

YOUTH PARTICIPATION

DOCUMENT

4



7th
WORLD SCOUT
YOUTH FORUM

SOUTH
AFRICA
1999

7^e FORUM
DES JEUNES DU
SCOUTISME
MONDIAL

JULY 19 - 22 JUILLET • BALGOWAN

YOUTH PARTICIPATION TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
TWO SESSIONS ON YOUTH PARTICIPATION...	1
TO PREPARE THEMSELVES...	1
1. RESOLUTION N° 2/93 (Adopted by the 33rd World Scout Conference, Bangkok, 1993)	3
2. POLICY ON INVOLVEMENT OF YOUNG MEMBERS IN DECISION-MAKING	4
GLOSSARY	4
BASIC PRINCIPLE	4
YOUTH PROGRAMME	4
MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES	5
RESPONSIBILITIES OF NATIONAL SCOUT ASSOCIATIONS	5
RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE WORLD ORGANISATION OF THE SCOUT MOVEMENT	6
3. GENERAL FRAMEWORK OF THE POLICY ON INVOLVEMENT OF YOUNG MEMBERS IN DECISION-MAKING	7
A FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT OF SCOUTING...	7
NOT A NEW IDEA...	8
BUT EVEN MORE RELEVANT TODAY...	9

INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared to help delegates and observers prepare themselves to participate actively in the World Scout Youth Forum sessions which will deal with youth participation.

TWO SESSIONS ON YOUTH PARTICIPATION...

Two sessions will deal with this theme, one on Wednesday morning and the other are on Thursday morning (see Document 1, Provisional Agenda).

The first session will offer participants the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the Policy on Involvement of Young Members in Decision-Making, adopted by the World Scout Conference in Bangkok in 1993, to share their experiences concerning the implementation of this policy at all levels of their association, and to identify in this context the difficulties in such participation and how to transform these difficulties into opportunities.

Following a brief presentation of the Policy in a plenary session, participants will be invited to form international teams to share their experiences. Several teams will then form a larger group to summarise their discussions and to prepare display panels, each one showing an obstacle or an opportunity. These panels will then be put together to form an obstacles wall and an opportunities wall.

The second session will offer participants the chance to prepare themselves to participate at the World Scout Conference and to contribute, within their association, to the implementation of the Policy on Involvement of Young Members in Decision-Making in a real spirit of partnership.

After a brief introduction in plenary, participants will once again form international teams. Each team will be confronted with a typical situation related to youth participation. This situation will be presented in the form of a scenario and each team will be invited to suggest solutions to the problems described in the scenario. The teams will then share their conclusions. Finally, participants will form new groups, this time by region, to reflect on their own situation in the specific context of their region, and to develop a personal plan of action.

TO PREPARE THEMSELVES...

To prepare themselves for these sessions, we invite participants to:

- Read carefully the Resolution, the Policy on Involvement of Young Members in Decision-Making and the general framework of this policy which are included in this document;
- Carry out a survey in their own association to reply to the following questions:
 - How do the youth members in their association in the different age sections (Cubs, Scouts, Rovers...) take part in decision-making concerning the implementation of the programme in their local unit? What is provided by their association to help in this regard? How is that used in the local units?

- Are the youth members in the senior age sections directly involved in the work of reviewing or developing the youth programme proposed by their association? How is this participation organised?
- Do young adult leaders participate actively in the decision-making process concerning the organisation and management of their association? In what way? Through Youth Forums? Through a Youth Committee? By participating directly in decision-making bodies (Conference, Committees...)?
- Do young adult leaders regularly represent their association vis-a-vis other bodies or organisations?
- Does their association offer training to young adults and adults, to enable both to implement a real policy on youth participation in a spirit of partnership?

1. RESOLUTION No. 2/93

Adopted by the 33rd World Scout
Conference, Bangkok, 1993

The Conference

- recognising the fundamental importance, in terms of achieving the purpose of the Scout Movement, of involving young members in decision-making
- considering that Scouting is not only a Movement *for* young people but also a Movement *of* young people
- believing that Scouting is a Movement based on democratic principles
- recognising the value to the individuals concerned and to the Movement as a whole of leadership opportunities for young members
- noting with pleasure the successes achieved by the 4th World Youth Forum in Australia (1990/91) and the 5th World Youth Forum in Switzerland (1992)
- welcoming the World Committee's decision to encourage participation of young delegates in the 33rd World Scout Conference by offering a reduced Conference fee
- encouraged by the results of youth participation in the efforts of the World Scout Environment Network
- adopts the *Policy on Involvement of Young Members in Decision-Making*
- recognises this new policy as an important contribution towards further strengthening the implementation of the World Programme Policy adopted by the 32nd World Scout Conference in 1990
- strongly urges National Scout Organisations to implement the policy at all levels within their own associations
- requests the World Committee to consider all means by which the policy may be implemented within the World Organization at regional and world levels.

2. POLICY ON INVOLVEMENT OF YOUNG MEMBERS IN DECISION-MAKING

Adopted by the
33rd World Scout Conference,
Bangkok, 1993

GLOSSARY

In this Policy statement, the following terms are used as indicated:

- **member** refers to any person who joins the Movement, either as a participant in the Youth Programme offered by National Scout Associations or in a leadership capacity
- **youth member** refers to any member who participates in the Youth Programme (for example, Pre-Cubs, Cubs, Scouts, Senior Scouts, Rovers) but not in an adult leadership capacity
- **young member** refers to any member up to the age of approximately 26
- **young adult** refers to any young member who has attained the legal age of majority in any particular country, up to the age of approximately 26
- **adult leader** refers to any member in a leadership function in the Movement but not a participant in the Youth Programme.

BASIC PRINCIPLE

Scouting is a Movement of young people, supported by adults; it is not a Movement for young people managed by adults only. Thus, Scouting offers the potential for a learning community of young people and adults, working together in a partnership of enthusiasm and experience.

This basic principle should be reflected both in the Youth Programme of a National Scout Association and in the management structures of the organisation.

YOUTH PROGRAMME

The Youth Programme is the means to achieving Scouting's educational purpose, which includes developing the capability of its youth members, of all ages, to make decisions. According to the Scout method, this capability is developed progressively through learning by doing, i.e.

the active involvement of youth members in making decisions that affect them.

Thus, youth members in all age sections (for example, Pre-Cub section, Cub section, Scout section, Senior Scout section, Rover section) should participate in making decisions affecting the *implementation of the programme* in which they participate at unit and local levels, assuming increasing responsibility with age for their own decisions and actions. Youth members in the older age sections should also participate in the process of *programme design and development* carried out by National Scout Associations.

Within the Youth Programme, the role of adult leaders is to encourage and facilitate the progressive personal development of the youth members through a rich and varied partnership with them. At all levels and in all situations, an appropriate balance must be struck between the complementary roles of youth members and adult leaders.

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

Young adults in Scouting, whether members of the older age sections or in leadership positions, should be active participants in decision-making in matters related to the organisation and management of the Movement.

Young adults should also be active representatives of the Movement in relationships with external bodies.

Appropriate training should be provided for young adults in these roles.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF NATIONAL SCOUT ASSOCIATIONS

National Scout Associations should establish their own specific national policies and procedures to ensure the participation of young members in decision-making.

These policies and procedures should include:

- design of the Youth Programme using appropriate programme development processes to achieve the objectives of this Policy statement
- organisation of Youth Forums for the expression of views and for the training of young members in practical skills of decision-making and leadership
- representation of young adults on decision-making bodies of the association and in delegations to Regional and World Conferences
- provision of appropriate training for young adults in such capacities

- provision of appropriate training for adult leaders both to support the effective implementation of the Youth Programme and to strengthen their understanding of the importance of the relationship between youth members and adult leaders.

National Scout Associations should be prepared to devote the financial and other resources necessary to support their policies and procedures relating to the involvement of young members in decision-making.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE WORLD ORGANIZATION OF THE SCOUT MOVEMENT

The World Organization of the Scout Movement must reflect this Policy statement in its own internal practices and procedures at Regional and World levels.

This includes:

- provision of opportunities for young adults to participate in decision-making processes and of training to be effective in such decision-making
- representation of young adults on technical committees and other advisory or decision-making bodies
- organisation of Youth Forums for the expression of views and for the training of young members in appropriate skills.

The World Organization, through the World Scout Committee and World Scout Bureau, must provide support and encouragement to National Scout Associations in implementing this Policy.

3. GENERAL FRAMEWORK OF THE POLICY ON INVOLVEMENT OF YOUNG MEMBERS IN DECISION-MAKING

A FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT OF SCOUTING...

The Constitution of the World Organization of the Scout Movement states that:

*The purpose of the Scout Movement is to contribute to the development of young people in achieving their full physical, intellectual, social and spiritual potentials as individuals, **as responsible citizens** and as members of their local, national and international communities.*

(Article I, 2. – emphasis added)

The Constitution goes on:

The Scout Movement is based on the following principles:

...

Duty to others

...

*- **Participation in the development of society** with recognition and respect for the dignity of one's fellow-man and for the integrity of the natural world.*

...

(Article II, 1. – emphasis added)

and further:

The Scout Method is a system of progressive self-education through:

...

*- **Membership of small groups (for example the patrol), involving, under adult guidance, progressive discovery and **acceptance of responsibility and training towards self-government...*****

(Article III. – emphasis added)

As can be seen from the above extracts from the Constitution of WOSM, the purpose, principles and method of Scouting include specific references to developing young people as responsible citizens through active participation in the development of society and progressive acceptance of responsibility for the direction of their own lives.

NOT A NEW IDEA...

This concept of participation is one that the Founder, Lord Baden-Powell, laid as a corner stone of the Scout method.

In an article in "The Scouter" in 1914, he stated:

*The main object is... **to give responsibility to the boy**, since this is the very best of all means for developing character.*

(Scouting was not at that time open to girls.)

On another occasion, he reported:

The possibility of putting responsibility on to boys and treating them seriously was brought to the proof in Mafeking...

Baden-Powell described the Patrol System as follows:

*The objective of the Patrol System is mainly **to give real responsibility to as many boys as possible** with a view to developing their character. If the Scoutmaster gives his Patrol Leader real power, expects a great deal from him, and leaves him a free hand in carrying out his work, he will have done more for that boy's character expansion than any amount of school training could ever do.*

In his farewell address to The Hague International Conference in 1937, he said:

Before making any decision... I consult the authority that I think of as best – and that is the boy himself.

On this particular occasion, he was referring to a question that had international implications, making it very clear that the consultation process applied to issues affecting Scouting at all levels.

Baden-Powell did not, of course, use words such as "participation" or "involvement", which were not part of the current terminology at the beginning of the twentieth century, but used words such as "self-government" and "self-education". Thus he stated:

For up-to-date self-government, up-to-date self-education seems the right preparatory step.

The Scout method is still today referred to as *a system of progressive self-education...*

Since involvement in decision-making is so intrinsically linked with the Scout method, it is evident that it is through the Youth Programme that young members must be first provided with opportunities to make decisions for themselves. "Self-government" within the Cub Pack and the Scout Troop is an essential element of Scouting's educational process – but one that is, sadly, often not used to its potential.

**BUT EVEN MORE
RELEVANT TODAY...**

The importance of educating young people to take a constructive place in society – which is what involvement in decision-making is ultimately all about – is even more important in today's context of change and evolution taking place in that society. The issues of human rights and democracy provide two illustrations:

Human Rights

As long ago as 1959, the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child stated:

The child is entitled to receive education... He shall be given an education which will... enable him, on a basis of equal opportunity, to develop his abilities, his individual judgement, and his sense of moral and social responsibility, and to become a useful member of society.

(Principle 7)

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1989, states that:

- *... parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.*

(Article 12)

- *The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.*

(Article 13)

The 32nd World Scout Conference in 1990 adopted Resolution 16/90 (Convention on the Rights of the Child), which states:

The Conference

- *considering that the respect and protection of the dignity of the child and his or her moral, social, legal and cultural rights represent a basic condition for a healthier and safer future of humanity*
- *recognising the fundamental obligation of a youth movement to protect and promote the best interests of children and young people*
- *welcomes the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20 November 1989*
- *expresses its support to the provisions of the Convention*
- *invites all National Scout Organisations to play an active role in encouraging their Government to ratify the Convention and in promoting its dissemination among adults and children*
- *encourages National Scout Organisations to find creative means to familiarise their leaders with the articles of the Convention and to use them in understanding the needs of children and young people.*

Democracy

There is today, throughout the world and in a variety of forms, an increasing preoccupation with the issue of democracy.

For example:

- in the countries of central and eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, following the collapse of the communist regimes, and in many developing countries in the “South” where there is a trend towards multiparty democratic systems of government, societies are facing new freedoms and striving to cope with “newborn” democracy
- in some industrialised countries in the “North”, there is a tendency towards what may be called an “ageing” democracy, which is being challenged by the impact of economic crises, increased nationalism and the increasing popularity of parties of the extreme right

- and, in some parts of the world, there is the prospect of strong “fundamentalist” influence on society which may threaten democratic principles.

As reflected in its educational method and the writings of the Founder, Scouting is a Movement that is based on democratic principles. It is thus incumbent upon the Movement to help to educate young people in democracy, to help them to take a constructive place in society.

And yet, in too many cases, young members of the Scout Movement are prevented from having any voice or influence even over the affairs of their own Movement! Scouting is a Movement *of* young people, not just a Movement *for* young people managed by older adults. In the true spirit of “learning by doing”, young people must therefore – in addition to “self-government” in local Scout units – be allowed the opportunity to take part in the “government” of the Movement, through having a meaningful part to play in the decision-making processes at all levels, local, national and international.