

Partnerships in Action

Development Programmes

This paper, prepared by the North-South Network, sets out a definition of 'community development' and encourages Scouting to participate in development programmes, with an educational dimension rather than development projects.

Introduction

In order to develop, Scouting need to represent world realities. In this way, on the national level, Scout associations should understand the political, social, cultural, economic and environmental reality of their country, their own context.

In order for these associations to be able to give real responses to the needs of young people, it is necessary to understand these needs and to fully understand their reality.

It is also true, however, that all the social problems such as immigration, unemployment, health, etc. have a global and international dimension. Moreover, solutions to these problems should consider and integrate all the aspects which are part of the country's context and not phenomena which can be tackled in isolation.

Understanding the context of the country, the region and the world is an essential element in the education process for young people. The responses which Scouting offer young people should consider the specific context in which young people are growing up and developing.

This approach is valid for all Scout associations, from north, south east or west, with the difference that some of them focus on development education and some on participation in development or both.

What is the global and international dimension of Scouting?

If we consider development education as **"a tool which claims to broaden young people's horizons, and help them to better understand the world's problems and the relationship of interdependency between communities"**, then development education allows young people to understand the situation and the needs of other populations. This can no doubt help transform young people's idealistic strength into constructive actions. Young people who have a broader "global vision" have a better appreciation of realities: the need for education, professional training, or how to avoid the temptations of our modern society. **The global result is a better conscience for the citizen in the community, the country and the world.**

As a result of this education, young people become involved through concrete actions, which are come under the concept of Community Development.

If we consider community development as **"the process aimed at creating the conditions needed for the economic and social progress of a whole group by favouring active participation and initiative-taking by members of the community"** (United Nations) or as **"improving the capacities**



of social groups to become more autonomous with regard to the characteristics of their environment, by taking their own destiny in hand", then by participating in development actions on the local, national, or international level, Scouts learn new things and techniques, increase their self-confidence and the feeling of belonging, discover their community and the contribution they can make to a better life, and enlarge their vision beyond the limits of their immediate environment.

There are many Scout associations involved in the area of co-operation through micro-projects which are mainly part of programmes aimed at the 17 to 21 year age group. A preliminary evaluation of these experiences highlights the fact that they allow young people who travel overseas to acquire a certain awareness and experiences which mean that in the future, these young people have a real awareness of their role as world citizens and possibly become involved in the area of co-operation. This is certainly very positive and allows them to continue in the future.

But, what happens with the young people do not have the chance of travelling overseas? What happens in the local association which hosts these young people? Can it carry out follow-up and benefit from this experience in the medium or long term?

This experience is already more than 15 years old and we hope that it can continue in the future, but

there are some problems relating to the continuity of actions and the support which local associations give for the projects to be carried out successfully, often because these projects do not always come into the context of the association.

Development programme ideas

Considering this reality, actions in the context of community development undertaken by Scout associations should be aimed at programmes rather than projects, where each programme corresponds to a series of projects (or micro-projects) which are all integrated.

Actions which Scout units carry out in the context of their association's programme policy, are exchanges of young people, work camps, community development projects, development participation or development education.

These actions are an **integral part of a development programme** which should exist between the associations concerned. In this way, each project (or micro-project) will contribute to reaching the aims of the programme.

Through **development projects which last for several years** (programmes) we can better respond to the actual needs of the associations. However, in order for the relationship between them to be productive, it must be based on the concept of partnership (developed in the Kigali and Marrakech Charters).



These relationships should allow the associations to:

- **Respond to development priorities in the country**
The associations should all agree to decide in which areas they wish to help and co-operate with each other and not to impose themselves, since each association knows its own reality and context.
- **Encourage educational responses**
Through the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes, the programme will allow the preparation of young people for active involvement in the development of their community, through development education or development participation, according to its needs. Each association's programmes will be enriched in this way.
- **Strengthen the infrastructure of associations on the national and local level**
It is very important for co-operation to provide associations with the necessary means to allow a follow-up of actions and to achieve autonomy in the future, with the final aim of achieving the lasting development of associations in the medium term.

Scouting's scope of activities

Scouting are defined as educational movements for young people, this is why the development programmes

which the Scout associations undertake should be directed towards education, an area in which Scouting are experts.

There are many fields of action which appear in the area of education, e.g.:

- **Literacy programmes:** associations can undertake programmes for functional literacy, as well as teaching in rural areas, operating mobile libraries, writing and producing teaching material, etc.
- **Health:** associations can undertake programmes for the protection of mothers and babies, health actions, family life education, drug prevention, organisation of clinics, etc.
- **Employment:** associations can undertake programmes for village co-operatives, professional training workshops (mechanical, electrical, carpentry, etc.).
- **Nutrition:** associations can undertake programmes for nutritional education and good eating habits, distribution of solar drying sheds, market-gardening, agricultural co-operatives, etc.
- **Environment:** associations can undertake programmes for reforestation, for fighting against erosion, popularising renewable energies, etc.

There are still many areas which come into the scope of Scouting activities: the issue of young people, the place of women, rural Scouting, street children, child labour, young people's initiatives, etc.

