

Interamerican Diversity and Inclusion Policy





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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE 26th INTERAMERICAN SCOUT CONFERENCE, HOUSTON 2016.

4/16: Interamerican Policy on Diversity and Inclusion

The Conference, considering:

- ◆ That "Diversity and Inclusion" is one of the six Strategic Priorities included in the Strategies for the Scout Movement, approved in the 40th World Scout Conference, and that this priority establishes that the Scout Movement must reflect the societies where it exists and is actively working to welcome all people without distinction. This diversity must not only be reflected in the amount of members, but also in the methods and programs used in the Movement;
- ◆ That from the 18th to the 20th of September, 2015, the Interamerican Symposium on Diversity and Inclusion took place, and in it, the fundamental concepts for the topics of diversity and inclusion were established for the Interamerican Region;

Agrees on:

- ◆ Adopting the Interamerican Policy on Diversity and Inclusion;
- ◆ Requesting that the Interamerican Scout Committee take the necessary measures to guarantee the implementation of the directions established in the Interamerican Diversity and Inclusion Policy;
- ◆ Inviting the National Scout Organizations to implement the directions of the Interamerican Diversity and Inclusion Policy;
- ◆ Urging the National Scout Organizations to develop and implement their own National Policies on Diversity and Inclusion, consistent with the Interamerican Policy.



1. BACKGROUND

In December 2014, the World Scout Committee established the Triennial Plan 2014-2017 for the World Organization of the Scout Movement. According to this plan, Diversity and Inclusion is one of the six strategic priorities established for this period.

This priority states that "Scouting should reflect the societies in which it exists and actively work to welcome all individuals without distinction. This diversity should not only be reflected in the membership, but also the methods and programmes used within the Movement".

In response to this strategic priority, in September 2015 the Interamerican Symposium on Inclusion and Diversity in Scouting was held in the City of Knowledge, Panama. This was the first time that the Interamerican Scout Region hosted an event to discuss these issues.

As a result, the document entitled *Diversity and Inclusion in the Interamerican Scout Region* was generated. In this document, the basic definitions on the subject that are to be implemented within the Interamerican region are set.

2. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The purpose of the Interamerican Diversity and Inclusion Policy is:

- ◆ To provide a comprehensive overview of the core concepts in which the Diversity and Inclusion in the Interamerican Scout Region policy is based.
- ◆ To serve as a reference and support framework for the development, innovation, implementation and evaluation tasks on the theme of Diversity and Inclusion, for both National Scout Organizations (NSOs) and regional levels.

3. APPLICABILITY OF THE POLICY

In order to contribute to the fulfillment of the Mission and Vision of Scouting, this policy is addressed to all National Scout Organizations recognized by the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM) belonging to the Interamerican Scout Region. Likewise, it also involves different regional level bodies: Interamerican Scout Conference, Interamerican Scout Committee, World Scout Bureau - Interamerican Support Centre, regional networks of Youth, Youth Programme, Adults in Scouting, Institutional Development and Communications, as well as any other network, mechanism or structure to be created in the future.



The principles governing the Interamerican Diversity and Inclusion Policy are:

Diversity and Inclusion as a result of an educational process. The idea of a more inclusive education involves us all, but it has special emphasis on those most vulnerable or on minority groups who are often the target of discrimination, exclusion, marginalization or failure. Inclusion is not only given in the educational context, but rather on the participation of all levels and in all areas of society. As a non formal education proposal, Scouting sees in Diversity and Inclusion a valuable element that cuts across all areas of its educational proposal. Therefore, it must be part of the training curricula in order to develop individuals who live according to these elements and thus strengthen the social fabric.

Diversity and Inclusion based on rights. Conventions on Human Rights emphasize that freedom, justice and peace around the world are based on recognition of the inherent dignity and worth and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family, highlighting the need to ensure that people with disabilities and vulnerable or minority groups exercise these rights fully and without discrimination. This means that NSOs should establish the necessary mechanisms to ensure that people with disabilities or from minority or vulnerable groups access with equal opportunities to the educational proposal of the Scout Movement.

Diversity and Inclusion based on institutional policies. Institutional policies are the answer offered by the institutions, in our case the NSOs, to the demands of society. In addition to establishing rules (laws, regulations, etc.) they involve everything the organization does and are the result of the process of political participation of various actors within the organization. Institutional policies change according to the historical, social and economic context in which the organization is immersed. Therefore, NSOs need to establish standards that create open spaces for Diversity and Inclusion in all areas in which it operates.

Diversity and Inclusion as equalization of opportunities. The equalization of opportunities is understood as the process through which all services offered by society are made available to all. In Scouting, this can be interpreted as the process that NSOs need to follow in order to make their educational proposal accessible, with equal opportunities, to all children, youth and adults.

Assertive language as an advocate for Diversity and Inclusion. Assertive language includes terms, concepts and purposeful and constructive attitudes that promote a positive assessment of Diversity and Inclusion.

Inclusive practices as a means to achieve real inclusion. In Scouting, Educational Activities are understood as a set of actions undertaken by children and young people from a ludic approach with the aim of promoting learning experiences. These experiences should favor the development of Diversity and Inclusion concepts in the children and young people who are part of the Scout Movement.

4. PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICY



5. KEY DEFINITIONS

5.1. Mission of Scouting

The Mission of Scouting, adopted at the World Scout Conference in Durban, South Africa in 1999, is: "To contribute to the education of young people, through a value system based on the Scout Promise and Law, to help build a better world where people are self-fulfilled as individuals and play a constructive role in society."

This mission is fulfilled:

- ◆ With the participation of young people in a process of non-formal education throughout their formative years;
- ◆ By using a specific method where each Scout is the main agent of his/her own development, so that he/she becomes an autonomous, supportive, responsible and committed person;
- ◆ By helping young people establish a system of values for their lives based on spiritual, social and personal principles expressed in the Scout Promise and Law.

5.2. Vision of Scouting

By 2023 Scouting will be the world's leading educational youth movement, enabling 100 million young people to be active citizens creating positive change in their communities and in the world based on shared values.

5.3. Principles of Scouting

Scouting is based on the following principles:

- ◆ Duty to God. Adherence to spiritual principles, loyalty to the religion that expresses them and acceptance of the duties resulting therefrom.
- ◆ Duty to others. Loyalty to one's country in harmony with the promotion of local, national and international peace, understanding and cooperation. Participation in the development of society with recognition and respect for the dignity of humanity and for the integrity of the natural world.
- ◆ Duty to self. Responsibility for the development of oneself.

5.4. Cause of the Scout Movement

The 39th Scout Conference held in the city of Curitiba-Brasil in January 2011, adopted "Education for Life" as the cause of Scouting.



5.5. Transversal thematic definitions of Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity. Diversity refers to the variety and difference of the people between themselves. This includes any dimension that can be used to differentiate between groups or between individuals.

For Scouting, recognising diversity means valuing and having regard for people who have different abilities, backgrounds, beliefs, knowledge, skills, needs and experiences and using these differences to create cohesive and diverse communities at local, national and global levels. It is essential that Scouting recognises diversity and builds upon each person's different contributions to create a better world.

As a Movement, we aspire that our membership reflects all the young people and adults located in countries and local communities where scout groups operate. Diversity is part of the principles and values of Scouting, and a core component of key policies and guidelines of our organisation. Therefore, having "diverse organisations" is essential to demonstrate that diversity is something that is valued and practiced within Scouting.

Inclusion. We understand Inclusion in the Scout Movement as the process of identifying and responding to the different needs and characteristics of the members of the Organization. This vision involves changes and amendments in contents, approaches, structures and strategies, actively engaging all children and young people, as well as all adults involved.

Scouting aims to be inclusive to all young people through the Youth Programme, which is accessible so that each young person can participate and benefit from. Inclusion also needs to be considered for all adults in Scouting, and reflected through how we recruit, train, support and retain our adult membership.

Overall, we aspire to design, plan, deliver and review our programmes, adult management systems and organisational structures to ensure Scouting is inclusive and accessible for everyone.

Vulnerability. Vulnerability is a relative and dynamic concept that refers to the diminished ability of a person or group of people to cope with and recover from situations that affect them. Vulnerability is not confined solely to poverty, but also includes social liasons, the relationship between gender and power, environmental factors, among others.

Minorities. A numerically inferior group compared to the rest of the population, in a non-dominant position, whose members have different ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics than the rest of the population and portray, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity to preserve their culture, traditions, religion or language.

Stigma. A condition, an attribute, a feature, a behavior - real or imaginary - that discredits or damages the reputation of a person. Stigmas create the idea that one person is inferior to others. Lack of information, false beliefs, fears and moral judgments are some of the factors involved in the creation of stigmas.





Discrimination. To give unfavorable treatment, to exclude or marginalize certain a person or group of people based on a real or imaginary stigma. Discrimination may be by action or omission, subtly or overtly hostile, direct or indirect, intentional or unintentional.

Welfarism. A set of practices that is based on the premise that people are passive objects of the action of others. Within the Scout Movement assistance-based models prevail that keep us in a frame of contradiction, since Inclusion cannot be fully achieved from a welfare perspective.

Educational Activity. In the Scout Movement, Educational Activities are understood as the set of actions taken by children and young people from a ludic approach, in order to promote learning experiences. The educational purpose of the activities not only responds to objectives, but favors the deployment of the different skills that contribute to the physical and emotional development of each young person, making him/her the leading player of his/her learning.



6. ELEMENTS OF THE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

6.1. Institutional approach to issues related to Diversity and Inclusion

Institutional Position for the inclusion of a greater number of persons with disabilities, minorities and vulnerable contexts. Institutional positioning implies taking a stance on current issues that require a response. This position must be explicit and must be included in institutional documents and made visible in the everyday actions of the NSOs.

Diagnostic process. In order to define the scope of the Inclusion proposal for the National Scout Organization as a real option of development for children, youth and adults, quantitative and qualitative data that reflect the actual context in which it is inserted is required.

Support infrastructure. Due to the complexity of the issue and the context in which the NSOs operate, it is essential to create liaisons and partnerships with government agencies and organizations that not only provide knowledge, but also provide the ability to generate exchange, implementation and development networks.

Room for improvement. Situations that are generated in the world today should not be seen only as a problem but as an opportunity for development and growth. Daily practice allows us to identify needs, strengths and interests that require new forms of intervention and management of innovative resources.

6.2. Inclusion of people with disabilities in Scouting

Attracting people with disabilities. People with disabilities have a condition (any deficiency or difficulty) that represents a limitation in their daily development and activities, not seen as complicated for other individuals. These limitations can hinder their physical, sensory and/or mental abilities. As from the WOSM document Guidelines: Scouting for people with disabilities, a disability is a condition that could make it difficult for a young person or an adult to access or participate in certain activities.

Scouting can play an active role in introducing and getting people with disabilities involved in its educational proposal; engaging parents or other reference persons (professionals, agents of civil society specialists in the subject) in this process; encouraging other group members to accept and help those with disabilities throughout the development of the Youth Programme; and ensuring that adults with disabilities play an active role within the group improving their self-confidence and self-esteem.

Good practices that favor the inclusion of people with disabilities. Practices that favor inclusion are those aimed at strengthening inclusive ambits, minimizing the barriers that prevent or hinder access to people with disabilities to participation and learning.

- ◆ *Getting all agents involved.* Understanding that inclusion practices must be group-collective and individual-singular. That is, they must involve the whole community: family, adult educators, volunteers, children, youth and other civil or governmental entities.
- ◆ *Recognizing the variability.* Understanding that we are in a context where we welcome children, youth and adults with different ways of learning, bonding and interacting, with unique features.





◆ *Identifying the alternatives.* It is the need to discover the own characteristics, strengths and necessary tools for active participation and full enjoyment of persons with disabilities in the activities of the Scout Movement.

◆ *Defining the scope of the proposal.* After making an initial diagnosis, the ability and willingness of the NSOs to include people with disabilities will be reviewed. Necessary actions will be defined to bring the educational proposal of the Scout Movement to them, in order to ensure their full participation.

A flexible and accessible proposal. The Scout Method is the ideal support framework, both for those who have a disability and those who do not. It is the task of adult volunteers, following the institutional decision on the inclusion of people with disabilities in Scouting, to build a framework that will enable equality and equity in access to the Educational Proposal of the Scouting Movement.

The role of families. Families play both supporting and organizing roles in the growth, maturation, development of social skills and learning of individuals, from the moment a person is born until he/she is inserted in the social sphere. Therefore, families constitute a very important framework that make possible that allow for the learning of the history, needs and strengths of a person.

Overprotection stigma. One of the paradigms that must be broken is overprotection. Overprotection of people with disabilities is generated by the thought that they are not able to learn certain attitudes or actions, and aims to provide what he/she can't do for him/herself and "take care" of the environment around him/her, because the environment is often seen as threatening. This often generates greater limitations than disability itself, reaching marginalization levels.

Adults with disabilities. Several questions arise when thinking about the inclusion of disabled adults, especially in those cases where people with disabilities have experienced the educational programme as children and as young people and continue to be a part of the Scouting Movement as adults. While there are no complete answers to these questions, it is necessary to think that it is the adult we are considering, not a particular type of disability.

That is, we are facing people with the ability to decide what they want to do and where they want to be. As it is done with any other adult, the expected functions, the work needs (which are not always related to enliven the educational programme), the agreements and commitments (in relation to the system of education and training) as well as the appropriate areas of management where they can collaborate should be communicated in a timely manner.

It is necessary to establish that, as with any other adult who voluntarily joins the Scout Movement, it is preponderant to ensure the safety and integrity of the young people involved when selecting an adult to encourage the educational programme. This allows us to take care of young people and to adult volunteers as well.

6.3. Inclusion of people in special situations of vulnerability and belonging to minority groups.

Attracting people in special situations of vulnerability to Scouting. Vulnerability is the result of exposure to risks, coupled with the inability to face them and the inability to actively adapt to their consequences. It is one of the many features of human beings, so there is no one who can be considered invulnerable. Everyone is vulnerable to varying degrees, depending on the capacity of each individual to resist. The relationship between the physical and mental state of each person and the specific conditions of his/her surroundings. The result of this relationship determines the environment in which a person lives, which can be favorable, barely adequate or unfavorable.

When someone is going through a particularly vulnerable situation, he/she faces negative exchanges, affecting his/her physical, emotional and/or mental well-being, hindering his/her development and social interaction, besides damaging his/her capacity to adapt to the environment. In such unusual circumstances, Scouting, through its educational proposal, can generate the conditions for the meeting and reconstruction of the context.

These conditions of social interaction within the educational programme, strengthen the integral development of individuals, considering their physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. This can be achieved through the generation of social liasons, resilient practices and building projects in a natural, recreational and leisure environment.

Attracting people from minority groups to Scouting. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities adopted by consensus in 1992, makes reference in Article 1 to minorities on the basis of their national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity, and provides that every country should protect their existence.

Before planning any action for the inclusion of a minority, we need to know the reality that group faces to define, jointly, the needs to that need to be attended. This is crucial when considering the approach of the educational proposal of the Scout Movement to the reality of minority groups.

Good practices that tend to the processes of inclusion of people in vulnerable situation and from minority groups.

- ◆ **Avoiding welfarism.** Welfarism is limited to temporary responses. The NSOs should promote the implementation of planned, organized and defined activities that enable, facilitate and strengthen the development of internal and external resources of every member of the organization. This would enable a harmonious and healthy development, personal fulfillment and social integration, qualities that are essential in resilient people.
- ◆ **Development and strengthening of Inclusion.** Due to the importance of this issue, it must be included within the training scheme at different levels for adults in Scouting, providing from the beginning a comprehensive education with an inclusive approach. In this way, Inclusion, rather than being an imposition, will come naturally, thus facilitating the coexistence among the members of the NSOs.





- ◆ *Identifying possible limitations.* Having a positive attitude is essential for achieving Inclusion; however NSOs need to identify within their context the limitations, either structural or technical, that restrict the action and scope of the implementation of an inclusive Programme.
- ◆ *Establish external actors that facilitate the adequate care of especially vulnerable people.* The wide variety of vulnerable situations is vast, making it very complex to provide adults with the necessary tools to respond to all cases. Although it has been proposed that skills and abilities will be furnished through training for immediate response, an expert advice is needed in order to offer support the NSOs.
- ◆ Development of programs or actions to include vulnerable people and minority groups. In order to help prevent victimization, intimidation or reprisals, each NSO must implement programs or become part of existing actions to address the needs from particularly vulnerable and minority people (according to each local reality), where the coexistence of members who do not show any of these qualities is facilitated, in order to contribute in reducing the feeling of marginalization and exclusion.



7. OPERATION OF THE POLICY

7.1. National level

In declarative form, but not limited, it is the responsibility of the NSO in relation to the subject of Diversity and Inclusion:

- ◆ The development and implementation of a national policy of Diversity and Inclusion to ensure the fulfillment of the mission of Scouting.
- ◆ Having the necessary support infrastructure for the permanent implementation, evaluation and update of its inclusive practices.
- ◆ Establish an Ethics Committee to audit its inclusive practices.
- ◆ Ensure the availability of the necessary materials for broadcasting, implementation and evaluation of the inclusive practices.
- ◆ Ensure that the Youth Programme and the Adults Management Model literature includes Diversity and Inclusion contents.
- ◆ Establish ongoing evaluation systems of the inclusive practices.
- ◆ Establish mechanisms to ensure the participation of people with disabilities and from vulnerable and minority contexts in decision-making bodies at all levels of the NSO.

7.2. Regional level

With regard to Diversity and Inclusion, the World Scout Bureau - Inter-american Support Center will:

- ◆ Provide advice and technical assistance on issues of Diversity and Inclusion to the member organizations.
- ◆ Produce and distribute materials related to the themes of Diversity and Inclusion, making it available to the NSOs.
- ◆ Define research strategies and evaluation of inclusive practices.
- ◆ Propose and promote seminars, workshops, roundtables, etc., to facilitate the exchange of ideas, where experiences are shared and the guidelines on Diversity and Inclusion are evaluated and updated.
- ◆ Adapt to the regional context the guidelines on Diversity and Inclusion emanating from the global level.



8. POLICY RENEWAL AND UPDATE

Diversity and Inclusion is a subject closely linked to the development of each country, to the public policies that it offers in this area, the progress in research and care of people with disabilities and from vulnerable backgrounds and minorities. Therefore, the National Scout Organization needs to review and adapt its policy of Diversity and Inclusion periodically.

This policy needs to be evaluated and updated in periods of no more than 10 years, in order to include the necessary adjustments.

For this purpose, the NSOs will require to have the support of public authorities, academia and research, NGOs, experts in the field, as well as those within the NSO who are work directly with these issues. The need to incorporate people with disabilities and from vulnerable or minority contexts as leading characters in the process of renewal and updating is highlighted.





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