

GUIDELINES FOR NATIONAL YOUTH NETWORK

Youth Involvement in the Interamerican Scout Region



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Guidelines for National Youth Networks

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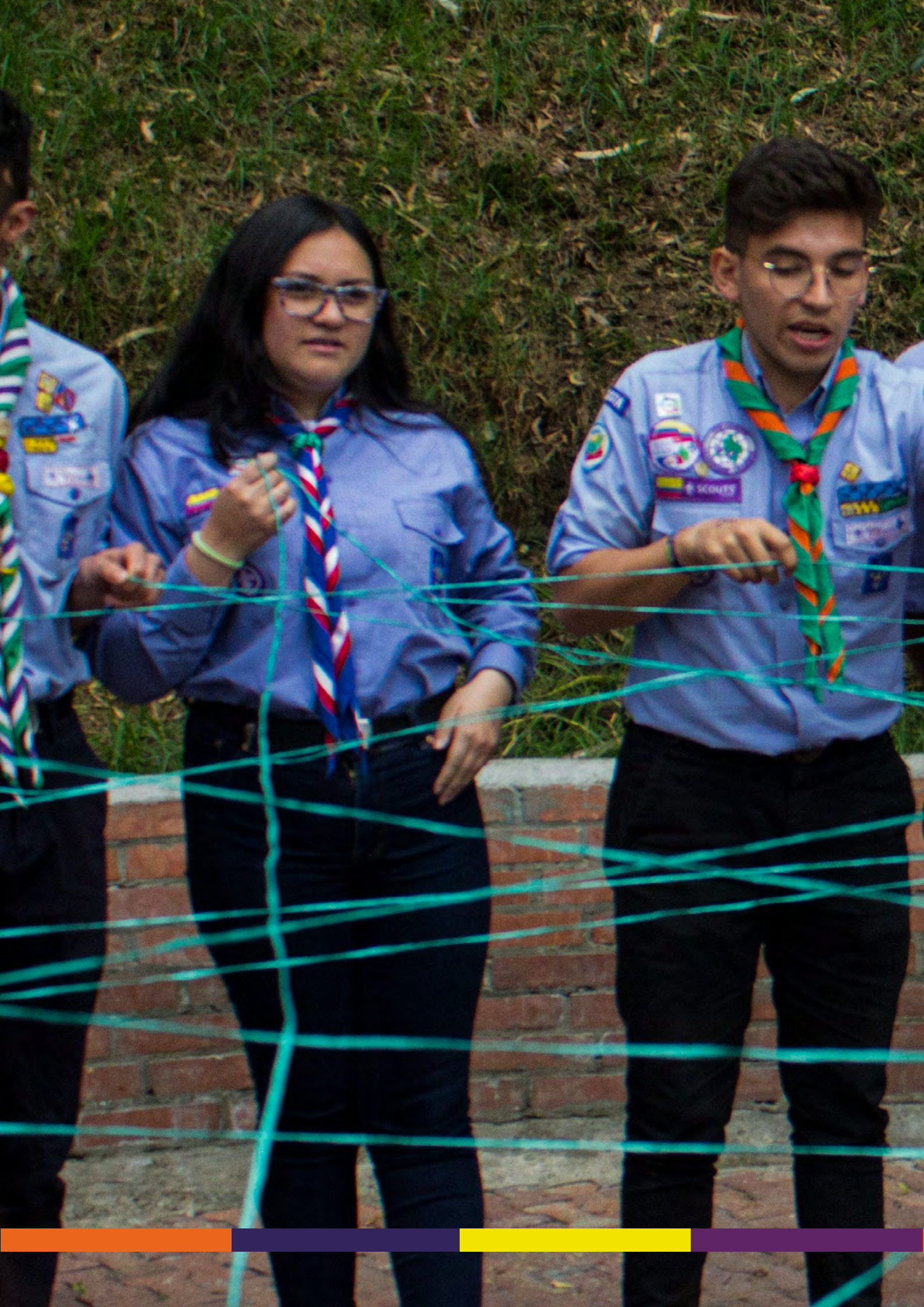
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GUIDELINES FOR NATIONAL YOUTH NETWORKS

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Red Interamericana de Jóvenes
Interamerican Youth Network



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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to present a proposal that contributes to National Scout Organizations, in the implementation of one of the Youth Involvement Models proposed for the Interamerican Scout Region: the Youth Network. This document will allow Scout Organizations to have a reference on how the Youth Network can be implemented in a practical, coherent and integrated way with the policies and processes that the organization has established and that are specific to its culture, history and objectives.

Increasingly, Scout Organizations are joining the effort to launch and enhance the involvement of young people in spaces where they can acquire tools, develop skills and experience collaborative work. Recognizing that Youth Involvement is a key element of the Scout Method encourages us to strengthen and guarantee Youth Involvement at all levels in Scouting.

Therefore, after a diagnostic processes, the need for reference documents containing general guidelines and concepts, such as regulatory frameworks and guidelines for the construction of new processes and improvement of existing ones, was identified. This document is expected to contribute to strengthening and ensuring Youth Involvement in the fields of: scout unit, institution and community.

“ Our objective is to help and facilitate with the first steps for the formation of this Youth Involvement platform ”



Hi, friends!

My name is Juan Lucas Rusiani, I am a Rover from Argentina, I am 21 years old and together with Laura Bates, we are the Coordinators of the Interamerican Network in the period 2018-2021.

We formulated this document considering the experiences and doubts that the different countries have had when forming their National Youth Network.

We hope that it will be useful for you to undertake this great and beautiful task of creating your youth network.

Our objective is to help and facilitate with the first steps for the formation of this Youth Involvement platform, which will provide you with the opportunity to exchange information, best practices and achieve collective work within your country and in the Interamerican Region.

Remember that the Interamerican Network is made up of everyone, and you will always find support in it. Enjoy the process of forming your network and when it is established, I am sure you will grow and learn a lot.

We wish you the greatest success on the path that you are undertaking and I thank you for having encouraged yourselves to take action to increase Youth Involvement in the Interamerican Scout Region.

**Yours in Scouting,
Juan Lucas Rusiani
Interamerican Youth Network Coordinator**



“The creativity and impetus of youth, together with the experiences and learning of the generations that came before, make the perfect combination”

All societies, from the beginning of time, lived in constant evolution, and we as a movement also evolve and adapt to the passage of time. Youth is not far behind and those who do not believe, who do not adapt, who do not build are scarce. The creativity and impetus of youth, together with the experiences and learning of the generations that came before, make the perfect combination to adapt to the needs of today.

This document was created precisely based on the experiences and needs of the National Youth Networks, thanks to the efforts of youth from all the networks through feedback and comments, and the Coordinating Core (Mauricio Veayra, Laura Delgado, Juanlu Rusiani and myself), with many video calls in the “craziest” hours.

Creating and/or improving a network is not an easy task; however, you are taking the first step of many steps that, although they will be for the future, sometimes you will feel that you are going to the opposite direction, but it is important that you know that it is normal and it is all right, it is an experience that will help you inside Scouting but also outside. It is as they say: “a step back only to gain impulse and then keep moving forward”.

It may sound cliché, but we are all part of the network and it is important that you know that all voices count, we are all worth the same and we are equally important, in the end, without you, we would not have an Interamerican Youth Network. I really hope that this document helps you in the formation of your network, as well as in its update. We wish you many successes on this journey of learning, working, making mistakes and definitely a lot of fun.

**Yours in Scouting,
Laura Bates
Interamerican Youth Network Coordinator**

1 THE YOUTH NETWORK IN NATIONAL SCOUT ORGANIZATIONS

A network is a form of social interaction, defined as a dynamic exchange between people, groups and institutions in different contexts. It is an open and under construction system that involves groups that identify with the same needs and problems and that are organized to enhance their resources.

The Scout Youth Network is a form of Youth Involvement¹ that aims to interconnect and serve as a platform for permanent cooperation between youth at all levels of a National Scout Organization (NSO). It refers to the involvement of all youth members with the purpose of ensuring constant communication at group, district/ regional or national level.

Networking seeks to create a space for exchange, around topics of interest to the youth of the NSO, in order to share information, documents, tools, strategies and their results, experiences and good practices, searching to contribute to the objectives of the National Strategic Plan, all aimed at promoting the sustainable growth and institutional strengthening of the NSO.

DEVELOP

EXCHANGE

FOSTER

STRENGTHEN

1- The Interamerican Youth Involvement Policy defines Youth Involvement as the process by which young people, based on the values of the Scout Law and Promise, commit themselves and are an active part in decision-making at the unit level, institution and/ or community; contributing to the achievement of the Mission of the Scout Movement.

2 OBJECTIVES OF A NATIONAL SCOUT YOUTH NETWORK

- Enable and encourage the exchange of best practices² among members.
- Promote experiences of collaborative work, as a permanent process of building knowledge at local and national level.
- Encourage young leaders to participate in the development of material that promotes information exchange among members, institutional structures, international collaboration, youth involvement in decision-making processes and young people's leadership skills.
- Establish the network's communication and working methods within the Organization.
- Promote and enable tools and meetings for skills development, so that young people can actively participate in decision-making.
- Guarantee constant access to communication channels and to spaces for young people at local, national and Interamerican level.
- Serve as a communication channel between young people and the structure of the Organization so as to gather and deliver information.
- Work together with the Interamerican Youth Network.*



2- The Mechanism for the Identification, registration and exchange of best practices defines Best Practices as those experiences locally, nationally or regionally, internally and externally, with stakeholders and in processes leading to relevant results of impact on National Scout Organizations and that are replicable.

* "The Interamerican Youth Network is a network of networks; therefore, it is made up of all the national youth networks. "Interamerican Policy of Regional Networks" - March 2019.

WHAT IS NOT THE YOUTH NETWORK?

- A parallel structure to the National one.
- An incidence platform whose purpose is to access to other positions.
- A closed or exclusive group.
- A team that plans and develops projects for young people.
- A platform that replaces young people's life in the scout Unit³.

MEMBERS

According to Youth Involvement Models in the Interamerican Region, young people from 18 to 29 years old is encourage to participate. Nevertheless, National Scout Organizations will be one to define Youth Network participant's age range. We recommend NSOs to establish the age range considering the reality of the organization, how Youth Programme is implemented, young people's interests, etc. Hence, all young people from NSOs can belong to the National Scout Youth Network.

OPERATION

The Scout Youth Network is a permanent participation and interconnection open space. It encourages collaboration among youth from different groups and territories so as to exchange information, to promote project development and to strengthen scout brotherhood and sisterhood.

Through virtual means and platforms, the Network can foster the creation of specific working groups, considering the ideas, activities and projects that young people from the NSO have proposed.

Those ideas, activities and projects can be of local⁴, zonal⁵, national or international level. The network will fulfill its objective by becoming a promoter and disseminator of calls to actions, transforming itself into a network of support, inspiration and exchange of experiences, skills and knowledge that enables and strengthens the initiatives of young members, their group of friends, their Scout groups, their districts and finally the entire organization.

3- Scout Unit refers to a group of boys, girls or young people of the same age, in which they develop the Youth Programme of the Scout Organization.

4- This level includes all the units of a Scout Group.

5- This level refers to all in between a Scout Group and the National level. This may vary from one NSO to another because of the extension of it. It can be just one or more levels e.g. district, zone, region, etc.

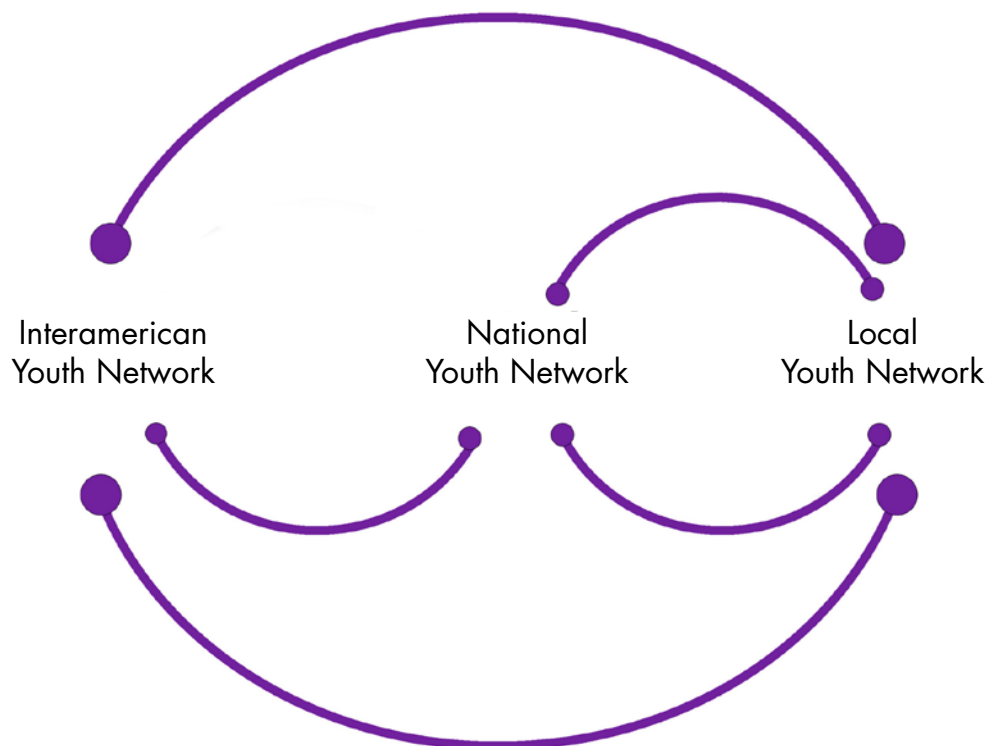
Regarding modalities in which a Youth Network can work we propose:

LOCAL NETWORKS

Depending on factors like a country's territory, common interests, interconnection realities, and information flow, we recommend establishing "local networks". The Local Youth Networks are made up at the grass roots level, nearer to scouts groups, which may be divided in scout districts, zones, etc. These networks foster the connection and interaction among young people from the different communities that they belong to.

This modality should be analysed by the members so as to decide whether it is the best alternative.

In this mode of operation, Local Networks belong to the National network as connecting nodes. For this modality of operation, representatives or coordinators could be assigned for each zone, who support as spokesperson of their local network.



WORKING GROUPS

The Youth Network can establish thematic working groups at national level, considering the needs identified by the network and the members' interests. The basic function of having thematic working groups is to collaborate and contribute to the national and local network's action plan. For example, working groups for graphic design, social networks, monitoring and evaluation, communication.

PRESENTIAL AND VIRTUAL MEETINGS

National Networks can call to regular meetings that allows reporting, election of coordinators, an exchange of experiences and knowledge. These meetings could be face-to-face or in virtual means, organized by the national coordination. Likewise, the meetings could be at zonal or national level, or even within working groups, depending on the established working modality.

WORKING PLANS

The Youth Network is a team that like any other should define goals, tasks and schedule as it aims to contribute to the needs and plans of the Scout Organization and its young members.

Having a work plan allows the team to better organize their purpose through objectives, indicators, actions, responsibilities and time, so that they can track their advances, make them visible and guide the efforts to achieve the proposed objectives.



We recommend formulating work plans that correspond to the management periods of each coordination, to regularly check advances and propose changes.

We encourage that national work plans can take into account and stay aligned with the Interamerican Youth Network work plan so as to contribute to a common view. Moreover the plan, should be aligned with the Strategic Plan of the National Scout Organization.

3 COMUNICATIONS AND ITS CHANNELS

The communication among members of the Network will be horizontal, fluid, open and permanent. The Network will decide which channels of communication is going to use and that decision will be informed to all the members. We suggest to keep communication channels in constant update, ensuring accessibility, responding to trends and meet young people's specific needs.

We also suggest the use of social networks, newsletters, e-mails, blogs or any other platform or electronic channel that facilitates the communication with internal and external public.



BEST PRACTICES/INFORMATION REPOSITORIES

One of the purposes of the Youth Network is to share information and best practices. The Coordinators will be responsible for concentrating, cataloging and creating information and best practices repositories, for the members of each network to check them out. In addition, these Coordinators will be also responsible for linking their networks best practices with the Interamerican Region's and those of the countries that comprise it.

4 COORDINATION

The National Youth Network is coordinated by young leaders, with the support of the NSO at all levels (group, zone, national). It is advised that young people themselves chooses, within a democratic process, their National Coordinators to help managing the team. These people should have a future perspective, be interested in networking and must have favorable skills to lead it.

Coordinators have no formal authority. They only take upon themselves the responsibility of keeping people linked in the most proper way and they periodically report results.

It is important to highlight that the coordinators are not only in charge of coordinating, as the name implies, but that the role that is exercised is to lead, motivate and continue to be agents of change. They are not expected to be a benchmark for bosses, but servant leaders, with all that this implies.

This central core can be made up of one, two or several people. This number will depend on territorial extension, national structure, culture and singularities of each country. The decision must be continuously analyzed, evaluated and supported.

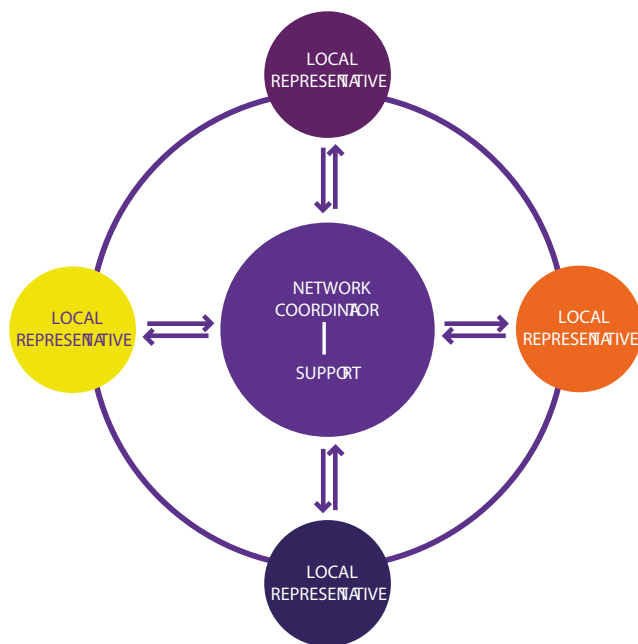
NATIONAL COORDINATORS BASIC FUNCTIONS

- To animate the National Youth Network.
- To ensure effective communication between stakeholders.
- To stay in contact with those representatives and members who are part of the Network.
- To facilitate the processes of dissemination, production and multiplication of information.
- To establish the work teams that they consider necessary for the proper functioning of the Network.
- To keep contact with the Interamerican Youth Network, collaborating with their tasks and offering the vision of their local reality.
- To participate in the Interamerican Youth Network meetings, as well as the Interamerican Youth Forum if the NSO so decides.
- To interact with other National Youth Networks from the region searching for shared growth.

COORDINATION CORE

The Youth Network Coordination Core is made up by the Youth Network Coordinators, elected by their peers democratically plus an adult advisor (more details later in this document) that will facilitate and help them by monitoring and advising them.

This team of coordinators does not have a specific hierarchy, but their work is based on their different skills and experiences. This team should guide internal decision-making processes with dialogue, cooperation, negotiation and consensus



COORDINATION CORE FUNCTIONS

- To act as secretary of the National Network and propose a work plan. Coordinate the work of the network members, follow up and assist in case of need and report periodically to the national structures when necessary.
- Contribute to disseminate materials and documents that are developed within the NSO in all the levels and promote the use of them.
- Serve as a communication channel between the national structure (whoever is assigned to link with) and the Network members. This means transmitting contributions, comments and opinions on any topic.
- Make contributions and/or participate on the material and tools development the Network intends to generate.
- Generate and manage spaces for communicating and meeting including the Coordination Core, the representatives of all the national territory and the national structures.

ADULT SUPPORT

Adult support will be necessary for a better management of the National Youth Network. For this, it is suggested that every NSO appoints a person who is part of the national team and acts as an advisor (preferably one that works in Youth Programme are). The principal function of this adult is to contribute to the improvement of the Coordination Core, therefore, the National Youth Network.



It is recommended that this person advising the Network, is over 25 years old, however, this will depend on each NSO to decide.

SUGGESTED FUNCTIONS

- Serve as a link between the Youth Network Coordination Core and the NSO national structure.
- Promote an environment that encourages collaboration and personal development of Youth Network members.
- Support Youth Network Coordinators in the formulation and execution of their work plans.
- Accompany Youth Network Coordinators in monitoring and evaluating of the work plan.
- Encourage the participation of all members in carrying out the proposed tasks and activities.
- Ensure that the actions taken by the Youth Network are carried out in concordance to the NSO's guidelines.
- Support the link between the Youth Network and private and/or public organizations for the development of projects and activities.



BENEFITS OF HAVING A YOUTH NETWORK

- Is a permanent space for Youth Involvement.
- Is a space for information exchange.
- It promotes Youth Involvement at all levels, contributing to generational change from all over the national territory.
- Empowers, encourages and promotes youth to take action, carrying out projects, contributing to the development of skills.
- It make information exchange more accesible to all levels of the NSO.
- It fosters collaboration among youth within the NSO and with other NSOs to generate initiatives that answers to local relevant issues of their communities.
- Allows all areas of the NSO to work with youth in developing innovative initiatives, approaches and tasks.
- Avoids unofficial internal networks.

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