

Commissioners: The benefits to understanding Language and Culture.

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Preface

I decided to write this thesis while having a discussion with several friends who were all Unit Commissioners. We had served in the military in various conflicts and remember the cultural differences and language barriers. It led to the discussion of how well the Boy Scouts of America has targeted two ethnic populations well; the Hispanic and the Asian communities. While these two communities are extensive and growing, there are other ethnic/religious communities that the Boy Scouts of America can capitalize on recruiting. My focus is on the Kurdish population in Nashville; which happens to be the largest Kurdish population outside Iraq in the United States. I will also provide some suggestions, which can be shared with the National office for other areas to use.

About the Author

Diogo Tavares has served as a Unit Commissioner since October 2011. While new to Commissioner Service, Diogo has served as a volunteer with the Boy Scouts of America for 13 years, 11 of them in Boy Scout Units as Assistant Scoutmaster and Committee Member. He has also served as Cubmaster in Clarksville, Tennessee and as the District Chairman for the Cogioba District of the Middle Tennessee Council.

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the years, the United States of America has been an immigrant melting pot. Various people of different ethnicities, cultural, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds have made the long voyage to travel to the “Land of Opportunity.” The objectives of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA); also known as the Aims of Scouting; character development, citizenship training and personal fitness should be available to all boys. The BSA determined a need to improve outreach to youth and families in various underserved ethnic populations, with literature and marketing materials targeting Hispanic/Latino, Asian-American and African-American families. Commissioners, who speak languages other than English and understand culture, can better assist units to recruit members for the Boy Scouts of America.

I am sure that we have all heard the joke; what do you call a person who speaks three languages, answer: trilingual; what do you call someone who speaks two languages, answer: bilingual; what do you call someone who speaks one language, answer: American. I am fluent in three languages and in my life this skill has served me well. As an active duty service member I see the value of being able to speak someone’s native tongue and understand their culture. I have deployed multiple times to Iraq and once to Afghanistan and can say that the biggest gap is, the language barrier, followed by the cultural ignorance of Soldiers. So how does this apply to Scouting? The BSA has determined a need for having their manuals, training and much more translated from English into Spanish, because the Latino community is the fastest-growing immigrant population in the US. Presently there are 50 million Hispanic Americans, which is more

than one-sixth of the US population. Hispanic Americans are becoming the largest minority group in the country. By 2050, Hispanic Americans are projected to compose 29 percent of the US population.¹

The Boy Scouts of America, as a National Movement sees this growth as a way to capitalize on recruitment and service to include others and build diversity (much like Walmart the BSA sees a need and is moving ahead of its competition; Kmart, to take the advantage). Until recently, the BSA had a team dedicated to marketing Scouting to various groups, based on ethnicity and to an extent, religion. That group has since been combined into the Membership Group and focuses on recruiting all boys.

I see a need for the BSA to recruit commissioners who are native to the populations that reside in certain areas in order to recruit from groups not familiar with what the BSA can offer. We have obviously covered the Latino community, but the Mid-Tennessee Council (Nashville) has a large population of Iraqi Kurds, and over 80 languages are spoken in Nashville schools according to a USA Today article². If the Council had Commissioners who spoke one of those languages or was an active member of that community, it could help the BSA in recruitment numbers and potentially close the gap on the decline of numbers that we have been facing as an organization nationally.

¹ Scouting in the Hispanic/Latino Community, Boy Scouts of America, 2011 Printing

² Larry Copeland, USA Today, *Nashville, suburbs see growth as Tennessee diversifies*, March 17, 2011

According to a Nashville Public Television documentary, *Next Door Neighbors – Little Kurdistan*, today, Tennessee remains one of the top 10 states in terms of growth in its foreign born population.³

HISTORY OF SCOUTREACH/MULTICULTURAL MARKETS TEAM

I spoke to De Tan Nguyen, National Director, Membership Group. He is an Eagle Scout and Vigil Honor member. My interview with him was focused on the history of the Multicultural Markets Team, as he had served as the Team Lead. In March 1994, the Urban Emphasis Department started, this department purpose was to provide the same Scouting program in other areas focused on the urban population centers. As times changed and our nation moved with the times the program changed to become Scoutreach in 1998. Scoutreach had the same purpose as Urban Emphasis with a better name aimed at avoiding labeling groups. In August 2008, Scoutreach changed its name to Multicultural Markets Team, until it merged with the Membership Group in March 2010.

The Multicultural Market Department's statement of purpose is; In support of the BSA mission and vision, the purpose of the Multicultural Markets Team is to provide relevant insights and tactical expertise to local councils, with the goal of increasing their capacity to grow and sustain their membership in ethnically and geographically diverse communities. They recently merged with membership recruiting at National. In

³ Nashville Public Television, *Next Door Neighbors – Little Kurdistan*, www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWS0TqtpVSc, uploaded June 2, 2009. Retrieved October 16, 2012

reviewing what resources they have available, I noticed only two resources in Arabic, which may not translate well to all Arabic speaking populations and none in Kurdish.

While Multicultural Markets as a National department no longer focuses on specific groups, local Councils maintain the programs aimed at their populations. National's position is that they want to provide Scouting to all children and rather than focus on certain groups, they recruit all boys. National still provides assistance with various cultures, but in an effort to move from stereotypes and labels they have integrated the two departments.

Mr. Nguyen told me that the National office has 14 professionals/staff members that work in the Membership Group. He also told me that Commissioner Service is another area within his department. The BSA has done a wonderful job with translation of Spanish materials for use and Mr. Nguyen said that they have other materials translated in various other languages. When asked about translating applications into other languages, he believed that the local volunteers would do that, because the need is not that great for the National Office to do.

At the Council level, I spoke to Ms. Shameka Freeman, who serves as the Multicultural Executive for Middle Tennessee. She told me that the Council raises money and hires part-time specialists to help with outreach units. The Middle Tennessee Council hires part-time Program Specialists to act as a leader (Scoutmaster, Cubmaster, etc.) for units with no volunteer help. In certain areas, there is a lack of volunteer and parent

support. In these instances, in order to give those kids a chance to join and participate in Scouting; Council hires a Program Specialist to deliver the Scouting program to them weekly. They are also responsible for building relationships within the organization and parents of the Scouts to help identify and train prospective leaders. Once leaders are trained, the program specialists are then able to move to another unit or area in need in order to create a new unit. Program Specialists work a maximum of three units at a time. Currently, the Council employs six specialists at this time. Of the six part-time employees, two are bilingual program specialists helping with Hispanic/Latino units; the other four help in lower income/urban areas. At the time of this interview, Ms. Freeman was not aware of any outreach programs specific to the Kurdish community, but will research that question.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

I had come from a family with a rich history in Scouting and grew up listening to all the great stories. My grandfather had been a Scout as a young child in 1928, at the age of seven, my grandfather became a Cub Scout (A Alcateia) in the Associação dos Escoteiros de Portugal (AEP - *Scout Association of Portugal*), Portugal's first and oldest Scouting Organization founded in 1913. AEP is also a founding member of the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM).⁴ As an adult my grandfather was transferred to Benguela, Angola, Africa due to work and took the Scouting Movement there as well. In 1962, he formed Agrupamento 248 a Cub Scouts (Lobitos) Pack and a Boy Scout (Exploradores) Troop, in coordination with the Corpo Nacional de Escutas, (CNE - *National Corps of Scouts - Portuguese Catholic Scouting*), the largest

⁴ www.wikipedia.org, Associação dos Escoteiros de Portugal, Retrieved October 17, 2012

Portuguese Scouting organization⁵. In 1968, he formed the Maritimos, (Sea Scouts), because he believed that youth should be provided with opportunities to learn and develop an appreciation for maritime operations.⁶ After all, Portugal is a country with a rich history of sea exploration dating back to Prince Henry the Navigator.

I was born in Portugal and immigrated to the U.S. as a young child. When my family immigrated they settled in the predominantly Portuguese speaking community of Newark, New Jersey. Naturally, after hearing all about Scouting and the wonderful opportunities and lessons, I wanted to be a Scout too. In 1989, I joined a newly formed Boy Scout Troop in my hometown of Hillside, New Jersey. In a local community we also had a Troop made up of predominantly Luso-American kids. Troop 101 had been formed in 1977 by a catholic priest, Rev. Antonio Pinho and a local resident, Mr. Jamie Miguel. These men were Portuguese by birth and heritage and both had been Scouts. Their thinking was that the Portuguese youth in the community should have the same opportunities that they had. Their targeted group was Portuguese kids and their parents. Their recruiting was conducted with them translating applications, literature and more from English into Portuguese and using their knowledge of Scouting to introduce it to parents using their native language and appealing through their cultural beliefs and values.

Boys traveled from 50 miles or more to participate in the troop, because their parents spoke the language, felt more comfortable with other families who held the same

⁵ www.wikipedia.org, Corpo Nacional de Escutas, Retrieved October 14, 2012

⁶ Maria Tereza Ivens-Ferraz Pitta Ferraz, interview, October 14, 2012

cultural traditions and beliefs, and because they were told in their language. The fact is that someone who spoke their language and understood their language had a much easier time convincing them of the benefits, than someone who didn't have those resources at their fingertips. I don't recall any literature or marketing tools during the late 80s and early 90s that could be used. Many times it was materials in English that the leaders of those units translated themselves or explained to potential Scouting parents in their own language. I am of Portuguese heritage; fortunately for me I come from a family with a rich Scouting heritage. Some kids are not as lucky.

I have served in the US Armed Forces for over 14 years; I have served in Korea and as mentioned earlier, I have three combat deployments. Understanding the culture and language helps to get relationships fostered much quicker. While someone native to the population is more beneficial; having someone who understands the culture and tries to respect the culture has an easier time of building trust and rapport, than someone who has no desire to be open-minded to a different culture.

The BSA is learning what the military has learned, that the only way to quickly build relationships and get people to join the "movement" is to understand their culture and language.

THE BOY SCOUTS

The Boy Scouts of America is one of the nation's largest and most prominent values-based youth development organizations. The BSA provides a program for young people

that builds character, trains them in the responsibilities of participating citizenship, and develops personal fitness; these objectives are known as the Aims of Scouting. For over a century, the BSA has helped build the future leaders of this country by combining educational activities and lifelong values with fun. The Boy Scouts of America believes — and, through over a century of experience, knows — that helping youth is a key to building a more conscientious, responsible, and productive society.⁷ Since its founding in the 1910 in the U.S., its founder, William D. Boyce brought Scouting after being helped in London on a foggy day. The BSA's stated purpose at its incorporation in 1910 was "to teach [boys] patriotism, courage, self-reliance, and kindred values."⁸

Today, the mission of the BSA is simple and is appealing to all parents regardless of their ethnicity, economic background, religion, and/or race. The Mission is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.⁹ The Vision of the Boy Scouts of America is that it will prepare every eligible youth in America to become a responsible, participating citizen and leader who is guided by the Scout Oath and Law.¹⁰

The BSA goal is to train youth in responsible citizenship, character development, and self-reliance through participation in a wide range of outdoor activities, educational programs, and, at older age levels, career-oriented programs in partnership with community organizations. For younger members, the Scout method is part of the

⁷ <http://www.scouting.org/About.aspx>, About the BSA, Retrieved October 15, 2012.

⁸ Alvin Townley (2007). *Legacy of Honor: The Values and Influence of America's Eagle Scouts*. New York: St. Martin's Press. p. 12. www.legacyofhonor.com. Retrieved October 15, 2012

⁹ BSA Mission Statement. www.scouting.org/scoutsource/Media/mission.aspx. Retrieved October 15, 2012.

¹⁰ BSA Vision Statement. www.scouting.org/scoutsource/Media/mission.aspx. Retrieved October 15, 2012.

program to inculcate typical Scouting values such as trustworthiness, good citizenship, and outdoors skills, through a variety of activities such as camping, aquatics, and hiking.¹¹

What parent would not want their child to be exposed to a program which provides their child with a head start for the future? Unfortunately, because they may not be able to read English or are new to America and its culture, one assumption may be that it must be bad because it will change the way their youth thinks; that it will corrupt their minds and feed them “American Ways”. What can be used to bring those people in? Marketing tools which appeal to them from a cultural and lingual standpoint, people to serve as the face of the organization, much like an ambassador, who speak their language and understand their culture.

KURDISH POPULATION IN NASHVILLE

The mission of the BSA is simple and is appealing to all parents regardless of their ethnicity, economic background, religion, and/or race.

The BSA has developed programs aimed at recruitment of Hispanics/Latinos, African-American and Asian communities on an extensive basis, but they have not necessarily focused on many other groups and there are still methods and tools that the National office can assist with. We have a great opportunity not just with these three demographics in the Middle Tennessee Council, but with one other group in particular. This paper focuses on that significant population group in Nashville; the Kurds.

¹¹ www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boy_Scouts_of_America, Boy Scouts of America, Retrieved 15 October 2012

However, I believe that my recommendations will assist all ethnic demographics in the U.S. and the recommendations could be tailored to support other councils.

The city [Nashville] has the nation's largest Kurdish population and was an international polling site for the Iraqi election after the fall of Saddam Hussein.¹² Thousands of Kurds moved to the U.S. during this time. The last wave of Kurdish migration to the United States or at least to Nashville, the main area of Kurdish communities in this country, was between 1996 and 1997, caused by a major civil war between Iraqi Kurdistan's two major political parties, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), in which the former Saddam's army into the region to counter his support from Iran. The Iraqi army began targeting hundreds of individuals accused of working against Saddam's regime. The International Organization for Migration facilitates an evacuation; Kurdish refugees crossed the Turkish border, then they were evacuated to Guam – a military outpost in the Western Pacific – and later resettled in the US. "Little Kurdistan" represents the close-knit community and culture among the Kurds, a presence that is confirmed by the many Kurdish-owned businesses in Nashville. A large number of Kurds have therefore moved to Nashville from within the U.S. to be with friends and family, or just to be a part of the growing society.¹³

¹² Larry Copeland, USA Today, *Nashville, suburbs see growth as Tennessee diversifies*, March 17, 2011

¹³Hero Karimi. www.kurdishherald.com/issue/v002/001/article04.php, The Kurdish Immigrant Experience and a Growing American Community, Kurdish Herald. February 2010. Retrieved October 16, 2012.

The Multicultural Markets Team have done some great research when it comes to the three demographics previously discussed above. I would say that in reviewing, *Scouting in the Hispanic/Latino Community*, and based on my deployments to Iraq, the team has hit on the five common cultural traits for the Kurdish population as well. They have a strong cultural identity, language, emphasis on family, religious fervor and respect for elders.

- Strong Cultural Identity: The Kurds are a people with a rich history that date back 8,000 years to Mesopotamia. Archeologists have traced the development of agriculture, domestication of animals, metallurgy, weaving, fired pottery, and the development of record keeping. They have also been an oppressed people for many years. These and many other facts lead to a strong cultural identity; but they do not associate themselves as Iraqi, they are Kurdish.

Language: While the Kurds speak Kurdish, they prefer Arabic. The Kurdish language is one of the two official languages in Iraq. The Kurdish language is very different from Arabic and Turkish. It has its roots in the Indo-European group of languages; there are two dialects; Kurmanji and Dimili-Gurani. Traditionally, much of the Kurdish culture and history has been passed down orally. This is due, until recently, to the suppression of the Kurdish language by ruling governments. Story-telling is a highly valued form of communication within the Kurdish culture.

- Emphasis on Family: Extended family is extremely important and the Kurds are group oriented. They believe in monogamous relationships and they do not

believe in Islamic fundamentalism. Men and women are not separated for meals, holidays or special events. Children and the elderly are highly valued within the family. The elderly often help take care of the children.

- Religious Fervor: A majority (two-thirds) of all Kurds are Sunni Muslim. However, 7% of the population is Shi'ite Muslim, many Kurds are followers of native Kurdish religions commonly called the *Cult of Angels*, and a small minority are Christian or Jewish.
- Respect for Elders: While Kurds have a deep respect for their elders, the village medicine man is very important in the Kurdish culture.

Why would parents object to allowing their children to join Scouting? The Multicultural Markets Team has provided some great reasons, they are: 1. Parents are concerned about their children losing their cultural heritage; 2. Parents and youth have other time commitments; 3. Parents have safety concerns with youth programs; 4. Unacculturated parents do not speak English or have limited English skills; 5. Youths think the uniform looks uncomfortable and the shorts are too short; 6. Youths do not see others like themselves in Scouting, and few have friends who are Scouts.¹⁴

While these are some great points, based on my experiences and background, I believe that points 1, 4 and 6 are the reasons foreign-born parents would use as to why their son should not be part of the BSA. A respected member of that community, who is partnered with Scouting, who may serve as a unit commissioner and/or a unit

¹⁴ <http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/marketing/resources/marketingresearch/reachingmulticulturalfamilies.aspx>. Research Identifies Barriers to Reaching Multicultural Families. Retrieved October 17, 2012

commissioner who is culturally astute and sensitive are the best faces to counter these thoughts. On point number six, I believe that the best recruiters are peers and parents. As an immigrant myself, my family had friends within our group and they trust each other first, before trusting an outsider.

The Multicultural Markets Team has provided the following information to help guide away from negative and highlight the positive; 1. Emphasize the educational aspects of Scouting and how Scouting will contribute to their child's success. 2. Highlight successful CEOs who were Scouts and how Scouting contributes to their success. 3. Give parents information about the organization. 4. Use terms like "physical fitness," "preparing for future success," "independence," and "values." 5. Highlight safety components of the program to reassure parents. 6. Show diversity in communications pieces so that youths can see themselves and their friends in Scouting. Using an "insider" to convey these points can produce the desired outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research conducted for this paper I propose five recommendations that can be used by the Middle Tennessee Council and should be shared with the Boy Scouts of America National Headquarters.

Recruit commissioners to serve the community who are native to the population. Based on my experiences as a youth Scout whose family immigrated to the U.S. and on my experiences in dealing with other cultures through the military these commissioners will

be seen as credible if they are “insiders”. If this cannot be achieved the next step would be to recruit commissioners who are open to learning about a different culture. People who volunteer for something in particular generally do so because of their passion. Much like writing this paper, it has been easy to do because it is not viewed as a chore, but rather as something that I was curious about and wanted to share my experiences with diversity and focus on a population that may be under-approached. Next, while the National office has translated materials and applications into Spanish and have published the application in Spanish they have not done it for other demographics. Contracting a service that provides on demand translation could benefit the BSA. Finally, recruiting materials should be available for various publications in multiple languages.

The last three recommendations potentially come with a price tag, but I believe that the cost can be minimized and more importantly could be done by existing volunteers. While the Spanish applications have been developed and printed, we must understand that the Hispanic/Latino population warrants printing separate applications, and while the Multicultural Markets Team has an emphasis on the Asian demographic, there are multiple ethnic backgrounds that fall under the Asian group. My suggestion would be to use volunteers in those various demographics to translate BSA applications into their specific language and make them available online through the Scouting.org. These could be downloaded and used as needed versus having them professionally printed. Likewise, using the same volunteers to help translate already existing materials to be used and available through the National office would be helpful. So if your population of

Kurds is 11,000 as it is in Nashville, or seven families in Maine, the resource is available nationally. See Appendix A for an example format of an application.

The above recommendation sounds easy, because as a Luso-American, that was the way that Troop 101 did it in New Jersey with their Portuguese population when I was growing up. Volunteers identified a need to help them in their recruiting efforts and they made it possible to provide the program to boys in the community. One misconception is that Portuguese and Spanish are the same; those are the kinds of misconceptions that lead American's to be labeled as ugly and insensitive. As an organization we must not make the assumption that things are equal and one ethnicity and another are the same. That would be like using a Chinese application/recruitment poster in a Korean neighborhood.

My next recommendation hit me while standing in line at the pharmacy in Walmart. At the counter they had posted in various languages, I speak, insert language, and need an interpreter. The customer could point to the poster, which allows the pharmacy technician to call a phone number, with a person who speaks the language to help the customer. The National office could develop this resource to leaders and commissioners by seeking volunteers with the knowledge of that language and asking them to help talk to parents who don't speak English.

The fourth suggestion is a little more difficult. While finding the leaders are not always the hard part, finding the Unit Commissioner with the best knowledge posses its

challenges. The BSA states in *Selecting Quality Leaders* to choose prospects that live up to the values of the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives. Leaders should have the following ten characteristics in order to be successful:

- Commitment to the ideals of Scouting
- High moral standards
- Ability to relate to boys
- Ability to keep a cool head under pressure
- Good organizational skills
- Ability to relate to and interact with adults
- Flexibility and the ability to compromise
- Good planning ability
- High energy level
- Good attention to detail

When looking for Unit Commissioners we should look for individuals that possess excellent people skills, have a Scouting background or be fast-track learners And know and practice Scouting ideals. On the Scouting.org website under commissioner recruiting says the following:

First, **BE RECRUITER READY**. Teach your district commissioners to develop a "recruiting mentality"; to be on the lookout for good commissioner prospects 365 days a year.

Second, you and your Scout executive and/or staff advisor must both make it a priority. Talk about it together. Suggest to the Scout executive that this be a critical achievement for all district executives. Let your district commissioners know it is an expectation.

Next, discuss with each district commissioner and district executive their target staff size and current staffing level. Ask each district commissioner/district executive team to develop an action plan for recruiting. Have a team present their plan to the council commissioner meeting. Bring them back in two or three months to report on results.

Train district commissioners and ADCs in recruiting techniques. Hold a training session on commissioner recruiting at a future council commissioner meeting. Make commissioner recruiting a part of all council commissioner meetings. Make it fun. Make it competitive between districts. Another idea—provide recognition. Every current commissioner who recruits a new person gets a neat gift...or is entered in a drawing for a donated family getaway weekend. And remember—a commissioner is not considered recruited until his/her application (paid or multiple) is submitted to the council service center.

I would submit that when recruiting commissioners from the ethnic population which, understand the cultural differences and how to speak the language they are the most effective. In the event that recruiting commissioners from this ethnic population cannot happen or there is difficulty in convincing someone to serve as a commissioner, versus being the Charter Organization Rep or a leader in the unit, then as a council we should

conduct training for commissioners who, desire to serve that population, want to learn about the demographic and are knowledgeable in the programs that they are assisting.

As a foreigner myself, we appreciate someone wanting to learn about our culture and attempting to speak the language. This assists in building the relationships needed to help build the program among the population we are targeting. As Americans, we want things, and we want them right away – instant gratification is important, but in some cultures time is the element that is most important. When I was commanding a company in Ramadi Iraq, it was easy to come into a meeting tell the locals what I wanted and leave. However, my cultural awareness, training, experience and upbringing allowed me to be much more cognoscente that in order to truly make things happen, some formalities had to come first. In Iraqi culture, sitting down and drinking tea, or as the locals called it chai (a concoction of hot tea with lots of sugar), smoking cigarettes and small talk is important. In the American culture we run, but in Iraqi culture they say “*insha’Allah*” or Allah’s will, meaning that if God will it, it will happen. This can be frustrating for Americans, but to a culturally astute person it can be the difference between truly making a friend or burning a bridge. People like to talk about themselves, so use the opportunity to learn about them, their culture and their background.

We have limited budgets and hiring some consultant or expert to train our volunteers is not always possible, but asking that respected member of the community to discuss their culture to train our commissioners on the do’s and don’ts and the specifics of their

culture can be a great compromise to finding a unit commissioner who is from that ethnic community.

Our organization is very intelligent; we leverage our volunteers in many ways to make our programs better. We see a need to provide Scouting to every boy who wants to be a member; some just don't know we're here. Statistics show that kids with parents who have college educations are much more likely to attend college; I would submit that kids who have people talk to them about college also have a higher chance. Likewise, kids who come from Scouting backgrounds are more likely to join Scouting; we just need to educate those who could benefit from the opportunity and the best way is through commissioner service.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the BSA, in particular that Middle Tennessee Council has a great opportunity to capitalize on a significant population in Nashville with the Kurds. I have provided four recommendations on how we can capitalize on this opportunity; to grow our numbers and provide the program to more children. This topic is near to my heart, because two pioneers in my community were able to see the need and developed a plan to provide a great program to kids in my community. In the end, thousands of children have been served by these men and the BSA, 48 young men have earned their Eagle Scout since 1977 and the unit continues to promote Scouting to the Portuguese communities of New Jersey. I provide one experience that I had above, we just need to find the right people in the Kurdish community to help us recruit for the Boy Scouts.

As an organization we teach our youth that working with other people, regardless of race, religion, sex, disabilities, socio-economic backgrounds or ethnicities. We talk about how diverse we are, and why shouldn't we, after all, we are a diverse country, a melting pot as previously described. What better way to expose our children to diversity than to recruit youth from various groups.

The fact is that while the Multicultural Markets Teams have done a great job getting the BSA started, they are not staffed to ensure that we have products in every language, to fit every ethnic group and support all requests for literature. They must rely on our volunteers who are in those communities and as commissioners always on the look out to recruit another commissioner to bring value to the team, we must look for those with these diverse backgrounds, who can help bring Scouting to every boy in America.

As recommended above, creating a base template application, where volunteers can help translate the document, provide it back to the council office, which can post it to the website and allow the users who need it to download would be a great first step. The marketing tools right now allow a user to add their contact information, but having these templates available to where the user can manipulate the text into their languages would also be helpful. The resource of an interpreter who could be reached by telephone would be great too. This resource could either be sourced through volunteers or through a service, like Language Line Services (<http://www.language.com>). This company offers interpreters in 196 different languages; these represent 98.6% of the

6809 languages spoken in the world today.¹⁵ These services vary in cost (see Appendix B-E).

Where I really feel that we as an organization will benefit is recruiting the right commissioners; commissioners are ambassadors of Scouting. They understand what it is all about and can convey it the best, they are the professional volunteer corps of the Boy Scouts. Commissioners, who speak languages other than English and understand culture, can better assist units to recruit members for the Boy Scouts of America.

¹⁵ <http://www.languageline.com/page/languages>. List of Languages Interpreted (Spoken) and Translated (Written) by Language Line Services. Retrieved October 17, 2012.

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