

Scouting and World Development



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Introduction

Over the past 20 years, the number of Scouts in the world has more than doubled. Most of this remarkable growth has been in 'developing' countries and proves the ability of Scouting to meet a wide variety of needs from an extraordinary diversity of cultures and traditions.

As an educational movement, Scouting is designed to prepare young people to cope with and make a contribution to the society in which they live. This is particularly apparent in developing countries where the Scout programme usually includes an active involvement in community projects, ranging from fish-farming to health education campaigns, re-forestation to literacy projects.

Because we are part of a truly international Movement, we can help young people to think of people in developing countries as our neighbours. Through educational projects we can learn about the interdependence of the world and show the need for cooperation and a sharing of world resources. This is an important application of the principles of the Scout Promise and Law.

In the United Kingdom and other European Scout Associations there has been increasing involvement in projects with developing countries. There has been a growing number of education/fund raising projects in association with aid agencies and national Scout Associations, as well as Explorer Scout and Scout Network expeditions abroad to take part in community projects.

In line with the aims of the Association, the main value of Scout involvement in such international projects is an educational one. The mission of Scout and Guide Associations is the development of young people. They are not overseas aid agencies or travel agents! By working with young people, we seek to improve the long-term quality of life in the community. What starts as a practical project to help others overseas should help

Scouts to explore the links between us and the community we live in, and the wider world. Projects may involve fund raising or visits abroad to help, but the underlying reason for such participation is to help members understand the issues involved, and to provide the opportunity to bring about change by practical action. It is through involvement and first hand experience that young people grow in awareness. But these benefits are not automatic. To build international understanding we must consciously challenge both prejudice and the notion that our culture is the best.

This fact sheet has been compiled for those interested in such community projects abroad. Drawing on recent experience of UK and other European projects, it is intended to give some preliminary guidance. The International Office is pleased to discuss individual plans with those planning local projects and to provide contacts with similar projects or sources of expert assistance or advice.

What Are We Really Trying To Do?

You may already have an idea of the sort of project you wish to undertake. The early stages of planning a project are often the most crucial and will largely determine its success or failure.

Many projects carried out by young people start with a simple desire to bring healthier, happier and fuller lives to an overseas community. The aims, objectives and methods adopted must, however, be carefully developed if an effective programme is to be carried out. Scout projects have evolved greatly in recent years, from raising funds for other agencies to more direct involvement in overseas development, recognising the key role of young people in the development of their own countries. This means that such projects become increasingly complex and require careful management. There are, sadly, examples where well-meaning people and organisations have been involved in overseas projects which have not produced the desired

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results. This often results from poor planning or inappropriate methods such as a failure to work in a true partnership with the local community, or lack of consideration for the other culture.

From this it should be clear that research is needed so that we are knowledgeable and aware of the issues involved, and that this leads to a clearly defined and realistic project plan. Some of the questions you should ask yourself include:

- What are your aims and expectations?
- What is your timescale? Is it realistic?
- What will the impact be, here and overseas?
- Should there be exchange visits? What would they aim to achieve? Do they justify the cost?
- How will you evaluate and review?
- How will you identify the real needs and be sensitive to overseas partners?
- Who will you contact for information and guidance?
- What financial and other resources are available?
- Are there alternative means of achieving the same ends?

Most importantly, when working with Scouts or other community organisations it is strongly recommended that a 'contract' is drawn up which recognises the needs and aspirations of all sides. Any partnership should be meaningful - not simply UK Scouts imposing their project on a community. In many cases, much could be achieved and learnt by tackling a project in your local community before considering an ambitious project overseas.

Community Development work in the UK may offer a suitable avenue for local support. Initial contact should be made within your own County/Area.

SOME EXAMPLES OF OVERSEAS PROJECTS

Supporting Agencies - Many of the Aid Agencies have specialist youth materials to help young people develop an understanding of international issues and produce regular magazines on their activities. These include ideas of ways to be involved.

Child Sponsorship - Some Scout Groups participate in such schemes run by voluntary aid agencies. They can be particularly useful for younger members as it allows them to relate life at home to that of a young person abroad. The level

of support required would be well within the means of the average Group.

Members of the Group can feel involved in a personal way, and learn about the country with which they are linked. Some agencies have reservations about child sponsorship and do not run such programmes. Among those who do are Action Aid, World Vision and Tear Fund. Some agencies have additional or alternative programmes for linking with a particular project, rather than with individuals.

SCOPE - Scouts Project Exchange - Scouts from around the world can share ideas for projects. (see

www.scout.org/front/partners_scope.shtml)

The International Office encourages and supports such initiatives because they help to support the work of Scout Associations abroad. Because projects are submitted through the World Scout Bureau, they receive close support and monitoring which ensures they meet proven needs and have a good chance of success. There is also an established procedure for reporting to donors. Contact the International Office in the first instance.

Community Links - The idea of UK communities forming direct links with places in less developed countries has grown rapidly in recent years and in some cases Scouts have become involved in initiatives by local authorities, churches or other community groups.

National Scout Association Projects - These are launched from time to time and information on current projects is available from the International Office.

Explorer Scout and Scout Network

Expeditions - To undertake practical work overseas on a specific project. These last for up to a month and give participants a personal experience of life in a developing country. The other Sections of the movement can be involved through educational activities, events and report backs as well as fund raising,

International Work Camps - Provide an opportunity to take part in practical voluntary work whilst also studying and discussing relevant international issues, often with young people from other countries. Some international Scout events provide this type of opportunity, as do several agencies set up to run work camps.

The purpose so far in this fact sheet has been to show the wide range of opportunities available, that all Sections of the movement can be involved in at an appropriate level, and that there are many worthwhile projects which can be supported without travelling

The remainder of the fact sheet deals specifically with Explorer Scout and Scout Network expeditions and exchanges, which perhaps need more careful consideration than other types of projects. overseas.

GUIDELINES FOR EXPEDITIONS AND EXCHANGES

Finding a Suitable Project

Despite the great needs that exist, it is not always easy to find a suitable project. The starting point is to evaluate your strengths and skills and develop a group feeling of the sort of project you would like to be involved in. At this early stage it is important to be in touch with the Assistant County/Area Commissioner (International) and the International Office at Gilwell Park. The International Office can give help and support to groups planning community projects and also attempts to monitor current expeditions, assisting co-ordination.

Although many other agencies can be approached for advice and contacts for new projects, it is recommended that the first overseas contact should usually be with the national Scout Association of the country concerned, through the International Office in the first instance.

There are several reasons for this:

1. It is courteous to inform the Scout Organisation as early as possible of your plans.
2. They may be able to provide valuable project ideas, advice or support.
3. If we are able to work alongside the host Association it demonstrates in a concrete way our "World Family" as an international movement.

We can thus support the development of overseas Associations in their work in the community. There will also be much we can learn. This exchange may well prove to be more beneficial in the long term than the actual project work carried out.

4. Contacts you may make with Government Departments, business and other agencies can affect the host Association, and should only be made with their knowledge and support.

Be prepared to consider suggestions received from overseas Associations and agencies at work in the field. Young people (and sponsors) are often attracted to projects which will obtain quick and concrete results, such as digging latrines and building houses or rainwater collection tanks.

These may or may not be the appropriate projects to tackle in the circumstances. Less tangible projects, such as health surveying have often had greater long-term impact. It may sound more attractive to fund a child health programme than help to finance the building of a leader training centre or the purchase of printing equipment for the Scout Association. However, these other projects may be crucial to supporting and increasing the work of Scouts in the community. Many of the most useful projects will provide the host community with knowledge and skills which are important if ongoing development is to take place. In a true partnership, decisions are made jointly and so you need to seek to understand the viewpoint and priorities of other parties involved.

Some of the factors to consider when seeking an overseas partner include:-

- A common working language or an ability to communicate effectively.
- Current involvement of local Scouts in development projects
- Political and economic situation in developing country
- Costs and practicality of travel between the two countries
- Any existing requests from overseas (eg. through SCOPE)
- Ease of communication with partner Association and their infrastructure
- Size of country
- UK interest in and image of overseas country
- Overseas government priorities/development strategy
- Whether to build on existing programmes or start a new link

A successful bilateral programme will:

- Create friendships
- Build relationships across boundaries
- Allow each partner the opportunity to help the other
- Allow the partners to cooperate and give service to others
- Improve the quality of life of each partner

Once you have contacted a suitable overseas partner and begun to plan a specific project there will be many more questions to ask:

- Are adequate resources available? (experience, skills, materials, finance, time, etc)
- How will the project be continued when UK support ceases?
- What contingency plans are necessary?
- How and when should reconnaissance visits take place? Will this include a visit to the UK by your overseas partner?
- What commitments are the partners making? Who will do what? Should this be included in the formal agreement?

Organisation

It may take two years or more to organise a project. Often, difficulty is encountered in communicating with the overseas partners and similar problems related to organisation and management can be experienced. Sensitivity and diplomacy are often required. Cultural differences and misunderstandings are common and must be allowed for. It will not be realistic to expect every detail to be cut and dried before departure and your plans need to be flexible.

Considerable preparation will be necessary in the United Kingdom. However this is organised, it should be based (like all Scout activities) on member participation. Many expeditions have a coordinating group or committee. In the case of larger expeditions, there may well be other task groups dealing with specific areas (eg. Finance and Fund Raising, Medical, Equipment, Technical etc).

Reconnaissance visits are often vital in order to meet the people involved, to advance preparations, and to identify problems and resources on the ground.

Selection

Some expeditions have had a firm selection procedure for those who will take part. Others favour a form of self-selection or involve a whole Unit. Each of these has worked well with different groups, but the leadership will wish to ensure that participants are capable of working well together in difficult circumstances and have the basic health requirements.

The size of the party must obviously be appropriate to the project. Many worthwhile projects need only small numbers, and if there are too many, they will not be fully occupied. There

must also be an adequate number of Leaders. It is important to have sufficient Leaders to cover all reasonably foreseeable circumstances. What will happen, for example, if the project Leader is ill, and the assistant Leader has to go and sort out customs problems on imported equipment (this can be very time consuming!). The team must be prepared and equipped to deal with emergencies and medical problems. It is important for all participants to understand the commitments they are making (eg. financial, training etc).

Training

For many Explorer Scouts such expeditions will be the first time they have experienced the "Third World" also known as countries of the South (developed countries are known as "the North").

As well as culture shock, the working conditions and climate can be very testing. This can lead to a whole range of problems, so training should always include teamwork, communication skills, and discovery of the culture and values of the host country. All expedition members could be required to obtain first aid qualifications. Some particular technical or practical skills will be required for the project itself and other skills will be needed within the group such as writing, photographing, catering and medical.

Education

It is important to use an expedition to inform others about life in the developing world and stimulate involvement. These projects have obtained much coverage in local and regional media. It may also be possible to consider a "Join-in" programme or information pack to encourage local Scouts and other community groups to support your project and learn more about the issues involved.

Fund Raising, Grants and Sponsorship

There are two aspects to expedition finance which should be clearly separated: Project Costs and Expedition Costs. The project costs are the contribution which you are making for the development work (eg. contributions to development agencies, Scout projects, development materials, purchase, wages for local craftsmen employed etc.) Expedition costs relate to the young people's participation such as Airfares, Food and Accommodation, Sightseeing etc.

Usually a personal fee is set to cover such items as airfares, and the participants are committed to raising the additional funds required as a group. The important point is that money raised for

project work cannot be used towards personal costs. There is no reason why fund-raising to enable young people to visit another country should not take place, but donors should be given a true representation of what their donation is going towards.

Depending on your type of project, there may be agencies and trusts that can be approached for financial assistance. Such agencies may prefer to deal through The Scout Association at a national level, and so you should seek advice from the International Office before making such approaches. Most agencies have strict criteria for grants which need to be taken into account when planning your project. Youth exchange grants, for example are only usually available to small parties where visits take place in both directions, and participants fall within specific age groups.

Clearly, applications must be well presented and be technically sound.

Most expeditions obtain the main part of their financial support from local fund raising events and sponsorship. Many companies are happier to give in kind rather than cash. Often, expeditions freight donated equipment which is left for further use in the host country. For example, one expedition collected second hand sewing machines which allowed a craft workshop to be set up. Others have collected books for donation to local schools. The viability of such schemes depends on local availability and cost, importation costs and regulations and what items would be genuinely appropriate and useful. Sometimes it is easier and preferable to buy equipment in the host country, through assisting the local economy and reducing the high cost of transportation.

The rules regarding fund raising and appeals for funds stated in 'Policy, Organisation and Rules' apply to all Scout Expeditions. This includes the requirement to conduct fund raising within the Group/ District/County/Area boundaries as appropriate; and to conduct fund raising in accordance with the principles embodied in the Scout Promise and Law. Approaches to companies trading in the host country must not be made without first consulting the International Office and the host Scout Association.

Fund raising by members is an important educational tool, but should not be allowed to dominate the project. Look for novel and interesting methods of raising funds which will draw attention to your project

In most projects the host Scout Association/agency will be making a contribution in finance, staff time, materials, transport or other forms. Where there are contributions from all partners it helps to dispel a paternalistic donor/recipient attitude which can develop in 'charity' projects. With such an attitude, groups will fail to achieve any real partnership. They will fail to see that the 'developed' countries have much to learn and gain from 'developing' countries.

On the other hand, it is important to undertake projects that will not 'overwhelm' the limited resources of the host Association, and financial or material support to them, over and above direct project costs, may be appropriate. Sound financial budgeting, accounting and management is obviously necessary in order to be accountable to donors.

Conclusion

The opportunity to undertake Community Development projects with Scouts in other countries is an important one. It is a means to serve the wider community, and for young people to develop physically, intellectually, spiritually, and socially helping to fulfil the aim of The Scout Association.

There are a variety of methods of being involved. Some are simple and some are complex, but the opportunity is available to all age groups.

More direct involvement requires careful planning and we have tried to raise briefly some of the issues and resources available.

This cannot be anything other than a brief introduction, but further individual guidance can be obtained from the International Office.

SOME USEFUL PUBLICATIONS

The Oxfam Handbook of Development and Relief

A comprehensive – and extensive - manual from Oxfam. Gives a detailed insight into various types of development projects and references to technical resources.

North-South School Partnerships

A short leaflet downloadable from [www.ukowla.org.uk/upload/dos and dnts.pdf](http://www.ukowla.org.uk/upload/dos%20and%20dnts.pdf)

Expedition Handbook

This is a publication of the Expedition Advisory Centre at the Royal Geographical Society <http://www.rgs.org/specialInterests/fieldworkandexpeditions/expedition+advisory+centre.htm>

Contact! a handbook for North-South Youth Exchange (Commonwealth Youth Exchange Council)

Contact is intended to assist both experienced organisers and those with no previous experience of planning a long distance exchange. Taking a project management approach it identifies key stages involved in planning and preparation and highlights good practice.

www.cyec.org.uk/publications.asp

Partnerships for Change

The World Organisation of the Scout Movement (WOSM) has a special web site which gives excellent advice on setting up partnerships, all based on the principles of the Marrakech Charter. www.scout.org/lgs/mar_0.shtml

Development Material

The following organisations produce a range of educational and information materials which may be of interest. Many have catalogues available.

- Christian Aid, 35 Lower Marsh, Waterloo, London SE1 7RL
www.christian-aid.org.uk/
- Oxfam, Oxfam House, John Smith Drive, Cowley, Oxford OX4 2JY
www.oxfam.org.uk/
- Tear Fund, 100 Church Road, Teddington TW11 8QE
www.tearfund.org/
- UNICEF, Africa House, 64-78 Kingsway London WC2B 6NB
www.unicef.org.uk/
- ITDG Publishing, Bourton Hall, Bourton-on-Dunsmore, Rugby, Warwickshire, CV23 9QZ
Online bookshop for international development and technology
www.itdgpublishing.org.uk/
- Save the Children, 1 St. John's Lane, London EC1M 4AR
www.savethechildren.org.uk/
- Teaching Aids at Low Cost, PO Box 49, St Albans, Herts, AL1 5TX
www.talcuk.org/

A Charter for Visitors

1. Travel in a spirit of humility and with a genuine desire to learn more about the people of your host country.
2. Be sensitively aware of the feelings of other people, thus preventing what might be offensive behaviour on your part. This applies very much to photography.
3. Cultivate the habit of listening and observing, rather than merely hearing and seeing.
4. Realise that often the people in the country you visit have time, concepts and thought patterns different from your own; this does not make them inferior, only different.
5. Discover the enrichment of seeing a different way of life, through other eyes.
6. Acquaint yourself with local customs - people will be happy to help you.
7. Instead of the Western practice of knowing all the answers, cultivate the habit of asking questions.
8. Remember that you are only one of the thousands of visitors to this country and do not expect special privileges.
9. When you are shopping, remember that the 'bargain' you obtained was only possible because of the low wages paid to the maker.
10. Do not make promises to people in your host country unless you are certain you can carry them through.
11. Spend time reflecting on your daily experiences in an attempt to deepen your understanding. It has been said that what enriches you may rob and violate others.

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