

20

**LIBERTY
IN
NORTH
KOREA**

22

Annual Report

Letter from CEO

As I reflect on 2022, my mind goes straight to the end of the year. To the return of rescues. For the past two years, we were unsure if we would ever have the chance to say this again. But the unwavering hope of our North Korean friends kept us going. And after a painstakingly long pause in our rescue work in China due to border lockdowns and restrictions on movement during the pandemic, we were finally able to begin moving people safely again.


We are moving cautiously and costs have become volatile, but our commitment is stronger than ever to continue helping North Korean refugees reach freedom.

In my nearly 20 years of working on this issue, I've learned that the North Korean people are resilient beyond measure. Despite facing unimaginable difficulties, unprecedented lockdowns, worsening food shortages, and increased isolation from the outside world, they are pushing forward. They are finding ways to survive, taking risks to live better lives, challenging the status quo, and creating change.

However, despite their incredible resilience in recent years, the extreme challenges facing North Korean people have been absent from the broader dialogue around global human rights issues, and especially on North Korea policy. I feel a greater sense of urgency that we must do more before these issues that have been overlooked for too long are forgotten.

As I think about the ambitious plans ahead of us, I know that I can only feel this excited and confident about where we are heading because of the tenacity of the North Korean people and the steadfast support of this movement.





I am immensely grateful to our supporters - for your staunch belief in our vision, for showing up to mentor and tutor, for writing letters to North Korean refugees and selling boba and cake pops to fundraise, for donating flights and hotel rooms, for inviting our Advocacy Fellows into your homes and to the Grand Canyon. Thank you for standing tirelessly with us and for investing generously in our mission.

We can't predict what the future holds or when the North Korean people will finally win their freedom, but it is without a doubt that we will achieve this together with our North Korean friends. And the impact we made last year and the work we are accomplishing together this year will bring us even closer to that day.



In solidarity, Hannah Song

A person in silhouette stands in the foreground, looking out over a city at night. In the background, several other figures are visible: one person sits on a tall ladder on the left, and three others stand further back on the right. The sky is filled with the bright, streaking light of fireworks. The ground is paved with rectangular stones.

Liberty in North Korea: *Freedom for every man, woman & child*



PHOTO: JOEL THACKWRAY

2022

Highlights

5

RESCUED

230+

refugees supported
in resettlement

\$4,145,144

RAISED

194

Empowered through
our programs

5

LiNK Labs projects

13,172,952

Reached with the stories
of the North Korean people

Refugee Rescue + Resettlement Support

Helping North Korean refugees reach freedom and gain stability and independence in their new lives

Empowering Agents of Change

Working with resettled North Korean refugees to support their success and build their capacity as agents of change on the issue

The Work We're Accomplishing

Accelerating Change in North Korea

Researching and innovating new ideas to empower North Korean people with access to outside information and technology

Changing the Narrative on North Korea

Focusing on the stories of North Korean people and mobilizing a global movement of support



Refugee Rescues

2022 was the year we finally regained momentum in refugee rescues. Since the start of the pandemic, extreme border lockdowns and unprecedented restrictions made the journey nearly impossible and left many vulnerable refugees stuck in hiding. **But the North Korean people didn't give up, and neither did we.** Despite these challenges, our field team maintained our networks, sought out new routes, and found ways to adapt to increased surveillance and checkpoints in China, finally making rescues a reality again in late 2022 and helping 3 North Korean women reach freedom.

We also worked with the U.S. Government to help unique and exceptional cases of North Koreans in third countries come to the United States utilizing a process known as "Humanitarian Parole" (HP). Last year, 2 people arrived through this process.

5 *rescued*



"I thought I'd never be able to escape China. After the pandemic, I'd only heard of people getting arrested while trying to leave. It feels surreal that I've made it to safety, where I'm speaking Korean again and having Korean food. The years I spent in China were so hard. At this very moment, there are so many more North Korean women like me who are struggling and desperately hoping to reach freedom. Please rescue the people who are still left."

Hee Ryung, escaped through LiNK's networks in Dec 2022



Resettlement Support

Once North Koreans reach freedom, a new journey begins. Our team provides resettlement support, community, and access to resources to help North Korean refugees succeed in their new lives.

Humanitarian Parole cases arrive in the U.S. without status and are ineligible for the usual refugee resettlement benefits from the government. As a result, LiNK provided full fiscal sponsorship and support for case management, housing and financial assistance, interpretation and translation services, and coordinating legal needs to receive status.



United States



“I have many reasons to be grateful... Most of all, thanks to LiNK, I am here in this great country and was able to come this far. I got my first salary this Thanksgiving month. I wanted to say thank you to everyone in LiNK for the great mission that you are all dedicating yourselves to every day.”

Minhyuk, resettled in the U.S. in 2021

2

RESETTLED

30

HOME VISITS
IN 4 DIFFERENT
STATES

3

HUMANITARIAN
PAROLE CASES
SUPPORTED

1

FAMILY
REUNITED

South Korea



3

RESETTLED

197

SUPPORTED

1

COMMUNITY
GATHERING



Meaningful Milestones

**3 marriages
3 babies born
1 new business
3 starting university
6 new jobs
1 job promotion**





Empowering Agents of Change

194 *empowered through our programs*

As North Korean refugees resettle and begin navigating their new lives, many aspire to not only find success, but also

work towards impacting this issue. With access to the tools they need, North Koreans have unlimited potential. We work with them to build their capacity and confidence as leaders and agents of change. They're sharing their perspectives and stories with audiences around the world, changing the narrative, educating people, and mobilizing global support. They're sending money and information back to their families in North Korea, helping to accelerate change from the bottom up. Most importantly, they're proving the potential of 25 million people inside North Korea still striving towards freedom and a better future.



Advocacy Fellows Program

The Advocacy Fellows program cultivates the next generation of North Korean leaders, storytellers, and advocates. We believe they'll be the ones to create a new vision for North Korea and spearhead that change.

22

SPEAKING
EVENTS

7

STATES VISITED

1500+

PEOPLE
REACHED
IN-PERSON

17

SUPPORTER
MEETINGS

5

STAKEHOLDER
MEETINGS



*US Ambassador to the United Nations,
U.S. Institute of Peace, Center for
Strategic and International Studies,
The Committee for Human Rights in
North Korea, and the State Department*

In 2022, Fellows returned to the U.S. for the first time in three years. They participated in workshops to grow their capacity and effectiveness as advocates, spoke to audiences across the U.S., and worked on digital media projects. LiNK Fellows were able to successfully bring a greater focus to the North Korean people and human rights issues.

“As an Advocacy Fellow, I am so happy that I can share my story with people and do something for others. I hope that now when these students think about North Korea, they remember the people, not the regime or nuclear weapons. I strongly believe that every person who does will help us in the fight for the human rights and freedom of the North Korean people.”

Hannah, 2022 Advocacy Fellow

“As an intern, this has been one of the most impactful events that I have attended during my time at the State Department. I know I will take this experience with me throughout my future career in diplomacy.”

State Department Intern





Nicky Choi

Nicky was born in North Korea in 1997. She escaped in 2007 and resettled in South Korea. She's currently a 4th year Nursing major. She hopes to share about her own experiences as a North Korean living in South Korea to shed light on and help change the prejudice North Koreans face in and outside of North Korea.

Hannah Han

Hannah was born in North Korea in 2000. She escaped North Korea in 2015 and lived in China before resettling in South Korea in 2017. Hannah is currently a 2nd year at Kookmin University, studying Chinese Language and Literature. She hopes to make known the human rights abuses occurring in North Korea and China, and create a world where her daughter can grow up to pursue her dreams.

Harry Kim

Harry was born in North Korea in 2000. He escaped in 2013 and resettled in South Korea in 2014. He's currently a 2nd year at Sogang University, studying Political Science and Diplomacy. He hopes to show the world North Korea through his eyes. He wants to broaden his perspective on the North Korean issue and speak to global audiences about his experiences.

Noah Kim

Noah was born in North Korea in 1999. He escaped in July 2014 and arrived in South Korea 3 months later. He's currently studying Political Science & International Relations at Seoul National University, and dreams of becoming a human rights lawyer to bring positive change for North Korean defectors. As a Fellow, he's sharing his story to help change people's perspectives on this issue and prepare for the reunification he longs to see.



LiNK English Language Program

A consistently reported challenge we hear from North Koreans is English language ability. It's not only an essential skill for access to educational and career opportunities – it's a tool to promote self-efficacy and narrative agency. This year, we continued to expand our LiNK English Language program (LELP) in South Korea to meet this growing need. Students were matched 1:1 with volunteer tutors, emerging with not only the confidence and communication skills to advocate for themselves, but also with new connections that will last a lifetime.

134

NORTH KOREAN STUDENTS

2

SEMESTERS

25%AVG INCREASE
IN TEST SCORES**18**DIFFERENT
COUNTRIES OF
VOLUNTEERS

US, UK, Canada, South Korea, France, Australia, Italy, Malaysia, Lithuania, Nigeria, Peru, Indonesia, Estonia, Ireland, Poland, Netherlands, Czech Republic, & Netherlands



“Even if our English improvement doesn’t seem very noticeable right away, thanks to all of you, us resettled North Korean students could overcome our fear of English, share with the world about the human rights violations in North Korea, and gain confidence to accomplish our goals in this new society. Thanks so much to all the volunteer buddies for dedicating their time and efforts for us.”

LELP participant, Fall 2022

Changemakers Scholarship

As more resettled North Koreans seek opportunities in higher education, many do so with the desire to also make an impact on this issue. For North Koreans who are interested in growing as activists through their studies or extracurricular activities, LiNK offers six months of financial support to these students through the Changemakers Scholarship. 90% of recipients expressed that receiving the scholarship gave greater financial stability so they could focus more on their education and advocacy work.

“Thanks to this scholarship, I had more time to focus more on my studies and participate in various North Korea issue-related activities. Moreover, I learned many things from the other program participants. I am happy and thankful to have met these wonderful people. The past 6 months passed so fast.”

Jihyun Ha, 2022 scholarship recipient

31

RECIPIENTS

58%

IN COLLEGE
+ UNIVERSITY

23%

MASTERS +
PHD STUDENTS

45%

SAW AN
INCREASE
IN GPA

66%

INCREASE IN
TIME SPENT
ON ACTIVISM

Professional Mentorship Program

Many North Korean refugees in the U.S. have a difficult time finding professional development opportunities and navigating their career options. So we connect them 1:1 with mentors who provide guidance on specific areas of expertise or interest. Previous mentors have supported areas such as resume building, interview strategies, financial management, investing, and counseling.

By building the capability of North Korean refugees today, they become agents of change who are equipped with the tools and skills to help their communities and impact this issue in the long term.

3

NORTH KOREAN
MENTEES

3

MENTORS

AREAS OF
MENTORSHIP

*US college experience,
Business and employment
in the US, Computer
Science and AI*



“Through the program and my mentor’s help, I learned how I can use what I’ve studied about computer science in the real world.”

2022 Mentorship Program participant

Workshops

To help build confidence and skill sets for resettled North Koreans to achieve their educational and academic goals, we partner with outside experts and organizations to host workshops.

In Seoul, we hosted a one-day workshop on public speaking and storytelling with Professor Min Young Park, an expert in this field. 67% of participants said that the workshop helped with public speaking at school or work including those preparing for university entrance interviews, job interviews, running their own YouTube channels, or even giving lectures.

17

PARTICIPANTS

93%INCREASE IN
CONFIDENCE



Joy Kim

Joy reached freedom through LiNK's networks in 2013. She was one of our 2019 Advocacy Fellows and a bold university student studying social work with a dream to help multicultural families in South Korea. Today, she's working at an alternative school for North Korean refugees and their children as the first North Korea-born teacher, and has grown as an advocate for North Korean human rights!

EMPOWERING AGENTS OF CHANGE

Where They Are Now

Geumhyok Kim

Geumhyok escaped North Korea alone and had to rebuild his life from the ground up. In 2018, he was part of LiNK's Advocacy Fellows program, where he honed his voice as a storyteller and activist. Since then, he's graduated from one of South Korea's top universities, created a popular YouTube channel sharing information about North Korea, and started a family of his own!





PHOTO: ERIC LAFFORGUE

Accelerating Change in North Korea

With ongoing pandemic-related border closures and restrictions on movement, the information landscape in North Korea has become even more challenging in recent years. This makes efforts to increase the North Korean people's access to information that much more important.

Since 2020, the Kim regime has passed new laws that further cracked down on the spread of foreign media and information among North Korean citizens. Many information distributors have paused high-risk activities due to the hostile operating environment in China and North Korea's tightly sealed border.



PHOTO: JOEL THACKWRAY

LABS

North Korean defectors consistently say that increasing people's access to outside information is one of the most effective ways to accelerate change inside the country.

Labs is our space to collaborate, innovate, and develop new initiatives to empower North Korean people with information and technology from the outside world.

Much of this work must remain highly confidential to be effective, but key areas of focus will include collaborating with external partners, including recent defectors who can share feedback, insights, and information on recent changes to the information landscape in North Korea; creating and curating content tailored for North Koreans in-country; and developing new technologies or adapting existing ones for use in-country.

In May, we hosted a Tech Dinner with donors and thought leaders in Los Angeles to discuss existing plans and brainstorm technical ideas.

3

PROJECTS
EXPANDED

2

NEW
PROJECTS

4

BRIEFINGS,
CONFERENCES
& EVENTS

*Gov't institutions
and embassies*

1

TECHNOLOGY,
INFORMATION &
CRYPTO EVENT



Changing the Narrative on North Korea

Global

*13,062,807
reached online*

While dictators and nuclear missiles command headlines about North Korea, they erase the real heart of the country – its people. This is what the regime wants, to control the narrative both domestically and internationally. So when North Korean defectors share their authentic stories and perspectives, it's a powerful act of defiance

and a crucial way to change perspectives on North Korea.

LiNK amplifies North Korean voices through online media, documentaries, and events, and empowers North Koreans to take authorship over their own stories.

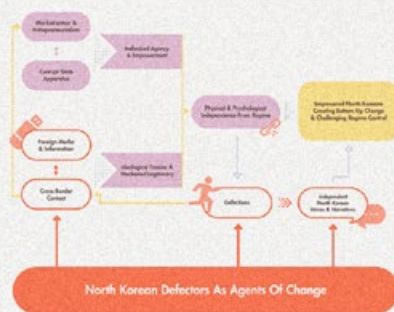


Top Content

How North Korean People are Changing North Korea

MARCH 21, 2022

Sometimes this issue seems hopeless. But we believe that all North Koreans can achieve their freedom in our lifetime. Here's why.



A flowchart showing the various ways that change occurs



I Escaped North Korea. Ask Me Anything

Jubilee 7.8K subscribers



How A North Korean Defector Sends Money Back Home

JULY 22, 2022

It may seem like North and South Korea are completely cut off from each other, but even after decades of separation, channels of communication persist. Defectors who have made it to freedom are bridging the gap, connecting people inside North Korea to the world beyond. Through extensive broker networks, they send back money and information, gradually changing in the world's most authoritarian country.

Through this process known as remittances, millions of dollars are sent into the country every year, representing huge spending power. Here's how they do it



North Korean defectors use remittance to their families back home

LiNK English Language Program: Meet the Students of Fall 2021

APRIL 5, 2022

A consistently reported challenge we hear from North Korean defectors is English language ability, which is critical for both educational and career opportunities in South Korea. To address this need, we launched the LiNK English Language Program (LiNKglide). Our North Korean friends have so much potential, and through capacity-building programs, they're equipped and empowered to achieve their goals.

After a pilot Summer 2021 semester, we're excited to share that our Fall 2021 semester served 49 North Korean students and 50 "English buddy" volunteers! Meet Hyang Lee and Jung Ok Choi, two of last semester's students.

Hyang Lee



For North Koreans, Freedom Changes Everything | World Refugee Day 2022

Liberty in North Korea 7.8K subscribers



How to Watch BANNED Videos in North Korea

libertyinnorthkorea • Follow

libertyinnorthkorea • Right now, North Koreans are watching foreign films and K-dramas, learning about the outside world and seeing glimpses of freedom. Here's how they're doing it

Increasing information access is one of the most effective ways to help the North Korean people bring change. Learn more in our latest blog post #linkinbio

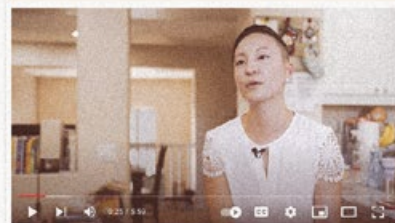
isendnews The people need to read and have access to Wikipedia

97xfarah I love how Squid Game's on here even though they almost got

1,050 likes

JUNE 9, 2022

Log in to like or comment.



North Korean Ancestry | AAPI Heritage Month

Liberty in North Korea 7.8K subscribers

105 likes

MARCH 11, 2022

Log in to like or comment.

libertyinnorthkorea • Follow

libertyinnorthkorea • Thanks to everyone who joined us for our Town Hall last week! For those of you who weren't able to tune in, we compiled the most important updates on how the pandemic has affected North Korea. You can also watch the recorded live on YouTube! #linkinbio

57w

rhinoxrat He needs to go

57w 1 like Reply

joanneschoi_

57w Reply

1,048 likes

MARCH 11, 2022

Log in to like or comment.

Allies

This year, we launched our most audacious call to action yet. Up until now, the scale of humanity's response to this issue has not matched the scale of this challenge and the oppression that the North Korean people face. They deserve our support, and the support of a movement so large that this issue can't be ignored.

We set a goal to mobilize 25 million Allies – one for every person in North Korea. Each Ally is crucial to convey the importance of this issue, not just for advocacy or policy, but for the North Korean people. We want them to know that all around the world, we are standing with them in solidarity and support as they achieve their freedom.

22,537

ALLIES

80+

COUNTRIES

*US, UK, South Korea,
Canada, Zambia,
Thailand, Switzerland,
Spain, Russia, Poland,
Norway, Czech Republic,
Nigeria, Peru, Morocco,
Kuwait, Israel, India,
Germany, France, China,
Chile*



LiNK Teams

LiNK Teams are student and community groups across the globe. They represent the next generation of leaders on this issue and are committed to seeing the North Korean people achieve their liberty in our lifetime. They bring fresh creativity and energy to the movement, helping to change the narrative in their local communities and raise funds to support North Korean refugees.

95

SCHOOL &
COMMUNITY
CHAPTERS

10

COUNTRIES

\$40,388

RAISED

8

LEADERSHIP
& ADVOCACY
CERTIFICATES
ISSUED



LiNK in the Media

We continued to work with international media outlets and advocate for a people-centered approach to reporting on North Korea, taking every opportunity to bring attention to the authentic stories of North Koreans and how they're changing their country. This year we reached the milestone of over 1,000 historic media mentions!

124

FEATURES,
CITATIONS &
COLLABORATIONS

14

LANGUAGES

17

MENTIONS
IN MEDIA
BROADCASTED
INTO NORTH
KOREA

WIRED

REUTERS

CNN

BBC

theguardian

중앙일보
The Korea Daily

ALJAZEERA

DAILY NK

MBC

The Washington Post

KBS

東亞日報

South Korea

Despite sharing a border and heritage with North Korea, the general public in South Korea has become increasingly disengaged from the issue. For decades, the narrative has been centered on politics and the threat of war, and this has contributed to creating

an unwelcome environment for many North Korean refugees resettling in South Korea. We're working to humanize people's perspective of North Korea and raise a new generation of South Korean activists.



Co-Creators

The Co-Creators program brings North and South Korean students together to increase their understanding of the issue and to work on collaborative advocacy projects. They pitched ideas, trained with us to improve writing and storytelling skills, and then executed their concepts in the public sphere. Through this program, South Korean students changed their perspectives on the people of North Korea, and North Korean students also changed their perspectives on the importance of this movement and also their own voices.

We believe it will be this new generation of young North and South Korean activists who will influence government policy and public attitudes towards North Korea, and will be crucial in shaping the country's future when North Korea is finally free.

5

NORTH KOREAN
ACTIVISTS

15

SOUTH KOREAN
ACTIVISTS

95%

COLLEGE
STUDENTS

13

DIFFERENT
UNIVERSITIES



“This program was a turning point for me! Before joining, I had not shared with anyone that I’m from North Korea because of prejudice against North Koreans. As I participated in Co-Creators, I learned that I can help with these issues in South Korea and even recognized my own prejudice.”

Jang Mi, North Korean participant

Jangmadang in Seongsu

The Co-Creators program culminated with a three-day advocacy event themed after the Jangmadang, people-driven markets in North Korea. Guests could visit interactive booths to learn more about the issue and how they can get involved.

From a travel booth showcasing different regions in North Korea to a perfume station with scents based on North Koreans' feelings of nostalgia, these young changemakers found creative ways to engage with new audiences!

602

ATTENDEES

8

BOOTHs

1

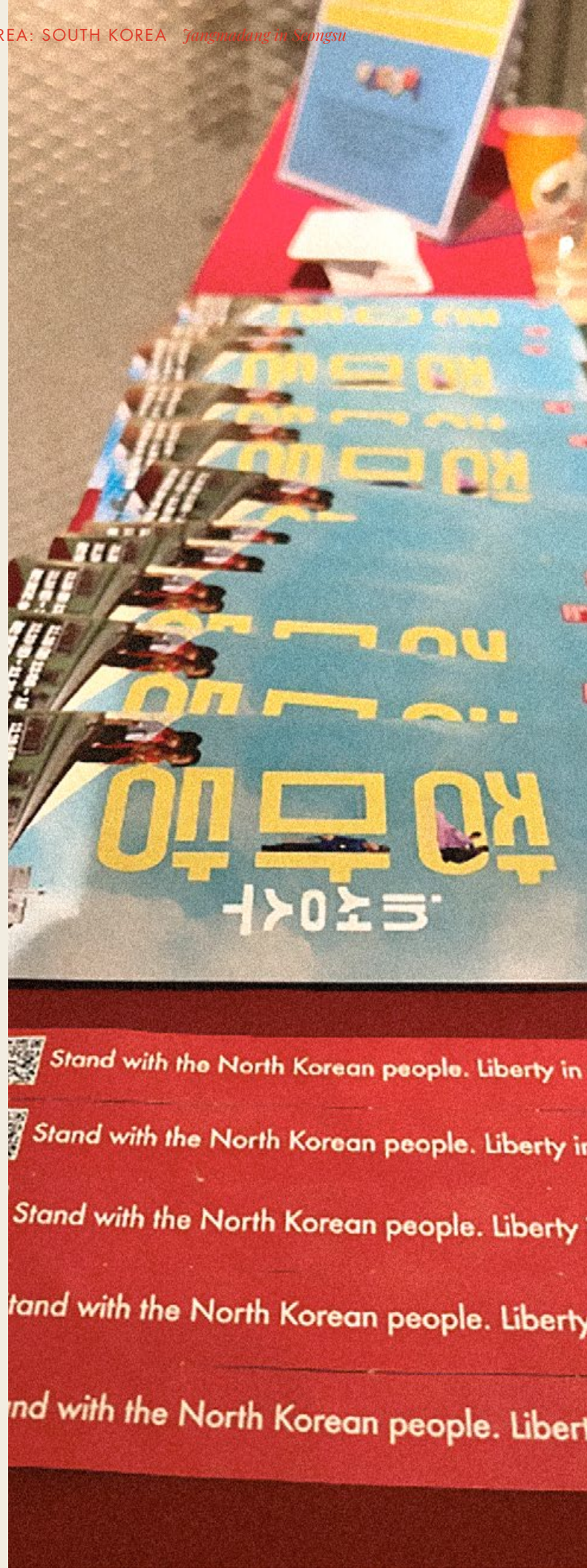
ACTIVIST
NIGHT

*Hosted 21 activists
from 7 North Korean
Human Rights
organizations*



“Thank you for putting so much hard work and effort into making this event possible. You all are a good example of tomorrow’s generation.”

Event attendee



Lectures & Events

23

EVENTS WITH
SCHOOLS,
CLUBS, NGO'S,
AND EMBASSIES

1,434

ATTENDEES



“Most of the events related to North Korean human rights that I have experienced so far have emphasized hostility toward the Kim Jong Un regime and the pity of the people. In this seminar, I could feel firsthand that organizations working for North Korean human rights are ‘working steadily like this.’ Thanks to the seminar, I understood how to start working for the human rights of North Korea.”

Event attendee



**Audited financials were not available at the time of publishing this report*

Financials

Revenue

	AMOUNT	%
Contributions & Special Events	\$2,645,400	63.8%
Grants <i>(includes multi-year awards)</i>	\$1,480,000	35.7%
Net Other Miscellaneous Revenue	\$19,744	0.5%
TOTAL	\$ 4,145,144	100%

Expenses

	AMOUNT	%
Programs	\$2,918,748	72.1%
Supporting Services	\$1,129,281	27.9%
TOTAL	\$ 4,048,029	100%

Resources Spent for Programs

	AMOUNT	%
Rescue & Resettlement Support	\$729,045	25.0%
Empowering Agents of Change	\$756,852	25.9%
LABS	\$348,129	10.3%
Changing the Narrative*	\$1,084,722	37.2%
TOTAL	\$ 2,918,748	100%

**LiNK provides fiscal sponsorship to filmmakers in support of projects that help change the narrative on North Korea and amplify the voices and stories of the North Korean people. The organization served as the fiscal sponsor for the documentary film, Beyond Utopia, which independently raised \$400,000 in 2022 and was granted through LiNK. The film premiered at the 2023 Sundance Film Festival.*

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**Only active members for part of the year*

Partners & Sponsors

Thank You



**LIBERTY
IN
NORTH
KOREA**