

# The Development Path, Characteristics and Inspiration of Lifelong Education in Taiwan

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**Abstract:** Lifelong education provides impetus for the sustainable development of society. Building a lifelong education system and a learning society have become the themes of educational development and reform in today's era. Taiwan has been developing lifelong education for more than 20 years. It has been deeply involved in community education to serve community residents, attaches importance to family education to expand the support network, develops elderly education to actively respond to aging, promotes social education to expand the lifelong learning network, and carries out non-academic education learning achievement certification, highlighting its distinctive characteristics. By studying its lifelong education development path and characteristics, we can get inspiration and provide reference for promoting the development of lifelong education.

**Keywords:** lifelong education, characteristics, inspiration

## 1. Introduction

Building a lifelong education system has long been the basic position and policy goal of the education system[1]. Taiwan established its first community college in 1998 and promulgated the "Lifelong Learning Law" in 2002. After more than 20 years of practice, it has accumulated rich experience in the development of lifelong education and the construction of a learning society, with distinctive characteristics. It is worth learning from in many aspects such as the development goals, concepts, and strategies of lifelong education.

## 2. Development path of lifelong education in Taiwan

### 2.1 Deepen community education and serve community residents

In an era of constantly updated knowledge, lifelong learning and enjoying learning have become the core values of community education [2]. As a regional educational service activity, community education serves community members and aims to improve the quality and quality of life of community members. It is one of the effective ways to achieve lifelong learning for citizens. Taiwan has established community colleges and community multifunctional learning centers, developed community learning groups, and carried out various community learning activities for all people, stimulating the enthusiasm of all people for lifelong learning and serving the lifelong learning and development of community residents [3]. In promoting the development of community colleges, the "Community College Development Regulations" and "Measures for Assisting and Rewarding the Development of Community Colleges" have been formulated to improve people's modern citizen literacy and ability to participate in public affairs. Through funding and auxiliary mechanisms, the development of community colleges is promoted. By 2023, there are 88 community colleges in Taiwan, and more than 1,000 branches and teaching points have been established, with a total number of students reaching 450,000 [4]. In terms of the construction of community multifunctional learning centers, the resources of primary and secondary schools are integrated to build community multifunctional learning centers, so that schools can be community-oriented and become places for community learning[5]. Teaching venues and sports venues and other resources are open to the community, and schools become platforms for interpersonal communication and learning for community residents. Scholars and experts in the field of community education provide professional guidance and support to the community multifunctional learning center in terms of teaching management, curriculum setting, community resources, etc. In addition, the community college has

launched a "Special Topic Plan to Promote Public Participation", where local governments take stock of local needs and local characteristics, integrate community college resources, and develop community education courses around "developing local knowledge" and "enhancing residents' humanistic and social literacy and ability to participate in public affairs". Through multiple learning methods, community residents are encouraged to actively participate and develop local culture, knowledge and local industrial characteristics.

## ***2.2 Pay attention to family education and expand the support network***

Taiwan promulgated the Family Education Law in 2003, which clearly defines and divides the status and role of administrative departments, schools, and institutions at all levels in family education, and is the legal basis for promoting family education in Taiwan. Taiwan has implemented the "Family Education Plan" to promote the concept of family education, popularize various types of family education, and improve the quality of family education professionals and the quality of family education courses[6].

Popularize various types of family education, such as parenting education and marriage education. Family education centers are set up in various places to provide consulting service telephones to the society, and require primary and secondary schools to implement 4-hour family education courses and activities[7]. Promote family education through special education service plans. For example, in 2023, a total of 13,600 family education activities such as parenting education are planned, with 663,000 participants and 13,000 family education consultation hotline services. Taitung County implements the "Community-Connected, Village-Neighbor Family Education Service Plan" to go deep into communities and disabled families to help them learn to manage family relationships and family life, and guide them towards the development of healthy families. In addition, 3i (ilove Love Time Map, iCoparenting, iMyfamily Love My Home) website learning activities are carried out, and colleges and universities develop aboriginal family education programs, gender equality is integrated into family education activities, etc., implement the public's awareness of diverse forms of family education promotion activities plan, and carry out various types of family education theme activities.

Improve the quality of family education professionals and curriculum teaching quality. In addition to carrying out various parenting education and intergenerational education related activities, the education department also carries out professional training and curriculum teaching material design to professionally develop family education and promote the certification of family education professionals.

## ***2.3 Develop elderly education and actively respond to aging***

By February 2024, the population of Taiwan aged 65 and above was 4.333 million, accounting for 18.5 % of the total population [8]. Taiwan has entered an aging society. Taiwan has adopted a series of measures to develop elderly education and actively respond to aging.

Establish elderly learning centers and establish a local elderly education system. Taiwan has set up elderly learning centers in conjunction with public libraries, non-governmental organizations and schools. With people over 55 years old as the main group for elderly education, it provides elderly adaptive courses, such as elderly learning core courses, self-planning courses, and contribution service courses. It also expands teaching points to the community to save the elderly's time for commuting and encourages them to study nearby.

Establish elderly learning service clubs and encourage the elderly to serve the elderly. Taiwan guides and organizes the elderly to establish elderly learning service clubs. In addition to planning learning activities on their own, they also go to communities, schools, nursing homes and hospitals to serve others, demonstrate the abilities of the elderly, and contribute to society. Through the elderly leading the elderly, the elderly human resources are returned to society. The elderly get great spiritual satisfaction in the process of serving others and gain a sense of value.

Train leaders of self-learning groups for the elderly and bring learning resources to remote villages. Taiwan has implemented a self-learning group plan for the elderly. Through the leaders of self-learning groups trained by the education department, they are assisted and guided to set up self-learning groups for the elderly, carry out elderly education in remote areas or suburban areas, and provide diversified learning opportunities for local elderly people.

Innovate multiple channels for senior education and create a co-learning model for the young and

the elderly. Taiwan uses the resources of colleges and universities to provide teacher support and curriculum support for senior universities. Encourage the development of the characteristics of colleges and universities, and carry out senior vitality camps or travel boarding camps. The course content includes outdoor photography, travel learning, sports and health, traditional culture, farm experience, etc. The teaching methods include guidance or service by college students, cooperation between college students and the second generation of the elderly, and guidance or inheritance of experience by the elderly to college students.

#### ***2.4 Carry out social education and expand the lifelong learning network***

Taiwan has established social education institutions at the grassroots level and in the community to carry out social education and expand the lifelong learning network[9]. First, social education venues have launched a series of lifelong learning activities for all people. The venues and museums under the education and cultural departments continue to launch public lectures, study activities, exhibitions and other exciting and diverse learning activities. Second, libraries promote the national reading movement. Enhance the special functions and service quality of public libraries to allow the public to enjoy the fun of lifelong learning and reading. Connect public libraries and their community resources (such as schools, private units, etc.), formulate county-wide reading maps and promotion strategies, and carry out diversified reading activities. The library or the household registration, medical system and private institutions will cooperate to carry out reading promotion activities and distribute gift bags, and effectively cultivate the reading interest of infants and young children by promoting parent-child reading. In addition, social education institutions are integrated to drive the output value of social education institutions and the surrounding environment, achieve the effect of cultural tourism and local publicity, and through informatization, allow more people to access museums, and provide schools and the general public with rich learning resources to create a lifelong learning atmosphere.

#### ***2.5 Carry out certification of learning outcomes of non-academic education***

The education department in Taiwan certifies non-academic education courses in accordance with the Lifelong Learning Act, and entrusts Taiwan Normal University and Taiwan Open University to carry out non-academic education course certification to encourage the public to maintain a lifelong learning awareness and strengthen learning participation in non-academic education certification courses. It provides guidance for lifelong learning institutions to apply for non-academic education course certification, and encourages lifelong learning institutions in various cities to establish a certification alliance mechanism to promote the national learning achievement certification system.

### **3. Characteristics of lifelong education development in Taiwan**

#### ***3.1 Focus on integrating resources***

Taiwan has integrated the resources of primary and secondary school teaching facilities to build multi-functional community learning centers, providing diverse courses in humanities and arts, leisure life, vocational education, counseling, etc.; it has integrated the lifelong learning resources of local universities to develop community education courses and elderly education courses around "improving residents' humanistic and social literacy and ability to participate in public affairs", providing the public with diverse learning opportunities; it has integrated the resources of various governments and departments at all levels to create a synergy to popularize family education and improve people's awareness of family relationship management; it has established elderly learning centers by integrating the resources of public libraries, non-governmental groups and schools.

#### ***3.2 Focus on innovative education forms***

Taiwan focuses on innovating the form of elderly education, such as conducting elderly vitality camps or travel boarding study camps, creating a co-learning model for the young and silver age, with the teaching methods of being guided or served by college students, mutual cooperation between college students and the second generation of the elderly, and the elderly guiding or passing on experience to college students[10]. Focusing on innovating the service forms of social education institutions, the Science Education Museum combines the "Smart Service, National Learning-Social Education Institutions Science and Technology Innovation Service Plan" to allow more people to

access museums through informatization, achieve the effects of creative value-added, cultural tourism, and local publicity, and provide schools and the public with rich learning resources. The museum guides the public to discover the treasures of each venue, establishes the "Muse Big Player" website, and publicizes information on various exciting performances through the Internet. The library carries out the "Reading March" gift bag distribution and reading promotion activities to create a learning environment for lifelong learning for all people.

### ***3.3 Focus on combining local characteristics***

In Taiwan, local governments have taken stock of local needs and local characteristics, integrated the resources of community colleges in their jurisdictions, developed community education courses around "developing local knowledge", encouraged community residents to actively participate, and developed local culture, knowledge and local industrial characteristics. Based on the development of local characteristics, local governments have joined forces with local universities to provide the public with diverse learning opportunities. For example, Yilan City has joined forces with local universities (Fo Guang University) to use local resources and characteristics (hot springs, agricultural products, traditional culture, etc.) to combine learning with tourism and lifelong learning with urban sustainable development. In terms of elderly education, local characteristics, industrial culture and community resources are combined to offer courses and activities suitable for the community to promote "old and young learning together" to provide more learning opportunities for the elderly.

### ***3.4 Focus on inheriting local culture***

In 2007, Taiwan issued the "Minnan Language Proficiency Certification Work Points" as the basis for the certification exam. Since 2010, certification has been carried out every year. In order to strengthen the use of Minnan, encourage the whole nation to learn, and facilitate the teaching, inheritance and promotion of Minnan. In order to make the public aware of the importance of local languages, the education department has planned a series of activities in conjunction with World Mother Language Day to arouse people's respect for diverse ethnic groups and multilingual cultures through publicity. At the same time, it attaches importance to Taiwan's local languages, carries out local language course education, promotes local language learning, and makes the mother tongue part of life. In addition, Minnan language proficiency certification, local language competitions, performances and outstanding contributions to the promotion of local languages, encourages local language and literary creation, combines the power of non-governmental groups to promote local language education, and continuously provides digital resources for tutoring and learning.

### ***3.5 Focus on using activity carriers***

Taiwan pays attention to using activities as a carrier to create a learning atmosphere and stimulate learning enthusiasm. In terms of family education, we implement a plan to promote the public's understanding of diverse forms of family education and carry out various types of family education theme activities. For example, they carry out iLove Love Time Map, iCOParenting and iMyFamily learning activities through the 3i website. In terms of social education, social education institutions such as cultural and technological venues and museums have established the "Muse Big Player" website to guide the public to discover the treasures of each venue, and promote information on various exciting performances through the Internet. We launched a stamp collection activity. Anyone who visits each venue with an activity point collection card and collects 3 points can choose any venue to exchange for gifts. Through exciting and diverse learning activities, we can stimulate the public's enthusiasm for learning.

## **4. Enlightenment from the development of lifelong education in Taiwan**

### ***4.1 Aiming for everyone to learn***

Everyone learns, that is, everyone participates in learning. This implies the most essential feature of lifelong education thought, that is, respect and highlighting the subject status of learners. Taiwan promotes lifelong education with the goal of everyone learning, focusing on stimulating the enthusiasm of all people for lifelong learning and enhancing the motivation of all people for lifelong learning. For a long time, we have taken the construction of a lifelong learning system that serves all people as an

important educational policy goal, but we pay more attention to how many learning resources have been built and how many learning opportunities have been provided. The measures to promote the development of lifelong education focus on providing sufficient learning opportunities and resources for all kinds of people outside the school. In the era of rapid development of information technology, it is becoming easier and easier for learners to obtain lifelong learning resources and opportunities. There is no need to overemphasize the supply of lifelong learning resources and opportunities. We should take everyone learning as the goal and provide education for everyone, education that suits everyone's personality. Lifelong education should not only be guided by resources, opportunities and supply, but also by values, development and lifestyles, upgrading from the primary stage of solving the problem of learning everywhere and learning at all times to the advanced stage of solving the problem of everyone being able to become a lifelong learner, and finally realize the learners' value recognition of their own development and lifelong learning.

#### ***4.2 Taking innovation and development as the concept***

Taiwan has innovated the learning forms and diversified learning channels of elderly education, broadened the supply of elderly education resources; innovated the hardware and software facilities of social education institutions, realized intelligent services for social education; innovated diversified community learning models, improved the quality of community education services, and let learners feel the charm of lifelong education. In many areas, the teaching content of community education and elderly education is not rich enough, the teaching form is single, the teaching method is backward, and the participation and satisfaction are low. Taking elderly education as an example, most of the courses are medical care lectures, literary and artistic training classes, and pension policy lectures. The content is not rich enough. Most of the participating groups are retired people with a high level of education, a certain economic income and community status. The participation enthusiasm of the elderly from low-educated and low-income families is relatively low. We should take innovative development as the concept, focus on the diverse needs of learners, innovate learning carriers, expand various learning models such as mobile learning, online learning, team learning, and experiential learning, innovate educational methods and channels, build a full-range smart learning place that integrates humanities, technology and life, and develop innovative, forward-looking, and constructive lifelong education that promotes social development.

#### ***4.3 Resource sharing as a strategy***

Lifelong education has the characteristics of continuity of education time, wide range of education objects, development of education goals, and diversity of education content. In the field of lifelong education, resources from different sources, different levels, and different contents should be selected, absorbed, configured, activated, and organically integrated to achieve the popularization of lifelong education and equal opportunities; through resource sharing among social members from different regions, different occupations, and different levels, more educational resources and knowledge systems can be provided to social members to achieve the goal of serving lifelong learning for all people. Taiwan has expanded the family education support network and popularized community education and elderly education by integrating various resources such as schools, governments, and communities. In many areas, lifelong education involves multiple departments, and the responsibilities of educational institutions and government departments are duplicated. There is a lack of coordinated interaction, and the phenomenon of "each doing its own job" is common. Taking elderly education as an example, the main educational entities involve colleges and universities, radio and television universities (community colleges), civil affairs bureaus, veteran cadres bureaus, social organizations, etc. Each entity acts independently, and the curriculum resources, network resources, and teaching venues are repeatedly built, resulting in excessive waste. We should take resource sharing as the development strategy of lifelong education, establish a resource co-construction and sharing platform, and have the government be responsible for the overall management and integration of resources, guiding all stakeholders of lifelong education to participate in it, so as to maximize the efficiency of resource construction and utilization and jointly promote the development of lifelong education by all stakeholders.

#### ***4.4 Based on family education***

Taiwan uses the Family Education Act as the legal basis for promoting family education, combines government and school resources, provides various forms of family education learning services,

expands the family education support network, and responds to the crises and challenges faced by families. In many areas, Parents do not fully understand the importance of family education and are not clear about the main tasks and professional knowledge of family education. Although there are organizations in society that have established family education schools, the professional abilities of their instructors vary greatly, and the role of providing professional guidance to parents on family education and improving their competence in family education is limited. Family education is an important part of the lifelong education system and the foundation of lifelong learning. It has an irreplaceable responsibility for the development of lifelong education for all people. The limitations of ordinary families' understanding of family education and the disorderly operation of family education have led to the blindness and arbitrariness of family education. Due to parents' backward ideas and misunderstandings about children's growth and education, the parent-child relationship in the family is not harmonious. The root cause of all this is related to the lack of "parent education". Through family education, people's knowledge and ability to manage family relationships can be improved, helping people face various challenges in modern families.

## 5. Conclusion

Education is a social activity to cultivate people and a basic way to inherit social culture. From a cultural perspective, local culture is attached to local language, and local language is the carrier of local art and culture. Taiwan attaches importance to the inheritance of local language and respect for the culture of multiple ethnic groups. It achieves cultural self-identification and inheritance by promoting local language and cultural courses, implementing supporting measures such as local language and culture promotion and rewards. In many areas, whether it is the exchange and inheritance of excellent traditional Chinese culture in family education or the education and promotion of excellent traditional Chinese culture in social education and community education, it is very lacking. Deepening cultural confidence in the context of lifelong education can enhance the people's sense of identity and pride in the motherland's culture, and play a good role in promoting the inheritance and development of Chinese national culture. We should permeate the concepts of national cultural identity and cultural confidence into all aspects of lifelong education, and do a good job in the education and inheritance of traditional Chinese culture.

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