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World Organization of the Scout Movement
Organisation Mondiale du Mouvement Scout
Всемирная Организация Скаутского Движения
Organización Mundial del Movimiento Scout
المنظمة العالمية للحركة الكشفية

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To: Chief Commissioners
International Commissioners
Chief Scout Executives

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Asia-Pacific Regional Youth Exchange Program Guideline

Dear Colleagues:

Greetings from Manila!

The APR Regional Plan 2007 - 2009 under priority area of Adolescents aims to continue sharing information among National Scout Organizations by organizing events that encourage youth exchanges based on the guidelines set by the Asia-Pacific Regional Scout Committee.

The Scout Exchange Program (SEP) is meant for initiatives between the National Scout Organization and other partner National Scout Organizations. It involves young people who are members of Scouting travelling to another country and staying with a host family or families.

This is being sent as a reference to national Scout Organization to maintain a minimum standard for those who are engaging in youth exchange programme or planning to start one.

Attach is the Guidelines for Scout Exchange Programme which was approved by the Asia-Pacific Regional Scout Committee during its meeting in Macau on 18-19 October 2008 for your reference.

On behalf of the Regional Scout Committee, it is requested that all National Scout Organizations, when initiating or under taking youth exchange programmes, adhere to this guideline and make every effort to maintain this standard.

With best regards,

Abdullah Basheed
Regional Director

Encl: as stated

Guidelines for Scout Exchange Programme

A. Introduction

To achieve the Objectives No. 3 of the Asia-Pacific Regional Strategic Plan (Vision 2013) and complete the task for the APR Program Sub Committee it is considered there is a need to develop:

1. A rationale for operation of Scout Exchange Program (SEP) approved by APR Scout Committee
2. Different types of Scout Exchange Programmes
3. An endorsement by National Scout Organizations to participate
4. Guidelines for National Scout Organizations
5. General Duties of receiving National Scout Organizations

B. Rationale for operation of Scout Exchange Program (SEP)

The Scout Exchange Program (SEP) is an initiative formally organized between National Scout Organizations and another partner National Scout Organization. It involves young people who are members of the Scouting Family having an exciting experience travelling to another country and staying with a host family, at a Scout Camp or in a youth hostel.

The SEP, which is preferably offered to Venturers or Rovers in National Scout Organizations, is initiated to provide international exchange opportunities, such as:

1. an unequalled opportunity for youth members to take part in safe, challenging and the wide range of diverse activities that only Scouting can offer;
2. opportunities for young people to travel to another country and see how people in that country live;
3. an economical way of experiencing living as a member of a family in an overseas country; and
4. an awareness in young people of how others consider the world including foods, customs, lifestyles, recreation and work habits.

C. Kinds of SEPs

1. Cultural Immersion

Cultural Immersion is when young people who are in the exchange programme spend six to eight weeks in an overseas country living with a Scouting family with a host brother or sister, attending school in the local community and gaining wide experiences from participating with the host family, the school and the family's Scout Group.

Host families provide the opportunity to open their home to invite a Scout from another country to share life experiences based around their home, school and the Scout group. They do not receive any financial support but they have the pleasure of welcoming someone into their home and gaining an international experience.

2. Event related visit

These are SEPs that are related to an event, usually a Jamboree, a Youth forum or even a camp. Young People will have an opportunity to see how Scouting is organized in an overseas country other than theirs.

3. Goodwill Educational Tour

These SEPs are short-term to give an opportunity to young people to visit tourist sights for educational purposes. This visit is organized by the National Scout Organization and sometimes a number of Scouts from the host country join them in the visits to share their knowledge.

4. Unit-to-Unit Exchanges

These exchanges are informally arranged at the Unit level. For example, a Unit from a host country befriended another Unit from another country in a Jamboree. The guest Unit then invites the host Unit to visit their country to reciprocate the hospitality.

D. An endorsement by National Scout Organizations to participate

The members of the World Organisation of the Scout movement have agreed to follow a certain protocol, especially in doing business in Scouting at international level. To protect the interest of young people, all SEPs should be agreed between International Commissioners of participating National Scout Organizations.

This guideline does not cover unit-to-unit bi-lateral Scout exchanges. However, it is highly recommended that in all cases, the International Commissioner should always be informed of exchange programmes, especially those involving overseas Scouts as participants.

E. Guidelines for sending National Scout Organizations

1. National Coordinator. The sending NSO should appoint a National Coordinator whose role includes:
 - (a) Identifying exchange Scouts;
 - (b) Facilitating the operation of the Program and liaising with the receiving National Scout Organizations; and
 - (c) Providing administrative support as required.
2. Host families or Scout Groups. Families who would like to host an incoming Scout are encouraged to contact and register with the NSO. It is important that each application is confirmed and endorsed by the local Scout Commissioner or similar. There may be government requirements regarding the suitability checks of families seeking exchange students.
3. Jamborees and Scout Camps. Jamborees and Scout Camps should have an international standard, if the SEP is an Event related visit
4. Profile of Exchange Scouts
 - (a) Must be current and active members of participating NSOs. Applications to participate as an exchange Scout must be made on the relevant application form available from the National Scout Headquarters
 - (b) Must be a minimum of two travelling together and, preferably, staying in the host families together;

- (c) Be within the required ages, as indicated by the host association
 - (d) Have the endorsement of their local Scout Unit
 - (e) The exchange student must have health insurance to cover medical expenses for the duration of the exchange. Each NSO may need to be specific as to the extent of coverage.
 - (f) Must have their own pocket money.
5. Costs and Finances. The Program should operate on a self-funding basis with development costs being largely built in to the charges made to sending families. The Scout Exchange Program requires participants to pay their own airfares and a small administration fee to the host NSO.

In accordance with the standard procedure, National Scout Organizations should maintain a bank account for all monies received/expended. This account is best audited in line with the Program's operating dates

F. General Duties of receiving National Scout Organization

1. National Coordinator. The receiving NSO should appoint a National Coordinator whose role includes:
 - (a) Designing an organized programme to ensure a rewarding learning experience for all participants;
 - (b) Facilitating the operation of the Program and encouraging its development in the NSO.
 - (c) Liaising with the sending National Scout Organizations.
 - (d) Providing administrative support as required.
2. Being aware of the local policy, where the Exchange Program may need to be registered with the Department of Education;
3. Maintaining a database of all outgoing and incoming visitors related to the programme;
4. Identifying and maintaining a database of host families or Scout Groups.
 - (a) Applications to participate as a host family must be made on the relevant application form available from the National Scout Headquarters;
 - (b) Overseas visitors will require host families as well as a school willing to accept the exchange Scout and an active and friendly Venturer Scout Unit or Rover Crew. It is up to the host NSO whether to place one or two Scouts in one host family.
 - (c) Applications to participate as a host family are sought from families who have a son or daughter in Scouts within the age group determined by the host association. This may involve a visit to the home of the host families;
 - (d) The profile of the family should match the profile of the visiting overseas Scout. It is preferred that receiving host families have some experiences in receiving Scout guest.
5. Preparing regular reports to the International Commissioner for national meetings;
6. Regularly update Commissioners on happenings and progress;

7. Ensuring that advertising brochures are available. A Web page could be developed and maintained (with expert assistance) and all forms adapted and linked.

G. Outward Travel

1. Establish the annual cost to participants; airfares and other charges.
2. Liaise with Branch representatives regarding advertising, likely travel dates, charges, application deadlines, selection panels and procedures.
3. Notify overseas representatives of actual/likely numbers to require hosting.
4. Follow up on preparation meetings.
5. Work with travel agency to set travel dates and obtain the best airfare, which should be a coordinated travel from the sub-national level.
6. Arrange Insurance cover through the National Scout Office.
7. Ensure adequate supplies of "issue items" – scarves, badges, etc.

H. Inward Travel

1. Work with overseas representatives to have "profiles" and travel dates of visitors as early as possible and allocate guests for hosting.
2. Ensure there are host families, schools, Scout Groups etc in place.
3. Ensure that visitors will be met at arrival airport.

Note:

The Guidelines for Scout Exchange Programme was approved by the Asia-Pacific Regional Scout Committee during its meeting in Macau on 18-19 October 2008.