

NARROWING STRATEGY OF THE DIGITAL DIVIDE USING ICT: FOCUSED ON INFORMATION NETWORK VILLAGE CASE IN KOREA

Choong-Sik Chung

Professor, KyungSung University in Korea

E-mail: cschung@ks.ac.kr

ABSTRACT

The Korean e-Government began with the e-Government portal site (www.egov.go.kr) on November 1, 2002. After going through continuous efforts in e-Government and national informatization, Korea has become one of the global e-Government leaders - obtaining the highest scores in 'E-government Development Index' and 'E-participation Index'. In addition, many of Korea's e-Government practices until now have been introduced to the world as the best cases and received worldwide acknowledgement.

INVIL (Information Network Village) is a project establishing self-sustainable village communities that are capable of continued growth by creating information network environments and improving the income of residents through e-commerce in agricultural, fishing, and mountain regions usually excluded from information networks. INVIL is designed to reduce the digital divide between rural and urban regions by increasing availability of ICT services and to raise the income level of local residents through ecommerce, which eventually leads to the improvement of the quality of life in rural communities. 363 villages have been created and are operational in Korea since 2001 to present.

For the past 15 years, the INVIL Project has experienced continued growth by meeting the demands of the times. INVIL Project is not only a good example of residents being able to participate directly with government policies through the information system but an admirable project that benefits the residents tremendously.

INVIL is already renowned far and wide as a successful project despite only being in existence for a relatively short duration of about 15 years. From this point forward, the Korean government will revisit the outcomes and visions of the future, and do all it can to systematically achieve the long-term goals.

Moving forward, the innovations and excellence of this project will be shared globally in order to give an opportunity for those residents of agricultural, fishing, and mountain villages worldwide to participate directly in government policies and improve the conditions of their villages through the use of information networks.

Korean government's INVIL project experience and know-how will be shared in e-Government with the Asian countries by promoting joint projects with international organizations and exporting e-Government systems to foreign countries. Furthermore, Korea will work to contribute to the narrowing of the digital divide between countries by helping developing countries through ICT official development assistance (ODA).

Keywords: INVIL, Digital Divide, e-Government, ICT Cooperation, ODA