

## **Continuums and Contiguums: What Humanitarian and Development Aid Reveal About Perceptions and Priorities in the DPRK**

### Biography

Nazanin Bagherzadeh is a PhD candidate at City University of Hong Kong. Her research focuses on the factors that influence humanitarian and development groups' ability to gain and maintain access in the DPRK. She holds a dual MA in International Humanitarian Action from Ruhr Universität Bochum and Université catholique de Louvain, and an MA (Honours) in International Relations from the University of Edinburgh.

### Structured Abstract

Article Type – Research Paper

*Purpose* – This paper explores the progression of humanitarian and development aid in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Since 1995, the DPRK has allowed at least 180 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international organisations (IOs) into the country. These groups deliver aid ranging from basic food aid to development projects. Examining the interplay of these two types of aid provides insight to the priorities and perceptions of the DPRK authorities.

*Design/Methodology/Approach* – Data collection on NGOs and IOs from their websites, publications, and secondary sources was used to map DPRK programmes.

*Findings* – For the first decade of international aid, a continuum between humanitarian and development aid was at work with a heavy focus on humanitarian projects. In 2005, the DPRK attempted to dispel humanitarian actors in favour of development work. The current aid landscape sees food and nutritional programmes running concurrently with more niche training projects.

*Practical Implications* – Aid groups provide a unique and invaluable source of information and engagement with the DPRK. Analysing facets of their relationships with the authorities may help groups in their future dealings with the country.

Keywords: DPRK, humanitarian aid, development, NGOs

## **Continuums and Contiguums: What Humanitarian and Development Aid**

### **Reveal About Perceptions and Priorities in the DPRK**

In 1995, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, or North Korea) made a large-scale appeal for international humanitarian aid. The DPRK had long been a recipient of fraternal aid from the Soviet Union, China, and Eastern Europe, but the 1995 appeal was the country's first extensive request for humanitarian aid from the United Nations (UN), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and non-socialist states. At the time of the 1995 appeal, the DPRK was in the midst of famine caused by economic mismanagement, poor policy choices, and a decline in fraternal aid. A series of natural disasters including floods and droughts provided the regime with an external source of blame for the famine. The summer of 1995 marked the beginning of an international effort to provide humanitarian and development programmes to the people of the DPRK that continues over two decades later. Over 180 international organisations (IOs) and NGOs have worked on projects ranging from the delivery of basic food aid to more advanced capacity building, such as training North Koreans on urban planning and entrepreneurship.

This paper explores the relationship between humanitarian and development aid in the DPRK over the past 21 years. The DPRK authorities have total control over which NGOs and IOs can operate in the country. Though aid groups do have the ability to negotiate, programmes cannot go forward without approval from the authorities. Looking at what kinds of programmes have been implemented since 1995 and identifying trends can provide insight into the perceptions and priorities of the DPRK authorities.

## **Literature Review**

Before delving into the aid situation in the DPRK, it is necessary to define some key terms and survey the relevant literature. Humanitarian aid aims to reduce human suffering and meet basic needs. Humanitarian programmes may address hunger, malnutrition, health, sanitation, and shelter needs through delivery of materials, dispatching of personnel, and/or training of affected populations. Typically, humanitarian aid is associated with the onset of emergency, both natural and man-made, though there are cases of prolonged need. The DPRK is one example; others include Somalia, Syria, and Sudan. Rehabilitation is used to refer to bringing institutions or structures damaged by crisis back to, or exceeding, their original competencies. Development aid has a wider remit, and focuses on helping a state develop its infrastructure, governance, economy, and other capacities. Examples of development include projects working in education, reconstruction, advocacy, economics, and/or technical training.

The concept of linking relief, rehabilitation, and development (LRRD) considers how these two types of aid do and should interact. The two main schools of thought are the continuum and contiguum approaches. The continuum approach sees aid as progressive and linear: humanitarian aid is delivered in the immediate aftermath of an emergency, followed by a period of rehabilitation to restore the community to its pre-emergency state, and then development aid can begin. Opponents of the approach argue it is too simplistic and ignores the varied needs found in real situations.<sup>1</sup> The contiguum approach allows for humanitarian and development aid to work simultaneously within the same context. This view allows

for a greater linkage of programming designed to help communities become more resilient.

Bennett argued in 1999 that the DPRK's distrust of foreign intervention, and lack of experience dealing with humanitarian monitoring requirements contributed to the authorities' view that aid was temporary and NGOs/IOs could be sent away once another supply of food was found.<sup>2</sup> This perception seems plausible during the era where international humanitarian aid was in its infancy. However, it is worth revisiting the possible perceptions of the authorities within the context of over twenty years of aid. Several years later, Snyder argued the authorities viewed aid as a threat to *Juche*, the DPRK's ideology that is often translated as 'self-reliance', and therefore a political act.<sup>3</sup> While this paper does not have the space or scope to go into an analysis of *Juche*, Snyder's point of considering how aid can link to political rhetoric is valuable. Paik said authoritarian regimes make rational decisions to let aid in based on risk and need,<sup>4</sup> and Walton urged humanitarians to consider the motivations of the regime, the capacity of local actors, and the international context when dealing with authoritarian states.<sup>5</sup> Paik and Walton's views support an examination of perceptions and priorities through the lens of aid.

Schloms presented three issues with LRRD in the DPRK: political will of DPRK and Western governments, the slow-moving nature of the famine, and the inability of development aid to affect the root causes of the DPRK's food insecurity.<sup>6</sup> His points remain pertinent today, though in the years since they were made, development programmes have been able to grow in the DPRK largely due to a change in the priorities of the authorities. Han advocated for a greater linkage of

humanitarian aid and sustainable development,<sup>7</sup> while Reed posited that NGOs were best suited to explore new avenues in aid and linkages with North Korean communities due to their ‘smaller size, closeness to the population, and more flexible funding base.’<sup>8</sup> This paper presents both NGO and IO experiences, with the latter focusing on the WFP. Perhaps due to the factors listed by Reed, NGOs encompass a greater diversity in experiences and programmes and are thus a significant portion of the analysis.

### **Overview of Humanitarian and Development Aid, 1995 – Present**

Since 1995, over 180 NGOs and IOs have worked in the DPRK. These groups have come from at least 25 different countries in Europe, North America, Asia, and Oceania. In stark contrast to its previous experience with fraternal socialist aid, the DPRK has worked with many groups from states it has denounced as enemies, such as the United States, Japan, and the Republic of Korea (ROK, or South Korea). Groups can be divided into four general categories: resident NGO, non-resident NGO, resident IO, and non-resident IO. Resident groups maintain a full-time presence in the DPRK, with at least one foreign staff member. All resident groups, including those currently in the DPRK and those that have left, have been European (note that residential status is a requirement for European Commission funding). Non-resident groups do not have a permanent presence on the ground in the DPRK. Instead, they work to deliver aid remotely. Most of these groups visit the DPRK either regularly or ad-hoc to conduct needs assessments, monitor projects, deliver goods, and/or meet with their DPRK counterparts. Table 1 gives an overview of the number of groups working in the DPRK in four different years. Tracking the presence of non-resident groups can be difficult, especially when it is not clear if a group’s activities are ad-

hoc or regular, or if they experienced any periods of interruption, so the table presents an estimate based on information from NGO/IO websites, publications, and secondary sources.

(Insert Table 1 here)

This information is presented to give a clearer picture of what aid on the ground looked like at various times, and to combat the oft-repeated vague idea of ‘few’ groups working in humanitarian and development aid in the DPRK.

#### *Mid 1990s – Early 2000s*

The DPRK’s 1995 appeal was based on famine and food insecurity, so the first five years of aid had a heavy humanitarian focus. Programmes included food aid, nutritional supplements, material aid, water and sanitation, and medical aid in the form of supplies, medicines, and personnel. The DPRK was a unique situation, as most groups had little to no contact or information on the situation inside the country before 1995. Thus groups had to conduct needs assessments, devise projects, negotiate with the authorities, and implement their programmes without the benefit of a prior body of knowledge. This fact likely contributed to the heavy humanitarian focus, as groups needed time to establish what the capacities of communities were and how they could effectively contribute to sustainable development.

This is not to say NGOs and IOs were running projects that only considered the short-term. Many groups incorporated elements of sustainability into their humanitarian programmes, especially as they gained experience in the country. For example, resident NGO Children’s Aid Direct (CAD, from the United Kingdom) had a programme to rehabilitate and construct greenhouses<sup>9</sup> while non-resident NGO

Caritas Hong Kong supplemented their food aid delivery programme with supplies of seed and fertiliser intended to help agricultural institutions.<sup>10</sup> However, in at least one case a group chose to leave because it felt it could not adequately implement rehabilitation programming under the conditions of the DPRK government. CARE, a non-resident American NGO, left the DPRK in 2000, after four years of working in food and agriculture. In a statement, CARE explained ‘the operational environment in north Korea has not progressed to a point where CARE feels it is possible to implement effective rehabilitation programs.’<sup>11</sup> CARE’s inability to come to a suitable arrangement with the DPRK authorities may indicate that the authorities had little interest in pursuing rehabilitation projects, or that the benefits of rehabilitation work were dwarfed by the authorities’ concern over keeping NGOs/IOs contained and without excess access to communities.

While NGOs were successful in entering the country during these early years, often after being invited by DPRK officials, IOs, in particular the UN, had the largest programmes. For this study, the experience of the UN’s World Food Programme (WFP) is of particular importance. The WFP’s DPRK programme was one of the biggest humanitarian programmes in the organisation’s history, and continues to this day. Between 1995 and 2015, the WFP has provided 4.6 million metric tonnes of food aid to the DPRK,<sup>12</sup> feeding 8 million North Koreans at its peak in the early 2000s.<sup>13</sup>

Like NGOs, IOs had a clear humanitarian focus that evolved to include sustainability as groups gained more experience in the country. The UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA, which has since evolved into the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, or OCHA) released a series of ‘Floods

Situation Reports' in 1995 and 1996. The report from September 1995 establishes that the humanitarian priorities are 'to assist population suffering from immediate effects of floods,' and lists clothes, blankets, textiles, kitchen equipment, medicine, and food as 'urgently required.' The report also mentions the floods negative consequences on the economy, but the main focus is on the previously listed humanitarian needs.<sup>14</sup> By 2000, the WFP was working in agricultural rehabilitation and disaster risk reduction – operations that incorporate some elements of development into humanitarian aid.

Both NGOs and IOs seemed to be operating under the continuum approach to LRRD. It would be difficult even for staunch opponents of the continuum approach to argue against its appropriateness in this context. Groups were entering a country that had been virtually untouched by the international aid system, with little knowledge of what capacities were already in existence. Additionally, groups had to grapple with negotiating with the authorities for access. While access is not an uncommon issue in humanitarian situations, the DPRK context of a strong central government with total control was markedly different from other scenarios where access problems arose from power struggles. Other points of negotiation included contact with North Korean citizens and the presence of foreign staff. As development projects tend to involve a higher degree of potentially long-term interaction between the implementing group and the target community, it seemed unlikely that the authorities would allow such projects and relationships. Perhaps most importantly, the DPRK authorities 1995 appeal was for humanitarian aid. As the authorities have the ultimate decision on whether a group can enter or begin a project, their perceptions and desires guided what groups were able to accomplish. With these factors, attempting a development programme in these early years seems unfounded.

### *Early 2000s – Mid 2000s*

As the DPRK entered the new millennium, its humanitarian needs shifted. While food security remained an on-going problem, the famine of the earlier decade had subsided. The term ‘emergency’ seemed strained, and it became more and more apparent that structural issues were the cause of the DPRK’s problems. Despite this, the DPRK continued to use its Flood Damage Rehabilitation Committee (FDRC) as the interlocutor for many international groups until 2006.<sup>15</sup> Clinging to this moniker may indicate an attempt to remind the rest of the world of the DPRK’s official line that its humanitarian problems were the fault of outside forces.

NGOs and IOs now had more experience, information, and a better grounding of what the reality of aid work in the DPRK entailed. They also had seen several of their counterparts, such as the above-mentioned CARE and other international NGOs such as Doctors without Borders and Action Against Hunger, withdraw from the DPRK. Specific reasons for withdrawal varied, but often were connected to issues of access, monitoring, and disagreement over aid recipients. These withdrawals further highlighted that while negotiations and compromise were possible, groups needed to work under the conditions set by the DPRK authorities if they wanted to remain in the country.

For most of the early 2000s, the aid landscape in the DPRK seemed to follow that of the late 1990s. The majority of projects were humanitarian in nature, with consideration of more long-term effects. Groups opened bakeries, provided children’s institutions with machinery to produce soymilk, provided farms with fertiliser, assisted hospitals and healthcare facilities, started education programmes for disabled

children, and trained farmers. Again, it appeared as though the DPRK authorities were pursuing a slow continuum of aid with elements of basic humanitarian aid and rehabilitation.

In 2005, the DPRK changed its mind and made an abrupt shift in focus towards development aid. There are several underlying reasons that could help explain this decision. 2005's harvest was an improvement from earlier years. The shift, or least its effect on European NGOs, may have been related to a UN resolution submitted by the European Union that condemned the DPRK's human rights record.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps it was simply that the DPRK grew ashamed of its decade-long role of international humanitarian aid recipient. Whatever the reason, the change affected both IOs and NGOs, resident and non-resident.

By 2005, nine European NGOs were working in the DPRK with residential status. These nine groups all worked in humanitarian aid, with programmes in areas including food security, agriculture, nutrition, livelihoods, healthcare, water and sanitation, and working with the disabled. In September 2005, the DPRK announced that these humanitarian groups had to leave by the end of the year.

Two groups left: Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA, Switzerland) and CESVI (Italy). A third, Agape International, left and later returned as a non-residential NGO with a focus on sustainable energy, while PMU Interlife (Sweden) also took a hiatus before returning to work on humanitarian projects. The remaining five groups – Concern (Ireland), Handicap International (Belgium), Première Urgence - Aide Médicale Internationale (PU-AMI, France), Save the

Children (UK), Triangle Génération Humanitaire (TGH, France), and Welthungerhilfe (Germany, also known as German Agro Action) – were able to negotiate with the DPRK authorities to stay in the country. The groups had to abandon their organisational names to instead work under the umbrella of ‘European Union Program Support Units’ (EUPS Units), and their primary interlocutor changed from the FDRC to one of its successors, the Korea European Cooperation Coordinating Agency (KECCA). Just as with the FDRC, the terminology used gives insight into the mindset and direction of the DPRK authorities. The vocabulary in KECCA and EUPS point towards development assistance and emphasise collaboration. All five of these EUPS Units remain active in the DPRK as of March 2016.

Mapping the effect of the 2005 shift on non-residential groups is more difficult. Because they do not have a full-time presence, non-resident groups can suspend their work for a period of time quietly and without needing to announce their exit. These groups do not need to make black-and-white decisions about their programming in the way that resident groups do. Thus, it can be difficult to ascertain how many groups changed their programmes due to the attempted shift towards development. However, the change can be seen in some groups. The Food Aid Liaison Unit (FALU) consisted of European and American faith-based NGOs that worked to deliver food aid. The FALU consortium did have a residential presence in the DPRK through the WFP office, though most of its members were non-residential groups. The DPRK closed the FALU in 2005.<sup>17</sup> Some members were forced to take a hiatus and/or switch programming – for example, Canadian Foodgrains Bank returned to the DPRK in 2008 to work in agricultural development.<sup>18</sup> The closing of the FALU

further reiterates the DPRK's desire to curtail basic humanitarian aid, such as food assistance.

The IO most affected by 2005's shift was the WFP. The WFP was the largest group working in food security. It supported 19 food factories in the DPRK and provided food aid for 6.5 million North Koreans in 160 counties out of 203, with a residential staff that peaked at 46 making 400 monitoring trips per month.<sup>19</sup> Consistent with their apparent change in priority, the authorities ordered the WFP to switch from food aid to development work. Richard Ragan, the WFP Country Director for the DPRK at the time, explained the WFP's North Korean counterparts 'have expressed a clear preference for development-oriented assistance over emergency relief.'<sup>20</sup> The WFP prepared to shutter its factories<sup>21</sup> and plan for a 'full phase out.'<sup>22</sup> After negotiations lasting from fall of 2005 to spring 2006, the WFP was able to continue delivering food aid in the DPRK, but at a reduced programme size. The new operation aimed to provide food for 1.9 million North Koreans in 30 'focus counties,'<sup>23</sup> with 10 international resident staff members making 'a much more limited number' of monitoring trips.<sup>24</sup> The WFP had succeeded in continuing with food security projects, but this episode demonstrated that the authorities were willing to see even the largest of groups go if they did not compromise with the DPRK's vision for aid. This is not particularly unique – states almost always want to be involved with the direction of aid in their country, and as the primary responsibility holders for the well-being of their citizens, have not only the option but the right to do so. The DPRK's situation is notable, though, in its extremes – from swinging from humanitarian to development aid to the authorities' total control of what groups were able to witness, do, and learn.

Up until 2005, it seemed as though the DPRK was operating under the continuum approach to LRRD. The sudden attempt to hurry the continuum along and eschew humanitarian aid in favour of development projects resulted in a flurry of negotiations and the withdrawal of some humanitarian groups. The DPRK did succeed in making their priorities known, and as will be discussed in the following section, were able to attract a more diverse set of NGOs in the following years.

Unfortunately, it seems the DPRK's desire to move towards development aid did not line up with the humanitarian needs of some of its citizens. Two-thirds of WFP food aid recipients lost their access to WFP aid and had to change their strategies for dealing with food insecurity. To take an example of an NGO, ADRA had previously rehabilitated or built one children's institution per year, in addition to upgrading surgical theatres and maternity wards in hospitals.<sup>25</sup> The opportunity for more towns to potentially benefit from ADRA's work was cut off when the group was expelled. Paradoxically, by expelling groups like ADRA, who also worked with the National Academy of Sciences on a biogas technology project, the DPRK authorities curtailed some development-oriented projects that were already underway.

#### *Mid-2000s – Present*

After the DPRK's development shift, more diverse groups began working in the country. NGOs with more niche interests were able to conduct projects. Areas of work included providing sports equipment and facilities for disabled children (DULA International, UK; Guus Hiddink Foundation, ROK), performing cataract surgery (Fred Hollows Foundation, Australia), training North Koreans in economics (Chosun

Exchange, Singapore; Hanns Seidel Foundation, Germany), and establishing a National Tuberculosis Reference Library (Bay Area TB Consortium, USA). All of these examples are non-resident NGOs, though the latest NGO to have a foreign staff member permanently in Pyongyang is another niche group, the World Federation of the Deaf (Finland).

Other groups built on the work of the previous decade with sustainable energy and agricultural programmes. Within these programmes and in other project areas, training became a larger theme in NGO/IO work. This is not to say that prior programmes did not include education or training. However, there is a marked change in the prominence of training. More and more groups, such as Chosun Exchange, Hanns Seidel Foundation, DULA International, Friedrich Naumann Foundation, and Friedrich Ebert Foundation, have been successful in bringing North Koreans abroad for training or other activities. Of course, those North Koreans who are permitted to go on these trips are chosen and vetted by the authorities, as well as accompanied by a minder. Still, this is a notable change from the early days of aid in the country and quite an achievement when considered in the context of the control of the DPRK government. Other groups have been able to bring foreigners who are not members of NGO/IO staff in for events or to exchange knowledge. For example, the World Federation of the Deaf and TOGETHER-Hamhung (Germany) have hosted International Deaf Meetings in the DPRK, while the Korean-American Medical Association have brought Korean-American doctors to work alongside their North Korean counterparts.

While these exciting, boundary-pushing new projects moved forward and grew in number, the DPRK continued to receive humanitarian aid. Heavy floods in 2007 spurred some international humanitarian groups to set up emergency relief programmes – a small-scale repeat of the original emergency call over a decade before. The DPRK continued to ask IOs for food aid, and accept donations of food and other basic aid bilaterally from enemy states. The WFP programme is still significantly smaller than at its peak, though lack of funding plays a large role in this, but has continued since the 2005/2006 renegotiations. Dozens of non-resident NGOs, such as First Steps (Canada), Food for the Hungry (Hong Kong), Korea Peace Foundation (ROK), Mission East (Denmark), and Shelterbox (UK), have continued to provide emergency relief and basic humanitarian aid. Seven European NGOs currently have residential status, and work in a wide range of humanitarian and development programming including education, sustainable agriculture, food aid, disaster preparedness, water and sanitation, and livelihood security.

After the first decade of a slow LRRD continuum, followed by 2005's attempt to lurch forward into the development phase, it seems as though the past ten years fall under the contiguum view of humanitarian and development aid. There are several advantages to the contiguum approach inside the DPRK. First, a wider range of programming means more potential for engagement and knowledge sharing between NGOs/IOs and both the DPRK authorities and aid recipients. The nature of development-oriented projects often requires more contact between NGOs/IOs and their programme recipients in the DPRK. In some cases this contact can be in the form of a trip abroad for North Korean project participants – an opportunity not afforded to many, and a chance for exposure to foreign cities, ideas, and people.

Second, as in other contexts, humanitarian and development programming running simultaneously allows NGOs/IOs to address the diverse needs within one state or community. Within the DPRK is difficult, and in some contexts impossible, to ascertain true need from the perspective of the vulnerable or ordinary citizens. However, this challenge would likely be present no matter what type of aid is being given. With the contiguum approach, vulnerable North Koreans such as children, the elderly, the disabled, and the ill have a chance at receiving humanitarian aid instead of being totally glossed over in favour of solely more high-level development aid. Meanwhile, North Koreans who the authorities view as trustworthy and who may not have the same basic humanitarian needs as the more vulnerable may profit from opportunities to engage in development work with foreign groups.

### *Looking Ahead*

Like in any country, it is impossible to predict exactly what the future holds for the humanitarian needs of North Koreans. The DPRK went from an LRRD continuum, to an attempt at forcing the continuum along, to the current state of an aid contiguum. It seems likely that the aid contiguum will continue - as the DPRK can profit off this low-cost opportunity for information, training, and knowledge sharing, it seems plausible that the authorities will want to continue on this track. At the same time, reports of food insecurity persist. Humanitarian groups now have twenty-one years of experience in the DPRK, with some like the WFP having been present since shortly after the first appeal. The DPRK benefits from the inputs of these groups, and as some opponents of aid highlight, may use aid as a substitute for having to trade for resources on the world market. Thus it also seems likely that humanitarian aid will be allowed to continue, though it would be surprising to see a large growth in this field.

## **Perceptions and Priorities**

What do the choices the DPRK has made in relation to the LRRD continuum/contiguuum reveal about its perceptions and priorities? The DPRK's actions give some insight into how it perceives aid and the international groups that implement programmes. It is important to remember that for decades before the 1995 appeal for international humanitarian aid, the DPRK received fraternal aid that was largely unconditional. The DPRK's perception of aid until that point was that aid came without many strings attached and was an act of solidarity. It is therefore unsurprising that the DPRK and humanitarian groups had difficulty making agreements regarding access, monitoring, and programme type, as this type of aid was totally outwith the DPRK's previous experience.

Being a basic aid recipient for ten years goes against much of the DPRK's rhetoric. *Juche* is often translated as 'self-reliance,' though others have argued convincingly for more nuanced interpretations.<sup>26,27</sup> Perhaps the DPRK's perception of the benefits of humanitarian aid began to diminish in the lead-up to 2005, especially in comparison to the image the country wants to portray. The DPRK seems to accept that development projects, and some humanitarian ones, may require long-term partnership or involve more contact between foreign groups and target recipients. This acceptance may be due to a view that development work has a stronger connotation of partnership, collaboration, existing capabilities, and cooperation than humanitarian aid.

Trust plays a large role in setting up both humanitarian and development projects. Despite being a country with few points of entry and a desire to keep information from foreigners as much as possible, many aid groups have been able to develop trusting relationships with their DPRK counterparts. Trust is tantamount to both sides when implementing programmes like bringing North Korean to Europe for a study tour. This shows an improvement from the earlier years of aid, when many relationships were characterised by suspicion and doubt.<sup>27</sup> Though this persists to an extent, the growth in the role of trust may be indicative of changing DPRK perceptions towards foreign groups and their staff.

It is important to remember, though, that the DPRK continues to prioritise maintaining a high degree of control over their programmes. Ultimately, the government has total command over which groups enter, where they are allowed to work, who they can bring in as international staff, what kind of programmes they are allowed to implement, and who their targets are. NGOs/IOs are able to negotiate, and sometimes have with impressive results, but ultimately the authorities have control. This has been a constant in the DPRK aid landscape since 1995, and it is unlikely that the regime will change their views on this.

Another priority appears to be extracting resources from NGOs/IOs. In the first few years of aid, this seemed focused on material resources – food, medicine and medical supplies, household items, fertiliser, etc. However, with the shift in acceptance towards development aid, it seems knowledge transfer has increased significance and priority. Workshops and trainings in the DPRK may not come with

any significant material inputs, but the authorities are still willing and wanting to have them.

Unfortunately, the DPRK has not chosen to prioritise the humanitarian wellbeing of its people. Allowing humanitarian groups to work alongside development groups is generally positive, as outlined in the previous section. However, the reality still exists that the DPRK chooses not to explore greater avenues for importing food and other necessary items for its citizens. The government has chosen not to pursue meaningful economic reform, and the elite in Pyongyang continue to live lifestyles much better than their countrymen in other areas. Rather than allowing humanitarian and development groups free access to communities to work with them in determining needs and planning projects, the DPRK has chosen to filter access and in some cases totally deny it. The DPRK has allowed groups in and chosen to expand humanitarian and development programme possibilities, but has failed to make larger steps in the pursuit of truly providing for its citizens.

## **Conclusion**

This paper examined humanitarian and development aid in the DPRK since 1995. The continuum approach to LRRD advocates that humanitarian aid, rehabilitation, and development should work in a linear process, with each one feeding into the next before phasing out. The contiguous approach sees humanitarian and development aid as capable of being effective while occurring simultaneously within the same context. The case of the DPRK encompasses both these views: the continuum approach in the first decade of international humanitarian aid, and the contiguous in the second.

Establishing how these aid types interact is valuable in considering the perceptions and priorities of the DPRK authorities. The authorities may have decided to prioritise *Juche* or more simply, perceived being a humanitarian aid recipient as not in line with their goals for the state. With this came an acceptance of more diverse groups and projects, and the terms related to trust and time that development projects can entail. However, the DPRK continued to prioritise its ability to control programmes and groups, while neglecting to truly make meaningful steps in other realms towards prioritising the humanitarian needs of its citizens.

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26. See for example Scott Snyder, (2003) p 1. who presented *Juche* as promoting humans, and thus the North Korean leader, as the subject rather than object of action.
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**Table 1:** Estimated NGO/IO involvement in the DPRK

	Resident NGO	Non-Resident NGO	Resident IO	Non-Resident IO
1996	3	31	5	6
2000	12	37	7	6
2006	8	50	9	6
2015	7	48	10	7