



OPENING SPEECH

Bernd Ebersold

Director of the Jacobs Foundation

Dear Mr Beer (Conseiller d'Etat en charge du Département de l'Instruction publique),

Dear Secretary General, Dear Eduardo, Dear Participants in this Congress,

And last but by any means not least:

Dear friends in Scouting,

This is a very special year for you. Millions of Scouts from 216 countries have celebrated the beginning of the second century of World Scouting throughout this year.

The Jacobs Foundation has good reason to celebrate together with you! We share a common belief with the International Scout Movement: we believe that young people are crucial to social change and development in today's and tomorrow's world. Therefore, the Jacobs Foundation has invested in numerous projects that intend to harmless young people's imagination, ideas and visions, their hope, energy and enthusiasm. In this context numerous projects have been carried out in cooperation with the Scout Movement, particularly in Africa.

Today the acquisition of so called "life skills" is widely considered a crucial prerequisite enabling young people to lead a dignified and productive life in this fast changing, increasingly diverse and challenging global society. Formal and non-formal out-of school activities, such as Scouting, have proven to be extremely fruitful opportunities for acquiring these skills.

And so it is perhaps not surprising that this Congress is supported by the Jacobs Foundation. It is one of the highlights of this year's series of celebrations. I presume that it takes a different stance from usual Scouting events and thus shows that Scouting has entered into a new century. Looking back on the last 100 years is a great opportunity to systematize Scouting extensive experience, draw lessons and provide good examples of how informal

and out of school learning can make an important contribution to the healthy and productive development of children and youth.

The Jacobs Foundation supports projects in the areas of research into childhood and adolescence on the one hand, and interventions based on first class scientific research on the other. Therefore we are very curious to learn more about how out-of school and non-formal learning institutions, such as the Scout Movement, can make their contribution to transmitting these skills and competencies. In particular we would like to know whether they can compensate for weaknesses in the formal education systems, in Africa for instance.

We are interested to see how Scouting has been and will be able to make a contribution to developing these “life skills” that enable young people all over the world to become socially responsible and productive members of societies, which they will in turn transform for the better.

We hope that this Congress will provide us with concrete examples and recommendations of how young people can live together in peace, freely share their dreams and hopes, fully realize their potential, and live up to their aspirations regardless to the color of their skin, their gender, faith or social and economic background. We hope too that it will also open up concrete perspectives for the World Scout Movement and the role it will have to play in its second century. And maybe, this Congress will also help this complex organization to improve its skills and ways of operating.

Just imagine what a difference we could make if we were able to motivate young people all over the world to become productive agents for a better future in their community, country and our global society as whole. Scouting should, and I am sure, Scouting will, be a part of this endeavor!

I wish us a productive conference.

Bernd Ebersold

Director of the Jacobs Foundation