

UPF Oslo, Norway: Humanitarian projects working to help North Koreans

Steinar Murud
July 1, 2021



Oslo, Norway - Two representatives of humanitarian projects spoke about their experiences working to help North Koreans.

UPF organized a webinar on July 1, 2021, with the title “Korea—Two Nations, One People: Humanitarian Projects’ Contribution to Peace and Development.” Approximately 15 participants joined the online conference.

Our wish was to learn from the experiences of humanitarian projects in North Korea. The grass-roots or people-to-people perspective is most likely different from the political perspective.

The first speaker was Torben Henriksen, representing the Norwegian Red Cross. He has visited North Korea more than 30 times. He explained about the Red Cross engagement and the various projects that have been done since 1995.



Red Cross chapters in North and South Korea have cooperated on several occasions, he said. They had a tree planting project for a couple of years; held dialogues regularly, even during difficult times; and organized family reunions more than 20 times. In addition, North Koreans are invited to visit both Norway and other nations regularly.

Mr. Henriksen believes that all these meetings and exchanges contribute to building friendship between the North Koreans and the outside world. He also thinks that the learning experiences that North Koreans receive abroad will be beneficial in the development of their own country.

The second speaker was Roald Føreland from the Christian organization Evangelical Orient-mission. This organization cooperates with an American group called Christian Friends of Korea. Together they have organized a series of agricultural programs, such as installing green hoses and building water pumps. All the projects are done in a very friendly cooperation with North Korean partners.

Steinar Murud of UPF-Norway spoke about the background for UPF's interest and involvement in Korea, and he gave an introduction to Think Tank 2022, a UPF project. UPF co-founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon established the global think tank in May 2021 to bring together leaders in many fields to work for Korean reunification.

Mr. Murud said that humanitarian projects are certainly of great help to people in need. But in addition they build warm relationships between those who are involved. Even representatives from nations that are political enemies can work well together on the ground.



Webinar program

Korea - two nations - one people -humanitarian projects' contribution to peace and development

Thursday, 1st July, 2021 18:00 - 19:30 CET.

Registration: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_cHWf-XsORr6_yFwevk89zw

25th June 1950 was the outbreak of the Korean War. Even though 71 years have passed, no peace agreement has been signed on the Peninsula.

Since then the North- and South-Korea have developed in very different ways both politically and economically. South Korean economy is today among the strongest in the world, while North Korea has in many periods been in need of humanitarian aid. Many organisations have done humanitarian projects or assisted with humanitarian aid during the decades. What are the experiences in working in North Korea? How is the situation today and how is the prospects for the future? Can such projects contribute to a warmer relationship between North Korea and the world, or between North Korea and South Korea? Can humanitarian projects be a door opener for peace, goodwill and development?

Speakers:

		
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