



WSPU Youth Exchange Programme welcomes Scouts from Africa

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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 Programme (YEP). This 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 programme 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 programme 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 also 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.

The World Scout Parliamentary Union (WSPU) is an international organization, which unites Scout-oriented parliamentarians from all over the world and brings them into closer contact with the World Scout Movement. Its objective is to strengthen both National Scout organizations and World Scouting through the influence of parliamentarians who believe in Scouting as an effective non-formal educational method and Movement. One of its aims is to encourage the formation of National Scout Parliamentary Associations (NSPAs) and through these NSPAs, the WSPU hopes to open doors and give the Scout Movement access to decision-makers involved in problems directly concerning young people and the communities in which they live. [For more information about WSPU, please visit wspu.info](http://wspu.info)

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