

2ND UNIFICATION OF THE MIND

5/02/2015

On May 2nd, 2015, ENoK hosted its second “Unification of the Mind” conference at John Marshall Library in Alexandria, VA. With similar format and objectives as those for the first rendition in 2013, the second “Unification of the Mind” hoped to convey the importance of *embracing* “North Koreanness,” as opposed to trying to “correct,” “improve,” or “enlighten” North Koreans.

The second “Unification of the Mind” was held as part of the [12th annual North Korea Freedom Week](#) hosted by [North Korea Freedom Coalition](#). Due to the week’s schedule, the second “Unification of the Mind” did not span a two-day period as its first rendition but rather just three hours. The speaker portion, which had opened up the first day of the “Unification of the Mind” in 2013, was taken out, and instead of having a “Morning Session” and “Afternoon Session,” each with five problem-solving activity (PSA) topics, the second “Unification of the Mind” conference featured just one session with a total of five PSA topics: “Education,” “Economy,” “Welfare,” “Society,” and “Citizenship & Immigration.”

The PSA leaders—David Tian, Andrew Hong, Linda Dye, Lisa Orme, and Grace Jo—led separate PSA discussions, for which the participants were divided according to their interest. For these group discussions, participants took on particular roles in a simulated setting and, as a group, attempted to solve a given problem, which had been prepared for each topic by the organizers before the conference.

Thirty-nine participants attended the conference, thirteen of whom were North

Koreans (defectors), three South Koreans, fifteen Korean Americans, and eight non-Koreans. Through the PSAs, we hoped that a candid dialogue and exchanges of varied perspectives, ideas, and experiences would take place among these participants of diverse backgrounds, helping them understand and embrace each other despite their apparent differences.



Organizers and Volunteers



Economy Group Discussion



Society Group Discussion



Welfare Group Discussion



Education Group Presentation

The table on the next page summarizes the expenses and income related to the “Unification of the Mind” conference. We would like to give special thanks to a longtime friend and supporter of ENoK, who has donated her time and money to prepare the food provided during the conference.

Also, we extend our thanks to Lisa Orme and Suzanne Scholte for their continued support and encouragement for ENoK to host the “Unification of the Mind” during the North Korea Freedom Week. It has been an exciting and busy year for ENoK since the defector students moved into Empower House to partake in the program. Thus, without Suzanne and Lisa’s help and encouragement, it would have been simply impossible to have this conference because most of our staff and volunteers were preoccupied with the work at Empower House. We cannot express our gratitude enough for making the second “Unification of the Mind” possible.

We hope to continue to hold this conference in the future and engage a larger audience in a dialogue intended to break down the “wall of the mind” and achieve the “unification of the mind” by *embracing* our North Korean friends.

2nd “Unification of the Mind” Conference			
EXPENSES		INCOME	
Conference Packet Printing	\$640.36	Food Cost Donation	\$200.00
Packet Binders	\$116.55	Donations from Participants	\$200.00
Other Stationery Supplies	\$21.20	Conference Budget	\$500.00
Food	\$200.00	<i>Income and Expense Differential</i>	<i>\$78.11</i>
Total	\$978.11	Total	\$978.11

Problem-Solving Activities Solutions

1. Citizenship & Immigration: Constructing Korean Identities Post-Reunification

Problem: *Imagine you are the staff in the Reunified Korea Office of Citizenship Immigration Services (RKCIS). Millions of Korean diaspora are waiting for RKCIS to develop a system of entry, immigration, citizenship, and resident identification so that they can go back to Korea. Develop a system of entry, immigration, citizenship, and resident identification for the seven million Korean diaspora hoping to return to their motherland.*

The theme of citizenship and immigration will remain as an important logistical question that deals with millions of Korean diaspora wishing to return to Korea. In recognizing the complexity of this topic, the simulation group considered four subcategories: system of entry, immigration, citizenship, and resident identification. In their development of a system of entry, the group proposed that each individual provide two current forms of identification (ID) to receive a one-year temporary ID card. After one year, the temporary card would be replaced with a five-year ID card.

For immigration policies, the simulation group suggested that no one should be accepted for 20 to 30 years, during which a concrete set of immigration laws would be created. They imagined foreigners being able to apply for citizenship after five years of permanent residency, a policy that resonates with the naturalization process in America. On another note, the group's discussion of citizenship issues focused primarily on guaranteeing equal rights and minimizing discrimination for all citizens. They proposed that former North Korean citizens automatically gain permanent residency. However, they also acknowledged the importance of approaching this assimilation problem delicately, in order to not neglect the cultural values of North Korea.

Lastly, for resident identification, the group resorted to a relatively simple measure: issuing a photo ID card for every citizen and permanent resident over 18 years of age. Like most identification, this ID card would display the name, date of birth, and address of a given individual. All current residents of the Korean peninsula (both South and North) would be automatically eligible to hold these cards. Though this solution appears simple and straightforward, the simulation group identified children under 18 to be a tricky issue. In particular, they raised the questions of whether to produce ID cards for children and, if so, how the policy should be extended to Korean children in foreign countries.

2. Economy: Investing in North Korea

Problem: *Imagine yourselves to be members of a Special Committee on Transition to One Korea. Your task is to figure out a legal framework that governs the way South Korean and foreign investors and companies can invest, make purchases, and operate in what is now North Korea.*

An important aspect of the reunification of Korea is its economic consideration in terms of new opportunities in the Northern half of the Korean peninsula. There already exist a lot of

affluent companies and investors – both South Korean and foreign – interested in buying North Korean lands and/or utilizing the new pool of North Korean laborers for financial gains. At the same time, a number of North Koreans have already managed to amass great wealth for themselves through unregulated market economy, the activities of which are not recognized officially by the North Korean government. The main thematic question that persisted throughout the group's discussion was how to approach and treat the assets and properties gained in such a market for which no regulation exists.

To answer the aforesaid question, the group considered what political framework would be most effective for creating appropriate legal guidelines. On one hand, a democratic system in which the residents of towns and cities would vote to determine the distribution of wealth was suggested though the exact procedure and implementation process were not discussed in depth. On the other hand, several members of the group voiced hope that the new political and economic system in which the two Koreas are integrated would be groundbreaking so that it would serve as a unique model example for other countries across the world.

3. Education: Teaching Korean History

Problem: *How will we assess our district students' understanding of the history of Korea? (Instead of focusing on the original question of "how to teach Korean history," the group decided to conduct a more holistic discussion on how the schools will accommodate students from both North and South Korea.)*

North Korean students will need their own version of *hagwon* (private cram schools), but for them, it will not just be academic. In these programs, they will receive supplemental lessons about day to day life, social skills, and pop culture, to which they have not been exposed, and go on field trips together to explore the country and the rest of the world.

Schools should not be segregated. North Korean students should go to the same schools as their South Korean peers but perhaps, be enrolled in additional classes to provide tailored help if a need arises.

Younger North Korean students may be paired up with older former North Korean defectors for mentorship. Defectors who have successfully resettled and reintegrated into the South Korean society should serve as mentors for younger North Korean students, particularly in the supplemental *hagwon* programs. Former North Korean defectors who have resettled successfully will play an especially important role because we expect a better sense of trust and understanding between the former defectors and younger North Korean students, who, having grown up in an environment of distrust, may tend to not believe others, such as South Korean people. The former defectors would readily understand this mindset and thus should be able to provide effective guidance.

4. Society: Women's Rights in Reunified Korea

Problem: *Imagine that you are part of a newly created organization (say, Alliance for the Empowerment of Women) that helped build a health center that specifically treats victims of sexual violence. This facility provides physical as well as mental health care. It has been a year since the opening of this center, but there has been chronic underutilization of the services available through this facility; women simply did not seek needed help for one reason or another. This center receives government funding and is now in danger of losing funding. You are all in a meeting to come up with a game plan on how to most effectively outreach to women in need. Please think of concrete strategies for reaching out to various groups of women in society who may be in need of the center's services.*

The “Society” group’s main topic of discussion was provision of support for female defectors who have experienced trauma and sexual violence in North Korea, third countries, and South Korea. Unfortunately, sexual violence and mental health services are often stigmatized, rendering many women unable to receive necessary assistance. The group proposed a three-step resolution to heal residual effects from trauma. They recognized confession – getting to the point at which these women are capable of recounting their stories to their therapists – is the first step towards healing. Only when they open themselves, would they truly be able to receive help. The group’s second step was to increase the number of services, such as TV counseling sessions and small groups. For the third step, the simulation group suggested that *Hanawon* should be the first place to offer trauma counseling services. They also recognized the need for a paradigm shift. Most broadcasts today spend so much emphasis on problems and trauma that they often neglect to explain the importance of healing. Furthermore, the group argued that we need victims to become spokespeople, sharing their therapeutic experiences to encourage others to receive healing. Such a drift away from social stigmatization would create an environment more conducive for women to seek help.

5. Welfare: Healthcare in Reunified Korea

Problem: *Imagine you are the staff in the Ministry of Health and Welfare (MHW) of the brand-new unified Korea. Design a health care plan that addresses the needs of Koreans from every corner of the Korean peninsula.*

Before proposing a set of policy changes, the “Welfare” group first identified two broad categories of problems. Critical healthcare and structural issues of North Korea included insufficiencies in clean water, electricity, food, medical supplies, adequate medical training, and transportation. There were also epidemic health issues of North Korea, such as TB epidemic (afflicting at least 5% of the North Korean population), substance-related problems, digestive complications, anemia, hepatitis, and cardiovascular disease.

The group proposed development of two different health care systems for North and South Korea. Due to the magnitude of the aforementioned critical healthcare needs, the Korean government would have to garner support from the international community to address the issues. Implementing any healthcare policy for a united Korea would be financially substantial,

which could be partially solved by an increase in taxes, and the logistical side of implementation would also be a major concern. To address this latter problem, the group proposed that a health care system be implemented in four phases, each with a specific time frame. Phase 1 would focus on the basic needs, such as food, sanitation, clean water, electricity, and immunization. Phase 2 would attend to infrastructural issues. To adequately promote general health, it is important to not only update medical facilities and training but also increase access to those facilities by improving transportation. After addressing many issues in the status quo, phase 3 would accentuate preventative care, which includes education and psychological support. Lastly, phase 4 would attempt to fully integrate the North Korean health care system with that in the south to create a holistic framework for the united Korea.