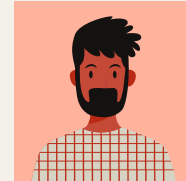
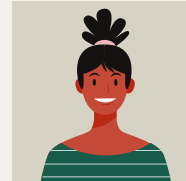
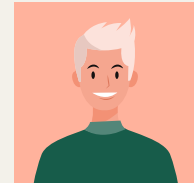
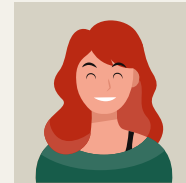
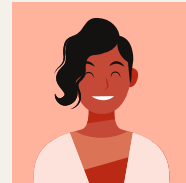


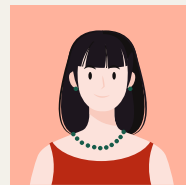
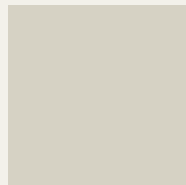
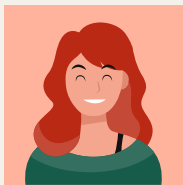
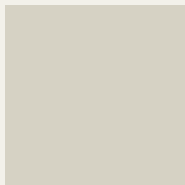
Rethinking Life Choices Beyond the “Child Penalty”

- A Participatory Curriculum with Experiential, Inclusive, Norm-Critical Narratives -

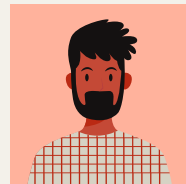
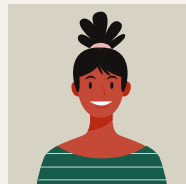
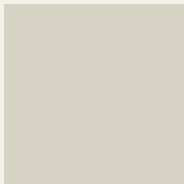
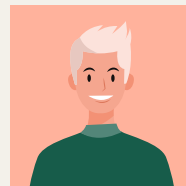
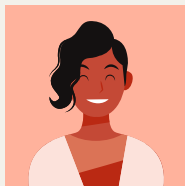
Miu AKUTSU, Woojin BAE,
Joomi PARK, Xin QING

LifeBridge





Three episodes of lived experiences...



Lived Experience 1

- Paternity leave for two weeks
 - **Encouraged & approved by policy**
- **Automatically, subtly marginalized**
 - Exclusion at a fast-paced system
 - “Why spending extra time and resources bringing me back on track?”
- **Capitalist notion of productivity**
 - Everyone is “replaceable”
 - “Maximum productivity” only



**Apparent discrimination vs
subtle marginalization**

Policies vs practices

**Narrow, short-sighted
definition of “productivity”**

Lived Experience 2

- Love kids and love to have kids
- Feeling **not ready yet** (not in **the right environment**)
- From a non-metropolitan region
 - **perceived unfairness**
- Uncertainty & Hesitation
 - Not enough information and realistic advice
- Wish for more open discussion
 - On the **“cost”** and **potential “struggles”**



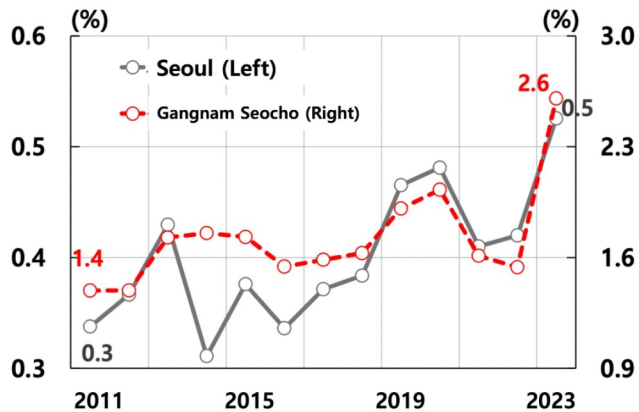
Narrowly defined “success”
= economic success

Perceived opportunity costs

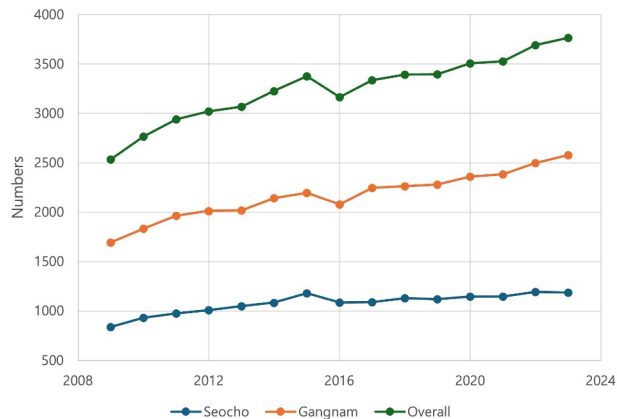
Lack of critical discussions

Narrowly Defined “Success” in the East Asian Context

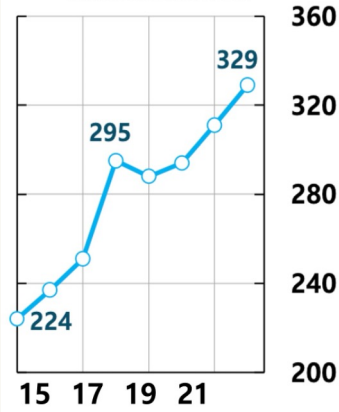
Transfer Rate to Seoul for Education Purposes of Middle School Students



Private Academy Numbers in Gangnam, Seocho District



The number of early childhood English academies in Seoul



- **Narrowly defined, credentialist “success”** urges people to (over)populate big cities for better educational resources
- **More competitive and exclusionary living resources**
- **Further instability and insecurity in all aspects of living**
→ Further decline in birth rate

Mistrust and Hesitation Resulting from “One-Sided Stories”

- Government's propaganda usually shows one-sided stories
 - Focus on narratives that **align with the “model family” population policies**
- Withholding information **causes mistrust** with governments, further adversely affecting birth rate



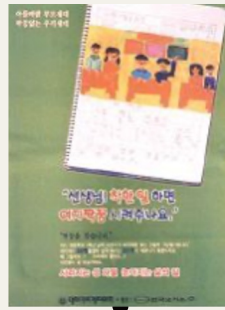
1960s



1970s



1980s



1990s



2000s



2010s

Lived Experience 3



- No strong opinions for or against kids, but “don’t know how we should engage with the topic any more”
- **Polarization of opinions**
 - Exacerbated by the online environment
- **Growing antagonisms & mistrust between social groups**
 - On alternative lifestyles and choices
- **Lack of spaces for open, inclusive discussion**

Social cleavages

(gender, generation, social class, geography, etc.)

Social perceptions not addressable by governmental policies

Tired by “one-sided” stories

when individual life stories become increasingly accessible online anyways

A Way out of the Child Penalty in East Asia?

Child Penalty

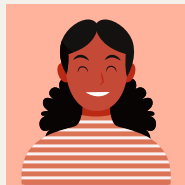
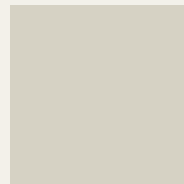
Narrowly defined,
yet worshiped
“Success”

Exclusionary,
capitalist notion of
“productivity”

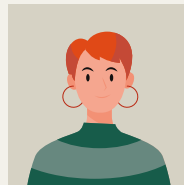
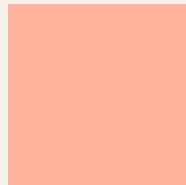
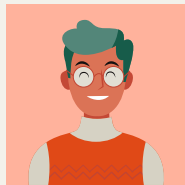
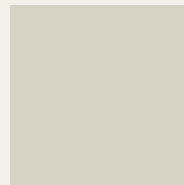
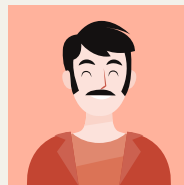
Perceived
opportunity costs
of childbirth &
child rearing

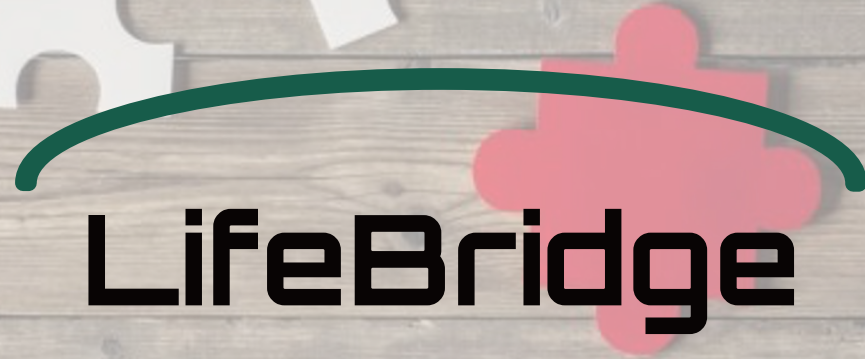
Social cleavages
(gender, generation, social
class, geography, etc.)

1. **Long term perceptual changes** instead of short-term “compensation schemes”
2. **Respect, understanding , and inclusivity** of all lived experiences and life styles
3. **Dignity and quality of life**
 - a. Not achievable solely by monetary awards/compensation
 - b. Proper acknowledgement of stress, compromises, and struggles
4. Call for **re-evaluations of taken-for-granted notions**
 - a. Traditional heteronormative family value
 - b. The extreme capitalist, elitist, “child is a burden” thinking



Solution Proposal





LifeBridge

Our Program Design



LECTURES

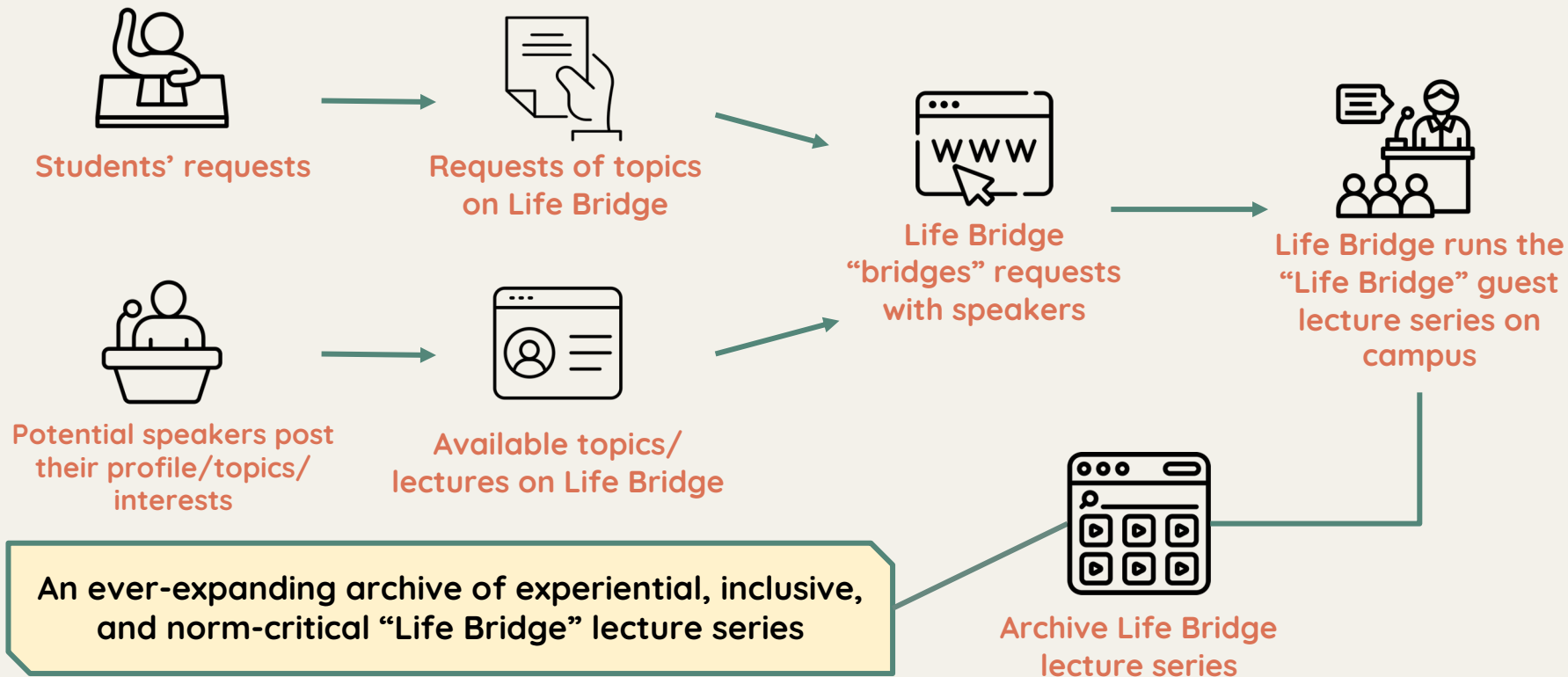
- Evidence-based
- Multi-faceted guide for students who may later encounter complex life circumstances & social norms

LIFE STORIES

Bridge students' needs with appropriate speakers

- Anyone willing to share pieces of their real-life story
 - Career, education, relationship, family, child rearing...
- Anyone who needs a catharsis or platform to share their under-acknowledged experiences
 - Not only success, but also hesitation, conflicts, compromises, and failures

Our Program Design



Okay, you might be thinking...

Wouldn't more "negative" opinion on sex, birth or child-rearing **cause even more decrease** of birth rate?



Not Enough
Evidence

France **1.79**
(UNFPA)

Don't Japan and Korea **already have sex education** in their school curriculum?

Japan **9** hrs

Korea **15** hrs

France **30~40** hrs

throughout junior high school

Evaluation with Episode 1

**Exclusionary, capitalist
notion of “productivity”**



Young professional whose
career advancement was
impacted by the “efficiency-
only” workplace environment

LIFE BRIDGE SERIES DESIGN

Speaker Profile

- People like him!
- Young professionals with diverse career tracks & experiences

Theme of Lecture

- Employee/employer perspectives on parental care policies
- Workplace pressures and key decision-making factors

Intended Results

- Highlight policy flaws and conflicts deterring childbearing
- Advocate for policy reform and inclusive corporate practices

Evaluation with Episode 2

Narrowly defined, yet
worshiped “Success”

Perceived opportunity
costs



Young woman who is so
uncertain about countless
options concerning her life,
pressured by the “social
expectation”

LIFE BRIDGE SERIES DESIGN

Speaker Profile:

- Shares personal experiences with conflicts of interest and compromises.

Theme of Lecture:

- Navigating choices and compromises.
- Reflecting on regrets and non-regrets.
- Defining personal meanings, responsibilities, and goals.

Intended Results:

- Recognizing shared experiences with uncertainty.
- Acknowledging the effort required to take responsibility for others.

Evaluation with Episode 3

Social cleavages

(gender, generation, social class, geography, etc.)



People who are overwhelmed with polarized and antagonistic child-related online discussions

LIFE BRIDGE SERIES DESIGN

Speaker Profile

- Any individuals with varying opinions and experiences related to relationships, life style

Theme of Lecture

- Open, ideology-free roundtables about different relationships, family structure, and child related concerns

Intended Results

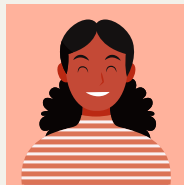
- Enable a public space where all kinds of information and narratives related to childbirth can be shared openly
- Fostering respectful disagreement
- Mutual understanding and empathy to all lived experiences, life styles, and choices

A decorative border of squares surrounds the central text. The squares are arranged in a circular pattern, with colors alternating between a muted olive green and a vibrant coral red. There are 12 squares in total, with 6 of each color.

Towards a society which duly
appreciates **all kinds of labor**,
embraces **all life choices**, and allows
for **empathetic and inclusive public
engagement.**



THANK YOU



Any questions &
feedback are
appreciated!

