



F: CO-ORDINATING AND SUPPORTING INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES AT A COUNTY LEVEL

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Getting more young people to undertake international activities is only part of the challenge. As well as quantity, it's also vital to ensure that international activities, like other programme activities, are of the highest quality.

The role of the ACC (International) is a broad one, touching, as it does, across all of the Sections. It can therefore be a challenge to measure the quantity and quality of international activity in your County. It's true that the number of Visits Abroad provides a very crude measure of those that are actually travelling abroad, but how do you know what else is happening? After all, as has been mentioned elsewhere in *International Essentials*, international activities aren't just about a privileged few in the older Sections having the opportunity to travel abroad, although that is part of it. It's also about what is happening during regular meetings and weekends throughout the year.

To help you, the International Core Team has produced a short form, which can be completed by yourself at your leisure, on how to assess your County support for the international dimension. You'll be pleased to know that the form doesn't have to be returned! It's for you to work through, to identify trends and to develop targets for the future. Be realistic when completing it, and keep a hold of your completed form for comparison next year. You can download a copy of the form from

<http://www.scoutbase.org.uk/ps/inter/team/support.htm>

Supporting the County adult training team

A key aspect in ensuring quality, is to first ensure that Leaders running Beaver Scout Colonies, Cub Scout Packs, Scout Troops and Explorer Scout Units are comfortable with the fact that international is not just about our place in a global movement, but that it's a pillar of our youth programme and is embedded in our fundamentals; helping young people to develop in an international context, as well as locally and nationally.

One of the ways that you can ensure that Leaders are 'on side' and understand the importance of the International dimension is to help your County

Adult Training Team by delivering Module 19 – International, as well as running International evenings and other events to promote the opportunities that are available. That way, you can introduce the international dimension in a very meaningful way and make yourself available to support Leaders looking for it in the future.

Section programme

As a result of input into the training of adults, you should see Leaders incorporating international activities into evening and weekend programmes that help young people to increase their understanding of other countries, cultures and issues. You might see groups collaborate on the International Friendship Group Award or perhaps arrange a day visit to a nearby international Scout camp in the summer. You might also have Leaders contacting you to run ideas by you on possible activities. Whatever the situation, always be ready to respond and be supportive.

If you know of a number of groups undertaking the International Friendship Group Award, think about how they might be able to help each other, or, on completion of their projects, how they might help to promote International to others in their own District.

Global awareness

Global awareness is about recognising that the world is getting smaller, that what's happening in one part of the world affects us and equally, what we do in our own lives can affect the lives of others across the world.

Your effort in this area should be focused on promoting the need for collective and individual action and the success will come through Leaders delivering activities that tackle issues that we regularly read about in newspapers and see on television. These are the kind of issues that we often feel hopeless about, yet there is a plentiful supply of excellent resource material, both produced by The Scout Association and a myriad number of external agencies.

External agencies are particularly good in providing ready-to-use activities, and Leaders in your County/Area will, no doubt, be looking out for



new programme ideas to run in their Colony, Pack, Troop or Unit.

Events outside of Scouting also provide opportunities to promote, support and co-ordinate international activities. Take an interest in these activities e.g. World Environment Day, and think of ways in which you might promote these to local Leaders.

Link-ups and exchanges

Link-ups and exchanges start in a whole host of interesting ways. Perhaps a Cub Scout Leader met another Leader on holiday and would like to develop the link further between their Cub Scout Packs.

Alternatively, a link may result from some members in your County participating in an international event. They may have forged a friendship with a Troop from another country camping next to them, which can be developed into a link-up or exchange.

One thing is for sure: international events can help people to catch the bug for the international dimension! Don't underestimate the power of this and try and harness the energy that comes back to the County from those groups that have participated. Find out what friendships were made and if there is scope for the development of a more formal link-up or exchange, at Group, District or County level.

Link-ups can take the form of exchanging email, letters, videos, or even programme ideas between two groups. A link-up could come about as a result of contact with one of the specialist internationally minded Scout Fellowships operating in the United Kingdom. For up-to-date details, check out:

<http://www.scoutbase.org.uk/ps/inter/>

Another overlooked opportunity for link-ups and exchanges is through town-twinning. Often, local towns in your County will have good links with twinned towns in other countries. Importantly, such link-ups often attract local funding and this can be beneficial when organising a trip abroad to the twin town.

International gatherings

Many of the Leaders in your County will rightly identify that there are some high point international activities in the Scouting calendar. These include World Scout Jamborees and World Scout Moots that take place every four years.

However, in addition to that, there are many more large international events that take place throughout the year, and these are open to young people in your County too.

Jamborees and Moots are important. They are unique events that can have a dramatic effect on the lives of the participants. Places are always limited, so part of the ACC (I)'s role is to ensure that young people in the County are aware of the opportunities and that they are achievable.

Helping those young people that attend such world events to share their experiences with other young people is also important. There are ways in which this can be done, with *Join-in-Jamboree* programmes being organised to ensure that as wide an audience as possible can feel part of the magic that defines these world gatherings. In addition, events like *Jamboree on the Internet* (JOTI) and *Jamboree on the Air* (JOTA) provide an annual opportunity for others to have a flavour of Scouting's international reach.

In terms of co-ordination, exposing your County to such events can be very enriching, and can involve working in partnership with colleagues to help with fundraising, public relations and development. Be ready to involve others.

Residential experiences abroad

Encouraging members from your County to travel abroad and have an international experience is a central part of your role. There is, as you know already, a well defined *Visits Abroad* process for Leaders and older members planning a trip abroad.

However, Leaders and older members need to know that this process exists, and from time to time, it can be helpful to share information via



your County newsletter that *Visits Abroad* folders and other information can be obtained from you.

Furthermore, it can be helpful to bring those groups together that are in the planning stages of a trip abroad. It can also be helpful to the Leaders of the various groups to share experiences and from a practical point of view; it's a good use of your time too. It can also be helpful to invite others who have planned a residential experience abroad before, with the aim of demonstrating that the process is quite straightforward. If you can provide input from people that have been to the country or countries being visited, this can be an enormous confidence boost to those in the early planning stages.

You will be able to use your visits abroad statistics and reports, as well as close contact with the groups that have travelled to gauge the quality of these residential experiences.

Expeditions

International expeditions provide opportunities for adventure that can be difficult to have at home. This can be because of geography as well as any language and cultural differences. Travelling through another country is a great way for our young people to grow in understanding and expeditions (which don't have to be high adventure) should be encouraged. Expeditions may appeal more to Explorer Scouts and Scout Network members so close co-operation with colleagues can be helpful. It might be that, together, you determine that the time is right for a County expedition to a particular destination. This can be another good way of promoting the international dimension to a wider internal, as well as external, audience.

Explorer Belt is an attractive proposition for older Explorer Scouts and Scout Network members and should be promoted widely, particularly by working in partnership with your Assistant County Commissioner (Explorer Scouts) and County Scout Network Commissioner.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award as well as the Queen's Scout Award should be mentioned when promoting international expeditions.

