



# **SCOUTING: AN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**





World Organization  
of the Scout Movement  
Organisation Mondiale  
du Mouvement Scout

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# STRATEGY

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# INTRODUCTION

*“Scouting: An educational system”* is intended to help everyone interested in gaining a greater understanding of how Scouting works as an educational system. It is intended for use by those responsible for ensuring that the Scouting offered to young people is the rich and multi-faceted learning experience that it is meant to be. It has been written as a tool for the Youth Programme and Adult Resources teams at national level, but it is hoped that it can be of use for all those at other levels who do their best to provide support to Scout leaders.

A large proportion of the publication is devoted to the Scout Method in particular because it is the Scout Method that encapsulates Scouting’s educational system as it is experienced by young people. The publication attempts to explain each of the elements of the Scout Method and to illustrate how they interact and complement each other as a system.

The section on the Scout Method provides information on how each element is meant to help to stimulate the development of the young person. It offers ideas, without any attempt at providing an exhaustive list, on areas that a Youth Programme development or review group should look at when examining how to make the Scout Method as effective as possible. It also provides ideas on tools that can

help Scout leaders in their work, as well as the kind of support they are likely to need. Finally, this section examines how each of the elements translates from the theoretical level into the practical level in the Scout unit<sup>1</sup>.

For detailed information on a step-by-step approach to Youth Programme development (whether your Scout association is in the process of developing a Youth Programme for the first time, or whether the Youth Programme is being reviewed), the World Scout Bureau has produced a series of publications entitled *“A Guide to Programme Development”*. Another publication, *“Scouting in practice: Ideas for Scout leaders”*, is intended to present the basics of what Scout leaders need to know in order to practise Scouting.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this document, “Scout unit” is used in a generic sense, referring to the youth members of an age section and the adult leader operating together in a locality, e.g. a pack, a troop, or a unit. “Team” is also used in its generic sense, when referring to the local level, to denote the smaller groups of 6-8 young people within the Scout unit, e.g. patrol.



# WHAT IS SCOUTING?

## A MOVEMENT OF SELF-EDUCATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Scouting is a movement of self-education for young people. The Scout Movement comprises national Scout organisations to which the individual members belong. The individual members are the young people that Scouting serves and adults who join in order to contribute to the development of Scouting's youth members.

The unity of the Movement is ensured by the World Organization of the Scout Movement which serves recognised national Scout organisations.

### **Its purpose**

All over the world, members of the World Organization of the Scout Movement are united by a common, active commitment to Scouting's purpose which is to help young people to develop their full physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual capacities as individuals and as members of society, and thus contribute to the development of a better world.

### **Its principles**

Wherever they may be, members are actively committed to the principles (i.e. the values) on which Scouting is founded, which form both the basis of the code of ethics which governs the Movement as a whole and a personal code of living to which each member adheres. These principles are about a person's active and constructive commitment to the spiritual values of life, to society and to oneself.

### **Its method**

All members are equally committed to the way in which Scouting seeks to help young people to develop - through Scouting's unique method of progressive self-education. The Scout Method is a comprehensive educational framework composed of elements which work together as a system to provide young people with a rich and active learning environment. It is based on how young people naturally develop, taking into account their evolving characteristics, needs and interests at different stages of development.

Together, Scouting's purpose, principles and method form the essence of Scouting's educational system, i.e. they are the foundation on which Scouting is based all over the world.

In order for the Movement to achieve its educational goals, the Movement as a whole must provide the global conditions for this to happen. Thus the Scout Movement is also characterised by the fact that it is:

### **A movement for young people, especially suited for adolescents**

Scouting exists for the benefit of young people. While Scouting's educational system is particularly suited for the adolescent age range, the upper age limit depends on factors which define what "youth" means from an educational perspective within a particular culture and society.

In general terms, the upper age limit would normally correspond to a general level of maturity at which a person no longer needs Scouting's structured educational approach in order to continue the process of self-education.

The lower limit corresponds to a minimum level of maturity required for Scouting's educational system to function and thus for young people to benefit from it. Evidently, these lev-

els of maturity can only approximately be measured by age, but would normally correspond to a few years either side of the second decade of life.

### **A movement of young people, supported by adults**

The young people in the Movement are supported by adults, whose role is to facilitate and provide the necessary conditions for the development of the youth members. As members of a movement of self-education, and in a spirit of partnership with adults, young people participate in the decision-making processes of the Movement, in ways which are appropriate to their level of maturity, skills and experience, so as to ensure the relevance of what Scouting offers to them.

### **Open to all**

Membership of the Scout Movement is open to anyone who agrees to adhere to its educational proposal (i.e. its purpose, principles and method); in other words it does not discriminate against anyone because of his or her religion, ethnic origin, social background or gender.

### **Voluntary**

Scouting is voluntary. All members - young people and supporting adults - join of their own free will. There is no compulsion to join

the Scout Movement, nor to remain a member. Scouting is not like school, at which attendance is usually compulsory between certain ages.

Every member - young or adult - who does choose to join is required to make a personal commitment to the Scout Movement. First and foremost, this commitment is to respect and act according to the code of ethics inherent in the fundamental principles of the Movement.

More globally, this voluntary commitment also extends to achieving the educational purpose of Scouting, as every member commits him or herself to the educational proposal of the national Scout association to which he or she belongs. For youth members, this commitment concerns their own personal development. For adults, this commitment is to help provide the conditions necessary for young people to develop.

### **Non-political**

Scouting is non-political, in the sense that it is not involved in the struggle for power of party politics. At the same time, Scouting's educational system aims to help young people to be, and develop as, responsible and constructive individuals and members of society. Young people cannot do so in a vacuum, divorced

from the socio-political realities of the world in which they live.

Scouting's educational approach, therefore, encourages young people to develop their own powers of judgment, and to take an active and constructive role in society which is in harmony with the values for which Scouting stands.

### **Independent**

While the Movement works in partnership with a number of outside bodies and receives support from benefactors all over the world, Scouting, at all levels, is independent in the sense of being free from control by any outside body or individual.

### **Complementary to other forms of education**

Scouting is a non-formal educational movement. In other words, it is not part of the formal educational system (school, etc.), nor is it informal (friends, media, etc.) as it does offer a structured approach to education. Scouting does not seek to reproduce what school, family, religious institutions, leisure clubs, etc., are already offering young people. It seeks to complement what others are doing by helping to fill gaps that may not be being met by others.

### **Relevant to young people**

Scouting seeks to be relevant to young people in the various socio-cultural environments in which they grow up, and to continuously adjust to meet the needs of young people in a rapidly changing world.

As a movement, this is one of our greatest challenges: continuously adjusting so as to be even more relevant to young people's aspirations and needs while remaining faithful to Scouting's purpose, principles and method.

Being able to determine what is essential and invariable from what is not essential and variable is not easy for newly constituted Scout associations who are considering this issue for the first time. The task is not an easy one either for Scout associations that have existed for decades, some for almost a century, steeped in rich memories of "the way things have always been done".

*"Here are some of the things that Scouting is not:*

- *it is not a charity organisation for people in society to run for the benefit of the poor children;*
- *it is not a school having a definite curriculum and standards of achievement;*
- *it is not a brigade of officers and privates for drilling manliness into boys and girls;*
- *it is not a show where surface results are gained through payment as merit badges, medals, etc.;*

*These all come from without, whereas the Scout training all comes from within."*

- "Aids to Scoutmastership", Baden-Powell, 1919 edition.



# WHAT DOES SCOUTING SEEK TO ACHIEVE?

*“Education is at the heart of both personal and community development; its mission is to enable each of us, without exception, to develop all our talents to the full and to realize our creative potential, including responsibility for our own lives and achievement of our personal aims.”*

- “Learning: The Treasure Within”, Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, 1996.

## “EDUCATION? BUT THAT IS SCHOOL!”

Scouting is an educational movement for young people. However, “education” means different things to different people. In everyday language in some parts of the world, education is primarily associated, at its most basic level, with learning to read, write and master basic arithmetic and, on a higher level, with gaining academic knowledge and vocational skills through school, university, and so on.

In Scouting, however, education is considered in its broad sense as being the process through which each of us develops our various capabilities throughout life, both as an individual and as a member of society.

The aim of education, in this broad sense, is to contribute to the full development of an autonomous<sup>2</sup>, supportive, responsible and committed person.

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<sup>2</sup> The term “autonomy”, like education, often means different things to different people. In an educational context it means being able to make up one’s own mind (as opposed to, for example, blindly copying one’s peers) and to manage one’s life (for example, being able to manage one’s time). Autonomy here does not mean total independence, nor does it imply being self-centred.

## A DEFINITION OF EDUCATION:

A life-long process which enables the continuous development of a person’s capacities both as an individual and as a member of society.

## THE GOAL OF EDUCATION:

To contribute to the full development of an autonomous, supportive, responsible and committed individual.

### Autonomous:

able to make one’s own decisions and to manage one’s life.

### Supportive:

able to actively care about and for others.

### Responsible:

able to assume the consequences of one’s decisions, to keep one’s commitments and to complete what one undertakes.

### Committed:

able to live according to one’s values, to support causes or an ideal which one finds important.

## THE PURPOSE OF SCOUTING

According to Scouting's educational philosophy, each person is born with a unique potential which can be developed in a constructive direction.

Making this potential a reality involves developing all of one's capacities - physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual - in the direction of the goals to be achieved.

Evidently, as education is the work of a lifetime, Scouting cannot fully develop anyone's potential in all areas. Scouting can simply accompany each Scout, for a time, along that person's path of development and help each person to develop the inner resources he or she will need to continue to develop without Scouting's help. After all, if Scouting were a crutch on which people relied all their lives, it would certainly have failed in what it is trying to achieve.

Scouting, therefore, simply seeks to make a contribution to this process of self-education during the years when a person can truly benefit from its structured educational support system. The age range for which Scouting can most benefit young people corresponds approximately to the second decade of life.

By encouraging young people to use and develop all of their capacities in a constructive way today, Scouting seeks to help young people to realise that they have within themselves what it takes to already make a difference - to their own lives and to the world in which they live.

As they become ready to expand their horizons and seek new challenges, Scouting helps them to use their experience and to further develop their capacities to live and grow as fulfilled individuals and as active and constructive members of society.

Whether or not a person will actually develop that potential depends, amongst other factors, on the presence of a supportive, structured environment during the formative years which stimulates the young person to bring out of him or herself - and develop - what is constructive, to the detriment of what is destructive. Scouting seeks to offer young people such an environment.

## A CONSTRUCTIVE DIRECTION: SCOUTING'S PRINCIPLES

Every movement - or organised body, for that matter - has a number of fundamental beliefs which underlie the purpose of its existence, orient what it seeks to achieve and how it goes about achieving its goals.

As an educational movement, Scouting clearly has a social responsibility: to the young people it serves, to the families who entrust their cherished youngsters to Scouting's care and to the world at large.

The goals of education are clear: to develop as an autonomous, supportive, responsible and committed individual and member of society.

*"The aim of development is the complete fulfilment of man, in all the richness of his or her personality, the complexity of his or her forms of expression and his or her various commitments - as individual, member of a family and of a community, citizen and producer, inventor of techniques and creative dreamer."*

-- "Learning: The Treasure Within", Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, 1996.

However, there must be clear guidelines which orient the development of the young person towards these goals.

It is Scouting's principles (generally referred to as "Duty to self", "Duty to others" and "Duty to God") which provide these guidelines. They are the basis of the value system which governs the Movement as a whole. These principles, therefore, give direction to Scouting's educational policy as a Movement, to the educational approach used with young people and to the way in which the elements of the Scout Method are used so as to give constructive and coherent direction to the development of the young person.

### **Duty to self**

Each person has a duty to develop one's autonomy and assume responsibility for oneself. This includes:

- taking responsibility for one's own development (physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual);
- striving to live life in a way which respects oneself as a person (e.g. taking care of one's health, standing up for one's rights as a human being, making decisions that one feels deep inside are right for oneself as a person, etc.).

Being able to do so presupposes striving to get to know oneself better in all the richness and complexity that characterizes each person with strengths and weaknesses, hopes, needs, and so on.

### **Duty to others**

In broad terms, this is one's responsibility towards everything material that is not oneself. This means:

- recognising and taking into account in the way in which one lives one's life that one is not the only important person on this earth, that each person has rights, feelings, hopes, needs, etc.;
- recognising that people are interdependent, i.e. no one can live in isolation from others. Everyone needs relationships with others in order to fulfil themselves as persons and everyone can benefit from the contribution that each person makes to the world.

Each person, therefore, has a responsibility towards others. This involves:

- respecting each person's dignity;
- playing an active and constructive role in society and making a personal contribution to it;

- helping out in times of need and defending the defenceless, whether they are one's next-door neighbour or whether they live in a very different environment at the other end of the world.

- recognising and taking into account, in the way in which one lives one's life, the integrity of the natural world.

### **Duty to God**

Each person has a responsibility to search beyond what is material for a force higher than mankind. This involves seeking:

- a Spiritual Reality that gives meaning and direction to one's life; and
- to discover meaning in spiritual values and to live one's daily life in accordance with these values.

When these three simple principles are truly part of a way of life and are adhered to simultaneously, any form of fundamentalism or fanaticism is necessarily excluded.

## A DIRECTION OF DEVELOPMENT IN EACH AREA

As Scouting's principles give direction to the development of the young person, the principles are also reflected in what Scouting seeks to help young people to achieve in each of the areas of development, i.e. physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual:

### Physical:

Developing the ability to:

- coordinate one's movements and thought processes (psycho-motor skills);
- take responsibility for the growth, functioning and health of one's body;
- come to terms with one's physical limitations.

### Intellectual:

Developing the ability to:

- pursue interests, solve problems and adapt to situations in a relevant way through effective information management, creative thinking and intuition;
- perceive patterns, connections and relationships between phenomena, events, ideas, etc.;
- develop receptivity to other perspectives of reality (e.g. understanding different ways of looking at things; understanding cultural, religious, age, gender-related standpoints, etc.);

- extract meaning from one's experiences;
- judge things for oneself, to think through the implications of one's decisions and actions, and to retain one's own free will.

### Emotional:

Developing the ability to:

- acknowledge, recognise and express feelings and emotions and to take responsibility for managing these in daily life.

### Social:

Developing the ability to:

- listen and to express oneself effectively;
- accept other people as distinct human beings with equal rights;
- take into account the interdependence of mankind, and of mankind and the natural world;
- cooperate, to support and to lead;
- take an active and constructive role in society and contribute towards a better quality of life for all;
- foster authentic relationships and an intercultural awareness, overcoming prejudice and discrimination;
- adhere to common rules out of one's own free will.

### Spiritual:

Developing the ability to:

- acknowledge and explore a dimension beyond mankind;
- explore the spiritual heritage of one's community;
- understand the beliefs, practices and customs of other world religions;
- integrate spiritual values into one's daily life and in the global direction of one's development towards a higher and more unified state of consciousness.

The abilities listed are not exhaustive, but provide the basis on which national Scout associations can develop concrete educational objectives which take into account the needs of young people at various stages of development within a specific socio-cultural environment.

As the areas of development reflect dimensions of the whole personality, in a real person the abilities listed depend upon or involve development in more than one area. It is the well-balanced and harmonious development of the whole personality towards greater autonomy, solidarity, responsibility and commitment that would describe what Baden-Powell called a person of "character".

# WHAT IS SCOUTING'S APPROACH TO EDUCATION?

Scouting's approach to education has to be coherent with what it seeks to achieve. Here again, it is the principles, the fundamental beliefs on which Scouting is founded, that guide its educational approach. Thus, Scouting's approach to education could be described as being person-centred, community-related and spiritually-oriented.

## Person-centred

Scouting's approach is person-centred in the sense that:

- Scouting accepts each young person as he or she is - a **unique** human being with his or her own personal background and experience of life thus far, variations in needs, capacities, interests and pace of development.

It recognises the uniqueness of each person through:

- respecting each person's free will to decide to join Scouting or not;
- proposing a framework of self-education (i.e. as Baden-Powell described it: "education from within", as opposed to "instruction from without");

- inviting each young person to develop to the best of that person's ability ("doing one's best"). There is therefore no comparison of achievement between young people;

- the flexibility of Scouting's educational system which enables each young person to develop in the way which is most relevant to him or her through:

- translating the general educational objectives proposed for the age section into a set of personalised objectives, with help from the adult leader;
- progressing through pursuing his or her interests and exploring his or her concerns;
- developing at his or her own pace. The approach takes into account that development does not take place at the same pace in each dimension, nor does it take place in a constant surge forward. There are no absolute deadlines.

- Scouting's approach is also person-centred in the sense that it seeks to help each young person to develop his or her **whole** self through:

- educational objectives which cover knowledge, skills and attitudes in each of the dimensions of the human personality;
- a multi-faceted method which emphasises personal experience (as opposed to, for example, just intellectual understanding);
- many, varied opportunities for experiences, spread over time, likely to contribute to a young person's development.

### Community-related

Scouting's approach is community-related in the sense that:

- the very goals that it pursues, i.e. to help young people to live and develop as ever more autonomous, supportive, responsible and committed individuals are necessary for the long term development of society;
- it seeks to help each young person to recognise him or herself **as a part of a whole**, i.e. the world in which he or she lives. It does so through:
  - emphasising the development of constructive relationships with others - young people and adults - based on mutual respect;

- offering young people the experience of a micro-society, based on a democratic way of life, taking into account the needs and interests of all;

- promoting a sense of belonging in young people - to their Scout unit and to their local, national and international community;

- offering varied opportunities for young people to interact with, and make a meaningful contribution to, the world of which they are a part (local, national and international community, natural, cultural and spiritual environment, etc.);

- helping young people to adapt constructively to changes in society and to cope effectively with issues that they face or are likely to face.

### Spiritually-oriented

Scouting's approach is spiritually-oriented in the sense that it seeks, through everything that it proposes, to help young people to:

- look beyond the material world in search of a Spiritual Reality;
- to discover for themselves those values which give meaning to life;

- continuously strive to put into practice those values in the way in which one lives one's life.

Of course, however ambitious what Scouting seeks to achieve may be, and however comprehensive its educational approach, it cannot help young people to develop without the right educational tools, and thus we come to the Scout Method.

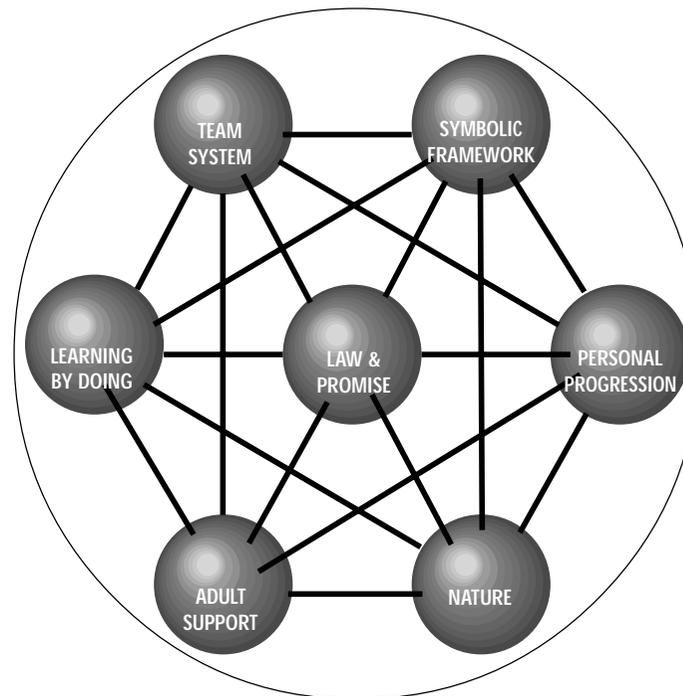
# WHAT IS THE SCOUT METHOD?

## A SYSTEM OF EDUCATIONAL ELEMENTS

The fact that Scouting's method is referred to as the Scout **M**ethod (capital "M") is because it is composed of several different educational tools. These are: a law and promise, learning by doing, a team system, a symbolic framework, personal progression, nature and adult support.

Taken individually, many of these educational tools are used in other forms of education - working in teams on projects, for example. In Scouting, however, these different tools are referred to as elements of the Scout Method - as each one is only one part of the whole. The fact that all of these elements form a whole and are used as a system is part of what makes Scouting unique.

## THE SCOUT METHOD



*"Scouting is a medicine composed of various ingredients and, unless they are mixed in their proper proportions according to the prescription, the users must not blame the doctor if the effects on the patient are unsatisfactory."*

- Baden-Powell, Jamboree, 1922.

In the sense used here, a system could be described as a network of elements in which each element:

- has a specific function;
- interacts with the other elements so as to reinforce the effectiveness of each one;
- contributes to the overall purpose to be achieved - and therefore must be present.

An important characteristic of a system is the synergy that is created - in other words the effects of a system are greater than the sum-total of the effects of its parts.

The same is true of the Scout Method. Each of the elements has an educational function; each element complements the impact of the others. If any of the elements is missing or is not being used as intended, then the system as a whole cannot serve its original purpose - the progressive, holistic development of the young person. We cannot, therefore, apply certain elements and disregard others, nor can we use any of them in a way which is not consistent with Scouting's purpose and principles.

The Scout Method is designed to stimulate the development of young people throughout the age range that Scouting serves. This means that the educational function of each of the elements and the way in which they work together as a system are just as valid and effec-

tive when working with young people in the junior age section as they are when working with young people in the senior age section.

Evidently, however, the way in which the elements are applied (i.e. the way in which the educational "tools" are intended to be used) needs to reflect the maturity of the young people in the various age sections.

Finally, it would be unrealistic to imagine that each element of the Scout Method can be in the foreground during every activity that the young people take part in. Young people cannot physically be in nature, for example, while they are performing a puppet show for sick children in a hospital in town. However, the element of nature could still be present, albeit in the background - for example by taking time to walk through a park on the way back or by using recycled materials to make the puppets.

### **A NATURAL SYSTEM OF PROGRESSIVE SELF-EDUCATION**

The Scout Method is a system of progressive self-education. It is intended to help each young person to use and develop his or her capacities and interests, building on what has already been gained; to find constructive ways of meeting needs at different stages of development; and to open doors to further stages

of personal development at the young person's own pace.

The Scout Method provides an educational framework based upon how young people develop naturally. It provides an environment which responds to their need for action, challenge and adventure; their desire to explore, experiment, and discover; their natural capacity for inventiveness and resourcefulness; the need to feel acknowledged, respected and appreciated as individuals; their need for close supportive relationships; their capacity for idealism and their need to make sense of the world; and so on.

At the same time, the Scout Method offers a way of life which channels their energy in a way which enables them to experience being autonomous, supportive, responsible and committed straight away, to the extent of their current capacities, while helping them to progressively develop their capacities in these directions in a holistic, balanced and attractive way.

# THE SCOUT LAW AND PROMISE

## THE SCOUT LAW

*The Scout law and promise are considered as one element of the Scout Method because they are closely linked. However, as their specific educational functions differ, they are treated as separate items in this chapter.*

### WHAT IS IT?

The Scout law is a code of living based on Scouting's principles. It is a personal code of living in that it serves as a reference, guiding the way in which each member of the Movement lives his or her life today, and guiding the direction of development for tomorrow. It is also a collective code of living in that it is the basis on which the Scout unit functions. The Scout law is therefore at the heart of the Scout Method.

### WHAT IS IT INTENDED TO DO?

As a concrete personal and collective code of living, the Scout law provides a simple way of helping each young person to become familiar with what Scouting seeks to help him or her to achieve and to discover the meaning of the various aspects of this personal and collective code of living through experiencing it in practice. Ultimately, the Scout law can serve as a reference in the subsequent development of a young person's value system.

### HOW DOES IT WORK?

#### A personal code of living

By trying to reflect the code of living more often in a young person's daily life and in the growing number of new situations which a young person encounters, the young person is in fact developing him or herself.

As this code of living is based on the principles of Scouting (and thus on the values underlying Scouting), it guides the direction of the young person's development towards a personal exploration of these values. This code of living is therefore personal, related to each person's development.

*"Is it possible to devise a form of education which might make it possible to avoid conflicts or resolve them peacefully by developing respect for other people, their cultures and their spiritual values?"*

- "Learning: The Treasure Within", Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, 1996.



## A collective code of living

In addition to being a personal code of living, the Scout law is also a collective code of living. It therefore serves as the law of a micro-society of young people in which each person has the same rights and duties towards him or herself and others.

As the Scout law is the basis on which their small community is founded and operates, the young people are exposed to a way of living with others which is democratic, respectful of each person and which promotes a sense of belonging, sharing, solidarity and cooperation.



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## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT?

From an educational point of view, the Scout law needs:

- to express the qualities of a person who lives according to Scouting's principles<sup>3</sup>;
- to be expressed in everyday language that is appropriate to the culture in which the national Scout association operates and to the level of maturity of the young people concerned, i.e. very simple for the younger age groups, and formulated in a slightly more mature way for the next age group, and so on;
- to be formulated so as to be relevant, inspirational and attractive to young people. It therefore needs to be expressed in positive terms, i.e. "A Scout is" as opposed to "A Scout is not";
- to be sufficiently short so as to be easily remembered - it is not intended to be a long, exhaustive list.

<sup>3</sup> In order to ensure the unity of the Scout Movement, the Scout law and promise formulated by each national Scout association is subject to approval by the World Scout Committee, through its Constitutions Committee.

*"The boy is not governed by DON'T, but led on by DO.*

*The Scout Law is devised as a guide to his actions, rather than as repressive of his faults."*

- "Aids to Scoutmastership", Baden-Powell, World Brotherhood edition, 1944.

## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMME DELIVERY?

Preparing adults for their work with young people at local level should involve opportunities for them to explore the values underlying the Scout law and how this code of living translates into their everyday work with the young people. This would include examining the kinds of relationships to be promoted, the implications of the Scout law on the way in which the group should function, etc. For example, any practice that could be potentially humiliating would not be consistent with respecting the dignity of others.

## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION?

While its function as an educational tool may seem quite complex, it is not difficult to apply in everyday life with a group of young people.

The Scout law is deliberately phrased in simple, everyday terms, often referring to qualities, so that each young person can easily understand what is meant and can do his or her best to reflect these in everyday life.

As the Scout law is a personal code of living and a collective one, it needs to be the foundation on which the Scout unit is structured and operates if the young people are to be helped to discover for themselves the values on which it is based. Concretely, the Scout law translates into the rules of the group: the rights and duties of each member, the sharing of responsibilities, decision-making processes, conflict management, and so on.

Young people should be involved as much as possible, and in ways appropriate to their level of development, in establishing the rules of the group. For one thing, this helps them to deepen their understanding of the Scout law and, for another, young people have much less difficulty in accepting, even enforcing, rules

that they have contributed to establishing. Evidently, the adult leader needs to ensure that rules concerning safety measures, etc., are included.

The Scout law provides an excellent evaluation tool, both in terms of bringing out the connections between the degree to which the code of living was adhered to and what went well or badly with activities, camps, projects, group life, etc., and what could be improved; and in terms of a personal evaluation of the extent to which each young person feels he or she has made progress in reflecting the qualities.

When a young person breaks a rule, he or she should be encouraged to reflect on whatever consequences it may have caused. The pur-



pose is not to make the young person feel terrible, but to understand and, if possible, to remedy the situation.

The code of living applies to both adults and young people. The code of living is not a set of rules which apply only to young people because “they have got to respect rules”. The code of living reflects basic ethical principles or values which Scouting believes are valid in life in general. If the adults do not reflect the code of living, why should the young people?

## **THE SCOUT PROMISE**

### **WHAT IS IT?**

The Scout promise is a pledge that every young person makes before a group of peers when he or she chooses to join the Movement. By making the Scout promise, the young person acknowledges that he or she is familiar with the Scout law and makes a personal commitment to do his or her best to live according to this code of living.

### **WHAT IS IT INTENDED TO DO?**

Through the promise, the young person accepts Scouting's invitation to develop by making a voluntary decision to accept the Scout law and to assume the responsibility of that decision through personal effort. Making the promise is the first symbolic step in the process of self-education. Making the promise does not imply that the young person must have proved to be a "perfect" Scout. It is a starting point, not the finishing line.

The fact of promising to "do one's best" refers to making a personal effort to the extent of the young person's capacity. From an educational perspective, the effort is as important as the achievement of the objective. The effort is a personal one, and progress can only be evalu-

ated in terms of how the young person was before.

By making the promise in front of peers, the young person makes his or her commitment public. This not only makes the personal commitment "official", it also symbolises a social commitment to the others in the group. By their presence, the others in the group show that they accept him or her as a member.

### **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT?**

The young people make the Scout promise upon entering each new age section. The fact of doing so is a symbolic commitment to embark on a new phase in the voyage of development and to share the way of life inherent in the Scout law with a new group of people. The wording of the promise and law therefore needs to reflect the progression in the maturity of the young people from one age section to the next.

For the law and promise to fulfil their educational functions, the young people that the Scout association addresses need to have developed the capacities to understand and to agree to do their best to adhere to a code of living. In other words there is a minimum level of maturity below which a child is unable to

voluntarily agree with a code of living if the child is unable to think beyond his or her own immediate needs and desires and does not yet distinguish him or herself from other people with their own needs and desires. By the same token, the kind of social interaction required for teamwork cannot take place either - and thus the Scout Method cannot function.

The minimum level of maturity required for the Scout law and promise (and, indeed, for the entire Method to function as a whole) is an essential point to bear in mind when a Scout association is considering the minimum age at which a young person may join the Movement.

### **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMME DELIVERY?**

Preparing adult leaders in this respect involves emphasising the educational function of the Scout promise. A key aspect in this respect concerns the concept, and implications, of "doing one's best". As this concept is closely linked to personal progression, it is discussed in further detail in the chapter on this aspect of the Scout Method.

## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION?

The way of explaining the promise to the young people requires attention. They need to understand the implications of making a promise - that they are giving their word and that they are giving their word to do their personal best. It should therefore be presented as an important act, but not something that they need to feel apprehensive about.

Another factor to be borne in mind concerns when a young person should make the Scout promise. Evidently, he or she will need to have had time to become familiar with the Scout law and its practical application in the group (i.e. that he or she will be expected to make an effort to develop and to adhere to the group's code of living), and to decide whether or not he or she wishes to formally join Scouting.

From a young person's perspective, making the Scout promise is not simply about whether the code of living seems reasonable or not. Doing so is also a decision to continue to take part in activities with the young people that he or she has come to know. External factors apart (schoolwork, other interests, etc.), whether a young person decides to make the promise or not will therefore also depend on

how interesting the activities seem and, especially, on the extent to which the young person feels integrated in the group. On the whole, adolescents are likely to want more time than pre-adolescents to make up their minds.

At the same time, from an educational perspective, a balance needs to be struck between giving the young person time to make up his or her mind, and the need for the real educational process to start. Until a young person makes the Scout promise, he or she is more or



less a visitor to Scouting and cannot experience the richness of what Scouting can offer. In addition, the prolonged presence of "visitors" (i.e. those who simply turn up occasionally for activities) is disruptive for the young people who *are* committed to Scouting, to the group's projects and life together.

Making the promise is a personal act of commitment. The adult leader's task, therefore, is to encourage the young person, but not to force him or her before he or she is ready to do so, nor to withhold the right to make the promise, nor to ignore the matter altogether. A simple way of encouraging the young people would be to propose several dates over a period of several months.

The adult leader needs to consider how to make the moment of making the promise a significant one for the young person - a small ceremony at the end of a camp, for example.



# LEARNING BY DOING

## WHAT IS IT?

Learning by doing means developing as a result of first-hand experience - which, after all, is a very effective teacher!

Learning by doing:

- reflects Scouting's **active** approach to education. In other words, young people are helped to develop through opportunities for concrete, "hands-on" experience as opposed to passively listening to a lecture or watching a demonstration.
- applies to the way in which young people gain **knowledge, skills and attitudes** in each of the areas of development and thus progress towards their educational objectives. Learning by doing is thus not limited to "doing" in the sense of learning practical or manual skills. For example, young people learn the meaning of responsibility through taking on responsibility.
- reflects Scouting's **practical** approach to education based on learning through the opportunities for experiences that arise in the course of pursuing one's interests and dealing with everyday life. In other words, Scouts do not gain knowledge, skills and attitudes in an abstract context, divorced from reality. In Scouting, young people would not learn to sew for

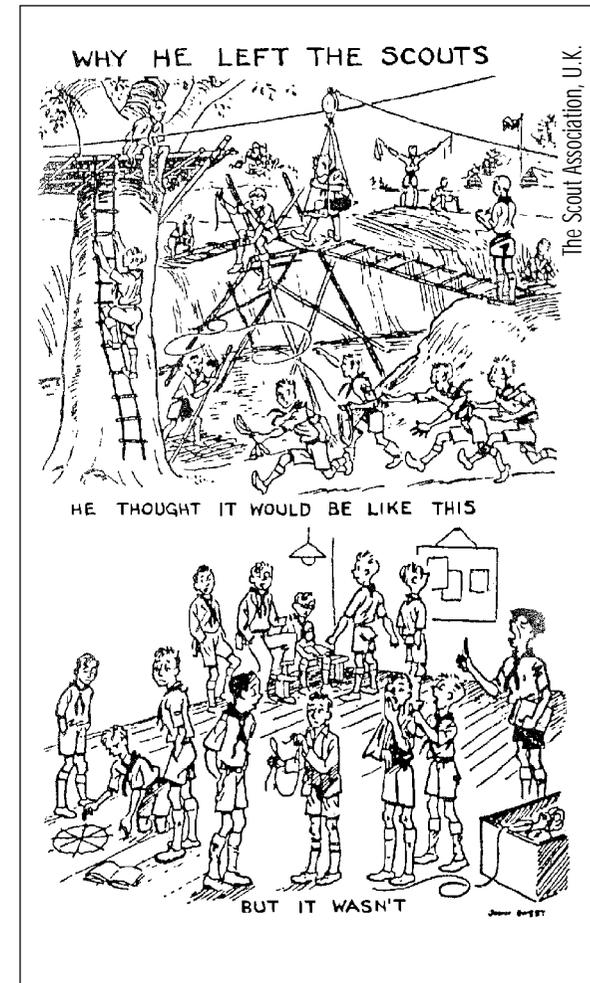
*"...It is important to provide children and young people with every opportunity for discovery and experiment - aesthetic, artistic, sporting, scientific, cultural and social."*

- "Learning: The Treasure Within", Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century, 1996.

*"Self-education, that is, what a boy learns for himself, is what is going to stick by him and guide him later on in life, far more than anything that is imposed upon him through instruction by a teacher."*

- "Scouting for Boys", Baden-Powell, 26th edition, 1951.

the sake of knowing how to sew, but because, for example, they want to put on a play and want to make their own costumes. Or, for example,



Scouts would not learn to manage conflict simply through a specifically-designed activity, but through the natural process of sorting out whatever disagreements arise in the group (in a manner which is consistent with the Scout law!).

### **WHAT IS IT INTENDED TO DO?**

Learning by doing is a way of helping young people to develop in all dimensions through extracting what is personally significant from everything that they experience.

### **HOW DOES IT WORK?**

As young people have a natural desire for action, challenge and adventure, Scouting channels their energy and provides them with a rich learning environment which encourages them to explore, experiment, discover and thus to develop. Learning by doing stimulates an active approach to life, encourages young people to be actively involved in everything that affects them, helps them to discover all of their capacities and make constructive use of them, to take charge of their lives, and be actors, not spectators, in their community.

The motor which drives the educational experiences is the activities that the young people take part in.

In other words, it is the combination of experiencing a code of living, the difficulties and rewards of responsibility, the joys and tribulations in the relationships that develop with peers and supportive adults, setting and striving to reach personal and collective goals, etc., all woven into progressively challenging activities that they find stimulating and useful that contributes to holistic and balanced development.

As the young people develop through a vast range of experiences, opportunities for new and richer experiences come within reach.



### **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT?**

In order to help young people to develop through extracting what is personally significant from what they experience, Scouting must provide young people with opportunities for potentially meaningful experiences.

A way of checking whether learning by doing is being used to its full potential would be to consider the educational objectives for the age section as a whole (knowledge, skills and attitudes in each of the development areas) and examine to what extent young people really do have opportunities to progress towards the objectives through first-hand experience. For example:

- If an educational objective concerns, say, the development of a sense of interdependence, one could examine whether:
  - the way in which the young people operate together during their activities really provides opportunities for them to contribute different talents, take on useful responsibilities, experience the benefits of mutual support, etc;
  - there is room for improvement in the kind of contact that young people have with their lo-

cal community so as to foster this sense of interdependence.

- Examining learning by doing from the perspective of educational objectives can help when seeking to help young people to cope with issues likely to affect them - unemployment, drug abuse, etc. The first, automatic response by associations is often to provide information and develop interesting activities to help young people to learn about the issue.

At the same time, Scouting can do much more to help young people to cope effectively! For example, how are young people being helped to develop a positive approach to life, to adapt to new situations, to use existing resources in a creative way, to take initiative, to develop constructive contact with others, etc?

#### **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMME DELIVERY?**

Adult leaders need to have a thorough understanding of how the Scout Method and the group's operating structure aim to contribute to young people's development, and how the way in which they are used influences the educational experience that the young people derive from the activities that they take part in.

With appropriate preparation, this enables the adult leader to take advantage of the variety of opportunities that may arise in the local community, the young people's ideas on what they want to do, particular needs that are expressed, etc. - which cannot be anticipated at national level - so as to offer young people a rich educational experience that is really relevant to those particular young people at a given time.

#### **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION?**

One implication of learning by doing is that young people are encouraged to experience things first and draw conclusions from what they have experienced later. In practical terms, this has several implications for the adult leader:

- The adult leader does not need to explain the educational objective of an activity. Not only are the young people likely to be uninterested, it would limit their spontaneity, limiting the experience to the confines of what they may imagine is being expected of them.
- On the other hand, verbalising their reactions, feelings, etc., afterwards helps them to reflect on the experience and to draw conclu-

sions. A quiet moment at the end of a meeting or camp can be used to evaluate in general terms how the activity went and to encourage the young people to express themselves. The young people may perceive the experience in different ways, and may actually feel that what they have gained from the experience has nothing to do with what was originally intended by the activity.

The purpose for the adult leader here is not to insist on what they were "supposed" to have learned, but simply to accompany them as they reflect for themselves. The atmosphere needs to be constructive so that the young people do not feel afraid to speak. If needed, the code of living can be recalled to help young people to reflect on their experience or simply to remind the young people that each person has a right to express him or herself and that if complaints are to be made, to describe the problem and not to attack anyone personally.

- While the adult leader should gradually feel comfortable with making use of whatever opportunities arise to create an educational experience, the activities must always respect Scouting's principles: all activities and the way they are conducted must be constructive and not destructive for anyone or anything, etc.

- Difficult decisions that arise for the adult leader include how far to allow a young person to experiment or make mistakes before intervening. While the adult leader should always strive to make an activity successful, the success or efficiency of the activity cannot be at the expense of learning experiences. Making mistakes is an inevitable part of the learning process. However, through experiencing a mistake, a young person can better understand what, how and why something went wrong and, perhaps, how to go about things differently next time!

# THE TEAM SYSTEM

## (OR PATROL SYSTEM)

### WHAT IS IT?

Young people have a natural tendency to form groups of roughly the same age. The team system is a way of making use of this natural tendency in order to provide an environment in which young people enjoy being and in order to channel the substantial influence that peers have on each other in a constructive direction.

What young people gain from living and working together according to a code of living and the relationships that develop as a result of a multitude of shared adventures are as important in terms of their education as the activities in which they take part.

In Scouting, young people of roughly the same age operate in small groups of six to eight members. Each small group operates as a team. Within each team, the young people organise their life as a group and decide upon, organise and carry out their activities. Each young person has a specific responsibility which he or she carries out for an agreed length of time which contributes to the life and welfare of the team and the success of their activities.

In each of the teams, one of the young people, acknowledged by the others to be the

leader, assumes a general coordinating role and convenes meetings with the other members, giving each member the opportunity to take part in the decisions and to be fully involved in the life of the team.

Several of these teams (usually four to six) form a Scout unit, supported by an adult leader and adult assistants. The Scout unit is managed by a council involving the team leaders and the adult leader.

Although the adult leaders are not members of the teams, they are nonetheless in close contact with each of the teams and with each young person.

While the team is the basic grouping in which the young people operate, the young people are also part of the Scout unit as a whole. During the Scout year, there are activities which involve the whole of the Scout unit. These provide opportunities for each team to contribute to the well-being of the Scout unit as a whole and provide opportunities for the young people to get to know the others in the other teams.

All these elements combined form an organised social structure and a democratic system of self-government based on the Scout law that

*“Scouting puts the boys into fraternity gangs which is their natural organisation whether for games, mischief or loafing.”*

- “Aids to Scoutmastership”, Baden-Powell, World Brotherhood edition, 1944.

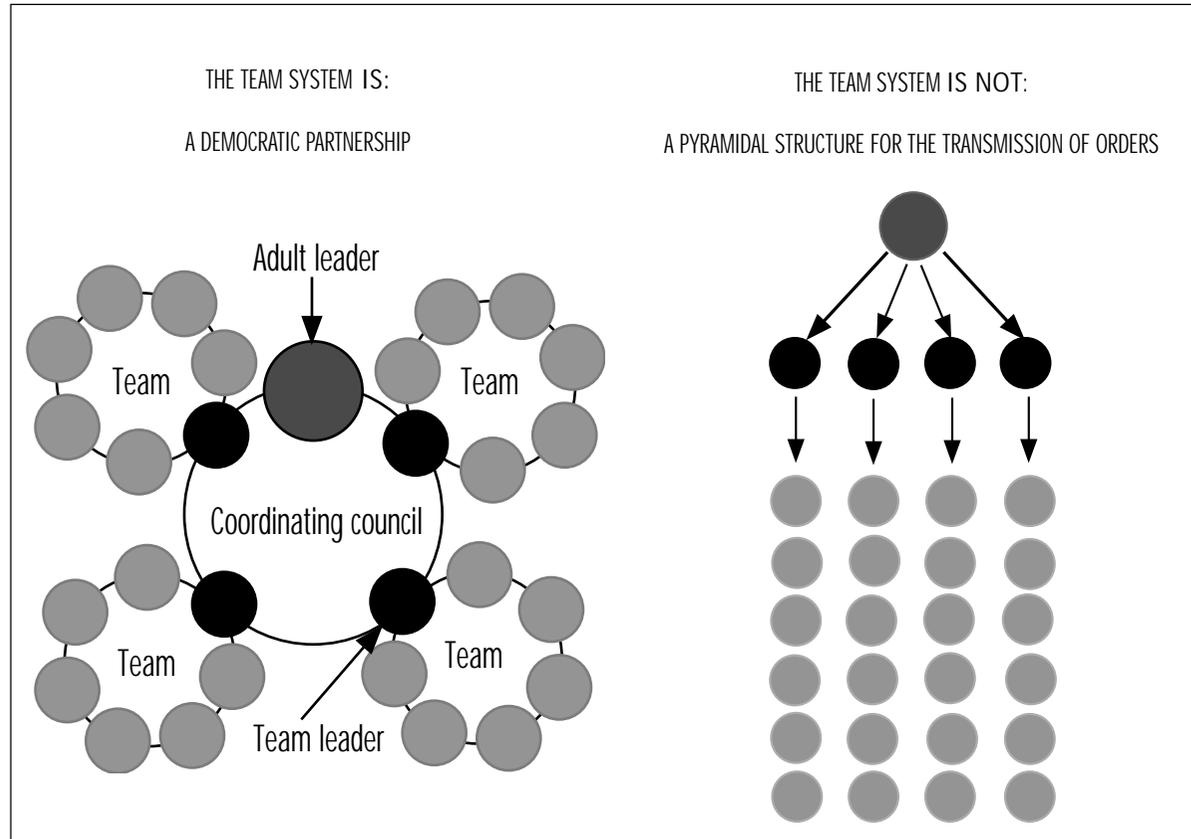
*“The patrol system leads each boy to see that he has some individual responsibility for the good of his Patrol. It leads each Patrol to see that it has definite responsibility for the good of the Troop.”*

- “Aids to Scoutmastership”, Baden-Powell, World Brotherhood edition, 1944.

Baden-Powell called the “patrol system”<sup>4</sup>. Each person is involved in the government of this mini-society and has a share of the responsibility in ensuring the well-being of its members.

Despite the name, the “patrol system” was not in any way intended to reflect a military-style line of command in which the adult leader gave orders to be carried out by the patrols. Indeed, if it were to operate in this way, it would not be able to fulfil its educational function.

<sup>4</sup>The terms “patrol” and “troop” continue to exist in Scouting in many parts of the world out of tradition, usually in connection with Scouting for the 11-14 age section, with other terms used in the other age sections. The terms were adopted by Baden-Powell as an inspiration to the young people of his day, probably as a result of his observation of the close cooperation in the achievement of objectives and the mutually supportive attitude of small groups of men in the army.



### WHAT IS IT INTENDED TO DO?

The team system, based on the way in which young people naturally organise themselves as small groups, provides a framework within which the young people can:

- develop their personal and collective capabilities through pooling and building on their individual skills, talents and experience and through the development of a mutually supportive team spirit;

- develop constructive relationships with other young people and adults, based on mutual trust, which strengthen over time as a result of all the adventures shared together;
- learn to live according to a democratic form of self-government in partnership with adults. It allows young people to experience building a consensus and resolving conflicts, expressing themselves and listening to others, to experience making decisions and accepting the consequences, cooperating and sharing, taking initiative and leading, taking on responsibility and following it through.

*“When people work together on rewarding projects which take them out of their usual routine, differences and even conflicts between individuals tend to fade into the background and sometimes disappear. People derive a new identity from such projects, so that it is possible to go beyond individual routines and highlight what people have in common rather than the differences between them.”*

- “Learning: The Treasure Within”, Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century, 1996.

Thus, everything that young people experience as a result of operating in teams can have a considerable impact on their development.

### HOW DOES IT WORK?

Initially, the only certain thing that the young people have in common is their desire to take part in activities. Through appropriately designed activities, each young person comes to realize that many of the experiences are only possible through a collective effort and so they have to organise themselves as a group (both within the teams and as a Scout unit). Thus, the fact of needing to cooperate stimulates each person to play his or her part in making their experiences possible and enjoyable through developing and using his or her talents and skills.

Through taking part in this process with a small group of people on a regular basis, they get to know each other with their strengths and weaknesses and a bond is created between them. This bond is important for several reasons:

- It contributes to a young person’s emotional development through providing a sense of belonging, a feeling of being appreciated and through providing the basis for the kind of close friendships that young people may have difficulty in developing elsewhere.

- A close-knit group provides a stimulating atmosphere in which each young person makes more of an effort to gain the skills and experience needed for their activities and life together. The greater the skills, talents and experience the young people are able to pool as a team, the more opportunities are opened up for challenging and meaningful experiences - for the group and for each person.

- This bond helps the young person to develop a deeper understanding of the meaning of responsibility and solidarity. Initially, a young person may carry out a task, turn up at a rendezvous or help out another member because it is part of the “rules of the game”. When the young people grow to care about



each other, the young person will carry out a task because he or she knows that the others are counting on him or her and does not want to let them down.

- The young person who seeks the approval of peers observes the group's reactions to his or her attitudes and behaviour, and thus provides a mirror effect. He or she can thus be encouraged to develop a greater self-awareness, often resulting in a change of attitude and behaviour. For example, the timid are encouraged to develop greater assertiveness; the "bossy" are made to sense the need to leave room for others.

### **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT?**

The design of the team system needs to take into account that it involves:

#### **A partnership between young people and their adult leaders**

The team system is not intended as a way for adult leaders to pass down their orders for the young people to execute. It is not intended, either, as a way for young people to simply express their wishes and expect their adult leader to prepare everything for them.

It is intended as a partnership between the young people and their adult leader, based on dialogue and cooperation. The adult leader (and his or her adult assistants) are part of the Scout unit but they are not members of the teams. The adults are part of the Scout unit in order to fulfil a specific role, i.e. to help the young people to exercise and develop their capacity for autonomy, solidarity, responsibility and commitment, while guiding each young person towards his or her educational objectives.

#### **Progressive self-government**

The principle of young people's participation in the government of their mini-society applies throughout the age range that Scouting serves.

Evidently, the sphere of matters on which the young people make decisions and the kinds of responsibilities that they undertake in the management of their teams and Scout unit as a whole will be linked to:

- their level of maturity. The level of involvement will therefore be different in a group of 8-10 year-olds than in a group of 15-18 year-olds.
- their experience of this form of operation. A Scout unit of 12-14 year-olds that has been

operating for a year or two may be able to have a greater degree of involvement in running their group than a newly constituted group of older young people.

This means, therefore, that the design of the Youth Programme needs to reflect a progression in terms of self-government in the operating structure across the age sections. It will also require some flexibility in terms of the extent of responsibilities for youth members in newly constituted groups.

Generally, in the youngest age section the nature of the decisions to be taken by the young people would be in the choice between several activities, for example. Responsibilities might be to remember to bring refreshments, or materials needed for an activity. In the subsequent age section, decision-making could extend to the theme of the summer camp, for example, and responsibilities could include looking after the team budget, being responsible for catering arrangements, compiling a diary of the team's adventures, etc.

#### **A democratic system**

The team system is intended to help young people to understand the concept of democracy through experiencing it in action.

Democracy in the Scout unit is based on:

- ensuring that the needs and interests of all are taken into account. This implies always striving to reach a consensus. If every decision were to be subject to a majority vote, the needs and interests of the minority would be ignored;
- adherence to a commonly agreed set of rules, based on the Scout law;
- the fact that the Scout unit supports each individual, and each individual has a share of responsibility for ensuring that the Scout unit functions efficiently, and contributes towards improving it for the benefit of all.

Democracy in the Scout unit is thus a truly participatory form of government. It does not involve establishing mini political parties, lobbies, campaigning to win elections for positions of power, or anything else of that nature.

### **Roles for each person - with real responsibility!**

In the Scout unit, democracy starts in the teams - as they learn to dialogue and cooperate. The design of the team system needs to ensure that each person has an active role to play. These roles need to involve practical responsibilities - related to the needs and welfare of

the teams. The roles need to be conceived so as to appeal to the young people and offer challenge. The responsibilities must also be adapted to the level of development and experience of the young people - i.e. less complex for the newcomers.

One of the roles is that of team leader. This young person's responsibility is to coordinate the team, help the team members to reach a consensus on what they want to do and carry out their roles, represent them at the team leaders' council, help coordinate activities involving the whole Scout unit, etc. As it requires maturity and experience of how the Scout unit functions, this is a role designed for senior youth members of the Scout unit.

The appointment of the team leaders is also part of the democratic process, based on who the team members and the adult leaders consider is most capable of doing the job. It is important, however, that the role of team leader is not the only challenging role for senior members.

### **A coordinating council**

The team system involves a council which needs to meet on a regular basis. The council is composed of the team leaders and the adult leader. It is an opportunity for the team lead-

ers and the adult leader to make decisions concerning the planning and organisation of activities, discuss difficulties, coordinate the affairs of the Scout unit, etc.

### **A Scout unit assembly**

Meetings as a Scout unit need to be built into the design of the operating structure so as to enable all of the young people and the adult leader to discuss and evaluate the success of the activities, but also to evaluate the life of the group, to build a consensus on what could be modified and, of course, to celebrate achievements.

### **Cohesion between all members of the Scout unit**

In addition to the organisation of life within the teams, there is also the life of the Scout unit to take into account! Summer camps, service projects, etc., involving the whole of the Scout unit need to be built into the design, while still providing time and space for the teams to be together.

### **Opportunities to experience teamwork with other members of the Scout unit**

In addition to the need to belong to a small permanent team, by early to mid-adolescence young people tend to seek opportunities to

expand their social horizons and to work with other young people on the more complex aspects of their projects. Concretely, this simply involves incorporating into the design of the programme opportunities for the young people to form temporary task forces.

### **A limited range of ages**

The team system offers the greatest educational benefits when it:

- enables the teams to operate with a degree of autonomy appropriate to the age group; and
- stimulates close relationships between the members of the teams.

The major consideration in this respect is the range of ages within the teams.

Generally, the team system works best when there is approximately three to four years age difference between the youngest and the oldest in a team.

This is due to the fact that the more mature members of the teams will stimulate the less mature to develop. At the same time, the less mature members stimulate the sense of responsibility in the senior members and give them opportunities to exercise responsibility in help-

ing the younger members to progress, to integrate the code of living, to gain skills, to learn how to work as a team, etc. The presence of younger members also helps the senior members to realize the changes in themselves since they were that age.

However, when the age range is greater than this, the educational impact of the team system becomes greatly reduced. This is because the difference in the level of maturity will be so great that the young people at either end of the age range will feel that they have little in common with those at the other end - and thus will informally regroup according to their natural tendency to be with others of approximately the same age!

For the national association, the fact of limiting the age range so as to enable the team system to fulfil its educational function evidently has implications on the number of age sections that the association offers and/or on the overall range of ages that it addresses.

### **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMME DELIVERY?**

The main areas of support to the adult leader are to help him or her to:

- understand how this association of teams is meant to function as a democratic system of self-government. The adult leader needs to be able to help the teams to build a consensus on what they want to achieve (making sure that the needs and interests of all are taken equally into account), and to help them to organise themselves;
- be able to enrich the young people's ideas of what they want to do so as to provide opportunities for the young people to progress towards their educational objectives;
- observe and understand group dynamics and guide it in a constructive direction;
- be able to better judge what the young people are really capable of taking on by themselves. This means ensuring physical and emotional security (of the young people and others); being able to overcome the temptation to make life easier by organising everything oneself; not pushing the young people beyond what they can be reasonably be expected to undertake, etc.;

- judge if and when to intervene, for example, in a conflict, or when to point out major obstacles, etc.

## **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION?**

### **In a newly constituted Scout unit**

Typically, a new Scout unit is made up of relatively few young people who have simply come together to give Scouting a try. The adult leader, in this case, will evidently have to take the lead in proposing activities that interest the young people and introduce the rules of the game - Scouting's code of living.

Initially they may all want to operate as a single team for a while. There is no point in artificially creating teams on their behalf. With time they will eventually do so of their own accord - as after all, the team system is based on how young people operate naturally!

### **Helping newcomers to become integrated**

In a group that has been operating for a while, and has well-established teams, helping newcomers to become integrated requires special attention. By being invited to join a team, the newcomer to Scouting is able to become familiar with a small group of people first. Gradu-

ally, of course, the other faces will become familiar, too.

It is within the team that the newcomer can most easily become acquainted with the group's code of living and to take on a responsibility which contributes to group life, thereby immediately becoming a contributing member of the team.

### **Establishing responsibilities within the teams**

From the panoply of responsibilities required for the teams to function, the adult leader should guide each young person towards his or her area of interest, while bearing in mind the young person's capacities. The task should not be so complex as to lead to failure, yet should be challenging enough to stimulate the young person.

The adult leader and the young people should agree on the length of time that the responsibilities are carried out by the same people in the group. It should be long enough for the young person to have mastered the job and to have gained something from the experience, but it is not a lifetime commitment! After the agreed length of time, the responsibilities can be presented to the group again, so that each person can experience a new role.

While some responsibilities will be more complex than others to cater to the differing levels of capacities and experience of the young people, all of the responsibilities need to be given value in the group. If the young people regularly try to avoid a particular kind of responsibility or try to relegate it to an innocent newcomer or, on the contrary always seem to be vying for the same responsibility, then there may be a problem underlying the situation which needs to be sorted out.

Making a meal together at the end of a day, for example, is not just to learn to cook; it is a concrete contribution to the group which helps the young people to operate autonomously. It is also an opportunity to have a chat about how the day went, to get to know each other better after the heat of the action. The adult leader needs to make an effort to make these routine activities fun. They are only "chores" if that is the way they are conceived and presented!

### **A particular responsibility - team leader**

A particular responsibility which can have an effect on group dynamics (either positively or negatively) is that of the team leaders. Being a team leader does not mean imposing one's will. It is primarily listening to the team mem-

bers, helping them to understand how the team system is meant to function, and coordinating their operations as a team.

The team leaders need to have the maturity to carry out the role and need to have experience of how Scouting operates in the group. While the adult leader will have an influence in deciding which young people are ready to take on such a responsibility, the young people in the teams need to be associated in the decision. This is because the team leader needs to be accepted as such by the other young people. Inviting the young people to consider who they think best matches a “job description” of team leader is one way of associating them in the process.

# A SYMBOLIC FRAMEWORK

*“Had we called it what it was, viz, a ‘Society for the Propagation of Moral Attributes’, the boy would not exactly have rushed for it. But to call it Scouting and give him the chance of becoming an embryo Scout, was quite another pair of shoes.”*

- “Lessons from the ‘Varsity of Life”, Baden-Powell, 1933.

*“The capacity for awareness of sensory experiences is critical to the development of meaning... Meaning derives from a profoundly held relation to the revelatory power of the symbols. Yet the symbol becomes an objectified ‘other’ if it is not grounded in the senses.”*

- “The Possible Human”, Jean Houston, J.P. Tarcher, 1982.

## WHAT IS IT?

A symbol could be described as something familiar which represents something more vast or abstract (e.g. an idea or concept). The design of the Scout emblem, for example, which is familiar to all of us in Scouting, is symbolic in nature - the reef knot which symbolises the unity of the Movement, and so on.

Symbols are often used to help communicate concepts which may not be familiar to people through inviting them to think beyond the most apparent meaning of things that *are* already familiar to them. Symbols communicate through an appeal to the imagination and experience - without the need for advanced powers of reasoning or complex language.

In Scouting, a symbolic framework is a set of elements which represent concepts which Scouting seeks to promote.

The very name of our Movement - Scouting - refers to a symbolic framework invented by its founder, Baden-Powell, and was intended to appeal to boys in late childhood-early adolescence (the only age section - and gender - catered to at the time).

Originally, the name of Scouts came from soldiers in the armed forces who went on re-

connaisance trips ahead of the rest in order to determine whether or not it was safe for the others to follow. They survived through their knowledge of nature and general resourcefulness.

However, it is important to remember that, despite his military background, Baden-Powell sought to promote peace, tolerance and goodwill:

*“Our aim is to bring up the next generation as useful citizens with a wider outlook than before and thereby to develop goodwill and peace in the world through comradeship and cooperation, in place of the prevailing rivalry between classes, creeds and countries, which has done so much in the past to produce wars and unrest.”*<sup>5</sup>

It is also important to remember that Scouting began in a particular sociopolitical context (Britain, in the early 20th century) in which, as B-P knew, “Scouts” conjured up images of adventure, courage and chivalry, close-knit groups, developed powers of observation, resourcefulness and a simple healthy life in the great outdoors - all qualities which he sought to promote:

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<sup>5</sup> Baden-Powell, Jamboree, 1922.

*“By the term of “Scouting” is meant the work and attributes of backwoodsmen, explorers, hunters, seamen, airmen, pioneers and frontiersmen.”*<sup>6</sup>

As Scouting began to cater to the needs of young people outside of this original age group, the need became apparent to develop other symbolic frameworks for them. The symbolic framework changes, therefore, from one age section to the next so as to correspond to the young people’s level of maturity and to focus on the specific needs of the various age groups.

At the same time, however, “Scouting” has remained the name of our Movement - and “Scout” is the generic term in English for a youth member of any age. Whatever the term used in other languages, the symbolism remains faithful to the original intention (e.g. “Pathfinder”, or a person who “lights the way”).

In many countries, the symbolic framework of Scouts with their troop and patrols is still used for the late childhood-early adolescent age section. However, whatever the symbolic frameworks used for the various age groups, “Scouting” remains as an overall “umbrella”

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<sup>6</sup> “Aids to Scoutmastership”, Baden-Powell, World Brotherhood edition, 1944.

symbolic framework, thereby creating a link between all members wherever they may be.

In order to cater to the needs of young people at different ages, each age section has a symbolic framework which is expressed as a central theme (inspired by children’s fables, mythology, legendary heroes, a period in history, etc., or which may be totally invented). It involves a way of life which represents the personal qualities and collective way of life which Scouting seeks to promote and focuses on the major educational need in the educational proposal that characterises a given age group. Examples of such needs are: learning to live together for a young age group, adventure and survival for the subsequent age group, exploring new horizons, involvement in community or environmental issues, etc.

#### **WHAT IS IT INTENDED TO DO?**

A symbolic framework builds on young people’s natural capacity for imagination, adventure, creativity and inventiveness in a way which:

- stimulates their development in the various dimensions;
- helps them to identify with the directions of development and the values underlying Scouting;

- stimulates the development of a sense of identity;
- stimulates cohesiveness and solidarity within the group.

#### **HOW DOES IT WORK?**

As a young person grows up, the way in which he or she apprehends the world and situates him or herself in it changes from being predominantly based on the use of imagination - the “magical thinking” of childhood - to being based on the use of reason and personal experience - the “logical thinking” of adulthood.

Young people frequently project themselves into an imaginary world in order to expand the confines of the real world in which they live and in order to explore and resolve various difficulties which then enable them to pass on to a new stage of development. The kinds of situations invented and the roles that the young people invent for themselves change as new stages of development are reached and new difficulties need to be sorted out.

The extent to which young people resort to their imagination in this sense gradually decreases as their sense of identity develops and their self-confidence in their ability to deal with situations and to manage emotions increases.

The purpose of a symbolic framework, therefore, is not to maintain young people in an artificial world of make-believe. It is simply a matter of making use of this natural tool in a way which helps them to enrich every day life, to resolve a number of difficulties that they face and move on to new stages of development. The symbolic framework, therefore, needs to gradually evolve, as young people do, from a world of make-believe to a more realistic setting with a pinch of imagination added.

A symbolic framework can contribute to the development of young people in a number of ways. In terms of intellectual development, the use of symbols and imagery can help young people to grasp abstract concepts. In addition, by school-age onwards, school and family tend to give priority to stimulating the capacities normally associated with the left brain (the ability to analyse, reason, present ideas in a structured way, etc.), often at the expense of the creative, inventive right brain. Through stimulating the imagination, a symbolic framework can help to keep alive the young person's creative, inventive side. Figuring out how to cross an unexpected river in the middle of the woods, for example, has more chances of success when one can both analyse the situation at hand and try to imagine what real explorers would have done!

From the perspective of emotional development, a symbolic framework provides young people with constructive opportunities to feel heroic, chivalrous, courageous, etc. Doing so is a way of developing their self-esteem and is a release from some of the emotional difficulties of growing up, such as the frustration of the dependency of childhood and early adolescence or feelings of inadequacy. It is not escaping from reality, rather it is a way of developing the inner resources needed to deal with it. Even as adults we do not lose this capacity, but we tend to deny it as being "childish" - and yet there is even a branch of psychotherapy that deals with helping adults to recover the capacity to envision overcoming supposedly insurmountable problems!

Evidently, the fact of identifying with the personal qualities and collective way of life inherent in the symbolic framework can also have an impact on physical, social and spiritual development.

The desire to be like the characters in the symbolic framework, and the fact of having developed self-esteem as a result of it, can stimulate the young people to overcome apprehension about a physical challenge, or to take better care of their health, for example.

The symbolic framework can contribute to social development when all of the young people identify with a close-knit way of life inherent in the symbolic framework and the underlying elements of caring for others, responsibility, etc.

Finally, a symbolic framework can open the way to spiritual development through the fact that it is based on the values inherent in Scouting's principles. It can thus stimulate young people to explore and examine themselves, their relationships and life in general in a way which goes beyond material, everyday life, transforming, for a time, the ordinary into the extraordinary, the impossible into the possible, the unobservable into what may be sensed intuitively.



## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT?

Whether a Scout association is in the process of developing symbolic frameworks for the first time, or whether a well-established Scout association is analysing the educational relevance of one or more of its symbolic frameworks within the context of a programme review, the work involved evidently goes beyond picking a children's story or a period of history out of the blue and giving symbolic names to meeting places, teams or activities. It also goes beyond simply substituting "Star Wars" for the "Jungle Book" in the hope of "modernising" the youth programme.

Some of the major points that need to be taken into consideration are outlined below.

### Focusing on an educational need

While a symbolic framework can contribute to development in all of the areas, a focus on a major educational need of young people at a certain age helps to ensure the relevance and appeal to the various age groups and thus the potential educational benefit. While this major educational need may vary according to society or culture, examples of needs generally considered to be characteristic of particular age groups are:

### • Mid to late childhood - the age of socialisation

Mid-childhood is the age when young people become capable of logical reasoning and thus start school. As a result, they start to spend more time with other young people of their own age outside of the family.

It is at this time that young people experiment with establishing (and frequently changing!) rules for their games and interaction amongst peers in general. Through a process of trial and error, the young people eventually develop a system of the rights and obligations of the members of the group. "That's not fair, it's my turn" can be heard all over the world.

It is through this process that the young people start to overcome the natural self-centredness of childhood and begin to understand the usefulness of cooperating, sharing and organising themselves as a group.

The use of make-believe is often a backdrop to their games - the imaginary setting gives purpose to the games and a sense of common purpose between the "partners".

Individually, many young people project themselves into make-believe situations at this time both in order to sort out difficulties and emotions at home and in order to adjust to this new social context of peers.

*A symbolic framework for this age group generally concentrates on this process of socialisation - facilitating integration and a sense of belonging to a group, making the code of living understandable to all, etc.*

### • Late childhood-early adolescence - the age of survival

For many young people in this age group, this is the time of the onset of puberty. While the prospect of no longer being a child may be exciting, the many changes that occur can be disconcerting. spurts of growth of limbs or the body can cause temporary difficulties in coordination, and even one's face can seem unfamiliar! On the emotional front, both parents and young people have to adjust to the fact that childhood is ending, but the wings of adulthood are not yet there. Feelings of inadequacy, frustration and a lack of a sense of identity come to the fore, although they are often hidden from peers for fear of ridicule.

Many young people at this time feel the need to prove all kinds of things to themselves. Developing survival skills and other practical skills related to dealing with everyday life becomes important in order to prove to themselves and others their growing capacity for autonomy.



Nonetheless, a sense of responsibility towards others starts to develop at this time.

Situations and roles invented at this time are often to do with physical prowess and attractiveness, heroism and courage.

*A symbolic framework for this age groups needs to become a little more realistic, concentrating on personal and collective survival and resourcefulness.*

#### • Mid-adolescence - the age of strong emotions

By mid-adolescence, young people often seek out opportunities for strong emotions and sensations. Inner questioning, the value of friendship, spiritual awakening, universal values, concern for global issues, and so on, tend to be characteristic of this age group, as well as a desire for strong physical sensations often associated with risk-taking behaviour.

Many young people feel that they are not “taken seriously” by the adult world. Some seek opportunities to prove their capacity to take an active role in society with real responsibilities, or feel a strong desire to widen their horizons - meeting new people and seeing new places. Others retreat into a phase of apparent apathy. At the same time, their desire for strong physical sensations, to test their limits or escape from problems, draws many towards high-risk activities.

Relationships within the group can become very important, with strong friendships and equally strong clashes of personality. Situations and roles invented at this time (romance apart!) include being taken seriously by adults, achieving a mission of some sort, being able to organise themselves as efficiently as adults, as

well as exploring new horizons and anticipating the thrill of adrenaline.

*In response to their need to identify with more mature roles, symbolic frameworks for this age group often revolve around kinds of people admired in history - high-adventure explorers, people who, despite all the odds, succeeded something extraordinary, people who have made a lasting contribution to society, etc.*

#### • Mid to late adolescence - the age of voyages

Much of the social concern felt before still remains, except that this is also an age when many young people hit earth with a bump! A desire for full independence from parents is coupled with apprehension about being able to actually deal with it all. Worries about studies, choosing a career, finding a job as well as the fear of solitude in the big wide world and the joys and tribulations of romance tend to characterise this period. Although many young people may leave Scouting at this time, quite a few still appreciate the idea of carrying out projects together, organising travel expeditions, examining new lifestyles and potential career opportunities, getting to know new kinds of people, helping out on community projects - preferably as far away from home as possible!

If actually travelling abroad is financially impossible in some cases, every country offers untold opportunities for voyages of discovery!

*Symbolic frameworks for this age group generally concentrate on a voyage of discovery and self-discovery - with stops to give a helping hand and get to know others along the way.*

### **Establishing the framework**

Before starting to think about potential themes, the question to ask is: what educational concepts should be highlighted through the use of symbolism? The answer to this requires examining the educational proposal for the age section, the values underlying Scouting, the needs of young people at different ages, and so on, and to see how these concepts could be symbolised in the operating structure and the application of the Scout Method - in other words, in what the young people are actually going to experience.

The next question would be to see if the concepts short-listed make a coherent whole or whether some are really peripheral and could be cut out. Symbolism is meant to enrich the Scouting experience, not weigh it down!

### **Examining potential or existing themes**

In addition to considering symbolic frameworks from the perspective of progression from make-believe to reality and a specific educational focus, there are several other considerations to be borne in mind. These include:

- **A theme from the young people's cultural heritage or a non-culture-specific theme?**

A theme inspired from one's cultural heritage (legendary heroes, history, etc.) can stimulate a sense of affinity with the culture heritage of the young people. This can be an important consideration in choosing themes for young people who suffer from a lack of cultural identity - which can arise for a variety of sociopolitical reasons; or it may be an almost automatic choice in societies with a relatively homogeneous cultural background.

The choice may be a different one, however, for Scout associations which cater to young people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds - whose cultural heritage should be considered? One option could be to look for culturally neutral themes - inspired by nature or mythology, for example. In any case, due to their ephemeral and commer-

cial nature, themes from "pop culture" should be avoided.

- **Is the theme likely to appeal?**

"Glorious" periods in sociopolitical history and even economic expansion have had an influence on the choice of themes representing heroism, courage and chivalry in more than one country over time. Themes designed to stimulate pride in one's people and country may well be a consideration, particularly in countries that have gone through difficult times. Themes of this nature, however, should be considered carefully. In no way must a theme serve to stimulate, nor be likely to result in, a nationalistic attitude, racial tension, territorial disputes, etc.

In fact, the major considerations in finding themes likely to appeal to young people are largely the same as the considerations in finding themes of educational relevance: a) Does the theme offer the right proportions of make-believe and reality for the age group? (Not many 16-year-olds, for example, are likely to be inspired by characters from children's fables) and b) Do the key characteristics of the theme sound mature to the young people it is intended for? (The theme is more likely to appeal if it corresponds to the needs of the stage of development that they are about to enter.)

• **Is the theme coherent with Scouting's educational proposal?**

Whatever the symbolic framework chosen, the way of life must reinforce, and not contradict in any way, Scouting's aims, principles and method. A symbolic framework which involves any hint of discrimination against other people, or any form of disregard for nature and the environment would not, for example, be compatible with promoting peace and human understanding or respect for the integrity of the natural world - even in make-believe.

**Making the most of a symbolic framework in the Youth Programme**

Clearly, a symbolic framework is more than simply adding "colour" to the Youth Programme - although it does that too. In a way it is like a coloured thread, woven in the fabric of the Youth Programme. Of course, symbolic names are used for the meeting places, teams, the themes of camps and so on, although it is more than that, too. How, for example, is the symbolic framework - and the educational need that it aims to respond to - reflected in the operating structure of the unit? For example, if a symbolic framework concentrates on active participation in society, does each young person have the opportunity to take part in decision-making and take on responsibilities?

If the theme of a camp is all about resourcefulness and personal survival, is there not a contradiction with the theme if the teams assemble pre-cut planks of wood for picnic tables?

An examination of the themes currently used for symbolic frameworks in an association may well show that the themes in themselves are still perfectly valid - but are they really being used to their full potential?

**WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMME DELIVERY?**

The adult leader needs to understand what a symbolic framework is and what it is meant to do in general and, more specifically, to become familiar with the symbolic framework for the age group that they are working with and the specific need that it aims to respond to.

The symbolic framework needs to be reflected in the booklets and other tools written for the young people themselves. The theme would normally be reflected as a leitmotif adding "colour" to the subject being dealt with (planning a camp, explaining personal progression, or whatever), and would also be reflected through stories, anecdotes, illustrations related to the theme. The predominant use of a certain col-

our (red, blue, etc.) may also be used to symbolise the theme of the age section and reinforce their identification with it. It is important to make sure that the theme comes across in an exciting yet mature way which helps the young people to feel that they really are "explorers" or "pioneers".

**WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION?**

There are a thousand and one ways of making a symbolic framework come alive in the group. The adult leader needs to feel comfortable with the symbolism so that the theme comes across as a natural part of what Scouting for that age section is all about. It is also crucial that the adult leader makes the theme come across as real and mature. From the young people's point of view, they need to feel that they really are explorers or Scouts, otherwise it kills the magic of it all - which is hardly the purpose.

The adult leader will, at times, need to take the initiative and invent connections as he or she goes along - for example in the way an activity is proposed or carried out, the theme of a community service camp, etc. Gradually, the young people will come up with their own ideas - the choice of team names, of how to make their meeting place more like an explor-

er's base camp, or a Scouts' den or an action group's office, for example.

The use of a specific theme for an age section does not preclude the use of other themes during the year for a particular project, camp or whatever in order to add excitement and a new learning perspective. This will involve thinking about the educational objectives of the event, what the young people are actually going to be doing and seeing what can be done to make the theme come alive - decorations, costumes, specific activities, even what, where and how they cook dinner can all add to the experience!

The adult leader also needs to ensure that way in which the group operates, including his or her relationship with the young people, does not contradict the educational need that the theme is meant to respond to.

# NATURE

## WHAT IS IT?

Nature refers to the natural environment - the woods, the plains, the sea, the mountains, the desert - as opposed to artificially created environments, such as the school yard, concrete campsites and crowded cities. Nature also refers to what Baden-Powell called the “harmonious whole” of the “infinite, the historic and the microscopic”, and humankind’s place in it.

Nature, as an element of the Scout Method, refers to the immense possibilities that the natural world offers for the development of the young person.

## WHAT IS IT INTENDED TO DO?

Contact with nature is intended to:

- contribute to the development of the young person in all of the areas of development in a holistic way;
- provide an ideal setting in which the Scout Method can be applied.

*“Every flower of the field, every fiber of a plant, every particle of an insect, carries with it the impress of its Maker, and can - if duly considered - read us lectures of ethics or divinity.”*

- “A Natural History”, Sir Thomas Pope Blount, 1693.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

Nature contributes to personal development in many ways. The most obvious examples are those which relate to each area of development:

### • Physical development:

Nature offers fresh, unpolluted air, space in which to run and expend energy, opportunities for all kinds of inexpensive physical activities which provide strong physical sensations, opportunities to test limits of endurance, coordination, the speed of reflexes, and so on.

### • Intellectual development:

For the younger Scout (and even for older ones!) nature provides innumerable opportunities to explore and develop the senses and to develop skills of observation and other faculties: colours, shapes, sizes, movement, listening to sounds, distinguishing smells, feeling different textures, and so on.

Nature can help young people to analyse situations; to use their imagination and powers of reasoning; to find creative and appropriate ways of overcoming difficulties, using a minimum of available resources; and much more.

*Here I am camped by a rushing river between forest-clad hills.  
Heaven is not a vague something somewhere up in the sky, but is right here in  
this world in your own heart and surroundings.  
By a camp fire the mind can open out and receive great thoughts and higher  
impulses.  
The study of nature brings into a harmonious whole the question of the infi-  
nite, the historic and the microscopic as part of the Great Creator's whole.  
Don't be content with the what but get to know the why and the how.  
If you ever feel hopeless about getting on to success in life from a small begin-  
ning remember that even that great strong tree, the oak, began at first as a  
little acorn, lying on the ground.  
Patience has more to do with success than almost any other quality.  
Boys can see adventure in a dirty old duck-pond... Without adventure, life  
would be deadly dull.  
As we get into our crabbed old age, we are apt to forget that we were once  
youngsters.  
God has given us a world to live in that is full of beauties and wonders and  
He has given us not only eyes to see them, but minds to understand them, if  
we only have the sense to look at them in that light.*

- Compilation of Baden-Powell's texts

Being in nature also provides a wealth of opportunities for young people to understand concepts of interdependence (e.g. through having to cooperate at camp), perceive networks of relationships, how systems function (e.g. through observing wildlife), and so on.

- **Emotional development:**

Nature offers many opportunities to explore feelings and emotions. The peace and tranquillity of being in nature helps one to stand back from everyday problems and irritations. At night in a tent, the young person has to face his or her irrational fears and overcome them.

- **Social development:**

A camp, far away from home and the trappings of civilisation, is when young people are able to really get to know each other with their strengths and weaknesses. The simple activities of everyday life, such as making meals, organising the living space, etc., bring out the meaning of interdependence. Helping each other is a necessity, the problems faced are real. Solutions to conflicts have to be found because one cannot just walk away and go home. Racing down a river, trekking up a mountain, taking an impromptu shower in the rain after a hot and dusty day, huddling together

for warmth sharing a hot drink are all experiences which can help to form close relationships and a sense of solidarity which city life does not always offer.

• **Spiritual development:**

A spiritual awareness can develop from simply taking time to discover and contemplate the many wonders of the natural world. Taking time, for example, to observe and think about how insects go about their lives, oblivious of the presence of human giants; or taking time while watching for shooting stars in the night sky to think about how tiny we are compared to the vast, mysterious universe. Taking time to sense a feeling of awe and timelessness inspired by landscapes.

Nature offers innumerable opportunities for inner questioning. Once the mind has opened up, then the young person can more fully explore and freely adhere to his or her religious heritage.

*“With the color that paints the morning and evening clouds that face the sun, I saw then the whole heaven suffused.”*

- “Divine Comedy”, Dante.

### Getting back to essentials

From a more holistic perspective of education, contact with nature can help the young person to get back to what is essential and real in life. Today, more than ever, young people are growing up in a world in which it is becoming more and more difficult to distinguish between what is essential and what is superfluous, between what is urgent and what can wait, between what is authentic and what is superficial - in short, between reality and illusion.

*“{Camping in nature} makes me feel freer... You have to get away from the usual comforts, and deal with things... You really realise it afterwards.”*

- “Educational impact of Scouting: Three case studies on adolescence”, WOSM, 1995.

In nature, miles away from the nearest road, let alone telephone, the young person is forced to face reality. City fashion, social backgrounds, acting “cool” disappear in the wind when a storm is blowing. The simple pleasures of life - feeling the warmth of the morning sunshine, watching the stars at night, swimming in a river - can make even the most sophisticated electronic game fade from memory.

### Living in harmony with nature

When young people are able to appreciate a simple life in nature in this way and are able to leave their consumer lifestyles behind, they can better understand the need to live in harmony with nature and to protect it.



*“He who is in harmony with Nature hits the mark without effort and apprehends the truth without thinking.”*

- Confucius

### Gaining a sense of the historic

Rubbing sticks of wood to make a fire, finding a source of water, picking edible berries for lunch, gazing up at an age-old tree can help to make young people gain a sense of history, to consider how far mankind has come - and where mankind is going.

### Understanding the value of the code of living

A Scout camp in nature offers both simplicity and intensity of experience. It is often after such a camp that young people feel that relationships have become much stronger and the values underlying the code of living can suddenly make real sense to them.

The use of nature in Scouting is evidently not intended to shut young people off from the

*“Human life is embedded in nature, humans are caught up in natural systems; to act as though this is not the case harms nature and ultimately endangers human survival.”*

- “Global Teacher, Global Learner”, Graham Pike and David Selby, Hodder and Stoughton, 1989.

world in which they live. It is simply intended to help them to discover a world that they may not otherwise have thought to explore, to look beyond material values, to enrich their experience of life in a way that can serve them in every day life to think through what is essential and what is really unimportant.

### WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT?

While it is generally not feasible for all activities to take place in nature, contact with nature is an essential part of Scouting. As contact with nature can help young people to develop in so many ways, it is just as important for the young person growing up amidst the concrete and plastic of the cities as it is for the young person growing up in a tin-roofed hut in a shanty-town.

### Education through nature

Nature can be the setting for many kinds of activities - even when the primary educational objective of the activity is not directly related to nature. In such cases, whatever the primary educational objective, an underlying objective is simply to help young people to feel comfortable with being in nature (for some this may be a big step!).

On another level, use can be made of a natural setting for all kinds of physically challenging activities, personal and collective survival activities, such as orienteering, learning the basics of camping skills, overnight hikes, etc. Nature can thus help to make young people more conscious of their capacities and their need to progress - through testing their physical limits, their resourcefulness, their capacity to deal with difficulties and avoid danger, to cooperate as a team, etc. Even a small amount of time to rest by a river or under a tree after a tiring activity can help young people to gain a feeling of peacefulness.

### Learning about nature

Most young people follow classes in geography and biology at school. In Scouting, activities which involve learning about nature are not intended to reproduce what schools are already doing, nor to concentrate on practical application classes to complement book-based theory.

In Scouting, knowledge is not amassed for its own sake! Activities about nature combine knowledge and skills based on the young people's interests and, in the way that they are conceived and carried out, contribute to the development of attitudes.



"The little Scouts in Action", Roland Coe, N. Y., Robert M. McBride, 1944.

When at camp, observing the social organisation of a colony of ants, for example, can open the young people's minds to a fascinating world that they may otherwise have missed - or trodden on. Being able to distinguish between the pawprint of a rabbit and a bear can

be extremely useful when camping near a forest! Learning to make a bird call, figuring out how to construct the equipment necessary for an experiment that they are interested in, learning basic agricultural skills and making tools, etc., offer opportunities for young people to progress towards all sorts of educational objectives.

### Action for nature and the environment

Evidently, environmental protection activities are a regular part of any Scout programme - and many can even be carried out in the middle of a city. In Scouting, young people's first encounter with environmental protection is simply the fact of applying their code of living to the environment in which they are carrying out their activities - respecting the natural habitat of the flora and fauna by not leaving litter, ensuring that their cooking fire is properly extinguished, not wasting natural resources, refurbishing existing materials and tools for use as opposed to always buying new, and so on.

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that an environmental protection activity will necessarily lead to a greater inner concern for nature. The greatest impact is when young people decide to undertake such an activity as a result of having had an opportunity to explore and discover aspects of nature and to

have developed an emotional link with whatever it is they are going to try to protect. When a group of even young Scouts, for example, have enjoyed running along their favourite stretch of sandy beach, and return to find it covered with litter, woe betide the next person they find dumping their rubbish on the shore!

### WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMME DELIVERY?

The adult leader needs to have some enthusiasm for life in nature and to understand how to make use of it in order to strengthen the Scouting experience. He or she need not be technically competent in the skills required for all activities, but needs to find adults who are.

### WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION?

In a new group in which the young people are not used to living in contact with nature, the adult leader should take special care to ensure that the first experience goes smoothly and is enjoyable. If the young people show an interest in physically challenging activities, this would be a better starting point in developing contact with nature than an environmental protection activity.

Camps in nature greatly facilitate the integration of new members in the group. A camp should therefore be planned a few months after the start of the new Scout year, with several others to follow. The adult leader needs to encourage curiosity, exploration and discovery, create a positive atmosphere, and use opportunities to recall the code of living. If camping in the wild is not allowed or is too dangerous, then at least the site should be as far away from other campers as possible.

Evidently, developing contact with nature in the group is not just a question of activities. It is also a matter of promoting a simple lifestyle in general and a basic respect for all things living.

# PERSONAL PROGRESSION

## WHAT IS IT?

Personal progression focuses specifically on helping each young person to be consciously and actively involved in his or her own development.

The progressive scheme is the main tool used to support this element of the Scout Method. It is based on a set of educational objectives prepared by the national association for the age section, established according to the knowledge, skills and attitudes that a young person could reasonably be expected to have gained in the various areas of development by the end of that age section.

Presented in an attractive and stimulating way, it provides a tool for each young person, with the help of the adult leader, to:

- work out a set of personal development objectives;
- establish how, in concrete terms, he or she or she intends to reach those objectives;
- carry out his or her intentions at his or her own pace;
- evaluate, recognise and celebrate the progress made.

## WHAT IS IT INTENDED TO DO?

Quite simply, as described above, personal progression is intended to help the young person to develop the inner motivation to take charge of his or her own development; to progress in his or her own way at his or her own pace in the general direction of the educational objectives of the age section; and to recognise the progress made.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

Many schools around the world face intense pressure to ensure that young people reach or surpass a common level of knowledge in academic subjects or of vocational skills that are intended to serve as a passport for the job market.

In turn, by adolescence, young people also face intense pressure. The subjects tend to be imposed, not freely chosen, individual paces of learning can rarely be taken into account due to the deadline of exams and, while having passed an exam or done better than one expected can procure a sense of achievement, it is also dependent on relative ranking - how many did better or worse.

*“Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?”*

*“That depends a good deal on where you want to go to,” said the Cheshire Cat.*

- “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland”, Lewis Carroll.

Some young people are able to sail through, others struggle along. Many others fall into a vicious circle whereby a lack of inner motivation and a fear of failure leads to little effort being made, thus increasing the chances of not feeling a sense of achievement.

Being able to pursue real interests, discover talents, and discover what it feels like to have a real sense of achievement in a noncompetitive atmosphere is crucially important for the young person. Ironically, the reaction of many parents to low academic achievement at school is often to restrict or even ban outside activities so as to devote as much time as possible to school work.

Scouting, of course, is not specifically aimed at young people who are having difficulty at school! It simply provides a way for all young people who choose to join to widen their horizons, to develop in ways that schools rarely deal with, to have an opportunity to shine - each in his or her own way - through the pursuit of his or her own interests and educational objectives.

## **The progressive scheme**

### **• Stages of progression**

The framework consists of a number of stages of progression for each age section.

The first stage which young people work towards is the one in which the young person makes a voluntary commitment to Scouting symbolised by the Scout promise. It is not a test to pass. Simply, for the young person to be able to make a truly voluntary commitment, he or she must have experienced Scouting in action, be willing to share in the tasks of group life, become familiar with Scouting's educational proposal for the age section, have understood the Scout law and how it translates into a code of living that are the "rules of the game".

While schools, parents, friends, and so on, may encourage - even push - young people to give Scouting a try, ultimately, it must be up to the young person him or herself to decide to join and make a personal commitment to Scouting - and to decide when to leave. This is based on the concept that a young person will only truly progress if the motivation to do so comes from within - no one puts much energy into something if they would rather be elsewhere.

The fact that the young person must choose to join is the foundation on which an inner motivation to develop can grow. In addition, the fact that all of the young people in the group are together and are undertaking things together because they want to helps to create a mutually stimulating atmosphere.

The fact that Scouting simply asks each young person to "do his or her best" is central to personal progression. There are no competitive tests, no ranking according to who did better or worse. The only competition is with oneself. Not only does this help to reduce the fear of comparison and of failure, it is also a factor which stimulates the development of deeper and more authentic relationships in the group - as there is no undercurrent of tension created by competition.

A close-knit group has a tremendous influence on stimulating progress in terms of attitudes such as tolerance, solidarity, responsibility and commitment towards the group, and provides emotional support. In addition, in general terms, the closer-knit the group, the more they can achieve together. The more they can achieve together, the more opportunities there are for each person to progress.

The number of subsequent stages will generally depend on the age range of the age sec-

tion and each lasts usually no more than one year. Each stage proposes a number of general educational objectives covering knowledge, skills and attitudes in all of the areas of development and, generally, a number of activity ideas based on the educational proposal of the age section which offer ways in which the young person can progress towards the objectives. The young person then personalises each of the objectives, with help from the adult leader.

An example could be a general educational objective related to developing the ability to take on responsibility and making a concrete contribution to group life. From the variety of roles to be undertaken in order for the group to function effectively, there could be responsibilities to do with growing vegetables for the group's meals, learning to take charge of the team budget, taking on the responsibility of being a team leader, etc. With the help of the adult leader, the young person identifies his or her areas of interest, the level of responsibility and the time commitment required, and so on.

After an agreed length of time, the young person can then take on greater responsibility in a way which involves new skills, for example by helping someone else to learn how to grow vegetables. The young person can then try out

a different role involving new skills and kinds of responsibility.

In this example, knowledge, skills and attitudes form a whole related to both the development of the young person as an individual and as a active member of his or her community - in this case, the Scout unit.

The amount and kind of responsibility gradually grows as the young person becomes capable of doing so. Helping someone else in the group to "learn the ropes" requires leadership skills - such as patience, an encouraging attitude and so on. At the same time, it helps a "senior" member to realise the progress made since he or she first started to "learn the ropes", and the ability of the "senior" member stimulates the "junior" member.

The contact stimulates constructive relationships and thus a closer-knit group. The autonomy of the group grows as each person becomes more autonomous, responsible, supportive and committed.

What a young person gains through Scouting is not abstract - it always relates to helping the young person to enrich his or her life today. In each stage of progression, the ways in which the young people gain the skills, knowledge and attitudes in the various areas of develop-

ment are thus related to what is needed in order to live Scouting to the full. For a young Scout, learning to pack a rucksack and remembering to bring what he or she is going to need is useful. Technically, one could say that being able to do so is a sign of intellectual development (as it requires analysis and memory, etc.), but it is also a sign of growing autonomy - in this respect at least, the young person does not have to rely on anyone else, nor is the person a burden on the others.

#### • Proficiency in areas of personal interest

In addition to the stages of progression, the progressive scheme offers a variety of opportunities to pursue personal interests. Usually, it offers a number of options within a variety of categories related to the educational objectives - manual skills, organisational skills, artistic expression, community service, accountancy, etc. The young person is encouraged to choose options in each of the categories during his or her time in the age section so as to help the young person to widen his or her horizons, discover new interests and talents and develop new skills.

The interest areas are not an "add-on" to the group's activities; they are an integral part of them. The interest areas are chosen according to the skills and knowledge that need to be

acquired for the group to carry out the projects agreed upon. Once chosen, the young person works towards completing a number of requirements resulting in a certain degree of proficiency.

While the young person may gain the knowledge and skills in these interest areas during Scout meetings or at other times during the week, with others or alone, the young person shares what he or she has learned with others and the skills and knowledge are put to use in their projects.

The requirements, of course, are formulated in such a way as to provide the young person with the latitude necessary so as to be able to progress towards his or her personal objectives.

#### • Evaluating progress

Personal progression is evaluated in terms of progress towards the personal educational objectives of the young person, based on the framework of general objectives for the age section in each of the areas of development. It is evaluated by:

- the young person him or herself - in terms of the changes perceived since he or she set

his or her personal objectives and the amount of effort made, i.e. "doing one's best";

- the feedback of the other young people in contact with him or her and of the adult leader in terms of observable changes in the young person in everyday life and in the observable amount of effort that the young person has made.

When the young person's personal progress meets the general requirements of the stage of progression, he or she formally passes on to the next stage.

Concerning progress in the specific areas of interest, progress is evaluated in terms of the effort made, the level of proficiency gained and the use that has been made of it in contributing to group life and the success of the group's activities. General attitudes are thus built into the criteria of evaluation even in terms of proficiency in skills or knowledge gained. A young person may have become very proficient at repairing bicycles, but if he or she is at the stage of helping another young person to learn the same skills and gets angry every time a mistake is made, then there is room for improvement!

#### • Publicly recognising progress

Progress needs to be recognised. The young person needs to know that he or she really has made progress and to feel a sense of achievement. The young person also needs to feel that others have noticed and acknowledge it.

Simply offering a few words of praise is an informal way of recognising progress and is important to sustain the inner motivation of the young person. In addition, a more formal way of recognising progress is equally important. A small ceremony at the end of a mid-year evaluation, for example, serves as an occasion for the whole group to publicly acknowledge each other's progress. A token of that achievement, such as a badge, a certificate or even a photograph or drawing of the achievement represents tangible proof to the young person that he or she really did achieve something special. That sense of achievement helps to build up motivation again to forge ahead.

Of course, the proficiency badges and progression awards are not meant to be stuck on uniforms or hung on walls to show off or for decoration. The fact that a young person has a certain level of proficiency in a particular skill

means that the others can count on the young person to make use of it.

Putting one's skills and talents to use in the group is a way of building on the progress through practical use and is also a way of making sure that the progress is not simply recognised by the others but actively appreciated! For a young person in the senior age section, passing a driving test can be a great moment for someone who has gone to great lengths to save up and practice, but how more enriching it is to also be the one to drive the team to an activity site.

### **Personal progression as an integral element of the Scout Method**

As we have seen, personal progression involves the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes in all areas and the development of the whole person as an individual and as a member of society. The progressive scheme is a useful tool in this respect. However, a tool by itself can be of limited effectiveness - it is the way in which it is used which makes it effective. In this case, it is the use of the entire Scout Method which makes the tool really work.

Designing or enriching activities intended to help the young person to gain knowledge and

skills is relatively easy. However, whether or not what the young person learns goes in one ear and out the other depends largely on his or her interests, the personal challenge involved, the perceived usefulness of whatever it is, i.e. the practical applications of the skill or knowledge, and the extent to which the skill or knowledge is actually put to use over time.

In terms of attitudes, activities on cooperation, empathy (seeing problems from the other person's perspective), peace and human understanding, and so on, can be useful - but they are primarily eye-openers. Long-term progress in terms of attitudes comes far less from specific activities than through the way in which knowledge and skills are pooled and shared so as to benefit everyone, through experiencing life close to nature, the sense made of the code of living through everyday experience, the joys and tribulations of life as a group, a mutually supportive atmosphere, and so on.

Routine activities, therefore, are just as important in stimulating personal progress as the special ones. For example, the connection between making supper or walking together in a small group and emotional development may not be obvious, but there can be one if a young person really needs an opportunity to talk through a personal problem.

### **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT?**

The progressive scheme needs to:

- be conceived with the application of the Scout Method in mind;
- be simple and clearly related to recognisable "milestones" marking personal progress;
- be attractive to young people;
- serve to motivate young people to make progress in their personal development;
- be easy for young people to understand and use with the help of the adult leader;
- make full use of the symbolic framework for the age section;
- be adapted to the age of the young people in the age section concerned;
- offer choice to young people;
- be sufficiently flexible, while covering all the areas of development, so that the young people can build their own personal objectives, based on their interests, capacities and socio-cultural context.

At the same time, as an integral element of the Scout Method, personal progression requires looking beyond the tool of the progressive scheme. It also means looking at how all the elements of the Scout Method can be used to create an environment which stimulates inner motivation, offers encouragement and support, and helps the young person to develop as a whole person.

### **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMME DELIVERY?**

The progressive scheme will need to be presented clearly to both adult leaders and youth members. Special handbooks or other information should be designed for youth members in each age section. These should:

- introduce the Scout Movement and the age section concerned;
- describe the application of the Scout Method to that section (team system, symbolism, etc.);
- present the progressive scheme (personal development areas, section educational objectives);
- explain how personal educational objectives are determined through dialogue with the adult leader; how they are attained through activi-

ties and life in the group; how progress is evaluated and recognised; and describe the proficiency areas and requirements.

Similar tools to help adult leaders fulfil their role will also need to be developed.

### **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION?**

#### **Helping the newcomer to discover Scouting**

In terms of helping a young person to take charge of his or her development, the first task of the adult leader is to try to get him or her interested in Scouting! However exciting the background reading materials make Scouting sound, and however much the activities described correspond to the young person's interests, reality has to live up to his or her expectations!

For a newcomer, the general group atmosphere, the leadership style of the adult leader, the perceived relationships between the young people and between the young people and the adult leader, the extent to which the young person feels welcome, etc., are vitally important factors in whether or not a young person is likely to stay beyond the first meeting.

#### **Building self-confidence**

The adult leader needs to try to discover any particular talents or skills that the young person may have and find a way for the young person to put them to use. The point is not to get the young person to "show off", but simply to feel good about being able to do something.

The situation or activity that enables the young person to use a particular talent needs to benefit the group in some way - even if the skill is purely of entertainment value. This is important in terms of helping the others to accept the newcomer and for the newcomer to sense the appreciation of the others and to feel useful. Young people are sensitive, however. If the situation created is obviously artificial, or if the adult leader were to make a big deal of one person's talent, then the young person could be extremely embarrassed.

By the same token, the adult leader also needs to observe whether the newcomer appears to have any apparent difficulties so as to avoid situations which could be potentially humiliating. The difficulties will of course be borne in mind by the adult leader as particular areas to be worked on when helping the young person to establish his or her personal objectives.

## **Helping the young person to set personal objectives**

Assuming that the young person has made up his or her mind to join the Movement, then the adult leader needs to help the young person to establish a set of personal objectives. This can take place as a one-to-one chat with the adult leader, or it could even take place in a team setting, depending on how comfortable the young people feel with each other.

The idea is for the adult leader, on the basis of the general educational objectives for the age section, to:

- help the young person to explore how the objectives translate into his or her own situation;
- examine his or her current level of capacities as compared to the objectives (as well as any difficulties that need particular attention);
- work out how the young person intends to make progress towards each of the objectives in concrete terms, based on his or her interests, within a mutually agreed time frame.

Each young person thus develops his or her own personal development plan. The young

person can be invited to write down the plan or record it in some way in his or her own words so as to serve as a reminder of the young person's intentions and, later, as a way of looking back at the progress made.

In order to help the young person to do so, the adult leader needs to be able to make an educated guess as to whether the educational objectives and the ways chosen to try to progress are realistic for that person. If the ambitions are too low, the adult leader can encourage him or her to go a little further. If the challenge is too great, the young person is likely to become demotivated very fast. At the end of the day, however, the challenge has to be determined by the young person him or herself - a challenge set by someone else becomes meaningless.

## **Facilitating the young people's progress**

Facilitating the way for each young person to progress towards his or her personal objectives can be quite a challenge for the adult leader! Of course, the national Scout association's progressive scheme will normally include a number of activity ideas aimed at providing opportunities for the young people to progress towards their objectives. However, the adult leader will always need to think through activity ideas to see how they can be enriched

so that each young person in the team has an opportunity to progress towards his or her objectives through playing a part in making the team's activities a success and contributing to group life in general.

Every so often, the adult leader will need to stand back and think through whether there is anything in the way in which the Scout Method is applied in the group that could be used to greater advantage.

## **Sustaining motivation and providing support to overcome difficulties**

Just as everyone develops at different rates at different moments in the various dimensions, so too the motivation to progress goes through ups and downs. As the young people discover that being in charge of the menus for the summer camp is not quite as easy as it seemed, or the creation of the set for the play they had agreed to put on was being held up due to an uninspired scriptwriter, frustration and waning interest can easily set in.

The way in which the adult leader deals with this will evidently depend on the situation. Sometimes young people simply need time to have a laugh and relax for a little while. Sometimes, the adult leader may need to point out

his or her disappointment with a lack of effort.

When a young person is experiencing difficulty, the leader's role is to help the young person to explore ways of overcoming the difficulty in order to succeed in what he or she set out to do. It does not help the young person to progress or to feel a sense of achievement if the adult leader provides all the answers or deals with the young person's problems on his or her behalf. Judging the right amount of challenge for a young person needs to be worked out before - not in the heat of the action.

### **Ensuring that what is gained is put to use to enrich the group**

The adult leader needs to make every effort to make sure that the talents, skills and knowledge are put to use to enrich the group. Doing so may require some inventiveness so as to enrich an existing activity or project in a natural way. However, just because a young person decided to learn to chair a meeting, for example, does not mean that he or she has to chair every meeting until the end of his or her days in Scouting! The idea would be for him or her to chair meetings to practise and improve his or her skills for a certain period of time, then to help others to learn, and be available and willing to stand in if someone is sick, etc.

### **Evaluating and publicly recognising progress**

Evidently, no one can expect a young person in Scouting to be constantly thinking about his or her personal progress. In fact, in the heat of the action, most of the young person's conscious effort will be directed towards making the activity a success.

This is why, once an activity, a camp or a project has been completed, the adult leader needs to take time with the young people for evaluation (as a team following a team activity, e.g. an overnight hike, and as a unit after a camp, for example).



The review includes what they enjoyed or disliked, the general level of success of the activity, the difficulties encountered and how they were overcome, and so on. It is also a time to invite each young person to explain what they feel they have gained (or had hoped to gain) as a result of the experience - and what they will try to do differently next time.

There are many ways of conducting evaluation meetings, but the purpose is not to make the young person wish he or she could crawl into a hole and disappear! Stimulating inner motivation requires opportunities to realise the progress made and to feel a sense of achievement as a result of the effort. The young person also has to realise the weak points to be improved.

A collective approach can be very helpful. The young person expresses him or herself first, and then the adult leader may ask the other team members if they have any feedback to offer the young person.

If this approach is used, the adult leader will need to remind the young people that any criticism should be expressed constructively and to start with positive points first. The adult leader then provides feedback to the young person in the same way. The adult leader can, of course, take part in the evaluation too, ex-

plaining what he or she found enjoyable or difficult, personally enriching, etc.

Where a young person has made a considerable effort in one respect or another, this should also be recognised in the evaluation, irrespective of the actual level of achievement. This is, after all, what the young person promised to do! On no account should the adult leader or anyone else make comparisons between the levels of achievement of the young people.

The end of an evaluation meeting is an occasion to publicly recognise any of the young people who have completed the requirements for some aspect of the progressive scheme. In addition to applause, it is important to reward the young person with a tangible symbol of the achievement which is meaningful to the young person. Badges and award certificates tend to be popular up until the mid-teens. In the senior age section, other symbolic tokens may be more meaningful - something made by the others in the group which shows appreciation and friendship may be worth a thousand badges!

### **Celebrating achievements**

When the big project or camp is over, the evaluation meeting has been held, whatever the individual progress made, a celebration helps to close that chapter in style and then get off to a fresh start. This can be a moment of spiritual meditation followed by a party, a camp fire, a parent's evening with music and illustrations to show what they have managed to do, etc.



# ADULT SUPPORT

## WHAT IS IT?

In Scouting, adult support involves a voluntary partnership between the adult leader and the young people, both individually and as a group. In this partnership, the role of the adult leader is to facilitate the process of self-education through the way in which he or she applies Scouting's purpose, principles and method.

The support provided by adult leaders to young people is of an educational nature - the adult plays a particular role aimed at helping each young person to develop.

The nature of the educational support provided in Scouting is different from the other kinds of adult support which are normally present in a young person's life - for example, parents, a school teacher, or a sports coach. In each case, the reasons why the adult and the young person are in contact with each other are different, the goals sought are different, the nature of the role played is different, the affective relationship is different and the interaction that occurs is different. In short, the educational relationship is different.

In order to facilitate the process of self-education, the educational relationship in Scouting needs to be of a different nature from that of a parent-child or teacher-student relationship.

While an adult leader may be a parent in private life or a teacher in professional life, in Scouting life, i.e. when he or she is working with the young people in the group, the adult leader is not there as a substitute parent, nor as a teacher.

The particular kind of educational relationship between adult leaders and young people in Scouting could be described as an educational partnership.

## WHAT IS IT INTENDED TO DO?

As an element of the Scout Method, adult support is intended to stimulate the young person's development through:

- bringing adults and young people together in a rich learning partnership, based on mutual respect, trust and acceptance of each other as a person;
- the fact that, in the partnership, each person is personally committed, dedicates time and energy, participates in decision-making and the sharing of responsibilities, and seeks to create a constructive atmosphere that benefits everyone;
- the role played by the adult, which is to be an active member of the group in the sense that he or she is beside them in their adven-

*"You may give them your love but not your thoughts, for they have their own thoughts."*

*You may house their bodies but not their souls, for their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.*

*... Seek not to make them like you, for life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday."*

- "The Prophet", Kahlil Gibran.

*"He helps us to be what we want to be."*

- "Educational impact of Scouting: Three case studies on adolescence", WOSM, 1995.

tures and their difficulties, while constantly seeking to assure all of the conditions needed for the young people to take charge of their development in the direction of Scouting's educational proposal.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

### A partnership

In Scouting, the partnership is a voluntary one - both the adult and each young person are in contact with each other out of choice, and both have an interest in what Scouting has to offer.

*"The Scoutmaster has to be neither schoolmaster nor commanding officer, nor pastor, nor instructor.*

*He has got to put himself on the level of the older brother, that is, to see things from the boy's point of view, and to lead and guide and give enthusiasm in the right direction."*

- "Aids to Scoutmastership", Baden-Powell, World Brotherhood edition, 1944.

The young people want to take part in exciting activities that, for the time being, they are not able to organise fully on their own. The adult identifies with Scouting's educational proposal, has an interest in young people's development, and feels that it would be personally enriching to be involved in facilitating the development process of the young people. Neither partner is an empty vessel, and neither partner knows everything. In Scouting, all of the "partners" can learn from each other, enrich each other and complement each other.

*"The principles of Scouting are all in the right direction. The success in their application depends on the Scoutmaster and how he applies them."*

- "Aids to Scoutmastership", Baden-Powell, World Brotherhood edition, 1944.

### The role of the adult leader

The role of the adult leader is to facilitate the development of each young person through:

- presenting to them what Scouting can offer them, how it works and what is expected in return;

*"There are leaders the people FEAR.  
There are leaders the people HATE.  
There are leaders the people LOVE.  
But when the best leaders of all have finished their work, the people say,  
'We did it ourselves'.*

- Lao Tzu, Chinese philosopher.

- helping them to become familiar with all of the elements of the Scout Method - and to make sure that it is used. This includes everything from the code of living in the group, personal progression, how the Scout unit functions as an association of teams, responsibilities to be shared, what the adult leader is prepared to assume, and what the young people are going to need to deal with themselves, etc., etc.;
- observing and reacting to the group dynamics so as to maintain a welcoming, constructive and motivating atmosphere;
- developing a leadership style that is a balance between friendship (to encourage them) and authority (to get them back on track). The adult leader is not an army general or a company president giving orders to be obeyed -

he or she needs to encourage ideas, initiative and decision-making. At the same time, he or she is an adult with responsibility for the physical and emotional security of all concerned and for ensuring that each young person progresses in the direction of Scouting's educational proposal. He or she cannot, therefore, abdicate from the role of adult leader. The balance between friendship and authority will depend largely on the level of maturity of the young people at a given time and in a given situation. It is up to the adult leader to judge an appropriate balance;

- providing support to each young person and to the group as a whole. The adult leader needs to be able to make use of his or her knowledge of each young person to help to find ways in which the young person can progress, while bearing in mind how to integrate the young person's interests and educational objectives in what the group as a whole wants, and is able, to achieve. The more the group is able to achieve, the more each young person benefits.

### **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT?**

While the actual preparation of adult leaders for their role is normally undertaken by the team responsible for adult resources, there are

nonetheless implications for the programme development or review group.

For example, do the tools produced for the young people and the leaders make it possible for the young people and the adult to work together as partners? Do they provide enough latitude for the young people to make choices and assume responsibility? To what extent, and in what ways, does the adult leader's role - including his or her relationship with the young people - need to evolve so as to correspond to the growing level of maturity of the young people?

There is therefore a need for close collaboration between the national team responsible for the Youth Programme and the team responsible for preparing adult leaders for their role.

### **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMME DELIVERY?**

The adult leader is the person entrusted by the Scout association to promote, convey and implement the association's educational proposal. This involves having a thorough knowledge, understanding and personal identification with the theory underlying Scouting's purpose, the principles on which it is based and Scouting's method. It also requires knowl-

edge of the stages of development of young people and the general educational objectives.

At the same time, the adult leader is working with a group of real young people and needs a certain level of personal development if Scouting is to offer more than a series of activities. Scouting as an educational system remains complete theory until it is applied in the group.

Areas to examine include:

- Do the adult leaders truly understand Scouting's educational proposal?
- Are they able to translate the theory into practice in a way that really makes it a multi-faceted learning experience for young people?
- What kind of support do leaders need to be able to turn around difficult situations so that they become constructive learning situations for the young people?
- What kind of support do they need to be able to move from the use of ready-made activities to enriching activity ideas that the young people propose?
- What kind of support do they need to be able to fine tune the way in which the group functions so as to provide the young people

with the progressively greater room that they need to take initiative and assume responsibility?

- What kind of support do they need to be able to make sure that the routine activities of group life and the relationships within the group provide a rich learning environment?

These are only a few of the points that could be examined. There are certainly many more.

### **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION?**

Establishing Scouting's particular kind of adult support is a crucially important part of the whole educational approach. Young people need constructive contact with adults and they need opportunities to develop a different kind of relationship than the one they have with adults at home. They are not looking for substitute parents or teachers.

The adult leader must not expect young people to be miniature adults (because they are not), but he or she must accept them as people. Young people of any age need to feel respected as individuals and to feel that their worries, fears and hopes are considered legitimate. This does not mean that the adult leader has to condone all their behaviour, quite the

opposite. However, the adult leader needs to be able to look beyond what is apparent to try to understand what is going on and to respond in a constructive way.

The adult leader must never forget that he or she, too, is a human being with strengths and weaknesses. Young people do not expect perfection in an adult leader, just authenticity.

Ultimately, however good the tools produced at national level, a coherent learning experience depends on the adult leader's ability to understand the particular young people he or she is working with and to adjust to their interests and needs without ever losing sight of the educational objectives. In this respect, there are certain factors which come into play in the group which interact and which have a vital importance on whether what the young people experience will have a coherent educational impact.

These interactive elements are: the educational objectives being sought, the activities that the young people take part in, group dynamics and the way in which the Scout unit is structured and functions. Ultimately, making sure that all these elements work together in a coherent way depends on the capability of the adult leader.

For example, if an educational objective concerns developing the capacity to make decisions and assume responsibility for the consequences, then a simulation activity is not going to achieve the objective. The young people need real situations in which they can experience expressing their ideas, views and preferences, negotiate a consensus and persevere when they realise that things are not quite as easy as they thought. The responsibilities must be real ones.

In a new group, the adult leader cannot expect the young people to automatically function according to the full Scout Method all at once. Forming teams, for example, can take time. The adult leader needs time and patience - but what a sense of achievement when everything starts fitting into place!

## CONCLUSION

It is hoped that this publication has provided some food for thought on the richness of Scouting's educational system. When this system is fully applied at local level through the use of the Scout Method in everything that young people do, then Scouting can be extremely effective.

Activities as such have not been treated as a specific chapter in this publication. While activities are an essential part of Scouting, what makes an activity a Scout activity is not the subject of the activity (e.g. a hike in nature or a community service), nor even just the fact of having a clearly educational objective. From the perspective of Scouting's educational system, activities (i.e. everything young people do in Scouting, including routine activities such as setting up camp or packing equipment) are primarily the supporting context in which the Scout Method is put into practice. For example, it is through the activities that young people progress towards their educational objectives, learn to work in teams, etc. Activities, therefore, are a *sine qua non* condition for the educational system to function but, in themselves, activities play a supporting role<sup>7</sup>.

A holistic educational system as rich as Scouting is necessarily complex. Like a diamond, it has many different facets. Whatever facet we look at, we should be able to see the reflection of all the other facets. Complex, however, does not necessarily mean complicated. Baden-Powell, after all, was not a professional educationalist. He did, however, have a creative mind, an understanding and interest in young people, a lot of common sense and good humour. These qualities, coupled with an understanding of what Scouting tries to do and of the educational tools that it provides, are your basic equipment.

*"...Holistic education must acknowledge the multiple dimensions of the human personality... thus moving towards the perennial dream of an integrated individual living on a harmonious planet."*

- "Learning: The Treasure Within, Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century", article by Karan Singh, 1996.

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<sup>7</sup> Contact the World Scout Bureau headquarters or your regional Scout office of the World Scout Bureau for tools to help design Scout activities.