



# World Scout Parliamentary Union

**Find out the latest news regarding the work of the World Scout Parliamentary Union and its member associations.**

Official Newsletter

Issue n°2 - Spring 2012

## WSPU 2nd Youth Exchange Program

Report of the 2nd Youth Exchange Program, which took place in Korea with participants from Ethiopia, Kenya and Korea.

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## Main feature: Youth Participation: what is it and why does it matter?

Youth participation is a concept often heard. We look into what it exactly means and why it is important to promote.

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## Publication on youth participation

Two useful publications for parliamentarians and non-parliamentarians alike to improve participation of young people in the decision making process.

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## WSPU President visits Kenya and Morocco

Hon. Chung, took the opportunity to visit H.E. Musyoka VP of Kenya and Hon. M. C. Biadillah, Senate President & Hon. K. Ghellab, House Speaker of Morocco

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## News stories

For the latest news, please check our website at

<http://www.wspu.info>



## WSPU granted observer status by the Inter-Parliamentary Union

The Inter-Parliamentary Union held its 126th Assembly in Kampala, Uganda, from 31st March to 5th April 2012. During this important meeting, gathering over 2000 delegates from over 120 countries, the World Scout Parliamentary Union was officially granted observer status.

The [Inter-Parliamentary Union \(IPU\)](#), which was established in 1889, is an international organization of Parliaments. The Union acts as a focal point for world-wide parliamentary dialogue and works for peace and co-operation among peoples and for the firm establishment of representatives democracy.

To this end, it:

- Fosters contacts, co-ordination, and the exchange of experience among parliaments and parliamentarians of all countries:
- Considers questions of international interest and concern and expresses its views on such issues in order to bring about action by parliaments and parliamentarians:
- Contributes to the defense and promotion of human rights - an essential factor of parliamentary democracy and development:
- Contributes to better knowledge of the working of representative institutions and to the



Opening of the 126th Assembly in Uganda

strengthening and development of their means of action.

During this [126th Assembly](#), the IPU revealed "The Global Parliamentary Report", which is a joint publication with the UNDP, which investigates the evolving relationship between parliamentarians and their constituency. In particular, it analyses the challenges and parliamentary responses, and provides examples of good practice. This report is available at the [Global parliamentary Report web pages](#).

Observer status, with the IPU, is a great opportunity for the World Scout Parliamentary Union to strengthen its network of parliamentarians and to work towards developing better youth legislation and introducing Scouting's non-formal educational method to parliamentarians from around the world, interested in a better future for responsible young citizens.

## National Scout Parliamentary Association Survey

WSPU is still interested in gaining more information regarding existing National Scout Parliamentary Associations around the world, as well as having a better understanding of the current ties between parliamentarians (or National Scout Parliamentary Associations) and the National Scout Organizations

(NSOs).

This survey was sent out to all NSOs in October, with the Final Report of the 6th General Assembly and was further promoted in the 1st Edition of this newsletter. However, we have still not received responses by many National Scout Organizations.

We are therefore renewing our call for you to kindly send us the survey, which takes only a few minutes to fill out and send to us.

Please take part in the survey, you may [view and download it here](#). Please send it to us as soon as possible.

Thank you for your kind attention on this matter.

WSPU Secretariat



## WSPU President visits Kenya and Morocco

On January 13, 2012, Hon. Chung Ui Hwa, Chairperson of WSPU and the Vice-Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea officially visited the Republic of Kenya with other delegates of the Korean National Assembly and had the opportunity to meet H.E. Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka, National Chief Commissioner of Kenya Scout Association and Vice-President of the Republic of Kenya.

During this meeting, Hon. Chung and H.E. Musyoka discussed their nations potential opportunities to cooperate in education, science technology, water resources management, new recycling energy development, ICT (information and communications technology), as well as Kenya's possible opportunity to learn from Korea's SaeMaEul Movement (the new community movement of Korea started in 1970).

Hon. Chung and H.E. also discussed the launch of Korean Airlines' direct flight to Nairobi, which should start in June 2012. They both hoped that this will enhance cultural exchange and interactions between the two countries and the development of Kenya's tourism industry. They also look forward to many Korean companies investing in Kenya.

H.E. Musyoka highly praised Korea's efforts to overcome the economic depression in the past and has much interest in cooperation and improving the economic relationship between Kenya and Korea.

Following the meeting, H.E. Musoyka and the Korean delegates attended a dinner meeting hosted by the Korean embassy in Kenya and continued their discussion about the way of promoting increased mutual understanding and goodwill between the two countries.

Hon. Chung, who is also Chairperson of WSPU and of KSPA (Korea Scout Parliamentary Association) also brought dozens of gifts (including footballs, pencils and notebooks) prepared by KSPA and delivered them to H.E. Musyoka and kindly asked him to distribute them to the Kenyan Scouts.

On 17th January, Hon. Chung officially visited Moroccan National Assembly and met Hon. Mohamed Cheikh Biadillah, the President of the Senate and Hon. Karlm Ghellab, the Speaker of the House. During this meeting, Hon. Chung declared that 2012 is an important year, as it marks the 50th anniversary of establishing Korea-Morocco's diplomatic relations. He expressed his hopes that the two countries' relationship will be



even stronger following his, and his fellow Korean National Assembly delegates, official visit to Morocco. Representatives of the Moroccan national assembly responded that they consider Korea as a role model for economic development and think the two countries have a lot of potential for cooperation on human resources and economical development, due to their similar historical and geographical factors. They also added that they would strive to encourage a better development of the two countries' relations.

Hon. Chung, in his role of Chairman of WSPU and KSPA, also brought footballs, pencils and notebooks and asked the Korean embassy in Morocco distribute them to Moroccan Scouts.

## WSPU Youth Exchange Program 2012 welcomes Scouts from Ethiopia & Kenya to Korea

From 12th- 21st January 2012, Scouts from Ethiopia and Kenya joined by Korean Scouts, had the experience of a lifetime by taking part in the 2nd World Scout Parliamentary Union's (WSPU) Youth Exchange Program (YEP).

The aim was to give the opportunity to Scouts from member countries of WSPU/WOSM to travel to a different country (often for the first time), meet Scouts from other countries and have the chance to share their culture and traditions including their Scout activities and experiences. The program also included group discussions on youth participation in decision-making and debating on the role of young people in today's society in the context of the challenges that they face everyday.

The YEP in Seoul was designed so that the African participants could learn about the cultural heritage, traditions and history of Korea, while also experiencing it's modern side. It included activities such as staying in a traditional Korean "Hanok" home, cooking Nokdujun, making Kimchi and Tteokbokki, trying the traditional Korean Hanbok attire and experiencing a homestay with the families of local Scouts. But the Scouts also visited some of the modern buildings and companies, particularly the MBC Broadcasting company offices and "Yuksam" (Building 63), the tallest building in Seoul.

Participants also traveled to Gyeongju, in the southeastern part of the country to see some of the relics of the Kingdom of Shilla. They then moved on to Taebaek, a snow sports resort, in the northeast of South Korea, where the Ethiopians and Kenyan Scouts experienced the snow for the first time and enjoyed winter sports and activities. Visiting the highest cave in Korea in Taebaek Mountain, was one of the high points of the



program for many participants. One leader from Kenya explained "I have only read about caves like this one in my school books. As a geographer, it is such a great experience to be able to see it in person!".

Upon their return to Seoul, participants met with WSPU's President, Hon. Chung Ui Hwa, who was very pleased to meet the participants and learn about their experience in the Korean peninsula. Hon. Chung also shared with the participants that he felt very strongly about the importance of countries helping each other in times of need and that the global Scouting community is an excellent example of people coming together in a peaceful and cooperative manner to create a better future for everyone.

During the group discussion sessions, the participants had the opportunity to voice their opinions on the importance of youth participation. Participants explained about the system and structures that are currently in place in their countries to encourage youth participation and shared about the challenges they face in playing a more active role in the society.

The Scouts took some time to reflect upon the Movement that they belonged to which unites children and young people from diverse cultures and beliefs, Scouting was often mentioned as a wonderful means for young people to better understand the society in which they live. By teaching them to help others, to be good, loyal citizens and develop their skills in general, Scouting also opens their eyes to the world and encourages them to become better global citizens and messengers of peace. Finally the participants thanked the WSPU for creating this opportunity for young Scouts to come together from far away countries.

Read more in the [Report on 2nd Youth Exchange Program](#)



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# Youth participation: what is it and why does it matter?

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## WSPU and Youth participation

Youth participation is a concept that is often heard from the mouths of politicians and leaders throughout the world, but what does it really mean?

WSPU's mission is to create an international network of like-minded decision makers, such as by supporting better legislation for Scouting and youth. Developing new legislation encouraging youth participation is one of the ways to help the situation of young people and empower them. Promoting new laws allowing young people to play a more active role in decision-making; at school, in their local community or at a national level is one example, but it can also mean lowering the voting age, or setting quotas for their participation in committees or even parliament.

### What is Youth?

Unfortunately and paradoxically, there is no true consensus as to the definition of youth. As a matter of fact, what one considers "young people" or "youth" differs from country to country, mostly due to sociological, economic and historical differences.

If one chooses to look at the definition of the word "youth" in the "Merriam-Webster dictionary", it is defined as *"the period between childhood and maturity"*. However, this definition does not bring us any closer to knowing who exactly could be considered as youth.

The difficulty is even more evident, when during a "UN Youth Event" held in Geneva last year, the

It is therefore perhaps preferable not to define youth in a set age bracket, but rather define "youth" as a transitional stage of life, when someone's character, education, dreams, opinions and ideas start to take a firmer shape.

Seeing what is at stake during this transitional stage, it is also crucial that they have the chance to develop their ability to express their opinion

communities which they are a part of. The fact that "youth participation" encompasses such a wide variety of situations also means that there are many ways in which one can encourage young people to participate. It can go from simply asking their opinion about a specific project or decision, to setting quotas for young people in committees and other functions.

Choosing the right measures in order to encourage and facilitate youth participation is therefore one of the important aspects that legislators must consider. In most cases, there is not "one" means or measure that can help facilitate youth participation, but rather a whole spectrum of different initiatives and measures that must be adopted and put into place for them to have a real impact.

### Why is youth participation important?

The opinion of youth and their having an active role is important for many reasons, some of which are exposed here below.

### A fundamental right

It is a recognized right, recognized through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the



**Scouting's educational proposal is a long-term process. It seeks to develop behaviour and personalities that benefit the whole of society throughout life.**

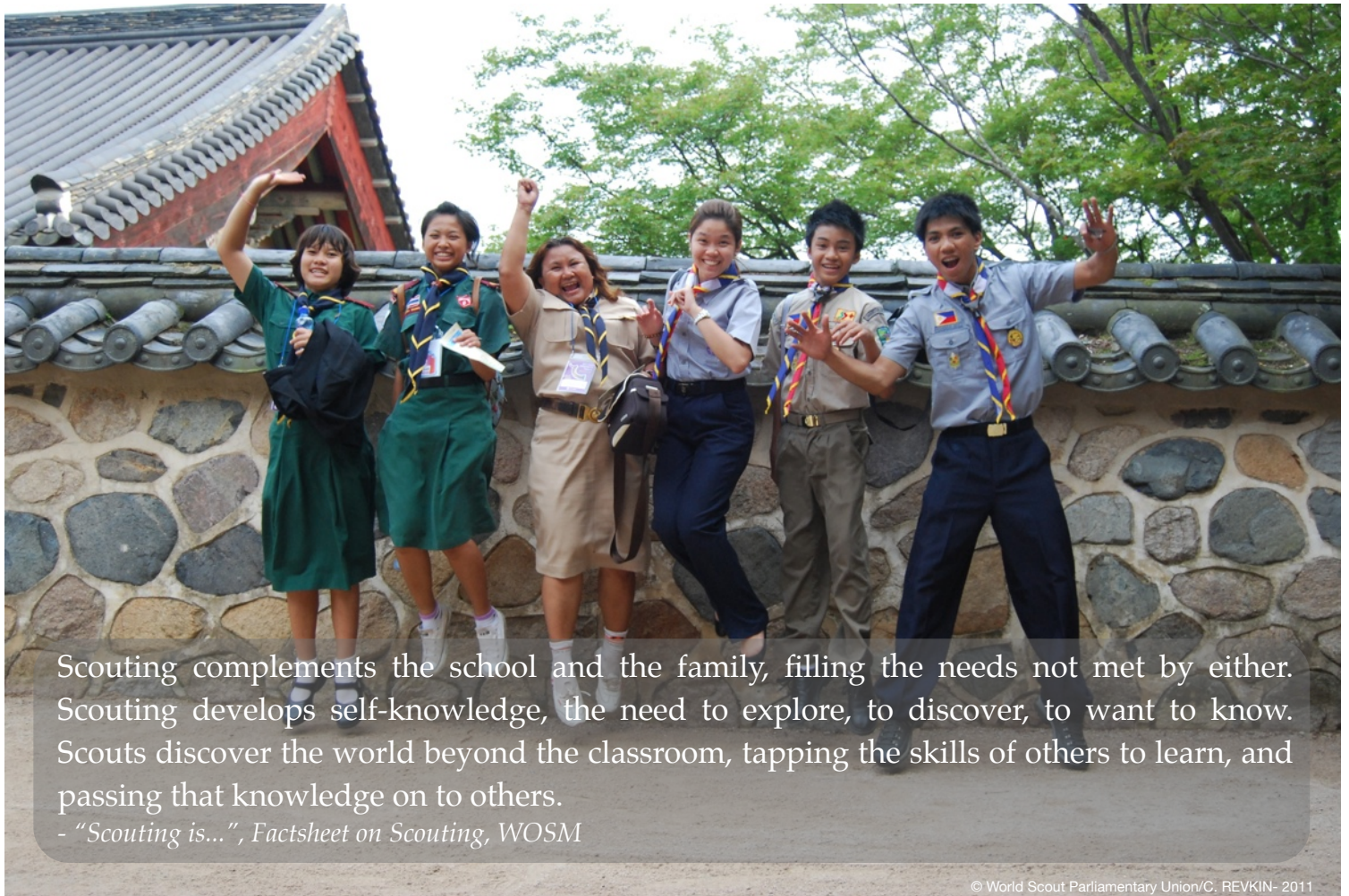
- "Scouting Today" Factsheet on Scouting, WOSM

question arose about the definition of youth. One of the participants, Moncef Belkhat, a Moroccan Minister of Sports and Administration, aptly pointed out *"I have been trying to find a definition for the word "youth". Some people say that youth are teenagers, while others say that they are up to 25, 30, or even 40 years old"*.

and to be involved in the decisions that concern the society of which they are an integral part.

### What exactly is youth participation?

In short, youth participation is about young people having a say in decisions that affect their lives, the organizations, bodies or



Scouting complements the school and the family, filling the needs not met by either. Scouting develops self-knowledge, the need to explore, to discover, to want to know. Scouts discover the world beyond the classroom, tapping the skills of others to learn, and passing that knowledge on to others.

- "Scouting is...", Factsheet on Scouting, WOSM

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Child (UNCRC), as article 12 specifies that "State Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child." It is interesting to note that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) is the most widely

not mistaken. As many studies and reports show, involving young people in issues that affect them has shown to be an effective way to develop the youth's sense of responsibility and understanding how these decisions affect their lives.

"Adults often assume that they know what children are thinking and feeling and so do not ask for their input

Moreover, as a publication by the "Youth Employment Network" also indicates, "Youth participation must lie at the centre of the creation of policies for youth. Just as the recipient of any policy must be engaged to ensure their concerns are effectively addressed, youth are no exception. They must be viewed as partners in devising solutions to common concerns."<sup>4</sup>

The following case example<sup>5</sup> also displays the clear advantage of listening to the young:

**Youth participation leads to a more democratic society**

In many developing countries, youth represent an incredibly large portion of the population. According to the World Bank<sup>6</sup>, "while they represent almost 50% of the developing country population, they are nearly 60% of the poor". These kind of numbers speak for themselves as to the importance of involving youth in decisions that affect this huge part of society.

Moreover, the Youth Employment Network Guide also emphasizes some of the educational benefits of youth participation in order to create better democracies:

"Youth participation encourages youth to become active members of a democratic society. By involving and empowering youth through the political process, young people develop important skills and improve self-confidence. They also gain a greater understanding of human rights and governance that is important in both newly formed and well-established democracies."

**Main challenges to youth participation**

Despite these many points, young people continue to be viewed as

**The importance of listening to children**

An interesting example of the contrast between adult assumptions and the reality of children's lives was highlighted in a project undertaken with four- and five-year olds in a poor district of London. The children were asked to produce a mural depicting their local environment as it currently was and then as they would like to see it. The researchers found that children objected to the local council providing play areas covered in grass – widely thought to be the most appropriate surfacing. Rather, they wanted concrete areas because grass made it impossible for them to see broken glass, dog excrement and the discarded needles used by drug addicts.



**Through Scouting, young people learn to live and work together. They are involved in decision-making, accepting responsibility, developing cooperation and leadership.**

- "Scouting Today" Factsheet on Scouting, WOSM

ratified International agreement<sup>2</sup>.

**Involving youth in decisions about policies which concern them result in better youth policies**

"Ask the boy" Lord Baden-Powell, Founder of the Scout Movement liked to often say and indeed he was

when making decisions about matters that concern them. Adults need to listen to children in order to claim to speak on their behalf. If not, the decisions they make for children may have negative rather than positive consequences"<sup>3</sup>.

members of society, who are not (yet) capable of making the right decisions, due to a lack of experience and knowledge. As the YEN guide<sup>8</sup> indicates:

*“Youth continue to face institutionalised prejudice in many quarters that see youth as lacking expertise, experience, capacity, or drive. Despite the increase in the number and range of mechanisms to engage youth, young participants continue to see their roles undermined by governments and policymakers, based on these perceptions.”*

Moreover, the participation of young people is also made difficult by the social hierarchy and traditions. Throughout the world, senior members are respected for their experience and wisdom and their opinion is traditionally well respected. Young people are usually taught to be respectful to elders and value their opinion. Unfortunately, in some cases this leads to a situation where it is considered unacceptable or rude for young people to express their opinion.

During WSPU's last youth exchange program, participants from Ethiopia, Kenya and Korea expressed the frustration they sometimes feel in those situations. They wish they could have the freedom to express their opinion, but know that it would not necessarily be welcome and could be considered impolite.

It is quite clear that changing social perceptions is one of the main challenges of youth participation. If we educate young people that their opinion is not important, they

will never develop the desire or courage to express themselves. However, overcoming these perceptions is possible through better education and through effective national youth policies, developed with their help.

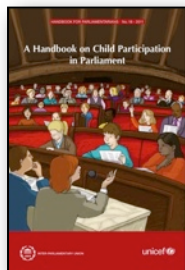
WSPU was always meant to be a platform on which to share best practices of national youth policies. But it is also a good place to put forth how Scouting's non-formal educational approach has a positive impact on the education of young people, including its Scout patrol system and peer education approach. This whole ensures the development of young people into responsible citizens, having the confidence and courage to express themselves and eager to make a constructive contribution to society.

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4. Youth Employment Network, Youth Consultative Group, “[Joining Forces for Young People: A Practical Guide to Collaboration with Youth People](#)”, p. 10.
5. Lansdown, Gerison, Promoting Children's Participation in Democratic Decision-making, United Nations Children's Fund Innocenti Research Centre, Florence, February 2001, [www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/insight6.pdf](http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/insight6.pdf), accessed 8 August 2011.
6. From World Bank website: <http://go.worldbank.org/EF3I0LWYJ0>, accessed 9 April 2012.
7. Youth Employment Network, op. cit. p. 11.
8. Ibid. p. 9.

# Improving youth participation

*There are many important international organizations working towards improving democracy, such as through better youth participation. You will find here below, examples of publications which can be useful handbooks to any parliamentarian wanting to improve the opportunities for young people to have a more active role in the democratic process.*



#### **A Handbook on Child Participation in Parliament**

This handbook, a collaborative effort of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and UNICEF, addresses some of the key ways in which parliamentarians can guarantee that children's voices, concerns and interests find expression in and are taken into account by parliaments. It aims to provide parliamentarians with information on a variety of effective mechanisms to ensure that children's participation in parliaments is meaningful, reflects the voices of the most marginalized and contributes to policies, laws and budgets that will help correct the disparities and inequities that afflict the world's children.



#### **Joining forces with young people: A Practical guide to collaboration with youth employment**

Produced by the Youth Consultative Group, in partnership with the YEN secretariat, this guide for youth acts to facilitate and motivate young peoples' participation in youth employment policymaking. This guide is part of ongoing efforts to systemise the substantive and meaningful engagement of young people in the development and implementation of youth employment strategies

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