



# EURO SCOUT.DOC

## YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

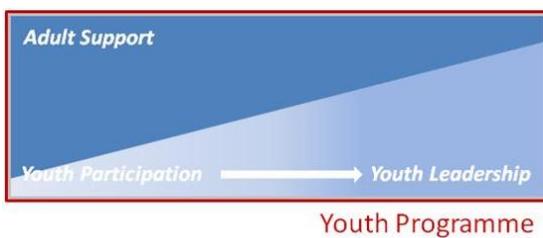
### IS YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PRESENT IN THE YOUTH PROGRAMME?

#### Youth Empowerment

In Scouting, youth empowerment is, simultaneously, the purpose (our Mission), the educational approach (our Method) and the aimed result (the individual development process of each scout that allows him or her to become an adult self-fulfilled as individual and playing a constructive role in society).

#### Youth Empowerment and youth programme

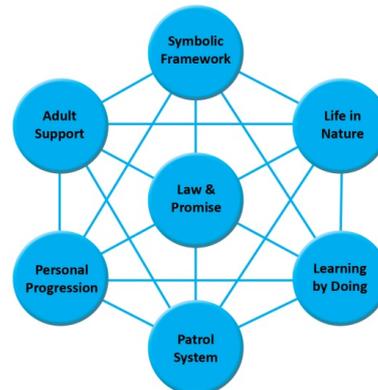
Through its youth programme, Scouting aims to contribute to young people's personal development (i.e. to empower young people for life), using Scout Method which promotes an increasing and upgrading youth involvement, since very early ages, with adult support decreasing and allowing a larger youth autonomy and responsibility, transforming youth participation into youth leadership.



#### Youth Empowerment within the Scout Method

The Scout Method comprises seven interrelated elements: Law & Promise, Symbolic Framework, Life in Nature, Learning by Doing, Patrol System, Personal Progression, and Adult Support.

Which of these seven elements fosters youth empowerment? Nevertheless one or other might seem more envisaged to produce personal empowerment, in reality young people's empowerment does not result from one individual element of the Scout Method, but from their magic combination within scout activities and life in scout units, as all the seven elements of Scout Method contain factors that enhance young people's autonomy and responsibility, as well as abilities and skills for (adult) life in the community.



In Scouting, youth involvement is the very essence of what we do. As a principle, "Youth Involvement" can be traced right back to the time of our founder Baden-Powell whose motto was "Ask the boy". Indeed were he alive today, Baden Powell would probably tell you that it was not he who founded Scouting but rather the young boys in his home country of England who inspired by BP's "Scouting for Boys" magazines, acting of their own initiative, organised themselves into Scout troops. So "Youth Involvement" is not something new. It is and always has been a core element of "The Scout Method" and is thus enshrined as such in our Constitution.

*John Lawlor*

*Youth Advisor, World Scout Committee*

## THE LAW AND THE PROMISE

The Scout Law is a personal code of living to guide the way each Scout lives his or her life, which states what good form is and what is expected of a scout. The Scout Law is at the heart of the Scout method, as it should be at the heart of each scout. Scout Promise is the way a scout engages him or herself to do his or her best to obey the Scout Law.

Law and Promise promotes young people's empowerment because:

- It introduces young people to ethical/behavioural code for life;
- It educates young people in the context of personal commitments and discipline;
- It incentivise young people to take an active citizenship in society;
- It promotes the progressive building of a values based personal development concept and behavioural ethos.



*"The boy is not governed by don't, but is led by do."*

**Robert Baden-Powell**

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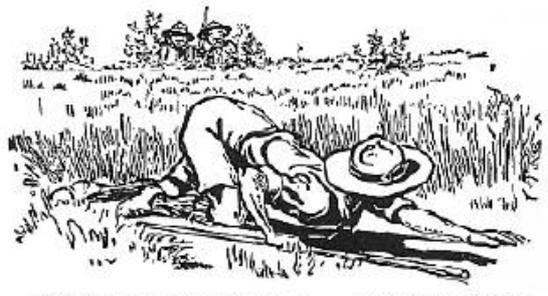
## THE SYMBOLIC FRAMEWORK

Scouting is not only very practical and tangible actions, but it involves also a huge imaginative world of symbols, characters, environments and rituals, where scouts breathe and flew in personal identifying experiences. All this theatrical mis-en-scène is fundamental to

integrate scouts into the game, to help build a belonging sentiment (esprit de corps), to communicate them serious and important messages and values.

Symbolic Framework promotes young people's empowerment because:

- It creates an appealing environment where scouts feel good, where things make sense, and promotes an increasing communitarian belonging sentiment, that progress along life and surpasses scouts' frontiers to the local and global community, fostering personal commitment;
- It allows important values and behavioural concepts to be informally communicated to young people and easily assimilated by them;
- It helps to understand the relationship and equilibrium between the individual and the community, developing a balanced personal identity within a solid and shared communitarian identity;
- It promotes, in a pictorial and easily understandable way, a common sense of expected actions and behaviours, and draws an intuitive path of personal development.



*"Boys can see adventure in a dirty old duck puddle, and if the Scoutmaster is a boys' man he can see it, too."*

**Robert Baden-Powell**

## LIFE IN NATURE

Nature is the natural and most appropriated spot where scouting games and activities take place. In Nature, scouts find an adventurous and challenging environment with challenges, which

they want to conquer, learning to overcome difficulties and to make their own decisions.

Life in Nature promotes young people's empowerment because:

- It is a challenging environment (to which sometimes young people are not used to) where young people can experiment simplicity and learn its value, and develop initiative and creativity in adapting to new situations;
- It is an adventurous environment where difficulties stimulates young people to think ahead and to develop their abilities and resilience;
- It is a safe environment (under scouting safety rules) where young people may start to experiment to take responsibility for themselves away from home, and to identify personal mental and physical limits (learning about their selves, their strengths and weaknesses, they learn to share with others and to lead others);
- It is the most appropriated way to learn to understand and how to use environment, developing a solid responsibility towards nature (to take care of everyone's heritage).



*"Scoutmasters need the capacity to enjoy the out-of-doors."*

**Robert Baden-Powell**

## LEARNING BY DOING

Scouting is mainly practical action, allowing young people to have many and diverse hands-on experiences. Learning, in Scouting, is not a passive accumulation of knowledge, but the result of personal experiences achieved through practical activities where each one has an active and relevant role.

Learning by Doing promotes young people's empowerment because:

- It is an informal and non-formal learning, where young people learn not only how things are or function, but also how they can manage or do them;
- It allows to make mistakes in a «controlled» environment, where new activities can be experienced («put in practice»), and to safely learn from them;
- It develops personal skills for life such as planning (make your own plan), autonomy (take ownership of what you do), evaluation (identifying own mistakes and strengths/weaknesses), among others;
- It is an opportunity where young people may discover their selves, their abilities and limitations, even their own vocation.



*"A week of camp life is worth six months of theoretical teaching in the meeting room."*

**Robert Baden-Powell**

## THE PATROL SYSTEM

*"The more responsibility the Scoutmaster gives his patrol leaders, the more they will respond."*

**Robert Baden-Powell**

According to the Patrol System, or Patrol Method, scouts are organised in small groups (about six to eight scouts), as this is the natural way boys work together. In a patrol, scouts develop themselves individually within a small community, where they discover to work with others under any circumstance (tenting, learning, cooking, and surviving together), including planning and evaluating together. In a patrol, while the patrol leader learns responsibility for others, all of them learn responsibility from their own incumbencies. The patrol serves as the character school for the individual.



*The Patrol System is the one essential feature in which Scout training differs from that of all other organizations, and where the System is properly applied, it is absolutely bound to bring success. It cannot help itself! The formation of the boys into Patrols of from six to eight and training them as separate units each under its own responsible leader is the key to a good Troop.*

**Robert Baden-Powell**

Patrol System promotes young people's empowerment because:

- It develops teamwork skills, as well as autonomy and responsibility, at early age (organization, taking responsibility in a group, shared goals, working together, communication with others, co-operation);
- It develops democratic and leadership values within a community, as they are part of the daily way of life within a patrol;
- It promotes self-esteem and personal confidence, as behaviour improves with increased expectations and responsibility;
- It enhances the peer to peer education, as the interaction within a patrol allow them not only to learn from and with others, but also to teach, mentor or coach each other.

*"The object of the patrol method is not so much having the Scoutmaster trouble as to give responsibility to the boy."*

**Robert Baden-Powell**

## PERSONAL PROGRESSION

Personal Progression of each scout is Scouting's main purpose, so a personal progressive scheme, that incentivizes and helps each scout to self-improve and develop him or herself, is always a key part of youth programme. Successive stages are proposed and challenge each scout to go through in order to reach the educational objectives for his or her each age group, regarding personal objectives of physical, intellectual, affective, social, spiritual, and character development.

Personal Progression promotes young people's empowerment because:

- It calls each scout to be the principal agent of his or her personal development, giving them the opportunities to make their own path;

- It involves young people in a healthy self-competition in order to realise their own potential, with medium or long-term rewards;
- It fosters young people to take the initiative in identifying weaknesses, creating their own goals, and learning and developing skills;
- It teaches young people to define individually fitting challenges, to overcome them and to recognise achievements, which can develop self-confidence and self-esteem.



*"In Scouting, a boy is encouraged to educate himself instead of being instructed."*

**Robert Baden-Powell**

## ADULT SUPPORT

Adult support is an essential part of the Scout Method, although we can never forget that Scouting is based in the self-governing of young people. So it should exist in a subsidiary bases to young people's initiatives and actions, and gradually decrease throughout the programme, giving more space for youth participation and leadership.

*"When you want a thing done, 'Don't do it yourself' is a good motto for Scoutmasters."*

**Robert Baden-Powell**

Adult Support promotes young people's empowerment because:

- It leaves young people the appropriate, regarding age, room of manoeuvre to lead their own activities and personal development;
- It helps, by providing a safe environment, young people to learn (try and error) and growth;
- It puts young people in direct and informal contact with real adult life experiences (closer to peer than parents) that may inspire them;
- It fosters self-confidence of young people by the acceptance of their ideas and the acknowledgement of their efforts.



*"I had stipulated that the position of Scoutmaster was to be neither that of a schoolmaster nor of a commander Officer, but rather that of an elder brother among his boys, not detached or above them individually, able to inspire their efforts and to suggest new diversions when his finger on their pulse told him the attraction of any present craze was wearing off."*

**Robert Baden-Powell**

## "ASK THE BOY"

"Ask the Boy" was the motto Baden-Powell found to express young people's protagonism and leadership in scouting. A simple sentence that comprises a complete guideline to adult support in scouting, as it clearly says that in scouting the protagonist is the boy, and leaders' role is to ask them, enquiring their needs, stimulating their capacities, promoting their development.

## THE MISSION OF SCOUTING IS TO EMPOWER YOUNG PEOPLE FOR LIFE...

As seen, everything scouting does is a contribution to young people's personal development. Thousands of good practice's examples could be found in scout units and patrols daily life, all over the world; in their meetings, in their camps, in their games and raids.

Wherever and whenever scouting is played, young people – boys and girls – are being empowered; not being externally shaped as diamonds, but growing interiorly, as powerful yeast was added to them, and revealed –each one – as the unique person he or she is.

*"The spirit is there in every boy; it has to be discovered and brought to light."*

**Robert Baden-Powell**

## CHALLENGES

Use this EuroScoutDoc to reflect on how you are implementing scouting in your unit, namely to check if each one of the scout method elements is implemented in a way that fosters young people's empowerment.

List all the activities your unit does and check which elements of the scout method are present in each one.

Which ones are more frequently present? And absent?

What you do better? What you need to improve? How to improve it?

Remember: in scouting, a good, complete and coherent application of the scout method is the right, and most successful, way to assure young people's empowerment.

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