

North Korea Program Summary

Since 2005, the International Republican Institute (IRI) has worked to support North Korea human rights groups dedicated to the promotion of democracy and human rights practices by investing in their advocacy and organizational skills.

IRI has worked with organizations in Seoul, South Korea to provide information inside of North Korea and North Korean defectors based in South Korea on universal human rights and principals of democracy. Highlights of IRI's programming include work with Seoul-based radio stations to develop democracy and human rights content broadcast directly into North Korea. IRI also co-sponsored a project with Sungshin Women's University entitled Education Program for Free Citizens, a two-semester program that taught the core values of democracy, human rights and a free market economy to North Korean defector college students. Sungshin continues the program with broad domestic and international support.

Organizational Capacity Building

IRI currently assists North Korean democracy and human rights groups based in South Korea by developing their internal capacity, making them better equipped to carry out their mission of promoting fundamental principles of free societies inside North Korea. Through an office in Seoul, IRI offers trainings and consultations on civil society fundamentals and best practices, highlighting topics such as financial management, grant writing, outreach and communication, administration, and staff development.

In addition its work with civil society, IRI will support a number of groups through a series of micro-grants. These grants will provide the groups with experience developing program activities and give inexperienced organizations the opportunity to learn to meet the demands of an international funder market in a highly-supportive environment. By building the organizational capacity of civil society groups working to advocate for human rights in North Korea, and by improving the quality of the product the groups are able to generate, these organizations will increase their competitiveness in attracting funding, raising the profile of their cause, and working to have a more meaningful impact on human rights in North Korea.