

**Reconstructing Korea's Crippled Economy: Korean  
Miners and Nurses in Germany**

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We began our research by examining Korea in the 1960s and 1970s. This era set the foundation for explosive economic growth that put Korea on the map as a significant economic influence in Asia. As we delved deeper into this pivotal moment, we found one group of people who contributed more than any other set of individuals--the padok-geun-lo-ja, or the Korean miners and nurses sent to work in Germany. Immediately, we were drawn to this topic and felt confident that it included the three elements of this year's National History Day theme "Exploration, Encounters, and Exchange in History." Furthermore, focusing on a specific group of people helped our group to focus and concentrate on in-depth analysis.

We visited Namhae German Village in South Korea, a small village specifically established by the Korean government for returning miners and nurses. We conducted interviews with actual miners and nurses who worked in Germany, now in their 70s, that allowed us to survey accurate, first-hand personal perspectives. Through the interviews, we were able to eliminate incorrect interpretations from third-party sources and come up with our own conclusions. There was also a museum inside the village where we watched documentaries and took pictures of artifacts and of photographs from the 1960s that we used in our documentary. The majority of our research was conducted through interviews. Interviews with professors and the head of the Korea Center for Free Enterprise helped us with fact checking and allowed us to gain professional opinions and authenticity for our work. Another important source was Korean and German news articles since they provided us with factual information such as statistics on the economic legacy, specifics on the trade between Korea and Germany, and photographs. Research papers from databases like EBSCO were also helpful since they had deep analysis, such as the lasting cultural effect of the Koreans' encounter with Germany. Books provided deep

analysis as well and helped us change our perspective on the story of the padokguelloja. We watched documentaries to gain knowledge on the topic and gain inspiration for formatting our own documentary.

Our primary goal was to convey the true story of the padokguelloja and minimize the distortion of their stories. This was the main reason for choosing documentary as our format. A documentary would permit us to exhibit both visual and auditory impacts that reveal emotions as well as facts. We were also able to display stock footage that we filmed of modern-day Korea.

At the time, Korea was an extremely poor country and moving to Germany allowed the padok-geun-loja to encounter new culture, opportunities, and economic stability. The labor recruitment agreement brought back enough foreign funds and investments in exchange of the padok-geun-lo-ja's hard work, which significantly contributed to the development of the Korea's economy and made exploration of methods for Korea to develop its economy possible.