

KOREAN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

GRADES: 9–12

AUTHOR: David Sheehan

SUBJECT: World History

OBJECTIVES:

1. To seriously investigate South Korean NGOs with the ultimate goal of understanding how Koreans are becoming involved in causes that seek to protect the environment, guarantee human rights and advocate for the interests of children.
2. To impart to each student that it is within his or her power to become an activist for a humanitarian cause.
3. To encourage students to realize that people of other nations, such as Korea, are making major contributions to solving global problems and establishing international dialogue.

BACKGROUND:

This lesson plan on Korean non-governmental organizations is a featured, pivotal component in teaching world history through the study of non-governmental organizations. The basic information presented here may be modified to meet the varying educational interests of any school district, ranging from an independent study assignment, to a limited and focused sub-unit, to a year-long curriculum framework.

This lesson plan grows from two imperatives: the necessity of having students develop a healthy respect for religious, cultural and sociological diversity as well as the need to have students understand that individual action, expressed through voting or organizing, is the cornerstone of the democratic experience.

With this being said, the world history curriculum really operates on two levels: the teacher provides a chronological framework with emphasis on governmental action and the student delves into an area of contemporary interest, emphasizing non-governmental action.

The parallel concentrations compliment each other in that the teacher systematically provides the “scaffolding” effect that explains the history leading to present world structure, for example, explaining the evolution of “left-wing” and “right-wing” politics of the French Revolution.

The student, on the other hand, focuses on a field of personal interest, such as hunger, human rights or environmentalism and connects it with the activities of a non-governmental organization such as Bread for the World, Child Soldier International or Greenpeace. Each student-NGO connection is ongoing and informs the teacher and other students.

Each student will be required to contribute to a class case study of a foreign country’s effort to empower the role of non-governmental organizations. The case study will focus on Korea.

PROCEDURE:

The lesson plan may be presented in three stages: (1) the contextual, historical framework for the study of modern world history; (2) the investigation and analysis of non-governmental organizations and the study of Korean NGO's in particular; (3) the final exhibition of student work to the school and community groups. Rather than establish a definite time frame for each stage, please note that halfway through stage 1, stage 2 begins, and halfway through stage 2, stage 3 begins.

(Stage 1) Contextual, Historical Framework

1. The teacher's role in this lesson plan is to establish a clear understanding of the major historical themes that identify various societies as heading towards modernization. There is no particularly recommended textbook since students will be referring to the textbook only as directed and will be researching independently. Nonetheless, the scope of the textbook must, at a minimum, cover the time period between the European Renaissance and the present.
2. In this lesson plan the teacher begins by presenting a broad overview of world history leading up to the European Renaissance.
3. Once an overview is provided, this curriculum concentrates on the several stages of European development that lead to modernity. In particular, these stages are: the European Renaissance, exploration, scientific revolution, economic revolution, political philosophies, the Enlightenment, the French Revolution and the First Napoleonic Empire. As the teacher moves the curriculum forward, through directed readings and discussion, students undertake short-term assignments to learn about coinciding events in non-European cultures. For example, students may research the achievements of Korean history and culture.
4. The importance of each student mastering the lessons of the French Revolution cannot be overemphasized. It is necessary to focus on the evolution of "left-wing," "center," and "right-wing" politics. In fact, it is crucial that each student understand the broader concept of a political spectrum that emerges in the years following the French Revolution or the so-called Conservative Restoration period. The concept of a political spectrum is essential to understanding the events in Korean history.
5. At the risk of oversimplifying the concept of a modern political spectrum, the degrees of action, whether on the left or on the right, must be carefully explained. These degrees of action range from moderate to radical to extreme.
6. At this point in the curriculum, the teacher may revisit the underlying beliefs of the Enlightenment, that is, the belief in concise action to remedy societal ills, and introduce the topic of non-governmental organizations. Once each student has selected his or her topic (discussed in the next section), then the teacher resumes in earnest his or her role to provide the contextual and historical background for the series of events throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. From this point on, each student adopts an NGO perspective, i.e. hunger, humanitarian or environmental, to name but a few, and studies and evaluates the substantive materials in the curriculum from this chosen perspective.
7. Throughout the remainder of the curriculum, the teacher will review the individual work of each student as he or she researches an NGO perspective, but more importantly as he or she connects with the selected non-governmental organization. The assessment model in this curriculum requires that each student do written, oral and technology-based work

products, culminating in a group project with other students who have selected like-minded NGO's.

8. In addition, the curriculum emphasizes the ongoing operation of NGO's in the contemporary political spectrum. Therefore, making connections between the operations of NGO's and international events is crucial. As the curriculum shifts from being teacher-based to being student-based, the discussion of international events will underscore the relativity of each student's selected NGO to his or her future. Also, the curriculum will shift away from nationalistic interests and address universal interests. In conjunction with this, international treaties, universal declarations and various accords may be introduced into the curriculum as the course concludes.

(Stage 2) Investigation and Analysis of NGO's

1. The student's role in this curriculum is to demonstrate a clear understanding of his or her selected non-governmental organization's mission and case studies, of the historical context in which this NGO was formed and of the ongoing inter-relationship among NGO organizations on a global level. During the initial phase of the curriculum however the student will be required to master the rudimentary aspects of the historical framework, such as focused study of the European Renaissance to the French Revolution.
2. A particular focus area for writing purposes will be the student-based research on contemporary Korean NGO's. The classes as a whole will direct their focus to Korea as a case study.
3. In the first part of this curriculum students will study a number of historical themes, such as the rise of the nation-state, the struggle for individual rights, the establishment of civic institutions and the philosophies of western civilization. Once the political spectrum of the French Revolution has been introduced each student will select an area of crucial interest, such as hunger, humanitarian law or environmentalism. Through subsequent research each student will select a NGO that operates in this area of interest.
4. The initial step in selecting a NGO is a technology driven exercise. In this district, students will spend a week in the social studies computer laboratory exploring the websites of NGO's and completing a generic questionnaire on the three NGO's that most interest them. In the weeks that follow, classroom discussion will hone down the list of NGO's to between 40-50 organizations. From this point on, each student will become "the expert" in the background and mission of his or her NGO.
5. Being an "expert" requires each student to do the following. First, the student must write a brief but inclusive summary of the NGO, explaining the history of the organization as well as specific activities. Second, the student must maintain a file of news reports that relate directly to the mission of the NGO or to related interests of the NGO. Third, the student must present a thesis paper at the end of the curriculum that: (a) explains the NGO; (b) places the NGO in an historical context; (c) analyzes future challenges.
6. Each student may advocate the interests of his or her NGO as he or she sees appropriate. With parental/guardian permission, a student may attend regional meetings of an affiliated group or may participate in informational campaigns at local, regional or national levels. Any student who does participate in such activities is strongly encouraged to report back to the class and in some cases, if so inclined, to produce a film documentary on his or her experience.

7. This curriculum is designed to get each student to think about important global issues without the constraints of nationalistic fervor or politics but yet to appreciate the historical context in which these issues exist. NGO's must co-exist in a world of nationalistic and political interests. It cannot be done otherwise, at least for the foreseeable future, so students must understand the history of the modern nation-state as well as the potential for non-governmental action. Korea is an excellent case study "jumping off" point.

(Stage 3) Final Exhibition

1. As a closing activity for this lesson plan, students will hold in the late spring a NGO Fair for the school community. Each student will present to his or her classmates a display on the mission and activities of the selected non-governmental organization, many of which will be focused on Korea. This will be a significant component in the final grade.
2. Students will meet ahead of time to decide on the scope of the display and the rubric by which it will be graded.
3. Most importantly, the students will be the ones to grade the final exhibitions and to indicate which efforts are deserving of special recognition.

RESOURCES:

Recommended Korean NGO's

Ansan Migrant Shelter Law Foundation (refugee issues)
www.migrant.or.kr

Asian Center for Women's Studies
www.ewhawoman.or.kr

Birds Korea (habitat preservation)
www.birdskorea.org

Buddhist Peace Fellowship (human liberation)
www.bpf.org

Church Women United (human rights)
www.churchwomen.org

Citizen's Alliance for North Korean Human Rights
www.nkhumanrights.or.kr

Coalition for Civic Action (citizen alertness)
www.whiteband.org

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
www.cites.org

Democracy Network Against North Korean Gulag
www.nkgulag.org

Economic Justice
www.whiteband.org

Emmaus Community (fighting poverty)
www.emmaus-international.org

Frontiers (peaceful endeavors)
www.thefrontiers.org

Green Cross (globalism)
www.greencrossinternational.net

Green Korea (environmental protection)
www.greenkorea.org

Greenlamp Environmental Education United (conservation)
www.greenlamp.org

Good Friends-International Peace and Human Rights
www.goodfriends.or.kr

Korean Animal Protection Society
www.koreananimals.org

Korean Coalition for the Rights of Children
www.sarangbang.or.kr

Korean Family Planning and Maternal Child Health Association
www.ippf.org/en

Korean Human Rights Foundation
www.humanrights.or.kr

Korean Lesbians / Gays / Bi-sexuals / Transgenders' Coalition
www.lgbtkorea.org

Lawyers for a Democratic Society
minbyun.jinbo.net/english/index.htm

Movement of Koreans for Helping Each Other (non-proliferation)
www.freedomhouse.org

Network for North Korean Democracy and Human Rights
www.nknet.org

National Alliance for Democracy and the Reunification of Korea
www.nkfreedom.org

Northeast Asian Forest Forum
www.neaff.org

People to People International
www.pipi.org

Religions for Peace
www.wcrp.org

Research Institute of the Differently Abled Rights (rights of disabled)
www.cowalk.or.kr

Save the Children
www.sc.or.kr

Service for Peace
www.serviceforpeace.org

SOS Children's Villages (abandoned children)
www.sos-childrensvillages.org

World Vision (poverty and justice)
www.worldvision.or.kr

Women Making Peace
www.peacewomen.or.kr

Women's Federation for World Peace
www.wfwp.org

Recommended Readings

Academy of Korean Studies. *Exploring Korean History Through World Heritage*. Seoul: The Center for Information on Korean Culture, 2006.

Breen, Michael. *The Koreans, Who They Are, What They Want, Where Their Future Lies*. New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2004.

Cumings, Bruce. *Korea's Place in the Sun, A Modern History*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2005.

Eckert, Carter J. et al. *Korea Old and New: A History*. Seoul: Harvard University Press, 1990.

Korea Overseas Information Service. *Facts About Korea*. Seoul: Government Information Agency, 2005.

Oberdorfer, Don. *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1997.