



Stichting The Science Circle
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Official Policy Plan for The Science Circle (a Dutch Stichting)

Introduction

Stichting (hereafter called NGO) The Science Circle is a non-profit educational organization based in the Netherlands and operating internationally. We aim to provide accessible and diverse learning opportunities through virtual platforms, primarily utilizing the virtual world “Second Life.” Our NGO is committed to fostering education, promoting scientific collaboration, and encouraging participation in various global discussions.

This policy plan outlines the NGO’s key activities, governance, operational structure, income, and technological resources.

1. Platform Overview

The virtual world "Second Life" is used as our educational platform, accessible free of charge via the website [<https://secondlife.com/>] . By selecting a personal avatar and downloading the world, users can participate in a wide range of activities hosted by The Science Circle.

2. Key Activities and Events

The NGO organizes a variety of free educational events aimed at global audiences, with regular programs scheduled as follows:

WEEKLY

- **Saturdays at 19:00 (Dutch time):**
Free education sessions featuring presentations, lectures, and excursions by international scientists and professors. These events include ample time for Q&A from attendees.
- **Sundays at 16:00 (Dutch time):**
Classical music concerts that allow attendees to interact with scientists, ask questions, and engage in informal discussions.
- **Thursdays at 01:00 (Dutch time):**
Mathematics Club meetings, which are open to everyone, including mathematicians, enthusiasts, students, and laypeople interested in mathematics.
- **Mondays at 19:00 (Dutch time):**
Virtual Moon Base Development Sessions with Dr. Phil Youngblood, where participants collaborate with scientists from fields such as astrophysics, chemistry, ethics, medicine, and architecture to design a future moon base. The results of this project will be presented at the "Virtual Worlds Best Practices in Education" event in April 2025 (<https://www.vwbpe.org/>).

ANNUAL

CRISPR

January

Dr. Stephen L. Gasior provides an update on the latest developments in CRISPR technology.

Darwin Day

February 12

Biologist Dr. Stephen L. Gasior honors one of his colleagues each year with a special presentation honoring Darwin's legacy.

Summer Program (Dutch summer months)

July and August

A documentary series on topics such as nature, food security and ethics, with a focus on relevant global issues.

NASA's "International Observe The Moon Night"

September/October

Scientists from various disciplines, including physics, astronomy and art, share telescope images, memories, poems and other creative expressions. This event also includes a special presentation by one of our scientists.

Christmas Week

December 25th to 31st

Daily virtual excursions at 16:00 (Dutch time) to innovative or aesthetically interesting virtual regions. The week concludes with a festive visit to Madpea, where participants receive a financial contribution (3.26 EUR) to play an interactive detective game together.

3. Upcoming Initiatives

In development are the following recurring events to further engage the international community:

- **Weekly Forum (Fridays at 20:00, Dutch time):**
A platform promoting freedom of speech and the exchange of knowledge from diverse international perspectives.
- **Monthly Debate (Last Friday of each month at 19:00, Dutch time):**
A space for constructive debate, aimed at fostering an environment where different opinions can be respected and discussed.
- **Weekly Meeting for Asia & Oceania (Wednesdays at 14:00, Dutch time):**
A virtual meeting space designed for members and interested parties in the Asia and Oceania regions.

4. Governance and Management

The Science Circle operates with a dedicated international board, responsible for ensuring the effective functioning of the organization. The board is comprised of members residing in Australia, the United States, and the Netherlands, with diverse working hours that accommodate global participation.

Current Board Members

- Chair: Chantal C.J. Jager, Netherlands
- Secretary: Jes Stannard, Australia
- Interim treasurer: Chantal C.J. Jager, Netherlands

General Board Members:

- Phil Youngblood, USA
- Mike Shaw, USA
- Stephen Gasior, USA
- Natalie Foster, USA

Board Structure:

- The international board meets monthly or bi-monthly to discuss finances, IT, program development, task allocation, and any new ideas or requests.
- The position of treasurer is currently vacant, and interim treasurer ship is managed by Chantal Jager.
- The Ethics Committee, which consists of international members, supports, monitors, and ensures the ethical standards of the NGO's operations.

Board Responsibilities:

- The board is involved in the daily operations of the organization, overseeing the preparation and organization of the program.
- The board maintains contact with educational support organizations in both the virtual and physical world, and actively publishes work on our website and YouTube channel.
- The board also participates in conferences, maintaining the international visibility of the NGO.

Compensation:

- All board members and participants are volunteers. None of the individuals involved receive any salary or compensation for their efforts.

5. Financial and Technological Resources

Operational Maintenance:

- Virtual Region: The NGO operates a dedicated country (region) within the Second Life platform.
- Microsoft Office 365 for Nonprofits: Used for collaboration and communication.
- Website: The NGO maintains a website through a domain name and DNS service with WordPress, which serves as an informational and organizational hub.

Income and Financial Support:

- The NGO's income is derived primarily from monthly and annual donations from members, which are exclusively used for operational maintenance (Microsoft Office 365 and website costs).
- Financial support for maintaining The Science Circle's region in Second Life is provided by NSF funding, received by board member Dr. Mike Shaw. These funds are paid directly to the owner of Second Life.
- The NGO does not own any financial fixed assets.

6. Ethical and Operational Guidelines

- 1) The Ethics Committee regularly reviews the NGO's activities to ensure they align with the organization's core values, such as scientific integrity, openness, inclusivity, and respect for all participants.
- 2) The board, in consultation with the Ethics Committee, will continue to assess the NGO's impact, ensuring that all programs and activities contribute positively to the educational objectives.

7. Conclusion

The Science Circle is dedicated to providing a free and accessible educational platform that fosters international collaboration and intellectual exchange. Through our virtual presence, diverse programs, and open participation, we aim to make significant contributions to global scientific dialogue and the sharing of knowledge. We look forward to expanding our reach and enhancing our activities in the years to come.

Approved by The Science Circle Board of Directors

Date: December 18, 2024