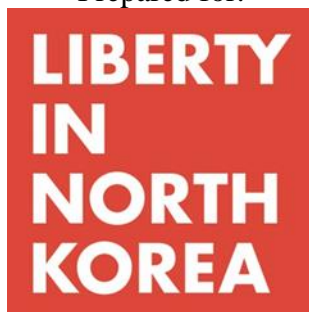


Addressing Suicide Risk and Mental Health Among North Korean Refugees

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Prepared for:



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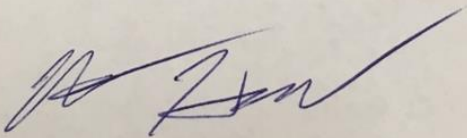
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Disclaimer

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A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Tryst Hensell', is written on a light-colored, slightly textured background.

Matthew Tryst Hensell

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Acronyms

APA: American Psychiatric Association

DMZ: Demilitarized Zone, the border between North Korea and South Korea

LiNK: Liberty in North Korea

NK: North Korea

NKR: North Korean refugee

PTSD: Post-traumatic stress disorder

RA: Resettlement Assistance office, the office within LiNK that works with North Korean refugees that have resettled in the US

SK: South Korea

US: United States

VA: Veterans Affairs

Executive Summary

Among North Korean refugees in South Korea and the United States, the rates of incidence for suicide and mental health issues are much higher than the general population. Regardless of the ultimate outcome of recent political developments on the Korean peninsula, North Korean refugees living in the United States will continue to face mental health issues that they are not prepared to face. North Korean refugees often struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder and, as existing literature suggests, are at a greater risk of suicide than members of the general population in South Korea and the US.

Liberty in North Korea (LiNK) is one of the leading organizations working with North Korean refugees in the United States and South Korea. Within the US, LiNK is best suited to help this population address such a crisis.

This report will analyze the viability of five potential solutions to the ongoing mental health crisis among North Korean refugees in the US. These options are to:

1. Let present trends continue
2. Send monthly online newsletters (as opposed to quarterly)
3. Send mental health professionals to meet with refugees individually
4. Develop a call-in help line with a mental health professional
5. Host a large group event on mental health

The five options will be evaluated by five distinct, but interrelated, criteria. These five criteria have been chosen based on their relevance to LiNK's ability to implement the above mentioned options. The criteria are:

1. Cost
2. Effectiveness
3. Cost-effectiveness
4. Political feasibility
5. Administrative feasibility

Based on an evaluation conducted through the use of these five criteria, it is recommended that Liberty in North Korea **send monthly online newsletters (as opposed to quarterly)**. This option has a very low cost in terms of implementation, high estimated effectiveness, and is feasible at the political and administrative levels because it simply expands an existing service. This report outlines potential content that might be used to fill these additional newsletters.

Implementing this alternative will be straightforward. Unpaid interns and salaried Resettlement Assistance staff will continue to develop the newsletter, only now at a more frequent level of production. Content can be selected and developed at the discretion of those producing the newsletter.

Problem Statement

Among North Korean refugees in South Korea and the United States, the suicide rate is much higher than the general population. In 2015, 14 percent of all deaths among North Korean refugees in South Korea were caused by suicide—a rate much higher than the general population. According to reports from The Bush Institute at the George W. Bush Presidential Center and Liberty in North Korea, there are over 26,000 North Korean refugees currently living in South Korea and 214 refugees in the United States, with the possibility of more arriving each year.

Liberty in North Korea (LiNK) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping North Korean refugees. LiNK works domestically and internationally, aiding North Korean refugees (NKR) through an underground network across China to sanctuary and offering support to those who have reached South Korea and the United States. This report will assist LiNK as they work to help NKR assimilate to their new environment.

The journey to freedom from the North Korean regime is a difficult and stressful one, contributing to the fragile mental state of these refugees once they reach safety. The border between North and South Korea, also known as the demilitarized zone (DMZ), is heavily fortified and virtually all defectors escape North Korea through the northern border with China. If these defectors are found within China, they are forcibly repatriated to North Korea, where they may face imprisonment or possibly execution. Those who are not repatriated are a great risk of exploitation. Very few North Koreans are legally allowed to leave the country, so virtually all refugees will have faced this type of trauma.

Figure 1: The Yalu border between NK and China



Source: Liberty in North Korea

In attempting to address the issue of suicide among North Korean refugees, special attention will be given to statistics involving women who escaped the regime. Women who escape North Korea face risks of human trafficking, prostitution, and forced marriages. If these women who are forced into marriage are repatriated to North Korea, they may also be separated from their

children. Some North Korean women are forced to abandon their children in order to make it to safety.

Since Kim Jong Un's rise to power following his father's death, fewer North Korean refugees have been able to successfully reach South Korea. According to LiNK, from 2007 to 2011, an average of 2,600 refugees arrived in South Korea annually. In 2012 and 2013, this figure decreased by 44 percent, with just over 1,500 refugees reaching South Korea each year (see Figure 1). Increased security measures by North Korea and China are the reason for this decline and may be an important factor in the suicide rate.

Figure 2: Increased Difficulty in Escaping



Source: George W. Bush Institute and Liberty in North Korea

After ensuring that defectors are not North Korean spies, the South Korean government provides defectors with citizenship, job training, housing assistance, and education. The US's North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004 has authorized funding for humanitarian and legal assistance to North Korean refugees. In spite of these efforts, and the efforts of human rights non-profits, the rates of suicide and mental health issues remain high.

Addressing the suicide rate among North Korean defectors is a crucial issue, not just from a human rights perspective, but also as a way of bringing hope to all North Korean people. About half of all NKR maintain contact with their families still in North Korea through underground networks. When North Korean defectors thrive in South Korea and the United States, they provide evidence of a better life. This inspires more North Korean citizens to defect and undermine the authority of the Kim regime. When defectors take their own lives, that evidence, and the hope of achieving that better life, is gone.

Figure 3: North Korean Children



Source: Liberty in North Korea

If the Kim regime collapses in the near future, the United States can expect to see a significant increase in the number of North Korean refugees. In such a case, nonprofits like Liberty in North Korea will become essential in helping with resettlement and assimilation.

Background

In developing these alternatives, I employed statistical data on successful suicide prevention techniques to determine the feasibility of success with each proposed alternative. Data was collected from various existing suicide prevention programs. While my initial intent with this research was to examine the size and success rate within each program, hard figures were difficult to determine. I examined general suicide prevention campaigns, as well as those designed specifically around refugee populations or individuals that have experienced severe trauma, like combat veterans. Despite finding useful techniques, much of the research lacked specific figures regarding effectiveness.

In determining likelihood of success for each alternative, I also looked closely at anecdotal evidence collected from North Korean defectors who have managed to thrive in their new homes, within the US and South Korea. Many North Korean refugees do not share their stories for fear that doing so would expose their families to severe consequences. Those refugees who do offer interviews or speak of their experiences often choose to use pseudonyms and omit personal details for the same reasons. I believe that even with omitted information, these anecdotal accounts of survival may offer valuable data on how North Korean refugees can cope with the trauma they have experienced. I will be careful to examine this data only as anecdotal and not extrapolate results across the entire population, as experiences for NKR's will be sure to vary.

Suicide Prevention

The suicide rate among NKR's living in South Korea is much higher than the general South Korean population. North Korean refugees often struggle to adapt to life outside of North Korea and many take their own lives. This section examines methods for suicide prevention in a general sense, before narrowing the scope down to look specifically at South Korea and the United States.

Among the general population, South Korea has one of the highest suicide rates in the developed world ("The Economic Toll of High Suicide Rates," 2017). The three predominant contributing factors towards this trend are hopelessness, stress, and a perception of oneself as burdensome. A recent study by Yi Jin Kim et al. (2018) analyzed common risk factors among adolescents and determined these factors to be consistent even among students in tenth and eleventh grade. An additional study by Suh et al. (2017) determined that these factors were cross-cultural, also affecting suicide risk in the US.

A study by Kim et al. (2018) examines suicide trends among the South Korean population, specifically looking at repeat suicide attempts. Kim et al. note that the risk of a successful secondary suicide attempt is greatest within the first year of the initial suicide attempt and risk is higher for males. The study looked at various factors associated with suicide and determined that alcohol intoxication and advanced age were also important contributors. While this study did not specifically look at the North Korean refugee population, it had a sample size of over 8,500 individuals over the course of five years.

In another study from South Korea, researchers noted a relationship between celebrity suicides and increased suicide attempts among the general population (Fu & Chan, 2013). While Fu and

Chan's research does have a limited scope in terms of size, other studies have supported their claims that "copy-cat suicides" are a valid risk for vulnerable populations. To this end, LiNK should be cognizant of media trends and be especially prepared for times when suicides make headlines.

Recognizing the importance of gender differences is also important for LiNK in addressing this issue. A recent study discovered that among a sample of 701 North Korean refugees, women were more likely to have suicidal thoughts than men (Noh et al., 2017). The study was conducted over a six year period from 2008 to 2014 and discovered that suicidal thoughts were also higher in individuals that had been in South Korea for more than five years. This additional information indicates that LiNK's efforts will not just benefit recent arrivals, but refugees that have already been in the US for an extended period of time.

Within the United States, suicide prevention is also an important mental health concern, even though American suicide rates are well below that of South Korea. The Journal of Forensic Sciences recently published an article wherein researchers compiled data from over twenty years of suicide studies within the United States (Steele et al., 2018). These researchers posit that there are important predictors of suicide that are different between age groups. In juveniles, insomnia and conflicts with family and romantic partners were key predictors. In adults, substance abuse and issues at home or work were predictors, especially with men. Finally, in elderly people, medical issues and isolation were contributing factors. I believe that the timeframe of twenty years of research does indicate reliable conclusions, especially since they seem to follow common sense. Isolation may be especially important as a predictor, given the relatively small number of North Korean refugees within the US.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is an industry leader at suicide prevention, founded in December 2004 by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, a division of the larger Department of Health and Human Services within the federal government. Roughly 80 percent of individuals who have called into the line reported that the Lifeline played an important role in keeping them alive (Tracy, 2017). While this statistic is impressive, it only accounts for individuals that actively called into the line for help. Given the stigma that exists around mental health in North Korea, it is likely that few NKRers would choose to actively call in.

Mental Health

A general understanding of stigma around mental health issues is important in developing solutions to address this problem. In North Korea, there is a caste system known as "songbun" that was developed and implemented in the early years of the country's existence (Couch, 2017). North Korean society is divided into three classes under the songbun system: the "core" class, the "basic" class, and the "hostile" class. Where North Koreans fall within this system is determined by two factors: "ancestral songbun" and "social songbun." Ancestral songbun is permanent and determined by the actions of a person's ancestors during the Korean War and earlier Japanese occupation. Social songbun is based on a person's loyalty to the regime and can be improved. The Committee for Human Rights in North Korea recently reported that the songbun system plays a crucial role in determining access to education, employment, healthcare, and housing (Collins, 2012). Unfortunately, mental health disorders have become tied to social

songbun. The general perception is that mental health disorders are indicative of wavering political loyalty and undesirable family ties.

Even worse, individuals with visible mental health issues are often sent to live in the harsher northern provinces or to state-run facilities ill-equipped to actually treat the patient (Couch, 2017). The songbun system has caused North Korean culture to view mental illness as a source of shame and the threat of punishment for being open about mental illness has added further stigma. NKRers are likely to not recognize that their mental health has been impacted by their hardships and the stigma that exists in their culture will make them less likely to actively seek out treatment.

Information about the process of escaping North Korea and successfully reaching safety is helpful in understanding this trauma and may offer insights into the origins of mental health issues among NKRers. Much of the existing literature regarding the difficulties of escape is anecdotal. In one instance from 2017, after a North Korean defector fled across the DMZ and sustained at least five gunshot wounds, his doctors reported that he was frequently suffering from nightmares that he was still in NK (Newton & Lee, 2017).

In some instances, NKRers like Yeonmi Park give their own accounts of their specific experiences (Calkins, 2015). According to these accounts, defectors are often subject to exploitation, with women also at risk of sex trafficking. LiNK (2017) asserts that these trends are generalizable across this specific population and that many defectors suffer from undiagnosed PTSD. Song (2016) explains in her chapter in *Migrant Smuggling Data and Research* that much of this data is inherently limited by the clandestine nature of refugee migration throughout China. Since LiNK and other related organizations work directly with North Korean refugees in China, I believe that their knowledge of general trends and the anecdotal evidence of survivors that have escaped to South Korea or elsewhere will be sufficient.

More academic analyses of the difficulties faced by North Korean refugees exist and may offer information that can be applied at a wider scope. In a recent study, Emery, Lee, and Kang (2015) interviewed 82 people between the ages of 15 and 25 who were either from North Korea or born to North Korean refugee mothers in China. The results indicate that family relationships can mitigate the risk of depression associated with physical abuse that many of the subjects have experienced. While the sample size of this study and the fairly subjective nature of interviews may not be ideal, this study does provide useful information about mental health trends within the relevant group. A larger study conducted among two-hundred refugees in South Korea also found that 29.5 percent of them had PTSD (Jeon et al., 2005). A compilation of 56 different studies and a meta-analysis determined that North Korean refugees are at a particularly high risk of PTSD and depression (Lee, Lee, & Park, 2017; Taylor, Chekaluk, & Bennett, 2017). These analyses support the claims made in the study conducted by Clifton, Lee, and Kang.

PTSD is common among combat veterans within the US and effective treatments at Veterans Affairs (VA) currently focus on increasing coping skills and stabilizing emotions (Lutwak & Dill, 2017). These VA-developed techniques may be similarly applicable to North Korean refugees. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline's website also features a specific section devoted to addressing the needs of combat veterans.

Assimilation Challenges

There is a significant amount of literature written regarding the assimilation of North Korean refugees into South Korean society. In a recent paper, researchers used a nationally representative survey to gauge the attitudes of South Koreans towards North Korean refugees (Ha & Jang, 2016). Ha and Jang's survey revealed that many South Koreans harbor resentment against North Korean refugees and believe that reunification of the peninsula is unlikely. Ha and Jang state that their survey was able to collect a truly representative sample of all South Koreans.

In addition to discrimination by South Koreans, North Korean refugees struggle to adapt to a society where material wealth and social status are so highly prized (Kim et al., 2015). The 2015 study by Kim et al. looked at 10 North Korean refugees who were either teenagers or young adults and asked them to participate in interviews and group discussions on their cultural adjustment. While these accounts are valuable insights, I believe that the small sample size and lack of follow-up is problematic. Unfortunately, Kim et al. assert that there is a research gap in this specific area, meaning that a more comprehensive account does not exist.

Currently, there is not much literature specifically regarding assimilation of North Korean refugees living in the United States. The only relevant literature I was able to find on NKR in America was written on the effects of music therapy on adolescent refugees (Choi, 2008). Choi found that self-esteem and anxiety were unaffected by the treatment, but the treatment was successful in reducing depression among the treatment group. While Choi's study only had seventeen adolescent participants, I believe that we can reasonably scale up these results to the overall North Korean refugee population, given the obvious success of the treatment.

The lack of substantial literature regarding North Korean refugees in the US is likely because they comprise a very small part of the population, just over 200 people currently (K. Song, personal communication, February 2, 2018). Although Liberty in North Korea had useful information on NKRs in the US, I was careful about generalizing trends too readily. In spite of this small sample size, I can use related literature to discover general trends. The information on NKRs assimilating into South Korean culture is largely adaptable. South Korea's modern, capitalist society has many of the same challenges for these refugees as the United States. One of the greatest differences between the two is the added difficulty of learning English, but the linguistic differences between Korean spoken in the North and the South offer their own challenges.

PTSD and suicidal tendencies are common among other persecuted groups that enter the United States as refugees. The prevalence of PTSD among refugees varies based on country of origin, length of displacement, and other factors (Grey, Lab, & Young, 2010). Fazel, Wheeler, and Danesh (2005) reviewed a series of studies on the matter and determined that among refugee populations, the prevalence rate of PTSD was 9 percent among adults and 11 percent among children. Among refugees, suicidal thoughts can reach up to 34 percent of the population (Vijayakumar & Jotheeswaran, 2010).

Limitations and Assumptions

As a final note, much literature regarding North Korean refugees is exclusively written in Korean. These may be studies conducted in South Korea or literature designed to be given to North Korean refugees. Unfortunately, I cannot read Korean and thus gathered my research exclusively from English-language resources.

The inflow of NKR to the US has varied greatly since the passage of the North Korean Human Rights Act of 2004, which created a pathway to asylum for North Korean refugees. In some years, over a dozen North Korean refugees were admitted to the US while last year only one was admitted. While the bulk of President Trump's rhetoric and policies regarding refugees has been primarily directed towards individuals from the Middle East, refugee inflow from North Korea seems to be impeded as well. I assume that this most recent trend will hold for the next three years and that the North Korean refugee population in the US will remain constant at 214.

Given the assumption that the North Korean refugee population will remain constant, all estimates for effectiveness will be based off of this number. Adding North Korean refugees to the population over time might cause proportional changes in the effectiveness of the proposed solutions. I am also assuming that reaching these refugees will work along an exponential curve, with each new participant brought to a program being more difficult to reach than the last. I do not believe that any policy proposed will be able to reach all 214 North Korean refugees living in the US. Reaching half of this population should be considered a great success, especially in such a short timeframe.

Evaluative Criteria

In order to properly consider the proposed alternatives in my APP, I established a set of evaluative criteria by which I can estimate the level of success and likelihood of success for each option offered. These criteria have been chosen to balance the goal of this project with the practical considerations necessary for LiNK.

Before offering the criteria, I established a geographic scope and time frame for evaluation. The geographic scope will include all of the United States, as the North Korean refugee population is spread unevenly throughout the United States. I will not be looking at South Korea, where the bulk of North Korean refugees arrive, for two reasons. The first reason is that NKR in South Korea have more resources available to them to specifically address their needs than NKR in the US. The reason for this disparity is because NKR make up a much more significant portion of the population and are the primary refugees arriving in South Korea, whereas the US accepts refugees from all over the world. The second reason is that the language barrier in assessing programs and literature on the matter would make this work far more complicated.

Additionally, I will be projecting my results over a three-year period. I believe that three years is a sufficient amount of time to see positive results from the recommended alternative. Three years is also short enough that these options do not constitute an overly intimidating commitment for a growing organization like LiNK.

Cost

The criterion of cost is the most straightforward evaluation of an alternative. In measuring cost, I will simply estimate the financial cost of implementing each specific alternative. This measure is useful, especially when looking at LiNK's budget and capacity for carrying out such measures. Cost will look at if the option requires funding for travel or additional employees to take over new responsibilities. Cost will also include the cost of time spent implementing each policy, either by salaried LiNK staff or unpaid interns. Although the interns are unpaid, the opportunity cost of their time will be valued at the minimum wage in California, \$11 per hour (State of California Department of Industrial Relations, 2018). While cost is an important measure for each of the alternatives, it alone is not sufficient to inform the selection.

Effectiveness

Measuring effectiveness alone is difficult as there can never be definitive proof that a program successfully prevented suicide. The purpose of this APP is to address mental health and suicide risk among NKR. Obtaining specific mental health information from the dispersed North Korean refugee population in America will be difficult. One of the most efficient ways to obtain this information is to simply compare levels of engagement between the North Korean refugee population and LiNK before and after the implementation of the program.

Equity will also be considered as being tied to effectiveness, as a measure of how evenly the proposed initiatives benefit the North Korean refugee population living in the US. Equity will primarily consider whether or not a policy is easily accessible to those refugees that do not already have a relationship with LiNK. Since LiNK only works with North Korean refugees in America that reach out to them, they do not have contact with the entire North Korean refugee

population. By also considering equity, I will determine if an alternative would still be accessible to NKRers not currently in regular contact with LiNK.

Cost-Effectiveness

Measuring cost-effectiveness is a necessary extension of the cost measurement mentioned earlier. Looking at the costs alone does not provide sufficient information about which alternative is best. If only costs are considered, the cheapest option would be chosen, regardless of its impact. Cost effectiveness will measure the costs of each alternative in relation to their estimated effectiveness. Total costs for an alternative will simply be divided by the estimated number of refugees that will benefit from the program.

Political Feasibility

Although LiNK is a non-profit organization, not a political organization, political feasibility will need to be considered in the sense of how well each alternative can be presented to donors and partners. Political feasibility is an important evaluation criterion because LiNK relies so heavily on donations and has seen a steady increase each year since 2011. If an alternative is not one that can be presented to donors and potential donors as absolutely necessary in maintaining the well-being of North Korean refugees in America, they may risk losing funding. Political feasibility will look at how necessary each alternative will seem to outside observers, especially in relation to one another. Cost will also be considered here, as LiNK will need to justify these expenses to donors.

Administrative Feasibility

Administrative feasibility will measure the likelihood that the organization itself will actually be able to carry out the option. An option may be cost-effective and politically viable, but if it is beyond the scope of LiNK's current functions, an alternative may be preferable. Some of the alternatives suggested for addressing this issue lie outside of the current range of services offered by LiNK. Administrative feasibility will also take into account how likely it is that LiNK might be able to establish such services.

Evaluation of Policy Options

Option 1: Let present trends continue.

Liberty in North Korea (LiNK) could allow present trends to continue as a way to address mental health issues among North Korean refugees. A phone call with LiNK's US Resettlement Assistance Manager revealed that North Korean refugees currently work with state-level agencies that help them resettle (K. Song, personal communication, February 2, 2018). Although there is variation between states regarding the length of case management, each state does play an active role in this regard. One of the primary roles of LiNK here is in sending quarterly newsletters to refugees that have made contact with them. The newsletters, written in a dialect familiar to North Koreans, offer information about LiNK, pathways to US citizenship, and include some basic mental health information. This option is the cheapest and allows state agencies that are close in proximity to the refugees to handle much of the work. Additionally, allowing present trends to continue allows for the likely scenario wherein the U.S. government expands services for North Korean refugees, something that may well happen if there is a substantial change in US policy towards NKR or North Korea in the near future.

Cost – No change

Allowing present trends to continue does not incur any additional cost for LiNK, simply maintaining the existing level of cost for currently-offered services. There is **no increase** program or operational expenses, making this the cheapest option. Based on the 2015 budget report, the Resettlement Assistance office spent approximately \$130,000 over the course of the year. The Resettlement Assistance office has full-time, salaried staff and unpaid interns that work on the newsletter. Keeping production at current levels does not take any time away from other responsibilities and prevents an increase in cost of time spent.

Effectiveness – Moderate, 60 refugees

The estimated effectiveness of the program is **moderate**. Currently, it is estimated that **60 refugees** read the online newsletter, though this number may not fully account for refugees who receive the newsletter from friends as opposed to LiNK. If LiNK allows present trends to continue, a conservative estimate assumes this number remains constant. In the event that additional refugees do seek out LiNK's services over the course of the next three years, this option does not preclude them from benefitting from the service. This accessibility means that allowing present trends to continue has high equity.

Cost-effectiveness – Unchanged, High

Cost effectiveness will remain **unchanged** if present trends are allowed to continue. Given the low cost of production, cost-effectiveness is presently **high**.

Political Feasibility – High

The online newsletter status quo has **high** political feasibility. Donors and members of the organization already recognize the value of the quarterly newsletter in spreading awareness of mental health resources, as well as resources for the naturalization process for interested NKRs.

Administrative Feasibility – High

Continuing present trends does not place any additional work on current LiNK employees or interns, giving it **high** administrative feasibility.

Continuing present trends and maintaining current services offered to North Korean refugees is the easiest option in terms of implementation as it does not expand existing services or establish new ones.

Option 2: Send monthly online newsletters (as opposed to quarterly).

An alternative to letting present trends continue would be for LiNK to publish monthly newsletters as opposed to quarterly, allowing the organization to play a greater role without overstepping boundaries. The increased frequency would mean higher exposure to new content regarding mental health. This new content can include information about music therapy, resources for survivors of sexual abuse, coping skills, and content designed to remove the stigma that exists around mental health issues in North Korean culture.

Additionally, the monthly newsletters may have the benefit of making the refugee population feel less isolated, especially if LiNK seeks out content produced by other North Korean refugees. Many North Korean refugees cite the loss of a shared set of social values as a source of stress in a new country (Kim et al., 2015).

Cost – Estimated at \$21,800

The only costs of increased production of the online newsletter are in the program expense of compiling content and sending it at a greater frequency. Adding the cost of work by salaried employees and unpaid interns, increasing production of the online newsletter to monthly from quarterly would cost LiNK a total of **\$21,800** in present dollars over the next three years.

See [Appendix](#) for methodology in determining cost.

Effectiveness – High, Estimated at 100

The estimated effectiveness of the monthly newsletter is **high**. I believe that within three years, the number of subscribers to LiNK's online newsletter will increase from an estimated 60 individuals to **100 refugees**.

Methodology in Determining Effectiveness Estimate

Currently, LiNK cannot know exactly how many people read the newsletter because they have no method of accounting for when individuals forward the newsletter to their friends. By increasing the output of the newsletter and regularly adding new content, these individuals who receive the newsletter from an intermediary are likely to reach out to LiNK and subscribe themselves, in order to ensure that they do not miss important content.

Additionally, the increased frequency of publication will lead to more people signing up as a result of word-of-mouth publicity. Literature on refugee mental health issues suggests that isolation is an important factor. Monthly online newsletters may help to address this sense of isolation.

Limitations

While there is the possibility that increased publication could be an annoyance and lead some refugees to unsubscribe, I believe that the shift to monthly would not be a significant enough increase to cause this. Increasing production of the newsletter is not sufficient to totally treat PTSD or suicidal ideation in NKRers, but it is likely to increase awareness and may lead them to seek therapy.

Cost-effectiveness – High, Estimated at \$218 per refugee reached

Cost-effectiveness of monthly newsletter production is calculated by dividing the number of refugees reached with the new policy by the total cost of implementation. Based on the estimated effectiveness of reaching a total of 100 refugees and the estimated total cost of \$21,800 to implement this course of action, it would cost LiNK a total of **\$218 per refugee reached**. Relative to other alternatives, the cost-effectiveness of this option is **high**.

Political Feasibility – High

Political feasibility of increasing newsletter production is **high**. Since the online newsletter is already something that LiNK produces, donors and employees are likely to support the idea of expansion provided that costs are controlled. Since increasing production of the newsletter from quarterly to monthly does not incur any additional costs for LiNK and the only costs are time spent by interns and salaried employees, this option has high political feasibility among donors.

Administrative Feasibility – High

Administrative feasibility of increasing newsletter production is **high**. While this alternative does increase the workload for the Resettlement Assistance office, the bulk of the work in developing the newsletter would be handled by interns, with salaried staff primarily reviewing and editing the final product. This alternative would be very easy to implement.

Option 3: Send mental health professionals to meet with refugees individually.

LiNK could locate and send professionals to meet with these refugees individually and attempt to address their concerns. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) recommends cognitive behavioral therapy in order to treat PTSD (APA, 2004). Therapy for refugees should be adapted to meet specific cultural needs, but this requires that the therapist also understand the cultural context of the patient (Kim & Koike, 2010).

Currently, there are 214 North Korean refugees living in the United States, and LiNK only works with those that reach out to them. Roughly 15 percent of this refugee population was guided through China, or “rescued,” by LiNK, meaning that these individuals have a more substantial connection to the organization. Others in contact with LiNK may have heard about the organization through word-of-mouth or advertisements.

Given the limited number of North Korean refugees, LiNK could feasibly send trained mental health professionals out to meet with refugees individually and discuss their current state. This proactive measure might be effective given that NKRers are likely unaware that they are suffering from PTSD. In many cases, NKRers do not recognize any mental health issues until physical symptoms manifest. LiNK would need to enlist the help of Korean-language interpreters for the psychiatrists in order to properly communicate with most of these refugees. While there is a

linguistic split between North and South Korean dialects, this should not be a severe impediment so long as the interpreter is fluent.

Cost – Estimated at \$52,200

The cost of sending mental health professionals to meet in-person with NKR is expressed in the time spent by LiNK staff in organizing the logistics for sessions and the actual cost of hiring psychologists and translators. The total cost of this program, over the course of three years is estimated at **\$52,200** in present dollars.

See [Appendix](#) for methodology in determining cost.

Effectiveness – Moderate, Estimated at 75

The effectiveness of organizing individual therapy sessions is estimated at **75 refugees** over three years. Despite the stigma that exists around mental health issues in North Korean culture, I believe that a few early adopts will speak strongly of their experience, inspiring others to participate. While this number is not much higher than the current estimated scope of the quarterly online newsletter, the literature suggests that these sessions are the most effective method of actually treating PTSD. Additionally, all NKRs would be able to benefit from this program, regardless of an existing prior relationship with LiNK.

Limitations

This effectiveness assumes that each refugee would attend one session with the mental health professional at LiNK's expense, before continuing sessions on their own. This report could not estimate how many sessions each refugee would need to meet their specific mental health needs.

There is the risk that important information may be lost in translation through the interpreter or that an interpreter may be difficult to find in certain parts of the US. There is also the possibility that NKRs may feel uncomfortable discussing certain topics through an intermediary.

Cost-effectiveness – Moderate, Estimated at \$695 per refugee reached

The cost-effectiveness of sending mental health professional to meet with NKRs is **moderate**. Based on estimated costs, LiNK would spend **\$695 per refugee reached**. The high level of effectiveness of the sessions in treating PTSD is a worthwhile justification of this cost.

Political Feasibility – Moderate

The political feasibility of sending mental health professional to meet with NKRs is **moderate**. When removed from concerns over cost or scope, this option is the most effective at treating PTSD. Donors, staff members, and volunteers will recognize the value in such a program. The cost of the program and the low estimated participant levels, however, reduce the likelihood that stakeholders would want to invest in this program.

Administrative Feasibility – Low

The administrative feasibility of sending mental health professional to meet with NKRs is **low**. LiNK has never offered a service like this before, meaning that there is no precedent that can be followed. RA staff and interns would need to find psychiatrists and Korean-language interpreters

in each city where NKR are interested in the program. The logistics of organizing this program on a variable basis give this option low administrative feasibility.

Option 4: Develop a phone line with a mental health expert.

LiNK could hire a mental health expert to operate a call-in phone line for refugees that would be open at select times. Again, this expert would need to speak Korean fluently, and have some familiarity with the Northern dialect, in order to avoid losing important information in translation. Additionally, LiNK would need to determine when would be the best time to operate this line and how to get that information out to the relevant parties. This option will also be fairly expensive. Not only would LiNK need to find such a qualified person, they would need to pay them to frequently operate this line, whereas the individual meetings are one-time costs. However, this might be preferred over the one-time cost of meeting with each refugee because this option allows NKRs to reach out when they choose, rather than going through LiNK. Ideally, the success of this program would lead to more North Korean refugees reaching out to LiNK, building their network even further.

Cost – Estimated at \$28,900

In developing an emergency phone line with a mental health expert, LiNK would have the standard costs of time spent by LiNK staff in implementing this option and the added costs of hiring a Korean-speaking mental health professional and establishing a dedicated phone line. In total, the cost of establishing this phone line and running it for three years is estimated at **\$28,900**.

See [Appendix](#) for methodology in determining cost.

Effectiveness – Low, Estimated at 40

Based on the stigma towards mental health issues in North Korean society, I believe that this program would initially struggle to attract callers. By the end of three years, I estimate that this program would reach **40 refugees**.

Similar to the in-person sessions, I believe that the early adopters will be refugees that already have a deep, personal connection to LiNK, specifically ones that were part of LiNK's rescues. Other refugees, however, would be unlikely to call in because of the stigma that surrounds mental health issues in NK. Unlike the in-person sessions, the phone line will probably not galvanize supporters to bring in other NKRs. For this, I estimate that this alternative has **low** effectiveness overall.

Limitation

Establishing a part-time phone line for NKRs to discuss mental health might create some issues with access. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, which is useful for comparison to this program, operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 2018). Given the variety of other services offered by LiNK, establishing a 24/7 emergency line would not be feasible.

Instead, the line would need to have a set number of hours on weekends for refugees to call. Given the diffusion of the North Korean refugee population throughout the US, scheduling a time period that would work for all interested parties would be difficult considering time zones

might make any particular time either too early or too late in the day. Additionally, if the line attracts too many callers, there is the risk of individuals not having their concerns addressed.

Cost-effectiveness – Low, Estimated at \$720 per refugee reached

The cost-effectiveness of the mental health line is **low**. Based on estimated figures, the line would cost **\$720 for every refugee reached**, the second most expensive per refugee.

Additionally, this option does not offer the same level of attention to NKR as the in-person sessions and would be less effective at actually addressing the underlying issues.

Political Feasibility – Moderate

The political feasibility of establishing a mental health phone line is **moderate**. Suicide and mental-health lifelines are widely known and considered beneficial. Donors, staff members, and volunteers would be likely to agree that a lifeline is a good idea in concept, but would likely be disappointed to learn that the lifeline would only function for a few hours on weekends and be put-off by the cost required to establish such a program when it seems unlikely to be taken up quickly.

Administrative Feasibility – Low

The administrative feasibility of establishing a mental health phone line is **low**. LiNK has never offered a service like this before, meaning that there is no precedent that can be followed.

Additionally, LiNK would need to create a position for the part-time psychologist and find someone qualified to fill it. Finding a Korean-speaking psychologist could be a months-long endeavor, assuming there is someone willing to largely sacrifice their weekend evenings for the cause.

While establishing the line and informing refugees of its existence would be straightforward, unanticipated technical difficulties may also arise over the course of the policy, requiring additional time and energy be spent addressing it.

Option 5: Host a single group event on mental health

A fifth option is to hold a large group event for North Korean refugees living in the United States. LiNK would host the event in Long Beach, California and make travel and lodging arrangements for participants to ensure that financial constraints are not a barrier to participation. The event would be held in the North Korean dialect, with presentations by mental health experts and other refugees who could share their stories. Individuals like Danny, star of the LiNK-produced documentary “Danny From North Korea,” and Daniel, a NKR and sushi chef in California and subject of a Vice News piece, could speak at the event, offering their thoughts on thriving in the US (Hamilton, 2015). The event would be a one-time cost, working with a large group in the hope that it might save on costs by addressing common concerns en masse. This event also has the benefit of connecting refugees to one another that otherwise might have been far more isolated. Based on the success of this event, LiNK could decide to hold subsequent events later. The logistics of this option are the most difficult out of the options listed, as organizing travel for refugees spread throughout the country will be a considerable challenge. The event can be streamed online, but the physical event should be the primary focus for the benefit of bringing this community together.

Cost – Estimated at \$75,700

Hosting one large, group event on mental health for North Korean refugees would cost an estimated **\$75,700**. This option is the most expensive of the alternatives listed. Costs would include the cost of time spent by interns and salaried RA staff, as well as the costs for reserving event space, lodging, and making travel arrangements for all participants.

See [Appendix](#) for methodology in determining cost.

Effectiveness – High, Estimated at 80

Hosting a group event on mental health would reach an estimated **80 refugees**. LiNK should begin promoting the event at the earliest stages of planning, roughly a year in advance, advertising that they will cover all expenses for NKR to attend the event. Offering the opportunity for NKRs to meet with one another in-person would likely attract everyone that receives the online newsletter and word-of-mouth buzz would bring in even more.

As a one-time event, not all NKRs would be able to attend. Some might have scheduling conflicts on that day and others may not hear about the event until too late. LiNK could record the content and post it online, but many NKRs would miss out on the benefits of in-person conversation and activities.

Cost-effectiveness – Low, Estimated at \$945 per refugee

The cost-effectiveness of the large group event on mental health is **low**. Based on estimated figures, the event would cost **\$945 for every refugee reached**, making this the most expensive alternative per refugee in addition to being the most expensive alternative overall.

Political Feasibility – High

The political feasibility for holding a group event on mental health is **high**. While Liberty in North Korea has never held an event for NKRs in the US, the organization has previously held events for refugees resettled in South Korea, creating a precedent.

The event would also be useful in providing an opportunity to rally donors and supporters. While many North Korean refugees avoid open advocacy because of their fear of potential consequences for their friends and family still in North Korea, the event would provide an opportunity to make the cause much more concrete and secure higher donations.

Administrative Feasibility – Moderate

The administrative feasibility for holding a group event on mental health is **moderate**. Even if LiNK uses South Korean events for reference, the logistics of such an event will be much more complicated in the US. Within the US, the North Korean refugee population is much smaller than in South Korea and spread out over a much larger area. LiNK would need to arrange travel and hotel accommodations well in advance and have contingency plans ready in the event that complications arise.

Outcomes Matrix

Criteria	Projected Outcomes				
	Option 1: Let present trends continue	Option 2: Increase distribution of online newsletter from quarterly to monthly	Option 3: Send mental health professionals to meet with refugees individually	Option 4: Develop an emergency phone line with a mental health expert	Option 5: Group event on mental health
Cost	No increase in cost	Estimated at \$21,800	Estimated at \$52,200	Estimated at \$28,900	Estimated at \$75,700
Effectiveness	Moderate. Estimated at 60	High. Estimated at 100	Moderate. Estimated at 75	Low. Estimated at 40	High. Estimated at 80
Cost Effectiveness	High. No increase in costs per refugee.	High. Costs per refugee would amount to roughly \$218.	Moderate. Costs per refugee would amount to roughly \$695.	Low. Costs per refugee would amount to roughly \$720.	Low. Costs per refugee would amount to roughly \$945 per event.
Political Feasibility	High	High	Moderate	Moderate	High
Administrative Feasibility	High	High	Low	Low	Moderate

Conclusion

Policy Recommendation

Based on the assumptions briefly outlined above, and more thoroughly explained in the appendix, Liberty in North Korea should **send monthly online newsletters (as opposed to quarterly)**. Increasing production by this amount would allow LiNK to expand content. New content could include information on music theory or anecdotes from other refugees that have found success in their new home. Increasing circulation is the most cost-efficient method of extending LiNK's reach to the North Korean refugee population with important information.

Allowing present trends to continue is cheap and cost-effective, but is not as effective in reaching North Korean refugees. Much of the literature on the subject of mental health issues among North Korean refugees suggests that addressing isolation is a key step in addressing the greater issue. The current levels of engagement, with newsletter distribution limited to once every three months, are insufficient to address this and this is reflected in the limited number of subscribers.

Sending mental health professionals and translators to meet with North Korean refugees is not the best alternative available because of the high cost involved in hiring translators and psychologists for every session. The high cost of time spent by LiNK staff in organizing logistics makes this option less appealing. Additionally, NKR might be uncomfortable with sharing their struggles with the interpreter, hindering the efficacy of the policy.

The main reason that developing a mental health phone line is not the best option is because the line would require that refugees actively call into the line in order to benefit from it. With the stigma that surrounds mental health issues in North Korea, it is unlikely that this option would see much use from those for whom it would be most useful. Further, the trade-off between the cost of the line and the window of time it operates is a difficult balance to strike. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline benefits from being staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, but this would not be feasible for LiNK.

Although LiNK does have a precedent for hosting a large group event for NKRs in South Korea, this is not the best option for addressing the issue at hand. The cost required to hold such an event is very high and the logistics of organizing travel and lodging for all participants would be very time-consuming. Additionally, the technical nature of these logistics would mean that the work could not just be left to unpaid interns, further raising the cost of time spent.

Implementation

Implementation should be carried out at either the start of the next quarter, when Resettlement Assistance brings in new interns or at the beginning of next year. While the online newsletter is only one of the functions of the Resettlement Assistance office, it would be beneficial for RA to bring in an intern each quarter to primarily focus on developing the newsletter. If RA has an

intern devoted to producing the online newsletter, they can have two weeks each month compiling content before assembling it during the third week of the month and then submitting it to salaried staff for review. After a rough version of the newsletter has been reviewed by salaried staff, the intern can apply feedback and produce a final version that is quickly looked over one more time before submission.

The online newsletter should be submitted on the fourth Thursday of each month. Submitting the newsletter on a consistent schedule allows the readers to know when to expect the newsletter and may help keep them engaged and encourage them to spread the newsletter through word-of-mouth. Additionally, this set-up allows for the following Friday to be spent discussing early ideas for the next month's newsletter. This would give the intern an opportunity to think about additional material over the weekend.

Newsletters should continue to be developed through the website MailChimp, as RA already does. The format of MailChimp is already familiar to salaried staff and intuitive enough that interns can easily pick it up. MailChimp is also able to easily produce online newsletters for viewing on both computers and mobile phones, allowing NKR's to access the newsletter in whichever manner is more convenient.

I also recommend that LiNK look into whether MailChimp possesses a feature that can be used to track the number of times the newsletter is accessed, as this will offer a better number for how many people are reading the newsletter, even if they are not formally subscribed.

Sending monthly newsletters may help LiNK expand its reach within the North Korean refugee community and connect a greater number of US-based NKR's to one another than ever before. Helping NKR's through feelings of isolation will not solve all mental health issues, but it is a good start.

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Appendix

Cost Analysis

Timeline and Discount Rate

This analysis predicts the costs and effectiveness of each option over the course of a three-year period. Given the high likelihood of change in either US policy or US-North Korea relations, projections are limited to a narrow scope in order to best avoid significant deviation.

Costs are discounted at a rate of 7 percent per year.

Costs

Cost of time spent on each alternative by salaried LiNK employees is based on the annual budget of the Resettlement Assistance office. The annual budget for RA, as of 2015, was \$130,060. Dividing this amount by a typical work year of 2,080 hours, the hourly rate of salaried LiNK employees within RA comes out to roughly \$62.50.

Cost of time spent by unpaid interns, however, is based on the \$11 hourly minimum wage in California, where LiNK's US office is located. Whenever possible, alternatives have advocated for involved roles for interns in implementation of each alternative for this reason.

See Table 1 for general format of cost breakdown tables.

Table 1

Assumption	Value	Justification
Discount Rate	7%	Standard discount rate
Estimate of Refugees Reached	Variable	Best guess estimates based on reports by LiNK and academic studies on NK refugees
Costs to Organization	Variable	Additional costs for implementation of option
Costs to Salaried Employees	\$62.50 per hour	Annual budget of LiNK's Resettlement Assistance office divided by typical work year
Costs to Unpaid Interns	\$7.25 per hour	Minimum wage
Total Cost	Variable	Sum of listed costs
Cost per refugee reached	Variable	Sum of listed costs divided by number of refugees reached by program

Option 1

Option 1 is simply allowing present trends to continue. LiNK incurs no additional costs in allowing present trends to continue and the online quarterly newsletter continues to be sent out.

See Table 2 for a breakdown of costs and effectiveness estimates.

Table 2

Option 1		
Assumption	Value	Justification
Discount Rate	7%	Standard discount rate
Estimate of Refugees Reached	60	Best guess estimates based on reports by LiNK and academic studies on NK refugees
Costs to Organization	No change	Additional costs for implementation of option
Costs to Salaried Employees	No change	Annual budget of LiNK's Resettlement Assistance office divided by typical work year
Costs to Unpaid Interns	No change	Minimum wage
Total Cost	No change	Sum of listed costs
Additional Cost per Refugee Reached	N/A	Sum of listed costs divided by number of refugees reached by program

Option 2

Methodology in Determining Cost

Liberty in North Korea would not need to buy additional computers or software in order to increase production, as production of the newsletter is done through the email marketing company MailChimp (K. Song, personal communication, April 9, 2018). The costs of increased production and editing for monthly newsletters would be best measured by looking at the time that would need to be spent by both salaried staff and unpaid interns in order to reach this level of production.

Time spent working on the newsletter would be time that they cannot work on other important projects. Unpaid interns would handle much of the work, collecting and editing content for each issue. Assuming that an intern would spend one week of work every month developing the newsletter, three years would cost LiNK \$13,857 worth of intern work in present dollars.

To measure the time cost of salaried employees, I estimated that salaried staff would spend roughly half a day every month looking over the prepared draft of the newsletter before sending it out. Over the course of three years, these final reviews would cost LiNK \$7,873 in time spent by salaried employees.

See Table 3 for a breakdown of costs and effectiveness estimates.

Table 3

Option 2		
Assumption	Value	Justification
Discount Rate	7%	Standard discount rate
Estimate of Refugees Reached	100	Best guess estimates based on reports by LiNK and academic studies on NK refugees
Costs to Organization	No change	Additional costs for implementation of option
Costs to Salaried Employees	\$7,873	Cost of one half day each month spent to review and edit the newsletter before submission for three years
Costs to Unpaid Interns	\$13,857	Cost of one week each month spent by an intern on the newsletter for three years
Total Cost	\$21,800	Sum of listed costs
Additional Cost per Refugee Reached	\$217.00	Sum of listed costs divided by number of refugees reached by program

Option 3

Methodology in Determining Cost

The RA's office would see an increase in program expenses as a result of the time spent organizing logistics. It is estimated that salaried staff and unpaid interns would both spend roughly one hour of every day organizing the logistics of scheduling therapy sessions. Salaried staff would identify mental health professions close to interested NKR and find suitable translators. The time spent by salaried staff performing this role works out to a cost of \$15,000 each year. When discounted over three years, this option will cost roughly \$39,370.

Interns would focus on informing NKRs about the new program, scheduling the sessions, and sharing any necessary contact information between all parties involved. The cost of this time spent by interns amounts to \$2,640 each year. Over three years, the time spent is valued at roughly \$6,930 in present dollars.

The salary of psychiatrists and interpreters provide additional costs to LiNK. A standard, one-hour therapy session costs roughly \$70 (Vallejos, 2014). A fluent Korean interpreter, able to understand the North Korean dialect, will cost around \$20 per hour (Indeed, 2018). While some interpreters may be willing to volunteer an hour of their time to help NKRs address their mental health issues, this assumption is not included in the cost estimate. The psychiatrists and interpreters would be hired as needed. Based on the estimate of 75 sessions, staggered over the course of three years, these sessions would cost \$5,850.

See Table 4 for a breakdown of costs and effectiveness estimates.

Table 4

Option 3		
Assumption	Value	Justification
Discount Rate	7%	Standard discount rate
Estimate of Refugees Reached	75	Best guess estimates based on reports by LiNK and academic studies on NK refugees
Costs to Organization	\$585	Cost of hiring hourly mental health professionals and Korean translators, discounted over time and number of sessions
Costs to Salaried Employees	\$39,365	Cost of one hour spent each day handling logistics for one-on-one sessions
Costs to Unpaid Interns	\$46,880	Cost of one hour spent each day helping with logistics and updating quarterly newsletter to include info about sessions
Total Cost	\$43,100	Sum of listed costs
Additional Cost per Refugee Reached	\$625.00	Sum of listed costs divided by number of refugees reached by program

Option 4

Methodology in Determining Cost

The cost of hiring the part-time, Korean-speaking mental health professional can be estimated at \$10,000 annually. I obtained this number by first finding the average income of psychologists, which is just over \$66,000 according to the 2015 US Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Handbook (Fescoe, 2015). Once I had the average annual income, I assumed that part-time work on weekend evenings would be at a premium, as this would be the best time for refugees to call in but a time when most individuals do not want to work. Additionally, I further raised the rate due to the requirement for Korean-fluency, as this narrows the pool of qualified candidates even further. Discounting this salary over time, adding a part-time psychologist to run the help line would cost LiNK \$26,243 in present dollars over the course of the next three years.

Establishing the phone line itself is far less expensive. The cost of adding a toll-free phone line would be \$35 per month (“Business Phone,” 2018). In terms of present dollars, establishing the toll-free phone line for three years would cost \$1,103.

Unpaid interns would only need to spend half an hour each quarter informing NKR about the program in the quarterly online newsletter. This amounts to two hours of work each year over three years. After discounting for the time spent each year, the cost of this time spent is valued at \$231 in present dollars.

Salaried staff would spend two hours each day over the course of four weeks setting up the phone line and finding the qualified psychologist. This time would all be spent prior to implementing the program and would not need to be discounted over time. The cost of time spent by salaried RA staff would amount to \$1,250.

When all of the associated costs are considered, this option would cost an estimated total of \$28,900 in present dollars.

See Table 5 for a breakdown of costs and effectiveness estimates.

Table 5

Option 4		
Assumption	Value	Justification
Discount Rate	7%	Standard discount rate
Estimate of Refugees Reached	40	Best guess estimates based on reports by LiNK and academic studies on NK refugees
Costs to Organization	\$26,243	Cost of hiring part-time mental health professional
Costs to Organization	\$1,103	Cost of establishing a dedicated phone line
Costs to Salaried Employees	\$1,250	Cost of 20 hours spent establishing phone line, answering questions over the course of two weeks
Costs to Unpaid Interns	\$231	Cost of time spent informing refugees about the phone line through the quarterly newsletter
Total Cost	\$28,900	Sum of listed costs
Additional Cost per Refugee Reached	\$720.00	Sum of listed costs divided by number of refugees reached by program

Option 5

Methodology in Determining Cost

Costs of time spent by salaried staff and interns were split between the cost of time spent planning in the immediate future and the costs of time spent finalizing details just prior to the event a year later.

Salaried staff would spend an estimated 160 hours, or a standard work month, beginning logistics of the event. This time is not discounted, as it will be an initial cost of time spent, and will cost LiNK \$10,000. Additionally, salaried staff will spend an estimated 48 hours immediately prior to, and during the event. This time is discounted by one year and costs LiNK \$2,804.

Time spent by interns working on the event would total 800 hours, split evenly between early preparations and last-minute details. Four-hundred hours is used as the standard length of an internship. This project will then be split between two interns. One intern will work on early planning for the duration of the internship, and the other will work on finalizing items and helping host the event. Only the time spent by the second intern will be discounted over time. At the minimum wage of \$11, the time spent by both interns is valued at \$8,512.

For convenience, LiNK should host the event in Long Beach, California. Lodging costs were estimated using the standard room rate of a hotel room near the airport. The standard cost for a room in Long Beach, California is \$125 (Cvent, 2018). Assuming that the attendees would spend

two nights at the hotel, allowing for a full day of speakers and activities, this amounts to \$250 each. Meals were estimated at an additional \$70 per person. Additionally, LiNK would need to pay to use the meeting space, estimated \$500 (Holiday Inn Long Beach, 2017).

Travel to Long Beach would need to be arranged for all attendees. While many NKR's live in California, many would need to fly across the country to attend. According to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (2018), flights to Long Beach cost an average of \$200. This number was then doubled in order to estimate the cost of a round-trip ticket. Costs mentioned here all then all discounted by one year at the rate of 7 percent. Assuming that LiNK is about to attract 80 attendees, the costs for travel, lodging, food, and event space amount to \$54,299 in present dollars.

When the additional costs of the event are added to the costs of time spent by salaried staff and interns, hosting an event on refugee mental health costs an estimated \$75,700 in present dollars.

See Table 6 for a breakdown of costs and effectiveness estimates.

Table 6

Option 5		
Assumption	Value	Justification
Discount Rate	7%	Standard discount rate
Estimate of Refugees Reached	80	Best guess estimates based on reports by LiNK and academic studies on NK refugees
Costs to Organization	\$54,299	Cost of renting rooms at the Holiday Inn Long Beach Airport Hotel, travel, and meals for attendees
Costs to Salaried Employees	\$12,804	Cost of one half day each month spent to review and edit the newsletter before submission for three years
Costs to Unpaid Interns	\$8,512	Cost of one week each month spent by an intern on the newsletter for three years
Total Cost	\$75,700	Sum of listed costs
Additional Cost per Refugee Reached	\$945.00	Sum of listed costs divided by number of refugees reached by program

Sensitivity and Caveats

Developing this report required making assumptions about the effectiveness of each option in addressing the needs of North Korean refugees. These assumptions were based on existing literature regarding mental health and suicide prevention in a general context and a more specific refugee context. However, there are so few North Korean refugees in the US that no substantial amount of literature has been specifically developed on them. As a result, the assumptions in this report may not accurately reflect the actual behavior of NKR in the US.

A true measure of effectiveness in addressing mental health issues among NKR in the US through these proposed options is not something that neither I (nor LiNK) have access to. I opted to measure effectiveness primarily through the estimate scope of NKR engaged because this was a reasonable estimate. LiNK can actually measure how many people engage with a policy, rather than how much the policy might resonate with them or help address their issues.

Assuming that estimated reach of each option has been exaggerated, increased production and distribution of the online newsletter remains viable. This option is the cheapest and most cost-effective by a wide margin.