



Preparing the Journey

Introduction

One of our strengths as a Movement is our ability to learn from each other, to share best practices, to benefit from the wealth of available experience. When it comes to designing or reviewing your NSO's Youth Programme, there is plenty to learn from what others have done. In this chapter, we share with you the findings of the Round Table on Youth Programme Development, a network meeting of programme developers held in Molina, Spain, 24-26 October 2008, which harnessed the experiences of seven NSOs who had all embarked on reviewing their Youth Programme in the previous five years.

The group as a whole found that they had many experiences in common. Most had faced the same challenges. All wished they had known then what they know now. Each NSO had used RAP and recognised the value of using such a tool. All were surprised at the length of time it took but were pleased that they had taken it. Your time, and that of your volunteers, is too valuable to repeat mistakes others have made. Learn from those who have done what you are in the process of doing now.

Prepare your journey

Every process of designing or reviewing requires a strong motivation to improve something that already exists or something that needs to be developed from the beginning.

In either case the task ahead implies several considerations that you need to ensure before you start:

1. Human resources
2. Financial resources
3. Managing the change
4. Institutional procedures in place, including training
5. Timeline
6. Tools to manage the process with the different teams

In this chapter, we share with you the findings of the Round Table on Youth Programme Development, a network meeting of programme developers held in Molina, Spain 24-26 October 2008, which harnessed the experiences of seven NSOs who had all embarked on reviewing their Youth Programme in the previous five years.

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What was most surprising was that all reported a surprisingly low level of understanding and implementation of the Scout Method in its totality by their leaders. A complete awareness of the fundamentals of Scouting or Scouting's non-formal educational purpose at local level was also lacking. All agreed that a tool (such as RAP), which provides a structure for the review process, was absolutely necessary. They also agreed that this excellent tool would be improved with the introduction of a chapter covering the preparatory phase for which the GPS provides some suggestions.

This is not an exhaustive list of who will be involved or what will be needed in the design/review process. The particular circumstances may require more or less or different resources. This is a guide to help identify the different areas that your NSO might explore when developing your own plan.

1. Human resources

Who is responsible: The provision of a quality Youth Programme is the core business of Scouting and ultimately the Board of the NSO is responsible for this. However, it is likely that the responsibility for designing or reviewing your NSO's Youth Programme will fall to the Youth Programme National Commissioner and their Team.

From the very beginning, it is crucial to be clear on the scope and parameters of the project. Do you have authority from the Board or the Assembly to develop and test a new Youth Programme, or is it their expectation that you will present an option for a new Youth Programme to them at each stage, needing their approval to take it to the next level? This is hugely important as the latter, when followed correctly, will take years to complete and it is likely that personnel may change in that time. The good will or encouragement which will be plentiful at the beginning of the process may not be so evident later on. Whether you set out to design a new Youth Programme, or to review your current Youth Programme, it will involve change. It is normal for change to meet with resistance. Being prepared for this and understanding the need to manage this change is part of the overall responsibility. From the outset it is necessary to understand this, and to know how this will be dealt with. If the Youth Programme Commissioner undertakes this responsibility does this mean it is their responsibility to bring about this change? Does the Board have the power to bring about this change? Or does the National Assembly have to approve the proposed change before it can be implemented?

Who will drive the project: The project manager doesn't have to be the Youth Programme National Commissioner, but they have to be someone The Commissioner trusts and fully supports. Building a strong Youth Programme requires a solid foundation. This takes time. It is vital that whoever is designing/reviewing your Youth Programme has a clear mandate to do so.

In Scouting, we use the team system. While the responsibility ultimately falls to the team leader, it is advisable that a project of this size is led by a core team in a collaborative way. It is also useful if the members of this team bring diversity in their approach to Scouting, and in their Scouting and life experience and expertise. A core team is a positive way to drive the project forward, to plan and execute the work at each stage, and to argue the points that will ensure the strength of the outputs.



The project is necessarily complex as it has many integrated parts, but a good project manager working with a core team will manage it so that it can be presented simply. Planning is essential, as is a good communication plan, but before that can happen the core team needs to commit to the process and be familiar with it.

- Start from the basis of fact. It is crucial to understand the reality, not the perceived reality.
- Clarify the fundamentals to develop a strategic view and plan of the whole process.
- Accept that a project such as this should be a collaborative project where open and frank discussions between team members guide you to the best outcome for your NSO.
- Recognise the obstacles, such as resistance to change (people have emotional attachment to some issues), time and financial constraints, people with their own agenda, lack of political will.
- Develop a communication plan, understanding it is necessary to take care of the politics of change.

Who will do the work: It is vital to have engagement from your NSO at all levels in the project. The process should involve all structures developing at the same time in the same direction.

The Commissioners for each age section, and members of their team, are directly involved in supporting the Youth Programme at local level. Not only do they have relevant knowledge of what works and what doesn't work, but they usually have direct access to young people and understand their needs and aspirations. The greater their involvement in the development, the greater ownership they have, and the more likely they are to be supporters of the new/renewed Youth Programme. Age Section Commissioners are busy people. They will not always be a part of the core team. Manage expectations around their involvement and make the most of the time they can commit. Consider how you will continue to support your existing Youth Programme as you form a team to develop and implement a new Programme.

Young people from the age sections, your youth representatives, or young leaders can play a vital role in this project. They have a very recent memory of what works in your current programme, how it works, and how they engage with it. Young people should be highly engaged in the design and implementation of the Youth Programme as part of the core team, ensuring meaningful youth involvement in the design and decision-making.

An open call for people with particular knowledge or expertise is a good approach as it shows transparency and willingness to engage with all. It broadens your resource pool and brings valuable people to the process. Engaging expertise in youth development from other organisations or educational institutions can bring immense value and credibility to the design of the Youth Programme.

Together these people will be the Youth Programme developers. Not all of them may be working with you at the same time. The different phases in the process may call for different skills and expertise. You will engage with them in different ways. It is important to manage this, and manage the expectations of all those who have volunteered to help you.



Your Youth Programme developers will need to engage with experts from time to time. Professionals in their field will add value during the different steps. Someone to fire your team's imagination and introduce some creative methods will add value later on, for example young people and older people, and those representing the diversity of your culture and society.

One team of developers does not necessarily need to undertake the entire project. In fact, it would be difficult to motivate people to give up the amount of time needed. It is important to transfer knowledge between teams, so future decisions are based on new learning from the earlier phases.

Someone needs to take care of the Change Management right from the start of the process. Explaining to small groups who have the opportunity to ask questions is the best method, but it takes time.

Who will provide input:

- Everyone in your NSO should be asked to express their views. The challenge will be to ask the right question of the right audience, as it is important to take account of all the input and use it appropriately. A survey of your leaders may be their first introduction to the process, but it is still a vital piece of communication so as well as giving you what you need, it also needs to send the correct message.
- Consider asking parents or caregivers what their views and expectations are for a Youth Programme and the experiences that their children will get from participating in it. As society changes, parents' demands of and expectations for their children change also.
- Every NSO has some highly respected leaders and not only at national level. More importantly they are leaders at local level who have mastered the Scout Method and who provide strong programmes in their local unit with exceptional results. You especially want to hear from these people.
- Young people from your country, both inside and outside Scouting, may be your harshest critics, but equally will bring some valuable input. Take note particularly of the feedback from those young people who are not members of your NSO. Scouting does not appeal to all, and never will, but it is valuable to know how it is seen in the community by those who choose not to participate. If you have the possibility to engage in a structured way through some or all schools, this is ideal.
- Experts in the educational or development field from your local universities will be needed as part of your process. Some input from experts will shape the direction of development. It will be important that everyone in your NSO hears directly from the experts.
- Youth programme developers from other countries who are undertaking, or have undertaken, a similar project. One of the findings of the Round Table is that similar challenges were encountered by all, so understanding another NSO's solution can sometimes help you move forward.

Who will create your resources: It will take at least a couple of years before you are developing resources to be used at local and national level in the roll out of your new programme. You will need talented, creative people to assist in their creation. However it is good to have this in mind as these people will need to have a deep understanding of your new programme proposal. If you are lucky enough to have a staff member from your NSO doing this, they should be involved throughout the process if possible.



At the same time, the process of development will also require some innovative thinking to help those on this development journey to work together better, and progress successfully through each step of the GPS. If you don't have those creative types in your core group, identify someone you can call on when you need this help.

Who will test your work: Once you have reached a certain phase in your development, you will need to test your theories. This can really only be done at a local group level. It may be that your developers are involved in local groups who will become test groups for certain things.

At a certain time, you will need to engage a cross section of your local groups in a pilot phase. This needs to be well planned, with volunteers committing to testing after appropriate training and having the resources they need (even badges, if there will be badges in the new progressive scheme). Your pilot units must surrender your NSOs current Youth Programme and undertake to use the new Programme in its entirety. Ideally this would be for a period of three years, but in reality it is very hard to support this, either with time or money. However, it is advisable to aim for at least 12 months as anything less is not a complete test. Think about what support they will need from you, and be clear about what exactly you expect of them.

Check whether the developed Youth Programme concept is similar to that of another NSO that is also operating in a similar cultural context. In this case, a review of the trials or pilot group examples from this NSO is recommended.

Who will make the final decisions: This is something that should be clear from the outset. What latitude do you have to continue the process? What is the reporting procedure? Where and when do you need permission to move forward? The final decision is a difficult one. Even with positive results from a pilot phase, it is not advisable that you must return to your National Assembly for acceptance. The change process is difficult and fickle, and in reality it is impossible to bring everyone through the process with you. The National Assembly will take a lot more convincing and possibly only see the benefits when the programme has been in place for some years.

Mentoring and coaching: Align yourself and your team with others who can help you on this journey. In Scouting we work collaboratively across NSOs as well as in local units. There is much to be said for the support of a friend at a time in need. Or a sounding board to bounce your ideas off. Perhaps you can find someone from within your NSO, or other support locally. It is also possible to find support internationally in the wider Scouting family. Ask through your NSO or through your WSB Regional office.

2. Financial resources

Related costs:

- Preparation and development meetings are the main outlay in the first phase (e.g. travel, accommodation, venue, food, programme resources). A lot of preparation and planning can be done remotely but when it comes to exploring new concepts and facilitating people in the development of the new programme you will need to come together for physical meetings.
- Resources for the process: administration, props, development aids as appropriate.
- Staff member(s) allocated to supporting the process.



- Engaging with experts; some you will visit, some will visit you. It will be worth your while to invite some from abroad and there may be costs associated with this.
- Research, surveys, focus groups (fees, travel, accommodation, food, venue costs)
- Regional Educational Methods forums or seminars can be hugely beneficial, being inspirational and contributing to the knowledge of your team.
- Training/showcasing your progress with your new Youth Programme in the regions/at local level
- Pilot groups: new resources (manuals, books, programme supports, badges, etc.). Pilot group training, or debriefing meetings.

Funding:

- Is it possible to attract funding from the local government, or a regional development fund which supports educational advancement?
- Is it possible to attract a benefactor for this specific project?
- Will you have a finite amount of money with which to develop your new Youth Programme? This will present a challenge as the project is by its nature organic, depending on cultural and social conditions.

3. Managing the change

Resistance to change is a normal human reaction. People don't like change. Your people are volunteers and they are used to doing things in a certain way. From the outset try to be clear about what will change and what will not change. Even if the programme will be completely reviewed, and your ages changed, and a new approach to personal progression developed, some things will not change. The aim or the mission of your NSO will not change and you may even be better able to achieve it with your new Youth Programme. Your use of the Scout Method will not change; it will be better understood and executed in your new Youth Programme. Your young people will not change, and the activities they enjoy will not change, but the experience they have and the benefits of a stronger youth involvement approach will mean they can achieve more from it.

Tradition and taking care of the fundamentals is important in Scouting. All of us as leaders value what Scouting offers young people. Asking our volunteer leaders who have an emotional attachment to the current programme to change what they do and how they do it can instantly cause resistance from some who feel threatened by change, and from others who believe that there is no need to change what is working well for them. Leaders may be very used to dealing with a specific age range that could benefit from changing, or be used to applying the Scout Method in a specific way which you are now challenging. Some leaders see their place as providing a social outlet and don't place importance on the non-formal educational approach of Scouting. It is also important to acknowledge that this can be a big change for young people; they have to adapt to, learn, and try new things so it is important that no young person is disadvantaged in any way during the implementation and transition to the new Youth Programme. It is important to care about the volunteers who keep our NSO working, and to consider the best way to take them with you as you navigate the process of change.



- Get past the programme jargon; communicate with your NSO in language it understands.
- Start from a basis of fact (understanding the reality, not working on a perceived reality).
- Be clear about what will not change (to reassure people).
- Be aware that this is a change process and deal with it from the beginning.
- Communicate the main themes to your NSO.
- Develop a change management plan.

Understand the context behind the issue or topic. Communicate effectively why it is changing and demonstrate commitment to the change. Some contentious issues could often be socialised early in the review process to build understanding and context behind the change in the development of a Youth Programme. This can be effective in ensuring young people and adult volunteers have time to consume and adapt to the change that is coming, but also that it does not derail or impact the positive development of the Youth Programme. Your NSO should carefully consider when aspects of change should be communicated to the movement so that there is time for people to adapt and have their voices heard.

4. Institutional procedures including training

A new Youth Programme can breathe a new life into your NSO. The Youth Programme is the core of Scouting and is supported by many institutional procedures. This new development also challenges your NSO to consider some of these procedures. It is worth considering whether your NSO can at the same time become a “learning organisation” ready to adapt and grow with changes in society.

It is likely that your Adult Training Scheme, and your Adults in Scouting policy and procedures will need to be adapted, or even renewed to provide the appropriate competencies and skills training for your volunteers.

5. Timeline

Driving the project will also involve managing the timeline. This may change as you progress but will be vital to keep you on track as you go.

You may want to review your approach to the project and consider how you will follow the GPS steps as laid out in its three phases:

1. Setting goals
2. Organising age sections
3. Making the system work.

The GPS has been developed specifically in this way to help you. It is built on the experience of others just like you, so we recommend you use it in the order in which it is presented. If you decide to swap some of the steps, any change in order should be within the phases. The GPS is a process. Just like building a house it needs a strong foundation. Taking care with the early stages of the GPS will give you the foundation on which to build a robust Youth Programme. Consider at the very least that everyone on your team needs to understand the fundamentals, the elements that you will explore in the goal-setting phase.



After that you may choose to allocate different tasks to different teams at the same time, so that you may have teams working on different steps simultaneously. Be aware that a programme development process involves a steep learning curve for most NSOs and that there is benefit to having a good understanding of the previous steps when developing the next one.

Setting out your timeline means taking care of the following:

- GPS steps
- Communication plan
- Financial resources
- Resources development
- Reporting structure

Tools to manage the process

Filing system

- The project has many steps, and will involve many tasks, meetings, groups, resources, input, feedback, documents, etc. Start with a clear filing system and a list of files.

Volunteer support

- Take care of your people. Treat them well. Show that you respect their time and their effort and they will be motivated to give you their best work.

Strategic plan

- Take care of political resistance.
- Have a holistic view of the development needed.
- Remember that it is better to be a learning organisation with continuous improvement (Scouting as a movement), than have to stop and change completely in the future.

Communication and marketing plan

- Keep it simple and don't use abbreviations as not everyone will understand them.
- Start from the basis of fact and share the reality, not what people may perceive the reality to be.
- Keep people informed of your progress at each stage; repeat the information you have previously given to bring the message home, and add some more to update them.
- Remind people why this is being done by your NSO, and the positive outcomes for them.
- Address your messages directly to each of your stakeholders in a way that helps them understand the positive outcomes for them.
- Be able to sell to management in less than half an hour.
- Make use of the normal processes, national events, etc., but don't over do it.
- Engage with more stakeholders than you need at any one time as all will not reply.