



THE SCOUT METHOD



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World Scout Bureau Global Support Centre
Kuala Lumpur

Suite 3, Level 17
Menara Sentral Vista
150 Jalan Sultan Abdul Samad
Brickfields, 50470 Kuala Lumpur
MALAYSIA a
Tel.: + 60 3 2276 9000
Fax: + 60 3 2276 9089
worldbureau@scout.org
scout.org

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Introduction

Within the Triennial Plan objectives of the 2014-2017 triennium, and as a response to the World Scout Conference Resolution 2014-08, the Scout Method Review Unit under the Innovating Scouting Work Stream had a comprehensive process to review the Scout Method.

In March 2017, the World Scout Committee endorsed the proposal of the unit, which was presented to the 41st World Scout Conference in the Conference Document number 8. This document reflected the Scout Method both from **Educational** and **Constitutional** dimensions. On the basis of the review process, the document provided a compact but comprehensive explanation of the Scout Method. The 41st World Scout Conference adopted the proposal with the Conference Resolution 2017-04. This document is the detailed text of the Scout Method adopted by the Conference.



Historical Background

Since the early history of the Scout Movement, the founder Lord Baden-Powell explained the Scout Method from different angles in the "Scouting for Boys" and in his other writings. The Scout Method has inspired millions and millions of Scout leaders and contributed to the unique educational experience... Scouting. The Scout Method is also part of the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM) Constitution. The first Constitution was written in 1924, however it was not until 1977 that the Constitution referred to the Scout Method. Moreover, other explanations of the Scout Method have appeared in several WOSM publications. Firstly, in *The Essential Characteristics of Scouting*, and *Scouting: An Educational System* that was published in 1998. Secondly in 2005, another explanation was introduced in the WOSM document RAP (Renewed Approach to Programme) that was published in 2004. This explanation was generated from an accumulation of work that was done mainly in the Interamerican Scout Region. Some NSOs have reviewed the Scout Method and have adopted some slightly different interpretations of the Scout Method to match the national needs. Now, we have the newly adopted interpretation of the Scout Method, which is reflected in WOSM's Constitution, WOSM's policies and the newly updated document of the *Essential Characteristics of Scouting*, November 2019.

Fundamentals of Scouting

This section of the document is to remind ourselves of the fundamentals of Scouting (The Purpose, The Principles and The Scout Method). It is also important to remind ourselves of the definitions of both the Scout Movement and the Youth Programme in Scouting.

The Definition of the Scout Movement

The Scout Movement is a voluntary non-political educational movement for young people open to all without distinction of gender, origin, race, or creed, in accordance with the purpose, principles, and method conceived by the Founder and stated below.



The Purpose of 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.



The Principles of the Scout Movement

The Scout Movement is based on the following principles:

Duty to God Adherence to spiritual principles, loyalty to the religion that expresses them, and acceptance of the duties resulting therefrom.



Duty to others - Loyalty to one's country in harmony with the promotion of local, national, and international peace, understanding, and cooperation.

Participation in the development of society with recognition and respect for the dignity of humanity and for the integrity of the natural world



Duty to self - Responsibility for the development of oneself.



The Scout Method¹

The Scout Method is an essential system for achieving the educational proposal of the Scout Movement. It is defined as a system of progressive self-education. It is one method based on the interaction of equally important elements that work together as a cohesive system, and the implementation of these elements in a combined and balanced manner is what makes Scouting unique.

The Scout Method is a fundamental aspect of Scouting and is expressed through the following elements:

- **The Scout Promise and Law:** a personal voluntary commitment to a set of shared values, which is the foundation of everything a Scout does and a Scout wants to be. The Promise and Law are central to the Scout Method,

- **Learning by doing:** the use of practical actions (real life experiences) and reflection(s) to facilitate ongoing learning and development,

- **Personal progression:** a progressive learning journey focused on motivating and challenging an individual to continually develop, through a wide variety of learning opportunities,

- **Team system:** the use of small teams as a way to participate in collaborative learning, with the aim of developing effective team² work, inter-personal skills, leadership as well as building a sense of responsibility and belonging,

- **Adult Support:** adults facilitating and supporting young people to create learning opportunities and through a culture of partnership to turn these opportunities into meaningful experiences,

THE SCOUT
PROMISE
AND LAW

LEARNING
BY DOING

PERSONAL
PROGRESSION

TEAM
SYSTEM

ADULT
SUPPORT

¹ This is a simple text to explain the Scout Method within the frame of explaining the Fundamentals of Scouting, but a full explanation will follow.

² Refer to the 40th World Scout Conference – Document 10 – 21st Century Leadership in Scouting

- **Symbolic framework:** *a unifying structure of themes and symbols to facilitate learning and the development of a unique identity as a Scout,*

- **Nature:** *learning opportunities in the outdoors which encourage a better understanding of and a relationship with the wider environment*

- **Community Involvement:** *active exploration and commitment to communities and the wider world, fostering greater appreciation and understanding between people.*

**SYMBOLIC
FRAMEWORK**

NATURE

**COMMUNITY
INVOLVEMENT**



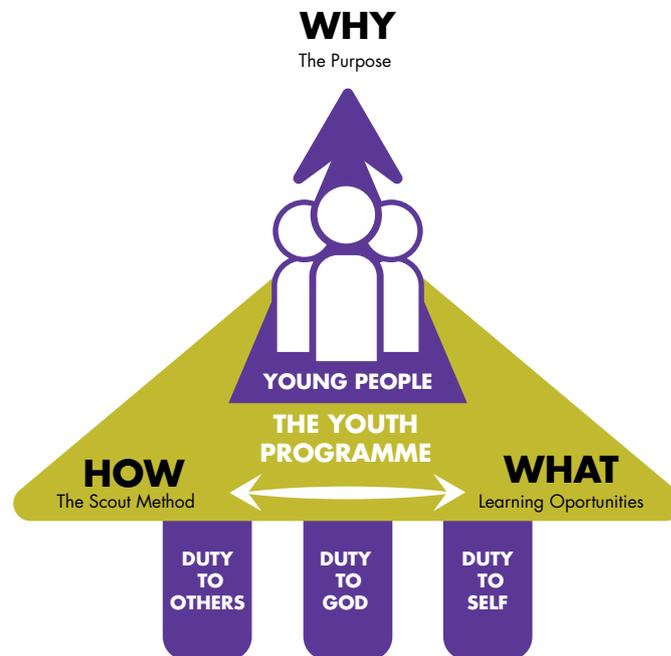
NSOs are expected to apply the Scouting way of education within the framework of the fundamental Scout Method described in this document. This Method is how we practise Scouting to create a meaningful experience for young people based on our shared values. All the various elements of the Scout Method are essential for the system as a whole to function and must be applied in a way that is consistent with Scouting's purpose and principles.



The Definition of the Youth Programme

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**).

In the following pages, the full explanation of the Scout Method adopted by the 41st World Scout Conference.





The Scout Method ... the unique methodology of Scouting

The Definition of the Scout Method

The Scout Method is an essential system for achieving the educational proposal of the Scout Movement. It is defined **as a system of progressive self-education**. It is *one method* based on the interaction of *equally important elements* that work together as a cohesive system, and the implementation of these elements in a *combined and balanced manner* is what makes Scouting unique.

The eight elements that make up the Scout Method are:

- The Scout Promise and Law,
- Learning by Doing,
- Personal Progression,
- Team System,
- Adult Support,
- Symbolic Framework,
- Nature,
- Community Involvement.

What is “PROGRESSIVE SELF-EDUCATION”?

Scouting is based on the concept of **self-education**. This implies that each young person is considered as a unique individual who, from the outset, has the potential to develop in all dimensions and to take responsibility for one’s own development. Implicit in self-education is the fact that it is based on the concept of “*education from within*”, as opposed to “*instruction from without*”. The young person is the primary actor in the educational process – i.e. the young people’s “*educator*” is primarily themselves. The Scout Method is the structured framework which is designed to guide and encourage each young person along this path of personal growth.

That self-education is also **progressive**. The Scout Method is intended to help each young people to use and develop their capacities, interests and experience of life thus far; to stimulate the discovery and development of new capacities and interests; to help them find constructive ways of meeting needs at different stages of development, and to open doors to further stages at their own individual pace. Importantly, self-education can happen individually or within group settings.

What do we mean by the Scout Method as “A SYSTEM”?

The Scout Method is described as a system. This implies that it has to be conceived as an interdependent group of elements forming a unified and integrated whole. That is why the word “*Method*” is used in the singular, not in the plural. While each of the elements comprising it can be considered as a method in its own right (and are in fact considered so by other educational bodies), we can only speak of the Scout Method when all these elements are combined within an integrated educational system.

Each of the elements has an educational function (i.e. each element is designed to contribute to the educational process in a specific way); and each element complements the impact of the others. All of the elements are therefore needed for the system as a whole to function, and must be used in a way which is consistent with Scouting’s purpose and principles. The Scout Method is a fundamental aspect of Scouting.

While all the elements of the Scout Method, working as part of a system, are constantly in play in the Scout experience as it is lived within the local unit, not all of these elements will be apparent in the forefront at any particular moment; some will be playing only a background role. However, over a period of time – for example, over the course of several meetings or a Scout camp – all elements of the Scout Method will have been used actively. In other words, a snapshot picture of life in the unit will not usually capture all elements of the Scout Method in action – but a video diary will!

The way in which the elements are applied must also be appropriate to the level of *maturity* of the young people. The implementation of the Scout Method can be done in a natural / intuitive manner, an intentional manner, or both. Ideally, it should be done in natural / intuitive manner (rather than through a ‘guided’ experience). However, the appropriate mode of implementation will ultimately depend on the developmental needs of the young people involved.

Elements of the Scout Method

The elements of the Scout Method can be illustrated as follows:





The Scout Promise and Law

A personal voluntary commitment to a set of shared values, which is the foundation of everything a Scout does and a Scout wants to be. The Promise and Law are central to the Scout Method.

The Scout Promise is a personal commitment that also serves to unify the members of the Movement. By making the Scout Promise, the young person makes a conscious and voluntary decision to accept the Scout Law and to assume the responsibility of that decision through personal effort ("doing one's best"). The fact of making the Promise in front of peers not only makes the personal commitment public, it also symbolises a social commitment to the others in the group. Making the Promise is thus the first symbol in the process of self-education. What is even more significant is that across the globe, other young people are making a similar promise, which is a powerful reminder to a young person of the unity and reach of Scouting.

The Scout Law is a code of living - for each individual Scout and for the members of the unit collectively - based on Scouting's principles. Through the practical experience of a code of living applied to daily life, the Scout Law provides a concrete (i.e. not abstract) and practical way for young people to understand the universal values which Scouting proposes as a basis of one's life. It is a resonating statement that helps us along the journey of planning, doing and reviewing the adventures within the programme. With the Scout Law, we can ensure our plans fit within the ideals of Scouting and then reflect whether the spirit of Scouting was present along the way.

Across the Scouting journey, a young person's understanding of the Promise and Law will evolve and come to mean more to them. This learning journey is a central part of spiritual and emotional development experienced through Scouting. The Promise and Law are considered as one element because they are closely linked.

The Promise and Law emphasises the key principles of Scouting, which are "Duty to God, Duty to self and Duty to others". Thus, together, they serve as a reminder of a young people's responsibility to their God, self and to others.



Learning by Doing

The use of practical actions (real life experiences) and reflection(s) to facilitate ongoing learning and development.

By its nature, Scouting should be fun and relevant. Learning by doing refers to personal self- development as a result of first-hand experience as opposed to just theoretical instruction. It reflects the active way in which young people gain knowledge, skills (all kinds of soft and hard skills) and attitudes; it reflects Scouting's practical approach to education, based on learning through the opportunities for experiences that arise while pursuing interests and dealing with everyday life. These opportunities are geared not only to make Scouts succeed, but also to enable them to make mistakes and be unsuccessful in some cases (which in turn creates more learning opportunities). It is thus a way of helping young people to develop in all dimensions of the personality through extracting what is personally significant from everything that they experience. It enables Scouts to experience the full programme cycle where they plan for their activities (in partnership with adults), carry those activities out and finally to have an opportunity to review the different outcomes and experiences brought about by the activities.

Learning by doing is also a means to ensure that learning opportunities in Scouting are fun and relevant. This will foster a desire in young people to want to have more experiences and in turn to learn more. As Baden-Powell observed, "the method of instruction in Scouting is that of creating in the boy, the desire to learn for himself". In today's context, of course, the intention is to encourage young people to reflect on their experiences and to build on them, in a journey of self-directed learning.



Personal Progression

A progressive learning journey focused on motivating and challenging an individual to continually develop, through a wide variety of learning opportunities.

Personal progression is the element concerned with helping each young person to develop the inner motivation to be consciously and actively involved in each person's own development. It enables the young person to progress in their own development, in their own way, and at their own pace, in the general direction of the educational objectives appropriate to the relevant age section.

Personal progression does not apply only within Scouting, but is also relevant for the young person outside Scouting, enabling them to set life goals and to learn to become an active citizen by acquiring skills for life and to engage in activities which addresses the needs of society.

Personal progression should be autonomous (i.e. self-directed) but facilitated by adults. Young people are thus empowered, encouraged and supported appropriately to set their own challenges. It enables Scouts to exercise freedom of choice and engage in self-reflection

Recognition is one of the most frequent ingredients of a learning opportunity and allows the discovery of the individual uniqueness of each young person as they deal with the inner values and is revealed through their capabilities in action. Recognition of progress by peers and adults helps a young person to gain confidence and to grow. The progressive badge system (e.g. progress stages, proficiency badges, or merit badges) is the main tool of recognition used to support this element of the Scout Method. However, personal progression can also be expressed in other ways, e.g. in the preparation of an annual plan, a learning journal, or a personal progression plan).



Team System

The use of small teams as a way to participate in collaborative learning, with the aim of developing effective team work, inter-personal skills, leadership as well as building a sense of responsibility and belonging.

The team system (or “patrol” system as it is often called) is the basic organisational structure of the local unit, which is composed of small teams of young people supported by the adult.

Each small team, normally comprising 6 - 8 young people, operates as a team providing their own leadership. Within each team and in ways appropriate to their capacities, the young people organise their life as a group, share responsibilities, and decide upon, organise, carry out and evaluate their activities. A representational system ensures that the young people also participate in the decision-making processes of the unit in consultation and partnership with the adults.

The team system, based on young people’s natural tendencies to form small groups, channels the substantial influence that peers have on each other in a constructive direction. It enables young people to develop their personal and collective capacities through pooling and building on their individual skills, talents and experience and through the development of a mutually supportive team spirit where problems are solved collectively. It provides Scouts with opportunities for leadership and support and to learn about the uniqueness of each individual, thus helping them to appreciate diversity. It also enables them to develop constructive relationships with other young people and adults and to learn to live according to a democratic form of self-government.



Adult Support¹

Adults facilitating and supporting young people to create learning opportunities and through a culture of partnership to turn these opportunities into meaningful experiences.

One of the basic principles of Scouting is that it is a Movement of young people, supported by adults; it is not a Movement for young people managed by adults only. Thus, Scouting offers the potential for a learning community of young people and adults, working together in a partnership of enthusiasm and experience.

The key message is that wherever possible, youth members should be empowered to make decisions and take on leadership roles, and be allowed to make mistakes. In general, adults are there to assist youth to prepare as well as to support, guide, mentor and facilitate learning experiences. In essence, the role of the adult in Scouting is to reinforce the youth-led, adult supported nature of the programme.

Adult support, in partnership with young people, involves three aspects which correspond to the three different roles an adult needs to play within a Scout unit:

- *The educator:* who needs to directly support the process of self-education and ensure that what a young person experiences has a positive impact on the development of that young person's knowledge, skills, or attitudes. In other words, as an educator, the adult needs to relate to each individual member, so as to help the young people to identify their development needs, to help the young person to accept those needs and to ensure they are met adequately through the Youth Programme. Moreover, it is important that the adult is a "role-model", positively influencing young people with attitudes and behaviours that

¹ It should be highlighted that this element of the Scout Method refers to the support provided by adults for young people. The treatment of Adults in Scouting, including recruitment and the provision of training for adults is dealt with in the World Adults in Scouting Policy. This should also be in line with the World Scout Youth Involvement Policy.

reflect the Scout values (education by example).

- *The activity supporter*: who must ensure that every learning opportunity that the group undertakes is successfully carried out. While no adult can be expected to have all the skills required for all activities, it is one's responsibility to ensure that the necessary technical support and expertise is made available to the group when and where needed. Adult in this role must practice the rules of keeping young people safe from harm.
- *The group facilitator*: based on a voluntary partnership between adults and young people, adults in this role need to ensure that the relationships within the group are positive and enriching to all and that the group provides an attractive and supportive environment for the continued growth of the group as a whole. This implies a rich learning partnership *between young people and adults, based on mutual respect, trust and acceptance of each other as persons.*



All these roles are positioned within the role of an adult as a “facilitator” of the delivery of Youth Programme as described in detail in the World Scout Youth Programme Policy.

While adults need not be present in all Scout activities, they should ensure that the environment in which the activities are conducted is safe² (both emotionally and physically) for Scouts. Young people should be empowered and given responsibility to play and maintain a protagonist role in every activity, and adults should be ready to take responsibility which the young people are not able to take at the moment.

² Refer to the World Safe from Harm Policy



The adult provides educational, emotional, informational and appraisal support to young people:

- Educational support involves the provision of tangible aid and services that directly assist the self-educational development of youth.
- Emotional support is associated with sharing life experiences. It involves the provision of empathy, devotion, trust and caring.
- *Informational support involves the provision of advice, suggestions, and information that youth can use to address problems.*
- Appraisal support involves the provision of information useful for self-evaluation that is: constructive feedback, affirmation of the personality and compliance with organizational values.

It is also essential to realise that the nature of the partnership between young people and adults in Scouting varies in accordance with the age and capabilities of the young people involved. Thus, a leader of Cub Scouts would be expected to have more input into programme development and planning and to perform a more traditional "adult led" style of leader, as opposed to a leader of a Rover Crew comprised of young adults who normally would be more of an adviser to these young adults.



Symbolic Framework

A unifying structure of themes and symbols to facilitate learning and the development of a unique identity as a Scout.

A symbol can be described as something familiar which represents an idea or concept which is very large or more abstract. Symbols are often used (e.g. in advertising) to help people understand and identify with concepts through an appeal to the imagination. In Scouting, the symbolic framework is a set of symbols which represent Scouting's educational proposal for a particular age range. The purpose of the symbolic framework is to build on young people's capacity for imagination, adventure, creativity and inventiveness in a way which stimulates their development, helps them to identify with the directions of development and the values underlying Scouting, and stimulates cohesiveness and solidarity within the group.

The very name of the Movement, "Scouting", is an element of a symbolic framework adopted by Baden-Powell when he wrote *Scouting for Boys*, intended to inspire the youth of his day. "By the term "Scouting" is meant the work and attributes of backwoodsmen, explorers, hunters, seamen, airmen, pioneers and frontiersmen³." Scouting represents adventure, close-knit groups, developed powers of observation, resourcefulness and a simple healthy life in the great outdoors—all qualities which Baden-Powell sought to promote.

As Scouting now addresses a wider range of ages, each age section has a distinct symbolic framework which corresponds to the level of maturity of the age section and focuses on a specific educational need which is characteristic of the age section. The symbolic framework recognises the personal progression of Youth Programme through elements such as distinctive badges, and different uniforms for different age sections, etc.

4 Aids to Scoutmastership, Baden-Powell, 1919



Nature

Learning opportunities in the outdoors which encourage a better understanding of and a relationship with the wider environment

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

Due to the immense possibilities that the natural world offers for the development of the young person's physical, intellectual, emotional, social and spiritual potentials, the natural environment provides an ideal setting in which the Scout Method can be applied. Needless to say, it also offers a sense of adventure. Indeed, most learning opportunities should allow Scouts to be in direct contact with the natural world in urban, rural and wild environments.

However, the use of nature, as an element of the Scout Method, involves more than activities carried out in the great outdoors. It involves the development of constructive contact with Nature, making full use of all the learning opportunities provided by the natural world to contribute to the development of young people.

Although referring to the forest, Baden-Powell's view of nature as an educational tool can be summarised as follows: "For those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, the forest is at once a laboratory, a club and a temple".⁴

In an increasingly small and interdependent world, nature also refers to the environment in which we live. Thus, in urban environments with limited green spaces, this element of the Method can still be expressed through having activities out of doors, e.g. doing pioneering on basketball courts.

Activities or projects may focus on different themes, such as classic outdoor adventure such as hiking or camping, or on projects related to environmental sustainability or education. In a world with fewer and fewer resources, Scouting is well placed to involve young people and the community in encouraging environmentally sustainable activities and practices. This would help anchor young people in their environment and help them appreciate their role in the wider world.



Community Involvement

Active exploration and commitment to communities and the wider world, fostering greater appreciation and understanding between people.

The term “community” refers to a social unit whose members have something in common. A Scout’s community includes those within Scouting (e.g. Unit, District, County/Region/State) or outside Scouting (e.g. family, school and nation), and it could be local or international in nature.

The emphasis on community involvement highlights:

- *The shared values and principles of Scouting. The application of The Scout Method happens mostly within the local community context. It becomes an important vehicle for increasing one’s awareness on global challenges and initiatives, for joining global action, and for assimilating/ developing global shared values.*
- *The influence of the community and societies where Scouts come from in their personal development process. Activities and the cycle of action and reflection enables young people to develop a deeper understanding of themselves while having a meaningful contribution to the overall objectives of the community they live in.*

Community engagement equally allows Scouts to experience and work with people from different diversities. Therefore, working with and within the community enables Scouts to increase their inter-cultural understanding, appreciate inter-generational issues that come into play, and get more involved in the community in other scopes of their lives.

Every learning opportunity the Scout undertakes should wherever possible be linked to how it could be used within the community. When a Scout learns to tie a new knot like the bowline, it should be linked on how it could be applied to saving a life. Even when a Scout experiences a learning opportunity that may appear only to benefit oneself (e.g. a sports activity), one should also reflect how such a learning opportunity could benefit the community (e.g. a fit and healthy Scout would be well-placed to serve the community better).

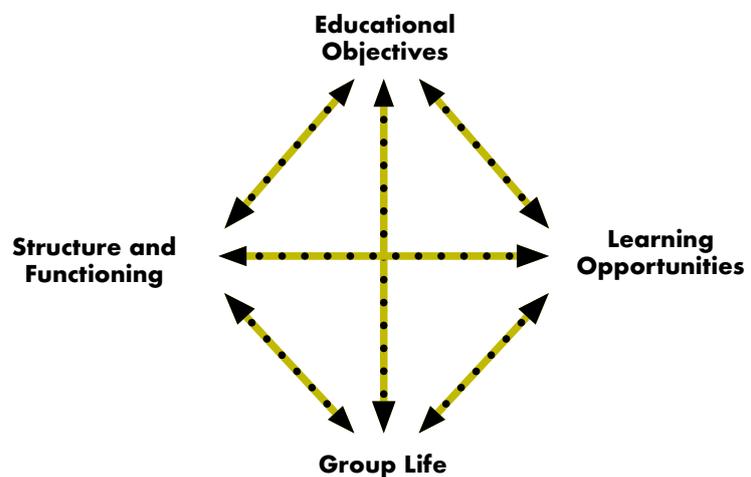


Community involvement promotes greater cohesion and rallies each member of the community towards a common purpose of transforming their communities for the better. It exposes more people to the values and purpose of Scouting and encourages them to support the cause of Scouting. Creating a better world is a journey which Scouts cannot take on their own while leaving the community behind. It should be a collective effort regardless of the size of the learning opportunity Scouts engage in. Service should not just be seen as doing things for others but through involvement, it will definitely entail doing things with others. The element of community involvement is about helping Scouts to create a better world. The focus is on active citizenship and the responsibility of each Scout to know the role they can play in the community.



The Dynamics of Scouting: The Scout Method in action

In order for the Scout Method to function effectively with a group of young people, the adult must be able to make appropriate use of the elements of the Scout Method and the dynamics of Scouting in action. The dynamics of Scouting are composed of four inter-related and interdependent ingredients. These are:



Educational Objectives

Within the context of the Youth Programme, a set of educational objectives, concerning the development of the young person in each area of their development, is proposed for each age section. Each young person strives to progress towards these educational objectives in a personalized way. Adults need to consider every aspect within the unit (e.g. the way in which the Unit is run, the decision-making processes, the kinds of relationships to be promoted as well as the activities that the young people take part in) from the perspective of how all these aspects can contribute to, as opposed to detract from, the educational objectives.

Learning Opportunities

In Scouting, learning opportunities include activities such as a hike in nature, a community service, etc. They also include roles and things that are necessary for the functioning of the unit and for dealing with the necessities of everyday life, e.g. buying food and cooking supper in camp, travelling to an activity site, being a patrol leader or taking part in a discussion to evaluate personal progression. All kinds of learning opportunities contribute to the educational process and the Scout Method must be applied to these. Indeed, learning opportunities provide the supporting context for the application of the Scout Method. It is important to say that a learning opportunity, of whatever kind, does not automatically constitute a Scout learning opportunity. It only becomes a Scout learning opportunity when the Scout Method is consciously applied to it, experience is gained and reflection happens.

Learning opportunities in Scouting must be based on the young people's interests and needs so they may become enjoyable and attractive to them. The learning opportunities must be conceived with a clearly defined educational objective in mind; they must provide an appropriate degree of challenge and be perceived by the young people as useful. Over time, a balanced variety of learning opportunities needs to be offered.



Group Life

This refers to everything that is experienced, within the teams and the unit as a whole, as a result of operating as a mini-society composed of the young people and adults. A sense of group life is essential for the harmonious development of young people. While young people have a natural tendency to form groups of friends, and even though this tendency is reflected in the team system, a sense of group life does not automatically exist in Scouting. Fostering a sense of group life involves promoting constructive group dynamics (the interaction and relationships that develop between the young people and between the young people and adults). It also involves making use of opportunities for young people to interact (amongst themselves and with the support of adults) in the wide variety of situations which occur naturally in the course of their time in Scouting. When a true sense of group life develops, the group as a whole takes into account the needs and interests of each person, and each person contributes towards the well-being of the group.



Group life stimulates experiences which can lead to emotional and social growth, the development of attitudes and the progressive appropriation of values because:

- *operating within a close-knit group and experiencing for themselves, the merits of a code of living (the Scout Law in action) provide a natural context for each young person to discover the deeper meaning of the values for which Scouting stands;*
- *constructive interaction and relationships with others in the group stimulate a climate of mutual trust and caring and contribute to the development of a sense of identity, self-worth and sense of belonging;*
- *when the prospect of being part of a close-knit group stimulates a desire to belong and feel accepted, and when that group operates according to Scouting's code of living, peer pressure – a major influence on the development of young people – is constructive, not destructive.*



Thus, the attitudes and values which group life stimulates are both of a personal nature (such as a constructive and pro-active attitude to life, self-confidence, a spirit of enterprise, goal-setting, etc.), and of a social nature (such as a team spirit, seeking a consensus, acknowledging differences and interdependence, experiencing solidarity, etc.). Group life, therefore, provides a useful way of helping young people instantly put into practice, and develop – to the extent of their abilities – their capacities for autonomy, supportiveness, responsibility and commitment.

Structure and Functioning of the Unit

This refers to the way in which the Scout Method is applied and put into place in the unit (e.g. the provision of concrete opportunities for young people to experience making decisions and assuming responsibility, establishing contact with their local community, etc.). It also refers to the use of resources (not only financial and material, but also in terms of time, etc.) which also play an important role in influencing the quality of the educational experience.



In summary, when these four ingredients truly reinforce each other, Scouting can offer a more coherent and richer learning experience. For example, an organisation may consider that “democracy” is an important issue that requires an educational emphasis. Helping young people to develop a personal adherence to a democratic way of life (educational objective) is unlikely to result solely from learning opportunities related to gaining knowledge about the subject. In this example, questions to consider include: does the way in which the learning opportunities are conceived permit an experience of a democratic way of life? Do all of the young people share in responsibilities and make a personal contribution to the well-being of the Unit (group life)? Is the adult able to listen to the young people and offer opportunities for them to make decisions to the extent of their ability (structure and functioning)? What could be modified regarding the way in which the unit functions, in the way in which adults and young people interact, in the activities that the young people take part, so as to reinforce the educational objectives?

Scouting is an educational movement of young people. It caters to a diverse age range (from 5 – 26), all of whom possess different abilities and developmental rates. Young people are open to challenges, are curious and eager to learn. However, with so many other distractions in today's fast changing world and numerous challenges to a young person's development, the role of Scouting is particularly important. It is therefore essential to remember:

- *The proper application of the Scout Method should result in an experience for young people that is **educational, fun and enjoyable** and where young people are **safe physically and emotionally**.*
- *It should be **flexible and relevant** to the times and, in particular, meet the demanding needs set by the **21st Century** as a response to the changing **needs of young people and society**.*
- *It has to be **adapted** to the **age and developmental** appropriate criteria of learning.*
- *Personal and group **reflection** as a mode of **self-directed learning** is the best tool to tailor individual experiences and learning and should be used in converting experiences to learning opportunities, which in turn would lead to self-education and self-development.*
- *The Scout Method should **empower young people** to play their role as **active citizens** which results in a **lifelong learning experience**.*
- *The Scout Method is "**How**" the Youth Programme in Scouting is implemented.*





Appendix: additional reading

Useful and complementary documents on the issues addressed in this document:

- Scouting for Boys, Robert Baden-Powell, [1908] 1944
- Aids to Scoutmastership: A Handbook for Scoutmasters on the Theory of Scout Training, Robert Baden-Powell, 1919
- [Constitution of the World Organization of the Scout Movement](#), World Scout Bureau, August 2017
- [The Essential Characteristics of Scouting](#), World Scout Bureau, November 2019
- [World Scout Youth Programme Policy](#), World Scout Bureau, December 2017
- [Adults in Scouting World Policy](#), World Scout Bureau, September 2017
- [World Scout Youth Involvement Policy](#), World Scout Bureau, February 2015
- [Diversity and Inclusion in Scouting, WOSM's Position Paper](#), World Scout Bureau, May 2017
- [World Safe from Harm Policy](#), World Scout Bureau, December 2017
- [Scouting: an Educational System](#), World Scout Bureau, 1998
- [Scouting for What? Scouting for Whom?](#), World Scout Bureau, 1997



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World Scout Bureau Global Support Centre
Kuala Lumpur

Suite 3, Level 17
Menara Sentral Vista
150 Jalan Sultan Abdul Samad
Brickfields, 50470 Kuala Lumpur
MALAYSIA
Tel.: + 60 3 2276 9000
Fax: + 60 3 2276 9089
worldbureau@scout.org
scout.org

