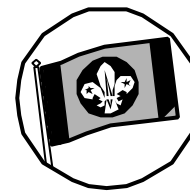


2.13 Developing Personal Skills in the Scout Fellowship



Introduction

The 'Game of Scouting' is all about helping young people to achieve their potential, or as the Aim of the Scout Association states "to promote 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."

However, in order to achieve this it is important that committed and well-trained adults guide our young people. Quoting again from the Association's Policy, Organisation and Rules, we see that "The Method of achieving the Aim... is by providing an enjoyable and attractive scheme of progressive training, based on the Scout Promise and Law and guided by adult Leadership."

This adult leadership also includes members of the Scout Fellowship whose job it is to provide Active Support to the progressive training scheme. Whilst the personal development of adults is not a fundamental Aim of the Scout Association, having well trained, confident and capable adult leadership is part of the fundamental Method of achieving the Aim. Every Scout Fellowship and every member of the Scout Fellowship should therefore ensure that they understand what skills are required to support Scouting.

What skills are needed?

Before deciding what personal skills need developing it is important that the needs of local Scouting are fully understood.

Whilst it is acceptable for members of the Scout Fellowship to acquire and develop new skills as part of the social side of their activities most development work will be directed towards meeting the needs of Scouting.

The role of the individual Scout Fellowship in providing Active Support will be agreed between the Scout Fellowship and their GSL or appropriate Commissioner (see factsheet "Agreeing the Remit of a Scout Fellowship").

Once this remit has been agreed the Scout Fellowship should decide what skills are needed to fulfill their role. For each item included in the Remit a subsequent list of required skills should be developed.

The full list can then be checked for duplicate skills that have been listed against more than one section and a final list of required skills agreed.

Where do we fall short?

Once a list of required skills has been drawn up the Scout Fellowship should perform some form of 'gap analysis' to determine where their personal or collective skills meet the needs, and what skills need to be developed.

This need not be a complicated process and can be as simple as writing a list of skills that are required and placing a tick or a cross against each skill. Some skills will have known standards against them and this makes it easier to judge whether or not the skills are up to the required standard - such as a member of the Scout Fellowship obtaining a BCU Two Star award for canoeing.

Other skills may have no agreed standard - such as being competent at tying and teaching pioneering lashings - and in this case the members will have to use their judgement when assessing their own competencies.

If there is any doubt about applicable national standards required for Scouting activities, or about the needs of local Scouting the advice of the Assistant Commissioner for Activities or Adult Support can always be sought (or the GSL or appropriate Commissioner who has agreed the remit).

Development plans

The gap analysis will highlight those areas where the Scout Fellowship needs to develop their own personal skills.

A plan then needs to be drawn up which details;

- The skills which need to be acquired (and to what standard)
- Who will acquire them (see below)
- When they will be acquired by (target dates)
- What the cost is likely to be

Note that some personal development will cost money simply because of the cost of training courses, which may be internal within Scouting or with external bodies. Even courses that are arranged within the Scout Fellowship itself will have a cost in terms, for example, transport costs, packed lunches etc. If the Scout Fellowship can not afford to cover these costs themselves money may be available from the GSL or appropriate Commissioner, on the basis of an 'investment' for the Scout Fellowship to fulfill its remit of local support.

How many people will need to develop particular skills depends upon the remit of the Scout Fellowship. Skills may be developed either collectively or individually, and for any skills which are seen as 'essential', it is useful to build up a 'pool' of competent members so you don't have to rely on one person doing everything!

Collective development

Some skills are best learned as a group - this may be both more economical and more fun. This is certainly useful where a Scout Fellowship has a very focused remit.

For example, a camp site service crew may have a broad need for many members to learn how to safely drive a tractor, or a Scout Fellowship that provides climbing and abseiling tuition may require a large number of members to complete a basic Mountain Leadership Training Board (MLTB) course.

Where the cost of acquiring and developing particular skills is minimal (for instance, when learning informally from a fellow Scouter) it is often a good idea to teach as many people as is practicable, although bear in mind that some skills are best taught on a one-to-one basis, so take the advice of your 'expert' as to the appropriate number to be trained.

Wherever possible, encourage cross-learning between members within the Scout Fellowship itself.

Individual development

In the case of a Scout Fellowship with a broad remit to cover many aspects of Active Support, there is a need for different members to develop differing personal skills. It may be more economical for a limited number of members to develop certain skills and this is often the case with relatively expensive external courses. Other skills may be of limited interest and there may only be a few members interested in learning a particular skill.

Wherever possible the interests of the individual members should be matched to the development of the required skills. In this instance useful personal development (such as completing a Duke of Edinburgh's Award) may fulfill the goals of the individual and the needs of local Scouting.

Skills directory

Once you have done the 'research', the individual and collective skills of the membership should be recorded for you to be able to see easily.

For further details see the factsheet "Building a Skills Directory for Your Scout Fellowship".