

People living in a communist country with a totalitarian government such as North Korea do not have the same access to certain necessities and luxuries as others around the world. North Koreans live under an extremely controlling government and are fighting for their lives on a daily basis. Many people experience hunger, thirst, and fear every moment of their lives. The North Korean government has remained the most repressive government to its population. The government gains power and obedience from the people of North Korea through threats of imprisonment, forced labor, execution, and many other fear-inducing tactics (World Report 2021). The most despicable action of the North Korean government is that the people are not allowed to leave the country; this causes frequent cases of people attempting to escape (Borgen Project) People who are caught in the act of attempting to escape are immediately executed (The Borgen Project). North Korean refugees or defectors are the people that made it out alive when escaping North Korea. A number of private organizations such as the Borgen Project are helping these refugees, but they are unable to assist these refugees on a scale that is necessary considering the widespread malnourished condition of people living in North Korea (The Borgen Project). 42.5% of all North Koreans are malnourished (The Borgen Project). Governments from around the world need to recognize how imperative it is that the human rights of North Koreans be protected. Foreign relation policies between governments around the world and North Korea needs to be discussed more frequently and with higher priority. One country that is currently helping North Koreans is South Korea. Although South Korea cannot help get people out of North Korea, they help North Koreans that have escaped by providing a \$13,000-\$19,000 housing subsidy, free public education, and \$6,000-32,400 in settlement benefits (Ministry of Unification). South Korea should be taking a more active role in getting North Koreans out of North Korea rather than just helping them after they escape. The South Korean military should be patrolling the northern border looking for people who seek refuge in South Korea and then help them cross the border safely into South Korea. The U.S military should assist with helping North Koreans escape by patrolling the northern border of South Korea along with the South Korean military. Saving millions of people from starving or being worked to death in labor camps should not be up to a few organizations, it is our duty as a world to protect these people.

As of 2020, there are 25.78 million people living in North Korea with 62.38% of those people living in urban areas (Worldometer) . These North Koreans live under a harsh totalitarian communist government. Approximately 17% of the total landmass of North Korea is cultivated for crops. This means that only 8,700 square miles of land are cultivated to feed the population of 25.78 million (fftc). This is not enough land to be able to feed the population of North Korea. The lack of land for cultivation and surplus of land that is urbanized is one of the main reasons 42.5% of North Koreans are malnourished (The Borgen Project). Here in the U.S we have over 1.4 million square miles of land that is being cultivated with only 12% of people being malnourished (Feeding America). The average size of a farm in North Korea is about 1,150 acres. This may sound like a lot of farmland, but these farms are usually farmed by a group of 80-300 different families (fftc). These families group together to create and share a big farm because there is not much other available land cultivated as most of the country is mountainous terrain. North Koreans experience long cold winters and warm and humid summers. In the winter, temperatures can range from -10 degrees fahrenheit to 20 degrees fahrenheit. Although in the summers temperatures can get as high as 85 degrees fahrenheit (World Data). With the overall lack of cultivation and surplus of urbanization, malnourishment has plagued North Koreans.

The size of North Korean families tend to be on the smaller side as there is not a lot of food to go around the dinner table. The average family size for North Korea is about 4-5 people (Country Studies North Korea). Usually with a mother, father, and 2-3 children. Typically, these families will eat small bowls of soup or rice (The Borgen Project). The soup is either homemade or can be bought from the market. Rice can also be purchased from the market but it is usually grown from a rice farm and eaten by rice farmers. Conveniently, it is not difficult to cook soup or rice as they are relatively basic meals that can be cooked quickly and do not need much culinary knowledge to cook a good soup or bowl of rice. Most North Korean families are able to afford soup or rice from the market via the wages paid by government assigned jobs. A common job assigned to middle aged men in North Korea is building infrastructure in the cities. Unfortunately, these mandated government workers are only paid about 6614.50 North Korean won which is about \$7.35 U.S dollars per day of work (The Borgen Project). Although the children of the family are fortunate enough to be able to attend free state funded public schools. The North Korean government states that it provides free healthcare for all its citizens but some reports state that is not true. According to North Korean refugees, free healthcare is only available to the uppermost classes living in the capital of Pyongyang (The Borgen Project). The rest of the healthcare in North Korea is either not available or too expensive for common people to afford living off of \$7.35 per day. A major barrier of North Koreans today is not having enough money for food, healthcare, and the ability to live a well nourished life.

The two major challenges facing North Korean citizens are starvation and a controlling and repressive government. The average family in North Korea experiences both of these challenges everyday. In North Korea, there is not enough farming land to feed the growing population of North Korea as there is only 8,700 square miles of farmland on the small island of North Korea (fttc). Therefore most of the population is forced to live in urban areas where the North Korean government removes your freedom of choosing your own occupation by giving you a mandated job that only pays an equivalent of 7.35 USD per day. (The Borgen Project). Most families cannot farm for their own food due to the lack of land available for cultivation, therefore they are forced to buy their food from the local market. Often these people do not have enough money to buy food from these markets due to their low wages paid by the government. This has led to 42% of the North Korean population to be classified as malnourished (UN). Unfortunately, these conditions are not becoming more bearable but rather staying the same. The last time that the North Korean government raised this wage was 8 years ago in 2014 and their government has not made a statement about raising the wage anytime in the near future (Minimum Wage Organization). North Korea has put the majority of their focus on urbanization and manufacturing as 62.38% of people live in urban areas (Worldometer). The low wages implemented by the government has forced the citizens of North Korea into starvation and finding a way to escape to make more money. One account from Jeong Min-woo who was a military officer who escaped North Korea stated "I arrived in South Korea on Nov. 22, 2013. I did not desert my unit. It was never a desertion, I left to earn money. I told the guards at the border I was leaving. It worked out, since we were all military men."(ABC News). Jeong Min-woo stated that he went through the process of becoming a military officer many years ago for the sole purpose of being able to escape North Korea (ABC News). Jeong Min-woo grew up in North Korea in a city called Hyesan where he and his family struggled to earn enough money to be able to have a meal each day (ABC News) The conditions are so uninhabitable in North

Korea that many other North Korean citizens such as Jeong Min-woo dedicate themselves to escaping the country to find a better life. Although most are not able to escape and are either put in labor camps, endure harsh interrogations, or have even been executed when they are caught attempting to escape by the North Korean government. The fact that North Korean citizens are willing to risk their lives by escaping North Korea to be able to start a new life in another country corroborates the terrible conditions North Korean citizens live in each day.

A plan of action to save North Koreans from their countries' intolerable conditions must be put into action by the U.S government. The plan is to house any North Korean refugees in the United States and provide them with things such as free housing, settlement benefits, government subsidies, and scholarships. South Korea has already taken action. South Korea provides North Korean refugees with \$6,000-\$32,400 in settlement benefits, \$13,000-\$19,000 housing subsidy, and free education in schools and universities (Ministry of Unification). I believe that the United States could do a much better job than South Korea as our country has more financial opportunities, land to farm, and has the ability to provide North Korean refugees with larger government subsidies, and benefits. The U.S government takes in a tax revenue of 4 trillion dollars, South Korea takes in a tax revenue of 82 billion dollars (Korean Won to U.S equivalent) (Statista). This means if South Korea can provide a North Korean refugee with the benefits stated previously, then the United States could provide approximately 50 times the amount of financial aid if the U.S had taken the same action (accounted for the same percentage of tax revenue to be attributed to North Korean refugees as South Korea). Although it may be difficult for North Koreans to be accustomed to American Society and to speak English, many highschools and colleges around the U.S have fantastic foreign exchange student programs for refugees and immigrants. President Biden pledged at the beginning of his presidency that he will allow 125,000 resettlements during 2022 (Migration Policy Organization). An account of large amounts of refugees coming into America is not unheard of. In 1989 the United States granted citizenship to 380,000 Jewish refugees from the Soviet Union (Aljazeera). American citizens were in great opposition to communism which made them more inclined to letting Soviet refugees into this country. If the United States and the rest of the world could expose the despicable conditions of North Korea similarly to how they did with the Soviet Union, then the American population would be eager to invite North Korean refugees. The United States has the ability to provide North Koreans with a life that they deserve for enduring pain and suffering for so long. The organization UNICEF has been battling malnourishment in North Korea through focusing on providing nourishment to children under the age of 5 years old. UNICEF's nutrition programme now covers 90 percent of North Korea delivering therapeutic foods to malnourished children (UNICEF). Their programme treats 120,000 malnourished children annually (UNICEF). With children under 5 in North Korea having a staggering 1.6% mortality rate (UNICEF) compared to America's children under 5 rate being just 0.5% (UNICEF). Meaning that children under 5 in North Korea are 3 times more likely to die than children under 5 in America. Developing a solution to provide UNICEF with more donations is one of the most efficient ways to help North Korea's malnourishment crisis. Marketing UNICEF's program to increase the amount of money donated to the program would help build more facilities to reach more of North Korea's youth. In recent times, social media has become the main avenue for marketing. We have seen many organizations raise large amounts of capital through touching the hearts of people on social media. Instagram has been known to work with organizations before in providing sponsored posts to increase the awareness of the problem in North Korea and what

they can do to directly help. Marketing the program through explaining what the programme is doing to help, why they need donations, what they will be doing with donations, and how it will impact the average North Korean child's life will be implemented into the marketing strategy. Stories of children saved by UNICEF's program such as 16 month old Kim Su Hyang's story should be all over social media. 16 month old Kim Su Hyang was extremely thin, weak, and running a high fever due to malnourishment before she was brought to one of Unicef's nourishment programme locations where supplies and aid were provided to her to save her life (Building Healthier Futures in DPR Korea). Personal stories such as this will be a key aspect to the social media marketing strategy. The best part of this marketing plan is that it will reach people from all around the globe as Instagram or other social media are not just for Americans. The entire world can band together to build health centers in North Korea through donations to UNICEF's nutrition programme. Awareness is the key to change, social media marketing will provide the most awareness.

Although the U.S government has the ability to provide a large amount of support through providing housing for North Korean defectors, the sociopolitical climate of the United States may hinder this action. During the past decade, the topic of immigration has been more intensely debated in the U.S than ever before. The Trump administration, mass media, and the COVID-19 pandemic have all been frequent topics of discussion that have greatly increased the intensity of debates on immigration. During the Trump administration, President Trump focused on tightening United States' borders and restricting the amount of immigrants coming into this country. The administration even went as far as building a physical barrier on the border of the U.S and Mexico that is an 18-27 feet tall wall (USA Today). The mass media retaliated against Donald Trump profusely by calling him racist and saying that he is against immigration due to his racist views of hispanics (CNN Politics). Now not only did the mass media attack President Trump on the idea of immigration but many democrats began to believe that republicans agreed with this because they were racist too. The book "Racism and Racial Resentment: Their Role In Trump's Election" by David King Keller is a perfect example of how the idea of immigration and racism being such an intensely debated topic in the U.S. Not only has immigration been intensely debated due to economic/social reasons but the COVID-19 pandemic has had another great impact on the amount of immigration happening in the U.S and around the world. As of right now the U.S states that if a person wishes to enter the country they must have a negative covid test or proof of vaccination (CDC). North Korea has not received any vaccinations from Pfizer, Moderna, or Johnson Johnson (The Diplomat). This means that there will most likely be a lot of pushback from people who are pro-vaccinations. These people will not be happy with a large number of unvaccinated people from a different country coming in. Overall, you have people who do not want people to immigrate due to economic and social reasons, intense debate over immigration, a previous administration that is not pro immigration, and finally a global pandemic. Although the odds may be stacked against the plan of action, there are ways to work around these problems.

The sociopolitical state of America is a difficult environment to attempt to immigrate North Korean refugees into, but it can be done. The mass media and government must show the horrors that North Korean citizens live through everyday. Social media working with UNICEF to create awareness for the problem will aid in providing a great solution in need of funding. If American citizens were more aware of the state in which they live in, they would be more inclined to let North Korean refugees in this country and more inclined to donate to the UNICEF nutrition programme. The citizens of North Korea need to be saved before more citizens and

children suffer from malnourishment.

Works Cited

Byrnes, T. (2021, October 8). *What's Behind North Korea's Extreme Vaccine Hesitancy?*

Retrieved January 25, 2022, from

<https://thediplomat.com/2021/10/whats-behind-north-koreas-extreme-vaccine-hesitancy/>

Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). Retrieved January 25, 2022, from

<https://www.cdc.gov/>

Cohen: I don't understand why people don't get it. Trump is a racist. (n.d.). Retrieved January 25,

2022, from

<https://www.cnn.com/videos/politics/2020/09/10/michael-cohen-trump-racism-ctn-sot-vp>
x.cnn

Coming to America: the 5 biggest refugee groups of the last 20 years. (2021, October 14).

Retrieved January 25, 2022, from

<http://america.aljazeera.com/watch/shows/america-tonight/america-tonight-blog/2013/10/13/the-5-biggest-refugeegroupsofthelast20years.html>

Comparison of the nominal gross domestic product (GDP) between South Korea and North

Korea from 2010 to 2019. (n.d.). Retrieved January 25, 2022, from

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1035390/south-korea-gdp-comparison-with-north-korea/>

Hunger Relief Organization. (n.d.). Retrieved January 25, 2022, from

<https://www.feedingamerica.org/>

Migration Policy Institute. (n.d.). Retrieved January 25, 2022, from

https://www.migrationpolicy.org/search?search_api_views_fulltext=North+Korea&field_publication_type=All&created%5Bdate%5D=09%2F01%2F2001&created_1%5Bdate%5D=

North Korea. (n.d.). Retrieved January 25, 2022, from <http://countrystudies.us/north-korea/>

North Korea Archives. (2021, May 6). Retrieved January 22, 2022, from

<https://borgenproject.org/category/north-korea/>

North Korea Minimum Wage. (n.d.). Retrieved January 25, 2022, from

<https://www.minimum-wage.org/international/north-korea>

North Korea - Our World Data. (n.d.). Retrieved January 25, 2022, from

<https://ourworldindata.org/country/north-korea>

North Korea Population. (n.d.). Worldometer. Retrieved January 25, 2022, from

<https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/north-korea-population/>

Rymen, A. (n.d.). *The Wall.* Retrieved January 25, 2022, from

<https://www.usatoday.com/border-wall/>

They escaped from North Korea: Personal stories and mementos of defectors. (2018, April 12).

Retrieved January 25, 2022, from

<https://abcnews.go.com/International/escaped-north-korea-personal-stories-mementos-defectors/story?id=54423385>

United Nations in North Korea. (n.d.). Retrieved January 25, 2022, from <https://dprkorea.un.org/>

World Data Atlas. (n.d.). Retrieved January 25, 2022, from

<https://knoema.com/atlas/sources/Ministry-of-Unification-Republic-of-Korea>

World Report 2021. (2021). Retrieved January 25, 2022, from

<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021>

Nutrition. (n.d.). UNICEF. Retrieved August 27, 2022, from

<https://www.unicef.org/dprk/nutrition>

Democratic People's Republic of Korea. (n.d.). UNICEF. Retrieved September 1, 2022, from <https://data.unicef.org/country/prk/>

Building Healthier Futures in DPR Korea. (n.d.). Retrieved September 2, 2022,

from [https://www.unicef.org/eap/stories/](https://www.unicef.org/eap/stories/building-healthier-futures-dpr-korea)

[building-healthier-futures-dpr-korea](https://www.unicef.org/eap/stories/building-healthier-futures-dpr-korea)