



First Scouts of the World Discovery in Ireland

?????:Andres Morales

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The first ever Scouts of the World Discovery in Ireland took place in October 2008, gathering 21 enthusiastic Venture Scouts and young leaders from across 11 Scout Counties and 4 Scout Provinces to the Scout Den & Museum of the 37th Cork (Togher) in Cork City.

Scouting Ireland's Venture Scout and International teams are carrying out this pilot to investigate how best to integrate the Scouts of the World Award programme into national programme. It also allows the association to put in place the necessary resources to facilitate young people from around the country in applying for the award.

The Scouts of the World programme is an international award designed to encourage positive action in achieving the UN's Millennium Development Goals. The Discovery prepared the Ventures and young leaders for the challenges facing them on a voluntary service project that they will complete over the next year.

The theme chosen was development, and the participants explored the history and development of women's groups in the Irish Travelling Community and the challenges facing modern Irish Traveller young women, visiting two travelling communities in Cork City. The Irish Travelling Community is an indigenous, often marginalised, ethnic minority numbering 25,000 people, often likened, though technically incorrectly, with the Roma community of mainland Europe.

The first group the participants met was at Meelagh Estate in Mahon, and allowed participants to meet with older women whose lives have changed hugely with the foundation of women's groups, providing the skills and confidence to act as their own advocates. A display of photographs from the previous 30 years was a testament to the commitment it had taken to establish a strong women's movement.

The second group the participants met was at St. Finbarr's Traveller Resource Centre in Blackpool. The Blackpool Wong Women's Group discussed what it was like to grow up in the Travelling Community in the 21st Century. They described how difficult it could be to socialise and to live an ordinary life that many young people take for granted. The Scouts of the World participants discussed their own life experiences, which included their perceptions of the Travelling Community and the discrimination its members face on a day-to-day basis. Most members of the Young Women's Group were unaware that they were eligible to become members of Scouting. As the group broke from its formal session into an informal one, information on education through the Scout Method was given to the host group. This particular project, while fulfilling the criteria of the Scouts of the World Award, exploring a live issue in development, is also in line with the World Organisation of the Scout Movement, WOSM Strategic Priority 4 - Reaching Out, which endeavours to extend Scouting to young people in especially difficult circumstances, like those without permanent dwellings or those who are part of ethnic minorities.

Following this, participants were equipped with some of the skills needed to undertake a voluntary service expedition; workshops in problem solving, project management, media skills and managing emotions were provided.

Over the next year, the group will be organising and running a voluntary service project using the Scout Method to play their part in accomplishing the UN's Millennium Development Goals. Six Patrol Leaders from across the country have been appointed to guide the project and other participants have been assigned to working groups in different areas depending on their own personal skills and their personal action plans.

Scouting Ireland Chief Scout Michael John Shinnick, visiting the Discovery, complimented all the participants on their

willingness to engage with live issues in modern Ireland and on their commitment to social inclusion. He was present for the exhibition, at which participants, in their patrols, reflected on their experience of the Discovery through visual art, poetry, drama, discussion, music and dance.

The final part of the experience saw participants draw up their personal plans, outlining the responsibilities they wished to assume in the project going forward. Under the supervision of the Patrol Leaders, working groups on project development, logistics, finance, administration and public relations have been set up.

This article was prepared by Scouting Ireland.

For more information on how to obtain the Scouts of the World Award visit: www.scoutsoftheworld.net

Please share your Scouts of the World activities with the World Scout Bureau by emailing [Andres Morales](mailto:Andres.Morales@scoutsoftheworld.net) Adolescents & Young Adults.