuang Business Circle](image1)
![Helping community develop rice culture, recreating memory](image2)

2. Revitalize and revive cultural inheritance: Based on the needs of local business development and working with local stores using the strategy of “business innovation and added value”, Wanhua Community College and a well-known local herb store co-built “Town West Tea House” for culture exchange. In the mean time, the school designed a series of silver learning programs and activities as well as working with the well-known “Chang Shou Tea House” to promote and revive the tea drinking culture which represents the lifestyle of local people in Monga. These programs help tea drinking culture to live on and offer a chance for the seniors who have been accustomed to tea drinking to participate learning so to promote silver learning in the community.
Another example of revitalizing cultural inheritance is the collaboration of Datong Community College and other community organizations. They established Taipei Confucius Temple, Master Chen’s Old House, and Dalongdong Baoan Temple adopting the core concept of temple study in urban regeneration project. The three major establishments with others formed Dalongdong Cultural Park which captures the local cultural features and preserves local beauty as well as encouraging creativity of Dadaocheng culture.

3. Promoting community art education: An example of promoting community art education is the collaboration of Neihu Community College and Hubin Community Development Association. They invited Mr. Wen-Chih Wang, an internationally known landscape artist, and his team along with over 30 students from Neihu Community College and volunteers to take turns building a bamboo woven house of Bihu in Neihu District using 4000 bamboo sticks. The team put in some innovative ideas and followed the common Taiwanese weaving techniques to build the house in six weeks. Their endeavor is a great example in promoting community art education.

Daan Community College also promoted community participation and ownership through street art, cultural tour guide, and goods market events such as “Daan Reading Cultural Festival” and “Green Lifestyle Festival.” Lastly, Wenshan Community College actively encouraged its faculties and students to participate in art and cultural activities and support Wenshan Painting association and black and white painting club in order to expand the learning capacities of its community.

B. Developing an Ecological City

As a city gifted with estuaries, riparian wetlands, and Taiwan’s largest volcanic system, as well as observed ecological island hopping, refugia, and urban greenery, Taipei may be the world’s most eligible metropolitan city to be developed into an ecological city. With the extreme climate changes, energy depletion and population explosion, the world will likely be confronted with a large-scale food crisis in the 21st century.
Many countries around the world have been focusing on the development of new food sources and finding balances between developing a dependable food system and ecological cities. Mayor Ke stated in his policies white paper that he hopes to transform Taipei into an ecological city and make farming and agriculture a main part of the city. Ke hopes to transform Taipei into a greener and healthier farming ecological city where education and living quality are emphasized. From both academic and community application’s point of view, it is evident that community colleges’ long-term investments in ecological and agricultural education have played important roles in Ke’s strategic plans. Community College’s farming city initiatives are summarized below:

1. **Acting on Ecosystem protection**: Wenshan Community College has been devoting in the protection of Cuihu Lake in Mucha Park in light of the unbalanced ecological condition for a long time. The school started a wetland ecosystem discovery workshop to encourage volunteers to conduct field work. Director at The Society of Wilderness, Mr. De Hong Chen has led volunteers to do field research and maintenance multiple times, and we have seen promising results. The school also worked with Taiwan Thousand Miles Trail Association to develop “Protecting Wenshan Trails” curriculum. Volunteers used ecological engineering methods to protect the environment around mountain trails. Volunteers made many attempts entering the woods and built an environment friendly hiking trail in Xianji Rock Coast Guard Administration Trail. Wenshan Community College worked with Wukung Elementary School, Mucha Junior High School, and Jingmei Junior High School to hold events promoting food and agriculture education; the community college campus is used as practicing site for the volunteers.

![Volunteers moved planting into eco-protection pond](image1)

![Volunteers carried logs for Xianji Rock trail](image2)

2. **Green roof promotion**: Xinyi Community College has been managing and maintaining its organic green roof garden in Xinyi Junior High school serving as the practice site for urban farming programs. The school has offered programs and workshops in green roof energy saving and carbon reduction, indigenous plants protection, and city farmer organic farming, etc. Xinyi Community College is the operation center of green energy conservation in the community via holding the organic green life seminar on a yearly basis. The school shares its experience and approach with the community by offering “Community Organic Farming: Elephant Mountain Civil Farm Experimental Program”.

3. **Seed Museum continuing education**: Wanhua Community College transformed the abandoned buses into community green life learning service station also known as the seed museum in Rixiang Village. With the idea of promoting a sustainable ecosystem in the community carried out by the volunteers, the school arranges guided tours at Taipei Youth Park and the seed museum for the community. Community groups could apply for the guided tours by appointment.

4. **Turning abandoned areas into gardens**: The programs titled “Turning abandoned areas into gardens - Green Salons in Zhongzheng” held by Zhongzheng Community College successfully completed the make over of a vacant place located at No. 87, Tongan Street in Heti Village Zhongzheng District and transformed it into a green land called “Transforming Schröder Literature Garden”.

5. **Ecosystem balance; bees raising in the city**: Songshan Community College has been advocating bees raising in the city due to the unbalanced ecosystem in its community. The school provides class instructions as well as bees raising practices. This program conveys actual knowledge about the environment and creates a diverse living organism in an urban jungle while the bees raised in the community help with pollination in the surrounding organic farms. Additionally, Songshan Community College has organized small scale ecological experiential activities at Zhonglun High School to help students understand bee ecology and climate change and to help promote agricultural and food safety education. All the students were ecstatic and in awe when they saw bees in their classroom.
6. Urban Farmer Empowerment: Datong Community College developed various events and workshops such as “Datong Community Urban Farmer Training,” “Datong Lanzhou Farming Technique Volunteer Training Plans,” “Urban Farmer Experience,” and “Organic Farming D.I.Y.” to utilized unused community spaces for cultivating and farming green plants. The purposes are to establish a low-carbon ecological farming community as well as to provide trainings for locals (i.e. Zhisheng district, Baoan district, Yangya district, Siwen district) to become experts in agricultural education.

C. A Waterfront Leisure City

Water is a central and crucial part of Taipei City. For example, Dadaocheng Wharf has been responsible for over 70% of Taiwan’s import and export trade since 1920s. Taipei’s development is deeply connected and rooted in the Dadaocheng area. In order to transform Taipei into a waterfront Leisure City, community colleges in Taipei established alliances to guard and protect Danshui river and Keelung River a few years ago. Examples of community college waterfront leisure cultural cultivation results are summarized below:

1. Improve waterfront tourism: Neihu Community College proposed the idea of a colorful comic strip painting called “Along the River at Wu Fen” to build a tourist attraction and preserve local culture in Neihu. The painting is created on the walls on the left sides of Jingguan Bridge and Hauchen Bridge by the lower course of Neigou River. It is a 200*4 masterpiece made by colorful mosaic tiles, being as the best connection between hydrology, history, and tourism.

2. Promote waterfront culture: Shilin Community College have been offering programs such as “Shezi
ecological and historic survey volunteering empowerment training”, “Culture along the riverside workshop”, etc. They hold “Keelung River Seminar”, “Beautiful Shilin: A Discussion of Future Prospect”, and “Keelung River Guided Tour Training”. The school publish guided manuals such as “Walk in Pingding Ancient Trail”, “Walk in Keelung River”, and “Walk in Shezi Manhattan”. Starting 2009, the school has held “Wetland protection workshop for volunteers” in the artificial wetland at Waishuangxi Park.

3. Build river eco-parks: Together with Chiuju Community Development Association, Nankang Community College keeps promoting the protection of Square Creek. In the last 10 years, the river protection watch team has been protecting the creek, closing down the creek, cleaning the creek to now being with the creek so Square Creek became the first river that protects its fish in Taipei City in 2011. With the heritage and culture education (green bamboo shoots for instance) and environmental education, we hope to build a Square Creek Eco-park in the near future. At the same time, the Da-Keng river cleaning activity is held annually, offering more chances for citizens to get closer to rivers and protect them.

4. Driving River Tourism: Zhongshan Community College led the tourism industry through the development of the Keelung River Blue Highway. The blue highway, referring to the river, has also promoted different images and cultures of Taipei. The blue highway has helped citizens and tourists understand the history and ecological characteristics of the Zhongshan district that surrounds Keelung River.
D. A Healthy LOHAS City

In order to meet WHO’s health city development plan, previous city mayor, Ma Ying-Jeou, introduced the “healthy city, energetic Taipei” concept and “energetic and healthy” sustainable city development vision in his “policy white paper.” His vision was to develop Taipei into a healthy, energetic, safe, caring, convenient, clean, ecological, comfortable, welfare, friendly, helpful and diverse international health city. In 2002, Taipei officially started the Taipei Health City project in 2004, the “Taipei Health City Plan” was developed; in 2006, Daan district was nominated as the first execution district; in 2007, Shihlin and Beitou joined the movement towards becoming an internationally recognized health city; in 2008, Songshan, Zhongshan, and Wanhua were selected to further drive and sustain the health city initiative. All 6 major communities selected collaborate with the local community college closely in order to effectively promote the healthiness of each community. Examples of community college’s involvement with the health city initiative is summarized below:

1. **Create a green life circle**: Along with Qingtian Community Development Association, Formosana Hayata Community, Pink Panther Culture Ltd., Landscape Environmental Design and Planning Ltd., Kufeng Village, Longchuan Village, and Jingan Village, Daan Community College started “Hello Green Life Culture and Life Alliance” in order to pay more attention to the needs of community. They hold discussions on issues including protecting historical sites, understanding reservoir culture, environmental development, food and agriculture education, health, disaster prevention, etc in the hope of creating a sustainable green life circle.

![Guru of urban waste reduction- Wei Yu](image1)
![Little White House in Kufeng Village](image2)

2. **Build a healthy LOHAS City**: Since 2007, Songshan Community College has been working on building a happy city in Songshan District. Step by step, the school established a monitoring standard to lead the community in making a happy Songshan of health, safety, and ecology. After eight years of devotion and effort, Songshan District has formed its local culture via a variety of events. It has won the excellence award of healthy city at community level Alliance for Healthy Cities Taiwan in 2013, the innovation award of healthy and senior friendly city in 2014 and 2015. Songshan Community College shared its results at the International Healthy City Annual Meeting in 2010, 2012, 2014, and 2016.
E. A Safe City

In order to transform Taipei into a safe city and to reduce accidental or intentional injury, communities must work together to create a more secure environment, and to work together to enhance physical, mental and social wellbeing of every habitant. It is especially important to highlight the development of disaster prevention systems such as water conservation and flood control mechanisms for the city under such severe climate change. Starting in 2001, Taipei city has focused on the development of safe city in Neihu, Zhongzheng, Xinyi, Nangang, Datong, and Wenshan District. Long-term collaborations between these communities and their respective community colleges are at the heart of promoting community safety. Examples of community colleges’ involvement in constructing a safe city are summarized below:

1. **Build a resilient city**: Wenshan Community College devotes time to promoting a safe city. The school trains volunteers and promotes the concept and application of rainwater tank and sponge city with help from schools and community organizations. The community college developed a series of discussions focusing on Wenshan River Study in issues including climate change, flooding, water shortage in Wenshan, etc. The school also proposed a community disaster prevention initiative in response to climate change on the Wenshan safe community organization net.

![Wenshan Community College’s response to climate change](image)

2. **Build a safe path to schools**: The “Paint for Hope and Safety” carnival held by Beitou Community College not only drew attention to the beauty of Beitou but it also initiated building safe walking path for pedestrians and for school children.

3. Build a safe city: In 2008, Xinyi Community College collaborated with both public and private organizations in the district to establish “Xinyi Safe Community Association” to lead the Xinyi Safe Community Construction Movement.

F. A Welfare and Wellbeing City

Taipei is committed to promoting an active social welfare system through establishing family center and infant care center – to create an environment that encourages childbearing – in every district, holistic physical and mental disability service – to encourage non-governmental organizations to commit to long-term care services – and long-term care service network between healthcare system and social welfare
system. Furthermore, Taipei is committed to developing a diverse program for helping families get out of poverty, establishing a holistic family service system and community safety net, organizing volunteer awarding events, and encouraging Taipei citizens to participate in caring services. The 12 community colleges in Taipei have invested in constructing senior-friendly community and socially disadvantaged caring and supporting network through classes, organizations, and social work groups.

1. It is expected that Taiwan is inevitably moving towards an aging country. Therefore, facing the challenges brought by an aging society, how to build a friendly and kind city for the senior citizens is one of the latest issues we have to face. Beitou Community College works in collaboration with Rongkuang Village and Jiqing Village to organize the “Senior Citizens Health Classroom” in Shipai Elementary School, putting forward a “grandparent-grandchild schooling program” where grandparents are invited to go to school hand in hand with their grandchildren. The aim is to build a healthy, happy community for grandparents and grandchildren to learn together. Seniors can increase their social involvement and contribute their wisdom, and even become a support of children and school education.

![The Senior Citizen Health Classroom at Beitou Community College](image)

2. **Build a friendly community for senior citizens:** Songshan Community College conducted a kindness towards the elderly evaluation survey focusing on two issues: a healthy diet for senior citizens and safe exercises. The survey started a new trend in healthy diet and active lifestyle and led to a better quality of life because of the delay of aging process and lower death rate amongst the elderly. We hope to move forward to a “healthy aging, active aging, and local aging” city through senior communal eating cafeteria, healthy energy station, accessible public repair services, Dementia senior support system, and grandparents concerts etc.

![Senior-citizen friendly City Camps in elementary school: experiencing being an elderly using props](image)

![Communal dining for the elderlies in the community](image)

3. **Community care for the social minority:** Through participating Airport South Community Development project, Zhongzheng Community College actively assisted disadvantaged women and children to gain job skills and independency by providing empowerment training. Square Health Store held a job training
program for women. Disadvantaged women are able to start a small business and make financial contribution upon graduating from the program. “Life of I- I Coffee” is a project that prepares high school drop-outs the skills of coffee making, encourages them to work, and assist with vocational education. The school helped the community in starting food banks to fulfill basic living requirements for lower income families. This last project has successfully integrated local human resource and given back to the community further.

“Care for the disadvantaged” being the main goal, Beitou Community College in collaboration with Chuanyuan Village, Zhongshin Village, Changan Village, Wenchuan Village, Jiqing Village, and Yangmingshan Mansion started a project, with village office’s referral, reached out to the disadvantaged families and provided household appliance safety check and repair. The project is called “Community House Alliance Hospital”.

4. Promoting public repair services: Songshan Community College has been providing training to a group of home repair public volunteers, who have now organized themselves into a formal organization. Through training and collaboration with the Huashan Social Welfare Foundation, the Songshan Public Repair Organization visits different homes to conduct safety checks and provides elderlies who live alone and low-income households with repair services and safety measures to create a friendly environment in Songshan.

†Job training program for women at Zhongzheng Community College

†Household appliance service at Beitou Community College

†Songshan Community College Songshan Public Repair Organization providing free repair services to elderlies who live
III. Conclusion

A. Counsel and Caring Relationship between Community Colleges and Learning Communities

From the tip of Taiwan to the tail of Taiwan, from the main island to Penghu and Kinmen, every community college has its own mission in developing local knowledge and offering classes on local literature and history, ecology, ethnic groups, and unique characteristics. Community colleges also proactively participate in local public affairs and strengthen the important mission of community ownership, talent cultivation, and local culture development. Local issues and field practices are incorporated into community college curriculums; the goal is to liven up the seemingly abstract issues and help students apply the knowledge they adopted in real life. Given their names, community colleges are destined to serve their communities and be in relationships with their communities.

In order to start the process of lifelong learning from within every community, community colleges will continue to work towards a learning city with their respective communities through allowing students to apply their head knowledge to the public arena and designing events that fit the community needs. Additionally, talent training is placed at the heart of community colleges’ strategic initiatives; curriculums are designed to sustain the continued growth of talent training programs and building community visions.

To ensure that the community learning system operates smoothly and to guarantee that resources and suggestions from different sources can be collected, the Community Learning System Promotion Committee was established to link different learning systems within the community and to maximize the results of collaborative efforts. The mission statement of the committee is to promote community lifelong learning and integrate learning resources and form district-based “Community Education and Learning System.” It’s responsibilities are outlined below:

1. Understand the public’s learning needs and provide quality-learning courses
2. Establish community education platform
3. Establish Internet learning mechanism to avoid geographical restrictions
4. Guide quality local teams and strengthen community educational results
5. Reduce the educational gap and create a community educational culture
6. Protect educational rights and opportunities for the underprivileged groups and implement the commitment of education for all.

As Li-Jun Zheng, the Chair of the Department of Culture, mentioned during the Community College Forum, she believes that community construction and community colleges are two of the most successful national movements in the last 20 years. She believes that community colleges are the main promotional basses for the overall construction of Taiwan’s culture, cultural education, local knowledge, local history and policies.

B. A Perfect Lifelong Learning Environment established in Community
In order to build a lifelong learning environment for everyone to learn at anytime and anywhere, Taipei City Government put together and promoted a learning city. The municipal government works in collaboration with 12 community colleges to establish an educational system much closer to the local communities. We hope to build an integrated platform of community learning resources and collaborative learning system that allow community colleges to develop the community more in depth as well as providing a better service for those who are interested in lifelong learning in the community. Community colleges further become the center of community learning and consultation and the educational center of local business development. Throughout years, Taipei City Community College has been advocating participation and lifelong learning. We offer academic courses, life and leisure classes, and club activities connecting with the local community and so community colleges become the most localized lifelong learning institute. Moreover, we encourage residents to show more concerns for the living environment by discussion of public issues and empowering residents. With all these efforts, quality of life and the community as a whole improve significantly.

With the intention to integrate community resource, community colleges have been building close relationships with government agencies, community organizations, public groups, schools, and hospitals. Community colleges work hand in hand with community development associations and public groups in course development and events holding. Community colleges serve as a medium in educating government policy so they also work closely with center and local government sectors. Community colleges play an equally important role as the district office in administrative districts and become a significant integrating platform of community resources as well as the leader in community learning.

How do community colleges reach a common understanding and agreement with the people on learning issues and build a community learning structure in the foreseeable future? All 12 community colleges in Taipei City have structured a communication channel through programs, seminars, events, and public forums to discuss with local residents on all sorts of issues including climate change, energy crisis, an aging society and so on. The people and community colleges discuss and decide on the fate of their community. Moreover, they develop a sustainable vision via learning that would last for centuries.