



FORM BEST PRACTICES CONTEST 2025

Municipality Cittaslow Jangheung..... Country Corea
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Name project

Cittaslow Jangheung's Unique Traditional Culture, Gossaum Tug-of-War(a local traditional play) for local residents' cohesion

Category Certification Criteria: mark the category of your project

- Energy and environmental policies (politiche energetiche e ambientali);
- Infrastructure policies (politiche infrastrutturali);
- Quality of urban life policies (politiche per la qualità urbana);
- Agricultural, touristic and artisan policies (politiche agricole, turistiche, artigianali);
- Policies for hospitality, awareness and training (politiche per l'ospitalità, la consapevolezza e la formazione);
- Social cohesion (coesione sociale).

Summary project

1 Operation of an Experiential Program for the Succession of Jangheung's Unique Traditional Culture, Gossaum Tug-of-War

- Establishing a foundation for resident-led, self-sustaining cittaslow while villagers directly participate in making "Go (Loop)"
- ↳ Transition and strengthening of government-led cittaslow operations into a resident-led operation system through voluntary participation of cittaslow residents
- Development of tourism products utilizing traditional cultural content by operating a "Go (Loop)" making program using straw for tourists

2 Establishment of Jangheung Gossaum Tug-of-War Preservation Society

- Residents directly establish a Gossaum Tug-of-War preservation society to establish a foundation for systematically preserving disappearing traditions and strengthening regional identity
- Maintaining and strengthening the unique cittaslow tradition by operating a go (loop) making program using straw

3 Transmission of Intangible Cultural Heritage such as Go (Loop) Making and Gossaum Demonstrations

- Conducting experiential education for cittaslow visitors and schools in the area
- Establishing a foundation for the spread of Jangheung's unique culture by operating a go (loop) making skill training class for the general public

Goal project

- 1 'Gossaum Tug-of-War,' a heritage of traditional farming culture, has almost disappeared due to the decline of conventional farming. However, Jangheung has maintained this heritage, which dates back to 1872 (153 years of history), to this day.**
- 2 The eastern and western villages on either side of the Tamjingang River, the lifeline of Jangheung, share joy and happiness by promoting mutual organic friendship and demonstrating the unity and cohesion of the communities.**
- 3 The logo of Cittaslow International, a snail carrying a village on its back, suggests that the spirit of the "International network of cities where living is good" aligns with the heritage of Gossaum.**

Result project

1-1. Summary of Jangheung Gossaum Tug-of-War

- Jangheung Gossaum Tug-of-War is a traditional village festival that has been held on the day of the first full moon of the lunar year since the Joseon Dynasty by eastern and western villages on either side of the Tamjingang (Yeyanggang) River. This is the largest festival in the southwestern region of Korea, holds great historical significance, and is academically important because Gossaum and Tug-of-War are performed together. The Jangheung Tug-of-War photo, published in the Jeonnam Photographic Journal in 1917, is considered the oldest confirmed photo of tug-of-war to date.



Historical photo of Jangheung tug-of-war published in Jeonnam Photographic Journal in 1917

It is recognized for its historical value, as records have been handed down through newspapers and other sources dating back to 1918. An academic survey and conference on Jangheung Gossaum Tug-of-War were held in 2013 to organize its historical and academic value. It was demonstrated during the 2019 Jangheung Citizen Day and Borim Cultural Festival. In 2022, it was selected for the Cultural Heritage Administration's Future Intangible Heritage Competition Project, and an academic conference was held for this project, with video records being produced.

Jangheung Gossaum tug of war possess the value and meaning as a transmitted cultural heritage. In Gossaum tug of war are documented the historical record of the region. Especially, it is said that Gossaum tug of war served as a medium through which anti-Japanese sentiment is expressed, distinctive value can be confirmed in a sense that it is connected to the special historical experience at that time. Surviving as a current festival and being interpreted as a symbol which expresses the identity of local community is something to be reckoned with. Its academic value calls for attention. Jangheung Gossaum tug of war includes loop fight and tug of war. In Jangheung, two plays are not separate and the two plays are connected consecutively. This contrasts it from Chilsuk loop fight because it is completely independent from tug of war. The academic value of Jangheung Gossaum tug of war is significant because it shows differentiation process of loop fight and tug of war.

1.2 Detailed Description of Jangheung Gossaum Tug-of-War Culture



○ Gossaum

When the go (loop) reaches the sandbank of the Yeyanggang River, the venue is the Jangheung Dohobusa (Governor of Jangheung), the Byeoksa Chalbang (Chief of Byeoksa Station System)*, along with the local gentry and gisaeng, who get off the go (loop) and dismantle the cheongsachorong (red-blue lantern) decorations. Then, three local men are elected as the captain (commander) and deputy captains. The captain and the two deputy captains, who command the eastern and western loops,

respectively, remove their upper garments and direct the loop carriers with hand gestures and shouts from the front. (In the Jangheung Gossaum Tug-of-War, red cloth was used for buseojul (rope to tie loops) and blue cloth for budongjul (rope to pull the rope).) Following the captain's command, the deputy captains and flag holders promptly convey orders to the rope carriers. When the deputy captains and flag holders convey orders to the rope carriers according to the captain's instructions, the rope carriers respond with loud shouts and move in unison. At this point, the captain controls the momentum by ordering advances and retreats depending on the situation, and when he assesses that the team has the advantage, he shouts, "Push!" Then, the men carrying the rope position the rope-carrying logs on their shoulders and charge toward the opponent's loop. The moment the gos (loops) make contact, the men on the rope attempt to push the opponent's go (loop) to the ground to win. The Jangheung Gossaum is played out with the men carrying the go on their shoulders. When the person in front falls to the ground, the person behind takes over the go (loop), and the people behind them continue to climb on. Dozens of young men get entangled and engage in a fierce fight. The winner is determined by either pushing down the opponent's go (loop) to collapse or by making the rope touch the ground, and this style of play is extremely fierce and intense.

* The rank of the Byeoksa Chalbang (junior sixth-rank official), but since the jurisdiction was different, he was not directly under the command of the Jangheung Dohobusa (third-rank official). It is said that because the two organizations, with different affiliations, were located in the west and east, a competitive structure formed between them, and the Gossaum Tug-of-War was held on a grander scale.

○ **Juldanggigi (Tug-of-War)**

After the Gossaum is over, the rope-carrying logs are removed to prepare for a tug-of-war immediately. The eastern and western villagers carry their loops on their shoulders and continue to advance and retreat, facing each other several times, until the male loop is inserted into the female loop, the binyeomok (hairpin log) is inserted between them, and the tug-of-war begins with a shout of "Jul Deureotda (The rope is in)."

Then, the ropes are connected, and the tug-of-war begins. If one side is being pulled, the commander gives the order, "Kkarara (Lay it down)!" and all participants simultaneously lay the rope down, sit on it, and push each other with their shoulders, which is called "Milchigi." Since the pride of both sides is at stake, the tug-of-war is just as competitive as the Gossaum. At this time, the women at the back of the gossip would come forward and poke the hands of or interfere with the men pulling the rope on the other side with pine needles to prevent them from pulling the rope firmly. If it had not ended, the tug-of-war would have continued to the next day.



2. Strengthening the resident-led operation system through the organization of the Jangheung Gossaum Tug-of-War Preservation Society and voluntary participation of residents, and revitalizing the local economy based on cittaslow by creating jobs for residents and increasing village income

- Jangheung, which originated from Cittaslow Yuchi, has created a Cittaslow culture that encompasses the entire Jangheung area, extending beyond the Yuchi area.
- The 'Jangheung Gossaum Tug-of-War Preservation Society' was established to continuously preserve traditional culture while generating income by having residents directly develop resources that reflect local characteristics and create workplaces and jobs.

It contributed to the preservation of traditional culture that was being forgotten through the Gossaum Tug-of-War, a future intangible cultural heritage.

This is particularly significant in that the residents of cittaslow established a self-reliant organization and built their brand. It is also considered a model and excellent case study for cittaslow to be emulated by other local governments.

3. Go (loop) making training for inheriting traditional culture

- Operating go (loop) making courses for schools and residents in the district to encourage residents' pride in traditional culture
- Operating go (loop) making-related training and experiential programs

4. Establishing sustainable cittaslow and realizing sustainable urban development by utilizing Gossaum Tug-of-War, a local traditional play

- Gossaum Tug-of-War is a folk play played before the farming season on or around the first full moon out of the twelve months of the year in the original lunar calendar, which used the moon as its standard. Since the first full moon of the lunar calendar is given great significance and meaning in Korean seasonal customs, it is specially called 'Daeboreum,' meaning the Great Full Moon. While most Lunar New Year's Day ceremonies are held as personal ceremonies and folk beliefs to wish for the health of individuals or the well-being of the family, the first full moon of the lunar calendar is mostly a communal prayer for a good harvest, reflecting village traditions.
- Gossaum Tug-of-War, a traditional community event performed together by the village, embodies the solidarity and commonality of the community, which are essential elements of sustainable urban development through mutually organic interaction relationships.

5. Spreading the cittaslow culture through promotional activities such as demonstrations of Gossaum Tug-of-War

- The Gossaum Tug-of-War demonstration at the Borim Cultural Festival, held every other year, requires more than 100 people on each side to carry the go (loop) and the rope.
- The process of making go (loop) and mobilizing people is a sustainable cittaslow culture that can transcend the paradigm of rapidly changing modern society.

6. Developing tourism products using the traditional play of Gossaum Tug-of-War

- An experiential program for making a go (loop) using a straw
- Utilizing folk cultural heritage exhibition projects in public places such as Tamjingang Riverside

Finance (costs and benefits)

- Jangheung supports the bi-annual event of Gossaum Tug-of-War that local residents make efforts of conservation and preservation by themselves
- When events and local community activities became very difficult for 3-4 years due to COVID-19, Jangheung performed that Gossaum mural was drawn on the walls of the Tamjin River, where Jangheung residents always exercise and take a walk in their life. Through this mural, Jangheung townhall wants that people always keep the value of tradition and culture in local people's mind. At that time, they announced like this : "A long 150-year-old traditional play, Gossaum of Jangheung! It's become hard to see with your own eyes, but the essence of traditional culture always flows through Jangheung along with the Tamjin River."

[*Click this link YouTube : Mural paiting of Jangheung Gossaum Tug-of-War](#)

Additional information (if necessary)

Photos related to Jangheung's traditional Gossaum Tug-of-War



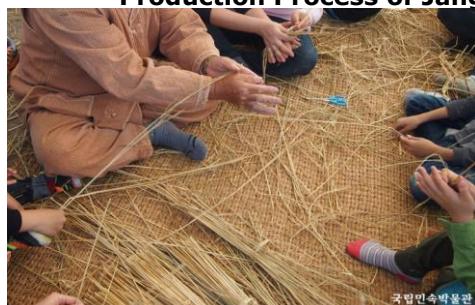
This photo displays the power of communities between eastern and western villages on the sides of Tamjingang River



cittaslow

좋은 삶이 있는 슬로시티 국제연대공동체
International network of cities where living is good
rete internazionale delle città del buon vivere

Production Process of Jangheung Gossaum Tug-of-War Ropes



Twisting Straw Ropes



Cutting Straw Ropes



Thickness of Go Rope



Twisting Go Rope



Weaving Go Rope



Erecting Gomeori (Loop Head)



March on the Chilgeori Intersection





In the Gossaum (Loop Fight) between eastern and western teams, when two loops crash and rise up, the team of the top loop will overpower the bottom loop and win.



Cittaslow Jangheung's Location