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Scouting for the 21st Century

PROJECT

Long term work on membership growth with associations

1. Introduction

At the last European Scout Conference the membership requested the committee to "...focus its efforts and resources primarily on activities that effectively promote membership growth and development in National Associations." (Resolution 07/2004).

The European Scout Committee interprets the decision of the European Scout Conference as a clear request to invest substantial resources into the area of membership growth. It was therefore decided that a long-term project is needed in order to build knowledge and capacity to support associations. This is also in line with the committee aspiration to create working methods aimed at offering more tailor-made support to associations.

In August 2005, the European Scout Committee decided to launch a project to initiate a long term project on membership growth together with a number of national Scout associations or National Scout Organizations, accepting that the key proponents in the issue of membership growth are the associations themselves.

The European Scout Committee has requested the Core Group of *An organisation for the 21st Century* (CG21) to initiate a working group to steer a long term project on membership growth with a limited number of carefully selected associations. Hence CG21 will also manage the growth project.

2. Project

The project will be run with a limited number of associations (4 to 8) and headed by the Core Group of *An organisation for the 21st Century*.

The project has following objectives:

- Identify factors that impact on growth
- Identify what organizations with a declining membership have in common
- Identify what organizations with a growing membership have in common
- Support growth in the associations participating in the project
- Raise knowledge on growth
- Share best practices between the participating associations and, later, through reports to the rest of the Region
- Identify ways for the region to support growth and establish knowledge in areas where the region cannot support growth
- The project will result in a growth network that reaches out to the other associations in the Region

The project will be kicked-off with a workshop where the participating associations will share successes and failures in their work on membership growth with the purpose of creating a

project plan. This workshop will be held on June 16 –18, 2006. The location will be in one of the participating countries. Two further workshops will be held at the end of 2006 and at the beginning of 2007.

2.1 Project phases

The project will be divided in four phases that are briefly described below. Actual content and work of the phases will be decided by the participating associations when they draw up the project plan.

2.2 Understanding growth

Before being able to give support or draw conclusions, it is necessary to try to understand the growth issue. This phase will be focused on sharing the data and information available in the associations and identifying common problems and patterns. The objective of this phase is two-fold. Firstly, one wants to understand the different approaches towards growth. Secondly, the associations will share which data and info they are collecting and how that is being done.

2.3 Supporting growth

Based on the understanding that has been gained during the previous phase, specific support activities will be developed. This support can come from various sources. In the first instance the participating associations can support each other. Also the core groups of the European Scout Committee will provide their support as all the domains they are working on are relevant for growth: adult resources, youth program, external relations, strategy, management & growth.

The growing associations participating in the project can decide in this phase to step out of the project because the support phase is less relevant for them. However it would be much appreciated if they can help out the other associations.

2.4 Gathering knowledge about successful and unsuccessful practices

Based on what the associations have already undertaken and what has been done in the support phase of the project, successful and unsuccessful practices can be defined. The objective of this phase is to enable the exchange of best practices, methods, experts in growth, etc.

2.5 Growth Network

The work done in this project should form a solid base to start a network on growth in which all associations of the Region can participate.

3. Open Call for participation to the growth project

The European Scout Committee and the Core Group of *An organisation for the 21st Century* call on all associations that are interested in participating in this project to submit their application. As the European Scout Region will allocate significant resources to the project, the same is expected from the participating associations.

Selection of the associations will be based on following criteria:

- The association needs to have a willingness to grow
- The association needs to establish and develop a growth strategy
- Growth has to be part of the strategic priorities
- Relevant membership data has to be available (see later in this document)
- Within the association there has to be a structured approach working on growth
- In case there are more candidates than places, the ESC will select associations from a number of different perspectives of growth
- Every association that is taking part will need to provide 2 or 3 people that are also involved on a high-level growth project in their association. The commitment will go further than participating in the workshops. There will need to be some work done during the entire course of the project e.g. writing best practice documents, running statistical analysis on membership data, preparatory work for the workshops, etc. The people involved in the work in the association will gain from this project covering the whole range of activity of the association, including youth programme, adult resources and Scouting's profile.

The project is not focused on associations with a decline in membership alone, although these will most probably form the larger part of the group. The European Scout Committee wants associations having positive membership development to participate as well, as they will be a good source for best practice sharing and understanding growth.

3.1 Data needed from the selected associations

One of the conditions of success for the project is that all associations should be able to help each other. It was therefore decided that the participating associations should have at least a minimum of data available in order to be able to share relevant information and data. The presentation and sharing of this information with the other associations will be part of the kick-off event of the project so that each association knows the other's state of affairs on growth and membership development.

Membership data:

- Membership by age
- Membership by function (Scout, Cub Scout, etc.)
- Membership by gender
- Membership gain / loss data
- Market share data
- Number of groups
- Number of units
- Number of patrols

Information about the association:

- Overview of growth projects
- Overview of strategic priorities on growth
- Overview of other projects
- Overview of major changes in programme during the last 10 years
- Overview of the image of Scouting
- Overview of other available leisure activities in working area of the association

What is in it for you?

This is an **offer that you can't refuse**, because:

- You will gain hands-on experience on growth and membership development.
- You will find concrete solutions for current problems. The project is action oriented.
- Learn about innovative approaches to growth.
- Get input for your work on growth by external experts.
- All costs related to the 3 workshops will be covered by the region (including travel costs)
- Association projects that find their origin in the growth project are eligible to apply for grant aid from the Centenary Fund.
- Exchange with and participation in work on growth and development at world level. For selected participants, the European Region will offer support to travel costs in growth initiative events.