

The 4th WSPU Youth Exchange Program

Group Discussion Report on Youth Policy and Youth Participation

Brief Overview of the Program

The 4th WSPU Youth Exchange Program, which took place from July 26th to August 3rd 2013, welcomed youth scout participants from two WSPU international member countries, Thailand and Ethiopia. Three participants from each country had the opportunity to meet the Korean youth scout participants and had a chance to share and exchange cultural knowledge and friendship.

The program was fully packed with a variety of activities which seek to promote friendship between the participants as well as cultural exchange between the Korean and foreign participants. The invited scout members learned about the Korean culture and toured historic sites of Korea, the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea and different cities such as Seoul, Suncheon and Yeosu. The participants also had the opportunity to attend the 3rd Kudu Jamborette to practice scouting activities and enjoy camping in the nature.



Group Discussion

One of the main activities of the Youth Exchange Program was a group discussion led by the participants on youth policy and youth participation in participants' respective countries and how the scout movement can promote overall youth participation in both national and international arenas.



The participants gathered in small groups to discuss and prepare for their presentation. In regards to the questions on the next page, the participants shared their knowledge and different opinions.



The participants also had the opportunity to meet four parliamentarians who are members of the Korea Scout Parliamentary Association (KSPA) and the Vice-President of the Korea Scout Association (KSA). The participants were personally welcomed by the parliamentarians and also had a chance to ask a few questions regarding the youth policy and programs in the Republic of Korea.

- ❖ **Question 1:** How much information do you know about the youth policies in your country? How much can youth participate or assert their voice in the decision-making process? What do you want to change or improve the most in your country in terms of youth-related policies and supportive programs?

Republic of Korea	Thailand	Ethiopia
<p>The Korean scout members stated that the Korean youth do not know much about the national politics and the youth policy.</p> <p>One of the main reasons why they do not know much or take interest in national politics, especially, the youth policy, is because there is a lack of youth participation, such as not being able to vote and lack of education about the national politics and youth policy at schools.</p> <p>Furthermore, the participants believed that there are not enough supportive youth programs provided by the government. If there are youth programs, they felt that such programs are not advertised enough.</p> <p>In conclusion, the Korean participants felt the need to learn more about the youth policy and programs in Korea, in order to work towards higher youth participation in the decision-making process.</p>	<p>The Thailand scout members stated that they know just about enough information about their national politics and the youth policy.</p> <p>In Thailand, there is a “Children and Youth Council” within the government. The council provides supportive and development programs, which derive from the “Children and Youth Act”, to children and the youth under the age of 25 years old.</p> <p>Moreover, the Thailand educational system promotes the scout movement by implementing scouting activity as one of the items in the educational syllabus in every school.</p> <p>Nevertheless, the participants thought their national youth politics should have a youth participation aspect to improve youth participation in a decision-making process as well as to foster youth policy and programs that are more relevant to the need of the youth.</p>	<p>The Ethiopian scout members stated that there are three aspects to national politics as well as the youth policy, which are political, economic, and social aspects.</p> <p>The participants felt that their national government provides supportive youth programs such as internship programs for the youth.</p> <p>Nonetheless, in the overview of national politics, the scout members asserted their opinion on how their national government must first practice fair election and let the youth participate in the election process to increase youth participation in the decision-making process.</p>

- ❖ **Question 2:** How do you think Scouting can promote better youth involvement in decision-making? Why do you Scout? What is the most important aspect for you in Scouting?

Collaborative Answers :

- ✓ One of the common reasons why the participants chose to scout is to build friendship globally and learn how to cooperate with others.
- ✓ Participants have the opportunity to learn about other cultures and values through scout activities.
- ✓ Participants chose to scout to serve the society and perform good turns.
- ✓ As one of the scout beliefs, participants valued the scout atmosphere where peace and generosity are promoted.

In conclusion, the participants strongly agreed that scouting promotes youth development through valuable learning experience and promotes friendship, cooperation and leadership skills. The scout members stated that the aforementioned skills are essential for youth development and eventually, it will foster youth participation in any decision-making process as well as future leadership.

Conclusion

Overall, the group discussion was a great success! The scout participants performed great teamwork skills and openly shared their thoughts and opinions. The outcomes of the discussion on youth policy and youth participation highlight the fact that many youth do not know much information about their national youth policy, especially in regards to the rights and protection of the youth. Moreover, the discussion led by the participants clearly denotes the existence of lack of supportive youth programs provided by the government as well as shortcomings of youth participation in a decision-making process.

In search of ways to improve the aforementioned issues on youth participation, the participants strongly argued that more information on youth policy must be provided and be made easily accessible through education and supportive programs. Also, they argued that the government must further promote youth participation in a decision-making process. In cohesion with such ways of improvement, the participants concluded that scouting values and practice are essential for youth development and building leadership skills which will aid in the youth taking a more active role in participating in a decision-making process.