Reviewing the Youth Programme

Reviewing the Youth Programme

The Scout Movement

The purpose of the Scout Movement is to contribute to the development of young people in achieving their full physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual potential as individuals, as responsible citizens, and as members of their local, national, and international communities.[1]

Scouting has always been a non-formal education (NFE) movement. In December 2019, it joined a global platform[2] for the world's leading NFE and youth development organisations and practitioners to coordinate efforts to leverage NFE in achieving the United Nations 2030 Agenda on sustainable development.[3]

The process of renewing the Youth Programme

At the 32nd World Scout Conference in Paris in 1990, WOSM adopted the principle of a World Programme Policy for the first time. This was based on the idea that the Youth Programme of a National Scout Organization (NSO) could not be defined once and for all, but rather should be adapted to the needs and aspirations of each generation of young people in each country.

In 2014, the reviewed World Scout Youth Programme Policy, as a framework, reinforced the common elements of Scouting education that an NSO should implement through its Youth Programme and according to its circumstances. It also emphasised the need for regular updates, taking into consideration not only the needs and aspirations of young people, but also the new challenges that societies are facing today.

The concept of Scouting as education for life is as relevant today as it was in 1908, which reinforces the ultimate importance of NSOs delivering an updated, attractive, and relevant Youth Programme to prepare the next generation of young people to bring new answers to the world's complex challenges.

In the World Scout Youth Programme Policy[4] programme, development is defined as:

> "...the process of regularly reappraising and adjusting the Youth Programme of an NSA to suit the changing needs and aspirations of young people in society and thus, improve its quality.

---

[1] Constitution of the World Organization of the Scout Movement, WOSM, 2017
[2] UNICEF, UNFPA, the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth (OSGEY) and the Big 6, an alliance of Youth Organizations formed in 1996: World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations, World Young Women's Christian Association, WOSM, World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation.
[3] Rio Declaration on Non-formal Education, WOSM, 2019
[4] World Scout Youth Programme Policy, WOSM, 2018

The World Scout Youth Programme Policy strongly recommends regular and systematic programme development to ensure these programmes remain up-to-date and in tune with the interests of young people, while remaining faithful to the fundamentals of Scouting, which are timeless and universal. This reflects the unity of Scouting. The diversity and flexibility of the Youth Programme is required to respond to a wide variety of social, geographical, economic and other situations. A major review should be carried out at least every 5–10 years."

One of the key success factors for a Youth Programme to attract and retain young people to Scouting is a regular review:

"A quality programme provides an engaging, challenging and exciting Scouting experience. And one which is regularly updated helps it to remain fresh and relevant. These are by far the biggest contributing factors to the attraction and retention of your members, and the fundamental cornerstones of any successful growth strategy."[5]

The concept of a Youth Programme and its development

To start talking about the development of a Youth Programme, it is necessary to understand what we mean by "programme". It should not be interpreted to mean a list of activities delivered at local level, but instead as the educational intention, plan of action, or idea with a particular long-term aim for each age section of an NSO.

In the World Scout Youth Programme Policy, it is defined as follows:

"The Youth Programme in Scouting is the totality of the learning opportunities from which young people can benefit (What), created to achieve the purpose of Scouting (Why), and experienced through the Scout method (How)."[6]

The policy applies a broad definition of the concept of Youth Programme, covering the totality of the experience proposed to young people, i.e., throughout their life within the Scout Movement, which includes the following:

Why: the educational objectives, in accordance with the purpose and principles of the Movement.

What: all experiences and situations that young people can learn from, both organised and spontaneous, i.e., the learning opportunities.

How: the way in which it is done, i.e., the Scout Method.

[5] The Growth Toolkit, WOSM, 2019
[6] World Scout Youth Programme Policy, WOSM, 2018

WHY
The Purpose

YOUNG PEOPLE
THE YOUTH PROGRAMME

HOW
The Scout Method

WHAT
Learning Oportunities
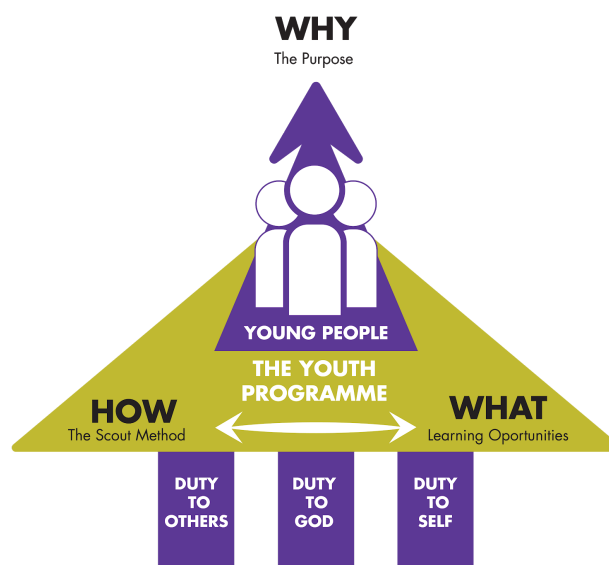
DUTY TO OTHERS

DUTY TO GOD

DUTY TO SELF

Fig.1

A Youth Programme based on the needs and aspirations of young people

The World Scout Youth Programme Policy definition emphasises that everything young people do in the Movement has to be oriented towards the purpose and principles of Scouting and implemented using the Scout Method.

A second key concept refers to a programme "of" young people, as opposed to a programme "for" young people. The Youth Programme is developed based on the needs and aspirations of young people and with their involvement because they are the main agents of their own development and happiness.

This does not, however, imply the rejection of a stimulating and educational adult presence. Adults have their place in programme development and implementation in terms of suggesting possibilities, offering alternatives, and motivating and helping young people to use their full potential. According to the World Scout Youth Involvement Policy, "Scouting is a Movement of young people supported by adults, and not for young people managed by adults only."[7] Yet none of this can be done without taking the needs and aspirations of young people into account and without their active involvement in the development and implementation process. The policy emphasises the importance of creating a collaborative environment, where both young people and adults share knowledge and skills naturally and harmoniously.

This reasoning is at the very heart of Scouting's magic. In 1909, in an improvised address at the University of Chile, Baden-Powell described his concept of education by recalling for the audience that the bait the fisherman puts on the end of his hook (e.g. a worm or an insect) generally has nothing to do with the fisherman's dietary preferences but should, in contrast, correspond to the tastes of the fish.[8]

---

[7] World Scout Youth Involvement Policy, WOSM, 2018
[8] Aids to Scoutmastership, Baden Powell, Robert, 1920

It is unlikely that a young person is attracted to the Movement because they are interested in the harmonious development of their personality. They become Scouts because they are offered the opportunity to take part in exciting activities; but they stay in the Movement to find answers to their needs and aspirations.

Therefore, an activity has to be more than just exciting to be educational. It should also help young people gain the competencies they need to develop themselves. In this sense, the adult's role is to channel a young person's motivation and enthusiasm into a natural educational process.

The Youth Programme that this **Guide to Youth Programme in Scouting (GPS)** promotes is based on educational competencies. We believe that not only adult leaders, but also young people themselves, should be aware of the set of competencies that the Youth Programme proposes to complement their development. These competencies should be expressed to young people at an appropriate age level, to allow them to reflect on their own development.

A Youth Programme which proposes activities without highlighting the educational objectives underlying these activities risks falling into the activity trap: activities that are carried out for the activity's sake without anyone being aware of their raison d'être are repeated passively, their quality gradually diminishing.

A Youth Programme that is not oriented towards goals may not be clearly understood and cannot be adapted to new needs and realities. It will lose its ability to adapt and eventually become obsolete.

Scouting strives to make young people responsible for their own development. It is about encouraging them to learn for themselves instead of passively receiving standardised instruction. For this to happen, it is essential to help them acquire educational competencies relevant to their own development.

These competencies should become increasingly personal with age, so young people can find answers to their needs and aspirations. If an NSO is no longer able to attract and retain adolescents and limits its recruitment to children under 14, it may be a sign that adults alone have designed its programme, without discussing it with young people and without taking their needs and aspirations into account.

A Youth Programme adapted to each culture and each generation

The world of young people is dynamic. It presents diversified centres of interest in continuous evolution. For this reason, an attractive and relevant Youth Programme cannot be defined once and for all. The World Scout Youth Programme Policy states that each NSO is not only free to develop its own Youth Programme but should also regularly review it and adapt it to the evolving world of young people and of society as a whole.

The increasing speed of change in society will affect the frequency with which the Youth Programme is revised. The current recommendation is that an NSO conducts a thorough review and revision every five to ten years.

Invariable and variable elements

The strength of the Scout Movement lies in its wonderful capacity to adapt to highly diverse settings and cultures, but does this flexibility threaten the identity and unity of the Movement?

> "A movement requires unity. This unity results from the sharing of a common purpose, through a common set of values and a common educational method which together create a sense of belonging among its members and which makes their identification with the Movement possible. Unity does not mean uniformity and it does not stop diversity among its members."[9]

If we were all free to adapt the elements of Scouting as we wished, would it then be possible to keep enough in common so that we could still be identified as members of the same Movement?

To answer this question, it is necessary to distinguish between those elements that are invariable, and those that are variable.

- **Invariable elements** are the fundamental elements of the Scout Movement, as defined in the WOSM Constitution, including purpose, principles, and the Scout Method. These are the foundation of the Scout Movement's educational system. All new Youth Programmes (including updates and revisions) should be based on these invariable elements.

- **Variable elements** are the Youth Programmes of different NSOs, built from the fundamental elements. These variable elements change to adapt to the needs and aspirations of each generation of young people and the society in which they live.

The invariable and variable elements do not conflict. It is much easier to adapt something to a variety of situations if we can rely on clear and well-defined fundamental elements.

The Scout Movement, as a global educational movement, owes its success to its ability to articulate different levels in a harmonious and creative way, from the definition of the fundamental elements at the global level, to the implementation of the Youth Programme at local community level.

An educational system

What is a system?
The first characteristic of any system is that it is geared towards a goal, which determines its structure. A system comprises different, interacting elements. It is a dynamic whole, the totality of which is greater than the sum of its components. A system is also built on principles or norms, which govern the relationships between the different elements.

---

[9] The Essential Characteristics of Scouting, WOSM, 2019

Scouting as an NFE system makes a unique contribution to the development of the individual complementing or offering an   alternative to formal education.[10] Geared towards the goal of educating young people, it combines different elements that interact in accordance with fundamental principles. Scouting is an open educational system, in constant interaction with its social environment.

> "In today's rapidly changing societies and economies, skill requirements for life and work have to be constantly updated. In view of this, the education system and other actors are increasingly providing learners with relevant lifelong learning opportunities in which NFE plays a major role."[11]

The different levels of Scouting's educational system

Scouting's educational system can be interpreted at different levels:

WORLD LEVEL

FUNDEMENTAL ELEMENTS
Mission, Purpose principles and method

NEEDS, ASPIRATIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE
Girls and boys of a specific generation in a specific culture

NATIONAL LEVEL

PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT
8 steps of GPS

PROGRAMME DISSEMINATION
Publications Training Support

LOCAL LEVEL

NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE
Girls and boys within a local community

YOUTH PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION
Young people
Learning opportunities
Competencies
Adult Leaders

Fig.2

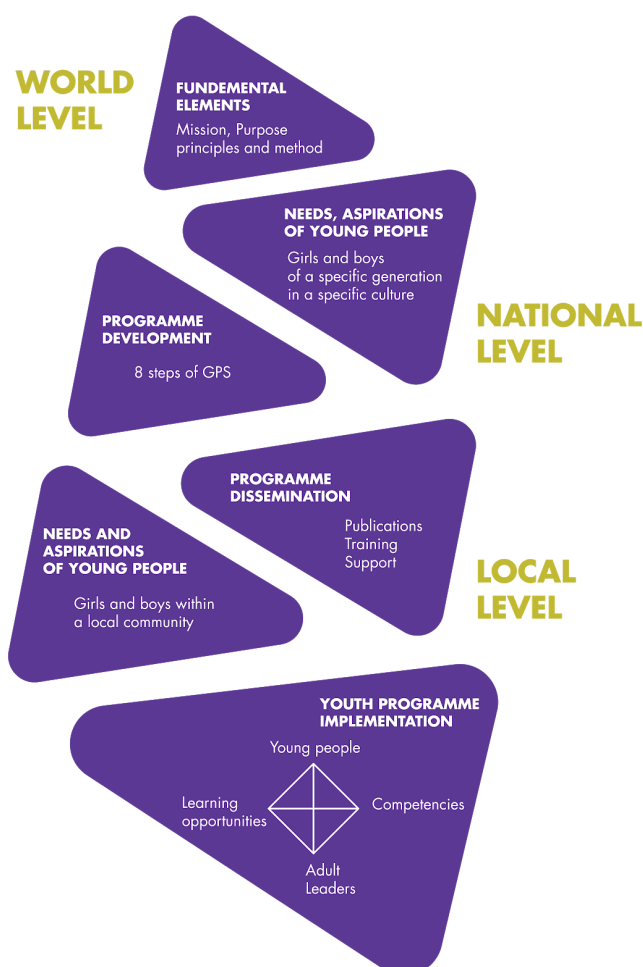[10] Rio Declaration on Non-formal Education, WOSM 2019
[11] Rio Declaration on Non-formal Education, WOSM 2019

REV 01. Timeline Tool to Analyse Historical and Social Processes

Introduction

Designing or reviewing your NSO's Youth Programme cannot be done without considering the social, economic, and cultural context in which it is inserted. In this way, the Youth Programme is a product that answers the needs and interests of certain people, at a specific time, in a specific place.

The timeline tool is intended to help you identify the relationship between historical and social processes and the most relevant events that occur within your NSO. The timeline is a useful tool to build knowledge and to organise information that we consider relevant. It orders a sequence of events or milestones on a particular topic in such a way that the timing between events can be easily seen and understood. Use it to visualise the relationship between the most important events that occurred at a sociocultural level in your country – such as the common habits, patterns, and beliefs – and what happened in your NSO at the same time.

Objectives

This tool is intended to

- identify the main events that occurred at the social level in your country and those that occurred in your NSO.

- establish a connection between the events that occurred at the social level in your country and those that occurred in your NSO.

This tool is intended for

- the team responsible for designing or reviewing your NSO's Youth Programme.

- participants in studies or discussions (seminars, workshops, etc.) organised by your NSO when designing or reviewing its Youth Programme.

How to use this tool

1. Prepare a timeline that includes relevant dates and events that have taken place in your country (perhaps also in the world), and the relevant events that occurred at the same time in your NSO.

2. Analyse the relationship between the events that occurred in your country and the events that occurred within your NSO.

To develop a timeline

1. Define the period of time you consider necessary to analyse. It is important to have a vision of the short, medium, and long term to identify trends and recurring events.

2. Identify the historical facts you are interested in knowing and analysing in a comparative way.

3. Select the most relevant events and dates in your country and identify the most relevant events that took place at the same time in your NSO.

4. Prepare a timeline and organise the sequence in an orderly manner, being careful to show these events on a scaled graph. For example, 1 cm equals 1 year.

5. Put the dates and the data on the chart, stating the information as simply as possible while at the same time ensuring it is understandable.

6. Add images to the timeline to help improve understanding.

Other possible actions

7. Summarise the comparisons made to identify the degree of relevance between your country's dynamics and that of your NSO.

8. Extend the timeline into the future, estimating possible plans for your country as well as preventive and proactive measures to be taken by your NSO.