

Re:Play Forum

A New View on Play



| Date & Time | December 4, 2018 14:30 - 17:30

| Venue | 00Ground, Seoul, Korea

| Hosted by | **C_program** **SOHO IMPACT**

| Sponsored by |  **NEXON** Foundation



Re:Play Forum

□ Objectives

- Gain knowledge and insights on creative play and its impact in the community
- Explore unique, cross-regional partnership opportunities with leaders in the field
- Connect with practitioners that have designed and implemented their funding strategies to support creative play

□ Program

Time	Session	Participants
14:30-14:40	Welcome	Jeung Min Kim (C Program) Sun Min Camilla Park (SOHO Impact)
14:40-15:40	Session 1. Investing in Play Space : Building an infrastructure for curiosity	<Presenter & Moderator> Yoonmi Eom (CEO, C-Program) <Panelists> Ysaac Kim (Founder, Hello Museum) Chungman Je (Former officer, Save the Children) Yeemyung Choi (Urban Development Specialist) Hyemi Shin (Play Fund Manager, C Program)
15:40-16:00	Break	
16:00-17:00	Session 2. Cultivating leaders and problem-solvers through play	<Presenter & Moderator> Priya Bery (CEO, SOHO Impact) <Panelists> Enkhjin Batjargal (CEO, GerHub) Leah Hanes (Executive Director, Two Bit Circus Foundation) Won-gil Na (Manager, ChildFund Korea) Scott Zeong (CEO, Brainery Makers)
17:00-17:30	Closing	Yoonmi Eom (CEO, C Program) Priya Bery (CEO, SOHO Impact)

Forward



"We invest in play" must have been an odd statement when we first declared it four years ago. However, thanks to our partners - artists, creators, architects, innovators and educators - we could invest in playgrounds, creative studio, art museum and research projects. We see Re: play forum as the beginning of a new chapter. With new partners, SoHo Impact, Nexon Foundation and many more funders and enablers, we look forward to imagining and making bolder things happen, creating more playful environment for all. Thank you!

Yoonmi Eom, C-Program



The Re: Play Forum marked the first ever global gathering bringing leaders and innovators together in the areas of play and learning in Seoul. It was inspiring to have a dialogue on the value of creative play. Panelists shared innovative models and helped attendees understand the business case for play as a critical pathway for developing 21st Century Skills to help foster the next generation of leaders and problem solvers.

As we look ahead, our goal is to spark a movement of funders, implementers and social venture leaders that are working to bring new value to play as a powerful vehicle for learning and community building. The Forum marked a first step in making this happen.

Thank you to our co-hosts at C-Program, event sponsors Nexon Foundation and Sohobricks, and to SOHO Impact's venture philanthropy portfolio leaders from Two Bit Circus Foundation, Imagination.org, Gerhub Mongolia, British Council Bangladesh, Brainery Makers and ChildFund Korea.

Priya Bery, SOHO Impact

Speakers (Session 1)



Yoonmi Eom
(CEO, C Program)



Ysaac Kim
(Founder,
Hello Museum)



Chungman Je
(Former Officer,
Save the Children)



Yeemyung Choi
(Urban Development
Specialist)

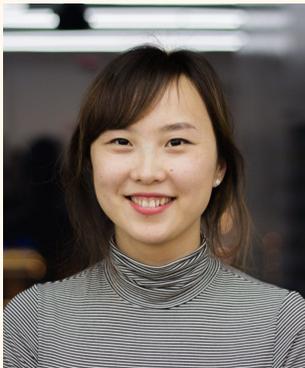


Hyemi Shin
(Play Fund Manager,
C Program)

Speakers (Session 2)



Priya Bery
(CEO, SOHO Impact)



Enkhjin Batjargal
(CEO, GerHub)



Leah Hanes (Executive
Director, Two Bit Circus
Foundation)



Scott Zeong
(CEO, Brainery Makers)



Won-Gil Na
(ChildFund Korea)

Session 1. Investing in Play Space : Building an infrastructure for curiosity

PRESENTATION

C Program: Play Space and Playful Environment for Children

[C Program](#) is a venture philanthropy funded by IT entrepreneurs, which pays close attention to measuring non-financial, strategic performance as well as financial performance. We are currently running two funds; play fund and learning fund. In terms of play fund, we are investing in building infrastructure for children's curiosity. In details, we have invested in tangible, physical spaces for play, new opportunities to play, research to foster conversation surrounding play.

We're often asked "Why invest in space?". There was a study from Save the Children, surveying children on composite well-being index about children's quality of life. Through that study, we realized that immediate accessibility of play spaces for children was crucial to their happiness and well-being. Also, as an investor, the physicality of 'Space' had an appeal since it can be scalable. When it comes to space, we focus on accessibility and openness as public place for every child regardless of parents' economic status whatsoever. Inside play space, we create less structured experience to give children freedom to choose and do what they want. Let me introduce four projects aligned with our approach.

Space 1. Tinkering Studio [DD238](#)

Q. What if we have a space right next to an elementary school, where children can do anything they want?

DD238 has been open for about two years now. It was an effort that C Program put together with Remark Press. Children can come to this space at any time without crossing any street. In this space, managers play the role of facilitators and observe three rules: ask questions, demonstrate (not teaching), take time and wait. Children are only asked to create something and keep writing a work-note. If kids are not comfortable with writing, they can draw. Presently, there are over 10,000 sheets of such notes stacked up. To maintain this space

sustainable with no entrance fees, we're tapping into funding opportunities in both government and private sources.

What if children had a space like a tinkering studio near every elementary school? When space, people and content come together to create new experiment and experience, what contribution can we make?

Space 2. Children's Contemporary Art Museum / Small neighborhood museum, [Hello Museum](#)

Q. What should child's first art experience be like?

In Hello Museum, children take off their shoes on entry. They run around art installations and even touch them. Sometimes, they lie down to see artwork or draw painting on wall or window. Instead of "Do not touch. Be quiet" message, this space provides children with homey, cozy and warm experience to meet art. Thanks to Hello Museum, more than 10,000 children have this playful first art experience every year.

I think that play spaces can take the form of something like Hello Museum. If every town or city gets play spaces like this, what kind of experiences will our children have? In order to make this space sustainable and even scalable, what can we as funders do?

Space 3. 'Playful environment for children' project, [Gunsan-city](#)

Q. What is the most necessary investment for playgrounds?

After building a playground in jungnang-gu, we've been asked to build new playgrounds with various partners including Gunsan government office. We asked ourselves whether building new playground is the top priority for children in Gunsan. To find an answer, we surveyed all 74 playgrounds in the area and listened to what citizens thought. Surprisingly, most wanted existing playgrounds to be better maintained. Some children spoke of being bored at playgrounds because they thought current playgrounds were mainly designed for younger children. We decided to give new energy to three nearby small playgrounds by grouping them into one playscape. One playground has open space where children can play with things on wheels like bicycles and another one is adventurous enough to meet active kids' play needs. The third playground is for youngest age group. While creating this "Playscape", Gunsan officials were trying to designate playground areas as smoke-free, no-parking zones. Beyond one playground, what contributions can we make to improve the overall Gunsan environment to the most playful?

Research 1. [Research for Playable Neighborhood Index](#)

Q. By what standards can we check how friendly my town is for children to play outside?

Are we providing sufficiently good environment in a city for children to play outside? Dr Yi Myeong, Choi attached GPS transmitters on children to study how they get around after school. Based on the research, we created a checklist which helps respondents to understand how playable their neighborhoods are. Also, we made a diagnostic tool for government officials to identify their jurisdiction's problems.

Through these four projects, we did create play spaces, conduct research and make a new approach to creating 'Playcape' based on survey results of all existing playgrounds. Since we shared projects from funder perspective, from now on, we will invite partners who actually executed all these projects. We will listen to what partners think on being funded, what new experiments they're planning and what supports they are looking for in detail.

PANEL DISCUSSION

1. What do external resources mean to professionals, nonprofits and researchers?

Q. (Eom) Can you share what C Program's funding meant to you and what did you gain from it?

A. (Kim) In one sentence, it could be "Experience that makes me from artist from entrepreneur". To elaborate, when we were working alone without funding, we were very much purpose-driven. However through funding, we became able to move forward with entrepreneurial spirit, thinking of sustainability and scalability. Additionally, building a small neighborhood museum model and experimenting together was meaningful since it was a new museum model focusing on community building with intimacy.

Q. (Eom) What about Save the Children? Can you share?

A. (Je) These days, NGOs are encouraged to collaborate with external sources as much as possible to create actual, tangible impacts. Meeting external sources with like-minded people who share purposeful value was such huge support to me. In addition, when turning creative, imaginative ideas into action and meaningful impact, objective perspective and balanced feedback from outside source was very helpful.

Q. (Eom) What did non-institution funding mean to you and your research?

A. (Choi) I feel so thankful for C Program since it gave me the privilege of carrying out research on neighborhood issue that I had long wondered about as a mom researcher with two kids. Unlike public institutions, collaboration with private agency like C Program gave me a plenty of feedbacks and insights from beginning to end. Even though the research is over, collaboration is still going on for promoting the research's core implication to a society.

(Eom) Investing in research can give us great opportunities to have tangible conversation with partners since it has measurable, objective data on the topic that we want to dive in.

2. What questions do you still have as unsolved from your experiments?

Q. (Eom) Where are we in terms of that?

A. (Kim) I think we are in the final page of the first chapter which lasted three years. While building a vision together as small neighborhood museum and experimenting the model, Hello Museum has achieved 350% growth in visitor numbers and 1,000% growth in revenue. Furthermore, visitors from diverse regions like Jeju have increased. The next chapter of Hello Museum would be how to scale up this model and meet a bigger number of children than the first chapter.

Q. (Eom) What can anyone interested in tinkering studio contribute to its sustainability?

A. (Shin) In order to keep this model free and open to every child visitor, the tinkering studio needs more funders like C Program. Currently, we're looking for spaces with low operational costs as possible including monthly rent to continue experimenting this model as free. For example, we're opening a tinkering studio as a pop-up in public space for teenagers. Like this case, introducing any existing places great for children or teenagers and also interested in tinkering studios would be welcomed. We appreciate any support to lower operating expenses of sustaining and scaling this model.

3. How do you measure qualitative impact on play-related projects?

A. (Je) When looking at impacts of play space, we normally monitor how many children are eagerly using the place and how active local people are using it as well. It's important that local neighbors are engaging from very first phase and becoming a thoughtful observers of the space.

With regard to play space's impacts on children, let me introduce results of the research we did with Shin-heung elementary school. After four month research, we found out that children who played enough in the place space had become interested in studying, had been closer with teachers and friends, had better coped with stress and better overcome difficulties..

A. (Kim) In the case of Hello Museum, we as professionals monitor how children's paintings have changed. We have a program called "Museum Idol", which invites kids who are underprivileged to experience art once a week. Through the program, we could see how impactful art experience with Hello Museum are on children's lives with their paintings.

A. (Eom) In the case of C Program, we make a investment decision when a place meets certain principles that we believe in. For each project, we strictly monitor impacts of the project with quarterly milestones. For instance, regarding Hello Museum, we have kept track of visitor numbers, revisitors, satisfaction level of visitors.

4. What will you suggest if someone wants to invest in 'Play space' for the first time as experiment?

(Shin) As mentioned in the tinkering studio project, I think that investing in space is not just investing in a physical setting, but also in children's experience. Components that make great children experience are physical environment, adults who will meet children as a space manager and content. No fund can invest in all components from the beginning. Thus, you can choose what to contribute among them based on your expertise so that you can join the experiment more comfortably.

5. What support do you need for your next chapter?

(Choi) I think that research tells us the fastest way to figure out right actions for issues based on data. For example, we were able to find out when, where and how children play around with 15 month research using GPS data. For a next chapter, I'd like to create an IT-based service that shows how playful a neighborhood environment is for children or try an experiment of building child-friendly neighborhood environment with construction developers.

(Je) In Korea, rural areas are the areas that lack play infrastructure the most. Around 45% of playgrounds are located in metropolitan areas which only occupies 15% of the land. Unlike old days, there are no children running around in mountains and fields, which leads to a huge issue

of neglecting. If funders want to experiment in play, it would be a good option to target children in rural areas.

6. What solution does our government provide?

(Shin) Currently, the government is investing in SOC (social overhead capital) like sport facilities. However, we learned from Gunsan project that government officials feel difficulty in allocating a budget to any kind of first cases. In Gunsan, C program funded to examine 74 playgrounds and gather data, which became a tangible reason to improve playgrounds and led to available budget for Gunsan. Funds for space are increasing but for the public side, it is hard to get a budget for a very first case. So private funders can help public side to make the first case happen together.

7. Are there any possible opportunities to collaborate with today's participants?

(Shin) C Program believes in the significance of play space because children spend 24 hours in their towns. Even though a neighborhood environment itself is very important for children, we tend not to consider them much. Thus, we want to invest in building an infrastructure to create playful neighborhood environment for children. To expand play spaces like a tinkering studio or Hello Museum, I hope you to join investing in people and content of the hospitable spaces for children.

(Eom) In cases of local governments, they can spend a budget on physical environment as construction costs, but it's difficult to spend money on people and content. If private fund helps the public sector to build a first case of new 'play space' model by investing in people and content, it would be easier for them to expand the case to other regions and to create second, third cases. C Program is focusing on how to experiment together with local governments for building infrastructure for curiosity in many regions as possible. I hope today's conversation leads to opportunities to collaborate with many of you for making this future happen.

Session 2. Cultivating Leaders and Problem-Solvers through Play

PRESENTATION

SOHO Impact: Building Futures Through Play

SOHO Impact was established by the founder of Nexon to foster creativity through brick play. In core mission, we collaborate with communities to cultivate generations of leaders and problem-solvers through play. We are a venture philanthropic organization that provides a set of resources to support our partner organizations. We provide **funding**, which goes towards the actual line of creative play programs, establishments of maker spaces and researches. We also provide **brick kits**. Every kit that goes to our partners is customized so that they can achieve their goals and fulfil their program needs relevant to their community. We provide **guidance**. SOHO Impact's goal is not to only to just advance creative play programs but also to build a capacity of organizations doing great work. The stronger our partner organizations are, the greater the outputs will be. Part of our core responsibility is ensuring that we are building a movement.

A Look into SOHO Impact Portfolio

1. GerHub (www.gerhub.org)

Play can be a vehicle for change. Gerhub, SOHO Impact's partner in Mongolia, is working to address social and environmental issues in the Ger districts of Ulaanbaatar. They have put together a new leadership program to encourage young people to design their own solutions for their communities. GerHub is working to grow young community architects, facilitating them to do their own urban planning and housing design; which leads them to believe that they can give voice to other communities and also learn that they have the tools to create the change they want to see.

2. Two Bit Circus Foundation (www.twobitcircus.org)

Two Bit Circus Foundation is SOHO Impact's very first partner. They are utilizing brick play as a tool for prototyping; offering children the opportunity to realize ideas. The organization has

integrated brick play into STEAM learning and now is supporting schools across Los Angeles. Two Bit Circus Foundation has established more than 130 STEAM labs in low income communities. They are also engaging in community-based activities like STEAM carnivals.

3. Imagination.org (www.imagination.org)

Imagination.org started with an inspiration from a young boy named Caine. When Caine was 9 years old, he was spending his summer at his father's auto-repair shop. During the time, he took his creativity to life and made an entire arcade out of cardboard boxes that he found in his father's shop. Imagination.org was founded after Caine's games were discovered. One little idea from a young boy started a global movement. Imagination.org currently has over 150 play chapters all around the world. Anyone can participate in building play chapters.

4. British Council Bangladesh (www.britishcouncil.org.bd)

Play is a vehicle for inclusion. SOHO Impact's new partnership with British Council Bangladesh will support public libraries across Bangladesh, by which we will help reinvigorate the library system and transform library spaces into a place for community inspiration and creativity. The second pillar of the partnership will focus on the empowerment of girls and women in Bangladesh. SOHO Impact is integrating brick play components into British Council's EDGE(English and Digital for Girls' Empowerment) program, a peer-led skills and leadership development program for young women.

5. ChildFund Korea & Brainery Makers

In partnership with ChildFund Korea and Brainery Makers, SOHO Impact is pushing play as a vehicle for the Maker Movement. We will provide brick-facilitated maker kits and maker education to disadvantaged youth. University students will take part as mentors for the children throughout the program. SOHO Impact will also be working with the partners to develop maker spaces in children's care facilities.

Play Unlocks Infinite Possibilities

SOHO Impact's portfolio shows how play can act as a vehicle to unlock infinite possibilities. It unlocks imagination, create connections, facilitates cooperation- but ultimately, play is fun. Let us deep dive into the discussion with our panelists.

PANEL DISCUSSION

1. Developing the Four C's* through Play

*Creativity, Communication, Critical Thinking, Collaboration

Q. Tell us about Two Bit Circus' STEAM labs and how they foster creativity in children.

A. (HANES) The STEAM labs that we operate are environmentally friendly and cost-effective. But the most valuable part is that it relates to 65% of the children will work for jobs that are yet to exist. Because they have to take random materials and create something. If you buy your children an expensive robot kit, they'll learn to follow the instructions and make a design as planned. But if you give them random materials and old motors, and they think that they want to make a robot, they become **problem solvers**, **critical thinkers** and **future inventors**. The goal is to revolutionize the way we educate and train our children. We want to be part of a movement which calls for **less instruction** and **less supervision**. We want to be in the middle of the mess with the children, and suggest to them "Let's try this", and when a child asks a question, help them by teaching them how to research certain information.

Anything that a student makes, will be welcomed at the STEAM lab. We encourage kids to bring things that they tried to make that didn't work out. So that they have an opportunity to explain what went wrong and what they're going to do to fix that. We want them to see that failure is an important part of the process.

Q. Share with us an example that highlights the value of play in maker education space.

A. (ZEONG) Maker education can be misunderstood for education that focuses on manual manufacturing. However, its true goal is to train children to foster the ability to solve problems and overcome the uncertainty of the future. The Four C's will become a very important requirement for children. Recently, there is an increasing call for two additional attributes; **content** and **confidence**. Contents and confidence gained through experience are immediately visible and maker education is trying to emphasize and nurture such attributes.

For an example, we've had 1st graders disassemble their toys. The adults thought that the kids would fail. Contrary to that belief, they completely disassembled their toys, which were composed of bolts and nuts. After disassembling, they were no longer young children who played with their toys, but they grew into beings of confidence, wanting to learn greater things.

2. The Right to Play

Q. What would happen if children don't get a chance to play?

A. (HANES) When animals are isolated during youth and are put back in the community later, they are distrusting and are more aggressive. The same can be said of children.

Doctor Peter Gray recently spoke at an event of a research onto prisoner on death row. **Over 90% of the prisoners could not talk of their play-related child experiences.** He spoke of long-term benefits and long-term negative consequences of (deprivation of) play.

Q. Many of us work for communities with unmet needs for children. How do you prioritize play, given that the children have other needs such as access to help, shelter and education?

A. (NA) The right to play is not equally enjoyed among all children. That is, depending on the region or economic circumstances, play opportunities offered to kids are vastly different. Our primary goal is to solve such inequalities and **make quality play available for all.** One of the projects that ChildFund Korea is working on is offering children ample play spaces, called "Playground wherever". Yes, children have various necessities, but I believe that when play stops, children's development stops as well. The foundation offers sponsorships to cover for basic needs.

3. Why Brick Play?

Q. It is interesting to find that SOHO Impact provides bricks as well as funding and capacity support. This sets you apart from other venture philanthropy funds. But, why bricks?

A. (BATJARGAL) Bricks are **universal**, and people understand them pretty fast. It's easy to understand. Almost every kid in this world knows about bricks, and what to do with it.

I encourage using bricks to play, **problem-solving**, **prototyping**, and all those various things. And on top of that, they're very environmentally stable, meaning they don't break easily. You don't need to throw them away. You can wash them and reuse them, over a long period. I really like that aspect of it.

(ZEONG) One of the most characteristic aspect of bricks is that it is stacked and gradually built up. In some cases, the end goal may be in mind, but for children can also change their

thoughts on the way there. So rather than deciding on a final outcome before beginning, a basic set of bricks can help children develop their own cognitive processes and **decision-making** functions.

(NA) Bricks are some of the simplest tools, and there is no inequality involved in it. It is a tool that is accessible regardless of economic status. I also think it is a great way to develop **creativity**. The children we work with are often at a disadvantage in that regard, but making things with bricks is an affordable and effective way to develop creativity.

4. Measuring Impact

Q. In order for the field of play to attract more capital resources, it is important that its impact is measured. How would you go about measuring impact?

A. (HANES) We do a **pre-then-post research** in our professional development and in our work with children, at the beginning and the end of the year. Over 70% of students at the beginning of the year said science and Maths don't relate to their lives in general. By the end of the school year, it was closer to 15%. Another question was about whether they thought they would fail Science this year. In the beginning the majority (57-58%) said yes, they were going to fail Science that year, but at the end of the school year it was 7%.

It is hard to measure the impact of play, and we're open to all sorts of input as well. We are fortunate to work with funders who understand that it is a hard thing to measure. We hope to do longevity research on children in elementary school and see if there is an impact when they get to high school.

5. Balancing Play with Responsibilities

Q. Kids are very busy these days, faced with many academic responsibilities. How are you fostering creativity in children in their busy lifestyle? Will these two ideas always be in conflict?

A. (ZEONG) I always add a qualifier *conscious* before the word *creativity*. Creativity requires sufficient knowledge as basis, whereupon new breakthroughs can be made. So children cannot just play all day. They need to be given something to work with, and that's guidance



and study. It's a **parallel process**. On the other hand, if play is unable to convey skills necessary as mature adult beings in society, we need to change it.

We have 3 strict rules that guide our creative actions. 1) Make differently, as all children are different. 2) Fail wonderfully, because that's where your greatest lessons lie. 3) Think of humanity. We consistently help children be mindful of those rules. I think these guidelines are necessary and important.

In Closing

When we think about play, we think there is room for everyone.

It's time to invest in play.

There are multiple opportunities regardless of the perspective you're coming from.

You will be hearing much more from us, and we look forward to hearing more from you.



“Play is the seed of curiosity.”

“Play is natural.”

“Play is an integral part of our lives...

and a human right that grown ups need to protect for the young.”



“Play is a necessity that is neglected.”

“Play is the moment of becoming oneself in the most fun way.”

“Play is nothing but everything.”

“Play is a huge investment opportunity in the 21st century.”

“Play is ∞”

Appendix 1. Photos





