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Membership Development



**38th WORLD SCOUT
CONFERENCE**

**38e CONFERENCE
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DU SCOUTISME**

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SCOUTS
Creating a Better World

MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

1. Background

During the triennium 2002-2005, the need to focus on membership growth was identified as many NSOs, particularly in counties with high economic development, had reported a declining membership over a number of years. A 'Membership Growth' meeting held in Geneva in May 2005 brought together 40 representatives from 14 NSOs, the World Scout Committee (WSC), the World Scout Bureau (WSB) Central and Regional Offices and the World Scout Foundation (WSF) to share their experiences.

The reports presented at this meeting revealed that some NSOs had identified a significant membership decline but had not taken any action to reverse the trend, while others had taken actions which had proved successful in reducing membership decline. In general to be effective, actions need to be taken in a number of different areas, showing that membership development requires a focused and targeted approach over a period of time.

It has also been noted that there are different ways of recording membership and some work has been taken by the WSB to develop a simple system for NSOs to record and manage membership at local level. This is to support one of the outcomes in Strategic Priority 6: An Organization for the 21st Century.

During the triennium 2005-2008 a Membership Development Task Force (MDTF) was set up following the World Scout Conference in Tunisia. The remit of the MDTF was to:

- promote membership growth and development in the Movement
- identify and work with targeted associations facing membership decline to clearly identify the issues and the reasons for them and to provide the energy, encouragement and impetus to turn their situation around
- work with targeted NSOs who are keen to develop their membership
- identify the parameters to be measured which will indicate growth/decline in membership
- share the results globally.

The task force, initially under the leadership of Steve Fossett, worked through electronic means to identify the initiatives being undertaken in NSOs and links were formed with the European working group on Membership Growth. Following the resignation of Steve Fossett, Wayne Perry took over chairmanship of the task team and a small group came together to discuss the production of a toolkit to promote the need for NSOs to focus on the growth of the Movement.

2. Membership Development toolkit

The rationale for the toolkit is that Scouting is a good product and NSOs should make sure that Scouting is accessible to as many young people as possible. This needs affirmative action in NSOs. A well-managed NSO with a good Youth Programme and effective adult leadership will not necessarily result in a growing membership. The toolkit contains examples of NSOs that have taken action to increase membership that has proved to be effective. It is designed to inspire NSOs to focus on growing their membership in the next triennium, so that Scouting can increase its impact in countries world-wide.

The Membership Development toolkit will be launched at the World Scout Conference. The launch will include a special breakfast focusing on the need to grow the Movement and a workshop during which participants can explore the topic in more depth.

3. Research

During the past triennium, there have been opportunities to gather and analyse data relating to membership. During this period WOSM provided its census information, as well as data on World Scout Conferences and World Scout Jamborees, for the development of research on membership to a fellow Scout Eduard Vallory, Director of the Graduate School of Economics at the Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona, to be used for the writing of his doctoral thesis on World Scouting and "Global Citizenship

Education"¹. This led to a valuable review, the double-checking and collation of WOSM censuses from 1924-2004 and to the creation of additional electronic data-sets². These are available from the WSB Central Office and can be used further in future investigations.

Also a survey was undertaken at the 21st World Scout Jamboree to measure knowledge, attitudes and perceptions regarding Scouting among youth and adult volunteers who attended the Jamboree. This survey provides information on a wide range of topics which has been analysed and will be available on the World Scouting website soon. The survey was supported by the Italian market research company *Doxa*.

There were also inputs to the World Scientific Congress held in Geneva in November 2007 on research into aspects of growth from Scout leaders in Belgium, Canada and Portugal.

The information contained in these research papers will be helpful to NSOs that are working on membership growth. There is also a wealth of information based on research that has taken place in NSOs that could be helpful if there is a way of sharing this information more widely.

4. Links with the Strategy for Scouting

The Strategy for Scouting, through Strategic Priority 4: Reaching Out, recognises the need for Scouting to reach out to young people and adults who are not traditionally part of the Movement, if the Movement is to grow and increase its impact in society.

It is also recognised that the growth of the Movement needs a strategic approach in all areas of Scouting, e.g. the Youth Programme, Adults in Scouting, the image of the Movement and an effective membership registration system. The link between growth and the strategy is reflected in the draft Conference Resolution on the Strategy for Scouting which proposes that membership development be adopted as the strategic focus for 2008-2011 with the strategy title becoming 'The Strategy for Scouting – action for growth'.

5. The triennium 2008-2011

There are many aspects of Scouting that will contribute to the growth of the Movement. It is important that NSOs focus on growth, not only as an outcome of excellence but as a response to our mission, contributing to the education of young people, and our vision of making a real contribution to creating a better world.

A focus on growth requires a commitment from everyone in the Movement. It also requires a change of mind-set to seeing Scouting as a quality product that should be available to as many young people as possible in every NSO. To achieve this, the following triennium should see:

- **targeted actions in the areas of Youth Programme and Volunteers in Scouting:** In the next triennium, the Strategy for Scouting will focus on membership growth and development. In consultation and close co-ordination with volunteer task teams and support groups, actions will be developed to enhance the work on membership growth through networking methods and provision of tools and/or training as necessary.
- **a clear communication strategy:** Working in a systematic and standardised manner on communications and marketing actions, membership growth will be supported through an enhanced image and branding. Based on regional and NSO needs and requests, the development of communication capacities will be further strengthened and intensified.

1 Vallory, Eduard. Global Citizenship Education. Study of the ideological basis, historical development, international dimension, and values and practices of World Scouting. Department of Political Science, Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona, October 2007. Available at www.escoltes.cat/research

2 "World Scouting (WOSM and WAGGGS) 2003 Data Set"; "WOSM Census Data Set, 1924-2004"; "WOSM ages-based Census Data Set, 1968-2004", and "Data Set of International and World Scout Conferences, 1924-2002"; Vallory, Eduard. Department of Political Science, Pompeu Fabra University, Barcelona, October 2007.

- **research and means of accurately measuring and reporting membership data in NSOs:** To strengthen the monitoring of quantitative as well as qualitative aspects of membership, a tool will be offered to NSOs which contains a simple but flexible system of registration. This tool, which is based on the tool that was presented to NSOs at a workshop during the World Scout Conference in Tunisia, is in production and will be available to NSOs in the very near future. Also, further quantitative and qualitative research will be supported, to feed better informed decisions related to membership growth and development.
- **resources:** regular and additional resources will be needed to help inject dynamism to the Movement's efforts to expand its membership, to reach more youth and incorporate more adults into quality programmes.