

**WOSM 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leadership Initiative**  
**Discussion Paper on Leadership in Scouting**

31 May 2013

"The *mission* of Scouting is **to contribute to the education of young people**, through a value system based on the Scout Promise and Law, **to help build a better world** where people are self-fulfilled as individuals and play a constructive role in society".

This Discussion Paper has been produced by the WOSM *21<sup>st</sup> Century Leadership* working group in order to facilitate discussion in and among our NSOs and Regions on the nature and role of leadership development in the Youth Programme. The Paper is a central – though not the only – output of the ongoing *21<sup>st</sup> Century Leadership* initiative and, as such, forms part of the World Scout Committee's Triennial Plan for 2011-2014.

The paper calls for input from NSOs and individual thinkers on your understanding of leadership in your respective Youth Programmes and societies, views on how leadership development in the Youth Programme can be further intensified and what NSOs and WOSM (at regional and world level) should do to make that happen.

***Purpose of the Discussion Paper***

This Discussion Paper attempts to bring clarity on why leadership is relevant for our Movement, what leadership means in Scouting, how it is developed through the Youth Programme, and what Scout leaders and Programme developers can do to further intensify the development of leadership capacity in Scouts. The paper does *not* address the role of adults in Scouting as educators and leaders, but the role that leadership plays in the Youth Programme and in empowering young people with leadership skills to be able to play a constructive role in society.

The views presented in the Discussion Paper draw upon consultations with hundreds of Scouts, Scout leaders, NSOs and WOSM representatives in events across all Regions and thus do not represent those of the working group only. However, we now seek even wider input and reflections, both from our NSO constituency and individual thinkers, to confirm the proposed description of leadership development in the Youth Programme and to collect your thoughts on how leadership development in the Youth Programme could be improved. All input and feedback received will be processed with the aim of developing a formal position on leadership in Scouting by the World Scout Conference in Slovenia 2014, together with tools and support for developing our leadership education. It is, hence, worth noting that as the paper is aimed to facilitate discussion only, it does not, at this point, represent the official position of WOSM.

The final position on leadership in Scouting will not be a policy document per se, but rather a clarification of the natural role that leadership development holds within the Youth Programme already today, as a means for fulfilling Scouting's Mission. However, through this exercise we hope to help form a common basis and language for leadership development in Scouting, and hence stimulate exchange and further development of the Youth Programme throughout our Movement.

## ***Guidelines for reading and responding***

The Discussion Paper consists of an introduction, followed by the following chapters:

- 1. Leadership is relevant for Scouting as the means to empower individuals to play an active and valuable role in society.
- 2. Leadership is understood in Scouting as a collaborative process to make a change towards a shared goal.
- 3. Scouting works particularly well to develop leadership in young people because it empowers them with the relevant values and skills, and provides them with a training ground for practicing leadership through experiences.
- 4. To intensify leadership development in Scouting, NSOs should continuously renew their Youth Programme to ensure social relevance, increase emphasis on certain Programme elements that specifically support leadership development, etc.
- 5. In addition to Youth Programme, the leadership topic is relevant and should be leveraged in Adults in Scouting and External Relations & Communication.

Each chapter concludes with some reflection questions intended to initiate discussion on its content. Please reflect on the questions and the paper as a whole and submit your thoughts, together with any comments or questions that you may have via the *21<sup>st</sup> Century Leadership* Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/21stcl](http://www.facebook.com/21stcl)). The working group will facilitate discussion on the topic until June 23, 2013). Feedback representing NSO views may also be sent directly to Mr. John Lawlor of the World Scout Bureau ([jlawlor@scout.org](mailto:jlawlor@scout.org); deadline **August 25, 2013**), who is also the point of contact for any further inquiries regarding the WOSM *21<sup>st</sup> Century Leadership* Initiative.

## Introduction

"Look wide, beyond your immediate surroundings and limits, and you see things in their right proportion. Look above the level of things around you and see a higher aim and possibility to your work". B-P

Leadership is a process that entails the empowerment of self-fulfilled individuals to play an active and valuable role in society, something that Scouting has always been doing. Developing leadership capacity in young people is one of the central elements in fulfilling the Mission of Scouting,<sup>1</sup> and numerous societies have benefited from this contribution over the last hundred years.

Leadership could be seen from two different perspectives: as a specialized *role* of an individual, and as a shared influence *process*. The first approach distinguishes between the role of the 'leaders' (people with particular responsibilities and functions) and of the participants or 'followers'; but according to the second, any member of the social system may exhibit leadership at any time, and thus the distinction between leader and followers becomes less relevant because it is the leadership process as a whole that matters. It is this second perspective that is closer to what Scouting provides when it empowers individuals.

In the past it was thought that leadership was only found in "natural-born leaders", and that leadership skills could not be acquired. Now we know that, like many other human characteristics, leadership traits are both innate and acquired, to varying degrees depending on every person — as happens in sports. That is why Scouting knows that the personal characteristics that are relevant in leadership processes can be promoted, empowering individuals and encouraging them to make a change based on our shared values.

It has been said that "there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept". This discussion paper assumes that 'leadership' in Scouting is related with the two elements of our Movement's Purpose: to contribute to the development of young people *as individuals* and *as responsible citizens* (members of their local, national and international communities). Therefore, it discusses leadership as a process that brings together personal skills, values, aims, practices and personal interactions.

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. in 1965, the 20<sup>th</sup> World Scout Conference adopted Resolution (8/65) stating: "one of the paramount aims of the Scout Movement is to train boys to be useful and active citizens. It is incumbent on NSOs to see that their unit programme provides opportunities for Scouts to exercise leadership, train in service to others and to develop themselves as citizens".

## **1. Leadership is relevant for Scouting as the means to empower individuals to play an active and valuable role in society.**

"Try to leave the world better than you found it". B-P

*Scouting contributes to the education of young people, supporting them to become self-fulfilled individuals and active citizens*

- Scouting is an educational movement that contributes to the education of young people through a system of continuous, progressive self-education based upon a value system, which empowers individuals to achieve their full potential and become autonomous, supportive, responsible and committed people.
- Scouting's commitment to "help build a better world" (community involvement) is hence an indirect outcome of contributing to the education of youth. Thus, society benefits from the Scout Movement in two different ways: One is the education of young people; the other, their empowerment as responsible and committed citizens.

*As active citizens of society, Scouts draw upon their leadership capacity – among other elements – to help build a better world and play a valuable role in society*

- To play a constructive role in society according to the shared Scout values implies that individuals use their ability to envision how society should be and, as responsible citizens, contribute to make it a reality through their individual and collective action, thereby becoming change agents. The Scout Movement therefore does not set up an ideal of society; it only sets the framework of values for living together (Scout Law) that backs up the ideal of society for every Scout to envision it and contribute to creating it.
- Here, in order to help build a better world, from day-to-day individual action to improving the group, the community, the country, or the world, leadership is needed – the capacity to realize opportunities for positive change and to create commitment and action towards a shared goal through the action of responsible individuals.
- One of Scouting's distinctive features is that it uses leadership experiences as training grounds for the empowerment of young people to develop skills and capabilities **to be able to establish goals—based on shared values, to engage people, and to facilitate processes**. It starts with the work in small groups. At the same time, leadership is a fundamental means for Scouts to help build a better world, playing an active and valuable role at any level of society.

*Scouting's educational activities—including those to develop leadership – have to be updated to reflect the changing needs of society.*

- Since the beginning, the Scout Method has promoted the development of leadership capacity in young people, i.e. individual empowerment and the capacity to play an active role in society. Although this model has been constant, the specific way in which activities and experiences have been delivered has changed over time in order to make the acquired skills relevant in present-day societies.
- The evolution of activities and experiences can be found in most of the Movement's key elements: not only in regards to issues (for instance, community development in Africa today includes focus on HIV/AIDS awareness education), but also within our activities: what penpal relations once meant in order to promote international awareness is what today social media exchanges do following an international event.
- This is why NSOs should, over time, be able to customize activities and experiences adapted to their contexts to achieve the constant goal of empowering individuals and also developing leadership capacity.

### Reflection questions:

1. How would you evaluate the role of leadership in your Youth Programme? How does it resonate with the reflections above?
2. How up-to-date and relevant to today's society is the leadership development provided through your Youth Programme?
3. How does your NSO ensure that leadership in the Youth Programme remains updated to the changing needs of society?

## 2. Leadership is understood in Scouting as a collaborative process to make a change towards a shared goal

"The scout is active in *doing* good, not passive in *being* good". B-P

- We understand *leadership* as a process of establishing visions, engaging and empowering others to agree about what needs to be done, and collaboratively facilitating real changes and outcomes that address the shared purpose.

*In Scouting, leadership matters as a process.*

- Three main elements are at the core of leadership: a goal or purpose (*vision*) to achieve; one or more people (*leaders*) taking the responsibility to facilitate the process towards the goal; and empowered people (*participants*) committed to and working together towards the goal.
- In Scouting, each Scout plays a role in leadership because its relevance lies in the *nature of the vision*, the *human attributes and values* of the leader(s) and of the participants, and the *characteristics of the relation* between them — all of this being found at the core of the educational action of Scouting:
  - *The nature of the vision — inclusive values*: As a ground for each individual to commit to pursuing his/her ideal of society, Scouting provides a common framework: the inclusive values of living together contained in the Scout Law—peace, understanding among cultures and religions, non-discrimination, respect for nature, community involvement.
  - *The human attributes — commitment, integrity, and trust*: Scouting empowers young people as autonomous, supportive, responsible, and committed individuals, who are trustworthy and have initiative and a deep sense of integrity, with the ability to become change agents. These skills and values are fundamental for any leadership process for both leaders and participants.
  - *The characteristics of the relation — collaboration*: The leaders' and participants' roles are based on a mutually - placed confidence in working towards a shared purpose. Whereas in some literature 'participants' are called 'followers', that does not mean they are subordinated, just as 'leader' does not mean 'power-holder', because all participants need to take an active role in order to make the vision possible.
- The leadership experience in Scouting allows all members to play the *leader's role* depending on the situation, assuming the responsibility to head the process. Likewise, the leader role is conferred by the others through their confidence. That role could be interchangeable among the members of the group— all of them being *change agents* — based on who takes responsibility and subject to the confidence of the others.

*Breaking assumptions on leadership*

- *Leadership is not only about adults*. When talking about leadership within the Youth Program we are not talking about Scout leaders (educators), but about how to empower young people to develop leadership skills to be able to make a change.

- *Leadership is not focused on the leader.* In order to have an effective leadership process, both participants and leader(s) need to act as change agents, and the purpose is as important as the process and the protagonists.
- *Leadership is not about innate skills.* Like many other human characteristics, leadership traits are both innate and acquired. Leadership can be practiced in very different ways, which means that different people can learn, improve and develop leadership skills that match their own preferences.
- *Leadership is not related with giving orders.* Whereas some situations of emergency need fast decisions and capacity to command the situation, most leadership situations require instead the leader(s) to take responsibility and point out a goal for change and engaging other change agents in working together towards realizing the envisioned purpose.
- *Leadership is more than just communicating a vision.* To be able to identify personal and societal values and communicate them as a vision is key for leadership. But leadership is more than envisioning how the future could be: it requires skills for engaging people and facilitating the process of realizing the goals.
- *Leadership is more than just efficient management.* To be able to design, facilitate and implement a process is key for leadership. But leadership is more than the capacity to deal with processes and to organize people: it requires visualization of a vision for change and the active involvement of others towards it.
- *Leadership is not only about action.* It is also about reflection in order to provide meaning. This means to critically revise actions (reflection-in-action), trying to understand the *why* and the *what for* of them, which allows for personal self-development, to be sure about our own values and purposes, and to see our coherence with them.

#### Reflection questions:

4. How would you define the meaning of leadership in Scouting? How does your NSO define it?
5. What are your reflections on the definition presented above? Anything that surprises you? Where do you agree or disagree the most?
6. What personal Scouting experiences can you share where the role of the leader and the participants kept changing in the spirit of collaboration and mutual respect, as described above?

### **3. Scouting works particularly well to develop leadership in young people because it empowers them with relevant values and skills, and provides them with a training ground for practicing leadership through experiences.**

"Go forward with confidence. Paddle your own canoe!" B-P

*Scouting develops the leadership capacity of young people by providing skills and values through experiences and learning activities based on the Scout Method.*

- In Scouting, the young person's "educator" is primarily him- or herself. This is because each young member is considered a unique individual who has the potential to develop in all dimensions and to take responsibility for his or her own development — what we call "self-education".
- The Scout Method— a system comprising seven elements, which together constitute an integrated whole, makes that self-education *progressive*, through elements such as experiences, assuming responsibility, development of confidence in oneself, group life, trusting in others and particularly providing "capacities both to cooperate and to lead". All seven elements of the Scout Method play a role in developing leadership skills:

- *Law and Promise:* The fundamentals for any leadership purpose are provided by the code of living that the Scout law represents. Furthermore, the commitment to the Scout Law made by way of the Scout Promise builds integrity within the young person. For example, when organizing an action for community service, Scouts already know which values they share and what is expected of their behaviour.
- *Learning by doing:* The Movement's practical approach to education enables the assumption of skills and meaning through life experiences. When a Scout is in charge of organizing an activity, he/she is not "taught" leadership, rather he/she *experiences* it, assuming a collective responsibility and involving others towards the shared goal.
- *Team system:* Working and living in small teams generates a collaborative approach of engaging and shared leadership. In small groups the interchangeable roles of leaders and participants stand out - the former empowered by the later, the later as involved as the former.
- *Symbolic framework:* The sense of belonging to a collective and the reminder of the shared values are intensified through the common symbols and narratives. Wearing Scout uniform, for example, when carrying out community service helps Scouts remember their shared values.
- *Personal progression:* The increasing capacity to take responsibility and to be the key player of your own development is the result of individual progression. The same child who was hesitant as to what to do at his first Scout meeting, could later stand up and become the one promoting an event and making it happen.
- *Nature:* Nature is the setting where everything is possible, where the individual is empowered and the group multiplies the self-confidence and trust of its members. The decisions that Venture Scouts have to take when traversing a mountain are important for reaching the destination safely, but they also make all the participants main players of the activity.
- *Adult support:* Playing the role of a older brother/sister, adults in Scouting help to instil in young people sense of self-security, confidence, and trust. Unlike other environments where adults can sometimes be overprotective or can underestimate the potential of young people, in Scouting adults give support and encouragement to the experimentation and assumption of responsibilities on the part of the Scouts.

*Scouting is particularly good at developing leadership because it combines empowerment with the opportunity to practice and gain leadership experience in a safe learning environment.*

- Certainly, leadership development is found in many institutions and levels of each society. What makes leadership development work particularly well in Scouting is the combination of its double role:
  - It empowers young people to "paddle their own canoe", with confidence, self-security, skills and capabilities for life, teamwork, values for positive change and community involvement.
  - It provides young people with a safe training ground of trial and error to take responsibility and decisions, build projects, practice how to design and facilitate processes, and learn from the experiences how to create a better world both from individual and collaborative action.
- This is why Scouting education creates awareness of the importance of taking responsibility for action, to collaboratively involve other people in the process and to bear in mind the potential consequences of actions at all levels of life.

#### Reflection questions:

7. What, according to you, makes Scouting unique from a leadership development perspective and how do your views compare with the reflections above?
8. What personal example(s) can you share of learning leadership through practicing the Scout Method?

#### **4. To intensify leadership development in Scouting, NSOs should continuously renew their Youth Programme to ensure social relevance, increase emphasis on certain Programme elements that specifically support leadership development, etc.**

*Development of leadership skills and attitudes should be intensified through the continuous renewal of Youth Programme activities with a focus on leadership skills required in modern society.*

- The 32nd World Scout Conference adopted the principle of a World Programme Policy,<sup>2</sup> based on the idea that the Youth Programme is not something to be defined once and for all, but that it must be adapted to the needs and aspirations of the young people of each generation and in each country.
- The world of young people has dynamism of its own, focusing on diverse and constantly changing interests. The World Programme Policy states that each national association is not only free to develop its own specific activities, methods and educational objectives, but also should regularly revise its Programme, in order to adapt it to the evolving world of young people and of society as a whole. The Renewed Approach to Programme (RAP) is the approach that National Scout Organizations are advised to use in order to do that.
- The skills and attitudes required for successful leadership in modern society vary depending on societal characteristics and also change over time. To remain relevant, NSOs must continuously renew the leadership development elements of their Youth Programmes. This may be done through continuous monitoring of social trends and needs of young people, and the consequent renewal of Youth Programme activities.

*Specific Programme elements, such as learning by doing self-reflection that follows, may play a particular role in intensifying leadership development and should be more strongly emphasized in Youth Programme delivery.*

- The Movement's use of *learning by doing* as one of the fundamental elements of the Scout Method has ensured that Scouting does not become classroom education. Instead it provides room for experimentation and discovery where the individual Scout progressively gains self-confidence in a safe environment – one of the most notable strengths of Scouting in the area of leadership development.
- However, over-emphasis on the *doing* part sometimes means that the *learning* is left to chance. Regular and honest self-reflection (the process of critically thinking about our behaviours, attitudes, beliefs and values) is a key catalyst of experiential learning and widely recognized as a fundamental pre-requisite of effective leadership development. Reflection facilitates the formation of a secure understanding and sense of oneself, and hence provides the basis for building additional leadership capacity.

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<sup>2 2</sup> The Definition of Youth Programme in Scouting as mentioned in the World Programme Policy Adopted by the 32nd World Scout Conference, Paris, 1990 is: *Youth Programme is the totality of what young people do in Scouting (the activities), how it is done (the Scout method) and the reason why it is done (the purpose).* **Totality:** Youth Programme covers the complete span of a young person's experience in the Movement. It is a progressive process of education and personal development. **What:** Youth Programme encompasses all activities in which young people in Scouting take part. They must be attractive and challenging to young people. **How:** Youth Programme, fundamentally, uses the Scout method in carrying out its activities. **Why:** Youth Programme is the means of achieving the purpose of Scouting, based on its fundamental principles.



Reflection questions:

9. How is your society changing, and what does that mean for how leadership development in Scouting should adapt in order to remain relevant?
10. What specific programme elements (structured reflection, progressive personal challenges, interchanged leadership etc.) are most important for strengthening leadership education in your Youth Programme?
11. What are the actions that your NSO could take to intensify leadership development in the Youth Programme?
12. What support might you need from WOSM (regional or world level)?

**5. In addition to Youth Programme, the leadership topic is relevant to and should be leveraged as part of our work in the areas of Adults in Scouting and External Relations & Communication.**

"Expect much of the kids and they will surprise you with even more!" B-P

*The role of leadership in Adults in Scouting is twofold: it concerns adult leadership training as well as the role of adults in facilitating the activities of the Youth Programme.*

- Many Scout leader training courses could benefit from increased focus on leadership, in addition to management topics (project management, communications, planning activities etc.), in order to enrich the content and accelerate the development of the participants as leaders.
- The role of the adult in facilitating leadership development of young people as part of the Youth Programme is crucial, since the behaviour and involvement of the Scout leader during each activity will influence the experience and development of the Scouts. Hence, the Scout leader has a substantial influence on the leadership capacity development of the young people.

*Leadership in Scouting is also relevant to consider from an External Relations and Communication perspective*

- At this point in time, emphasis on leadership as an element of the Youth Programme may occasionally provide benefits in engaging with certain external audiences for demonstrating the relevance of the Movement for that particular audience and hence promoting the gathering of external support to our cause.
- It is important for National Scout Organizations to be aware of this opportunity and to carefully design the messages directed at their different target audiences (e.g. Scouts, parents, local community, government, business and academia, other NGOs) so as to draw maximum benefit from the opportunity without compromising the overall position and role of Scouting Movement in society.