



EURO SCOUT.Doc

Going National on Programme?

Introduction

Youth Programme is the “core business” of Scouting.

It is at local level that the most important action takes place; there, each young person is provided with a learning environment (activities, procedures, traditions, structures, atmosphere...) that enhances his/her full development.

The vast majority of adult leaders have a key role in providing the necessary conditions to set this educational environment. But some of them are called to serve the Movement at national (or district) level, their primary mission being to support the action at local level.

To work at national level implies performing different tasks, having specific competences and approaching Scouting from a different angle than the one at local level. Those who coordinate Youth Programme (YP) at national level, which we will call Commissioner, deal with this key-issue also from a different perspective but still have the opportunity to have a significant influence in the educational process provided by his/her Scout Association.

This document has been initially produced by Joao Armando Goncalves, former National Programme Commissioner of Corpo Nacional de Escutas (Portugal) and current member of the European Scout Committee and was further enriched by the contributions of Leslie Bonnici (National Programme Commissioner - The Scout Association of Malta) and Dominic Byrne (National Commissioner for Programme Development – Scouting Ireland).

Youth Programme

*“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)”*

This definition, from the World Programme Policy¹, shows very clearly that Youth Programme is far more than just Activities (the main attraction for young people, of course) or even Progressive Schemes (to which, sometimes, tend to be taken for).

Since we believe that the activities we do enable the development of a number of qualities in the young person, each association should have clear understanding and awareness of what one would like to be achieved by young people (in terms of Educational Objectives²) and then ensure that the appropriate and related activities happen. Also we must keep in mind that, as a non-formal educational movement, we have our own active method of (self) education: the Scout Method. Using it and all its components is halfway to achieving the educational impact for which we aim.



The Tasks within Youth Programme

If the most visible part of Youth Programme happens at local level, with activities being carried out by young people, other important tasks have also to be considered because they can constitute a solid foundation for having a relevant educational “product”, able to produce a significant impact in young people’s development.

We can then identify the following main tasks when working on Youth Programme:



The Fundamentals – these are the ones set for the entire World Organisation of the Scout Movement and comprise our purpose (Mission), principles and method. They enable us to be One Movement no matter the country or region we are operating in. The fundamentals, stated on the World Constitution, are set at **World level**

Programme development – each national Scout association designs and reviews its own Youth Programme taking into consideration the Fundamentals, the (changing) reality of the country and the needs and aspirations of the young people. This process is usually led by the **National level** but other levels can be involved along the way, according to the different phases of the work.



Programme dissemination – to design a wonderful programme at national level is not enough. A huge effort has to be made to “spread the word” through out the association, train people, mainly leaders, produce materials, etc. This is a task from the **National level** which can benefit from a close cooperation with the District level, if it exists, because it can provide very useful support in the delivery of the programme.

Programme implementation – this is when our educational “offer” is put into practice, at young people’s disposal, and it happens at **Local level**. It’s the ultimate reason for all the effort being put in the previous mentioned tasks and it is wise that a monitoring system is set in place, by the other levels, to understand when and which adjustments have to be made.

Fundamental Elements
Mission, Principles and Method

WORLD LEVEL

Needs and aspirations of young people

Girls and boys of a specific generation and culture

NATIONAL LEVEL

Programme Development
8 steps of RAP

Programme dissemination
Publications, training, support

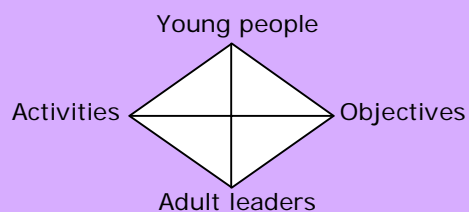
NATIONAL / REGIONAL LEVEL

Needs and aspirations of young people

Girls and boys within a local community

LOCAL LEVEL

Programme implementation



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 is achieved by:

- *involving them throughout their formative years in a non-formal educational process*
- *using a specific method that makes each individual the principal agent of his or her development as a self-reliant, supportive, responsible and committed person*
- *assisting them to establish a value system based upon spiritual, social and personal principles as expressed in the Promise and Law.*

From the fundamentals to programme implementation³

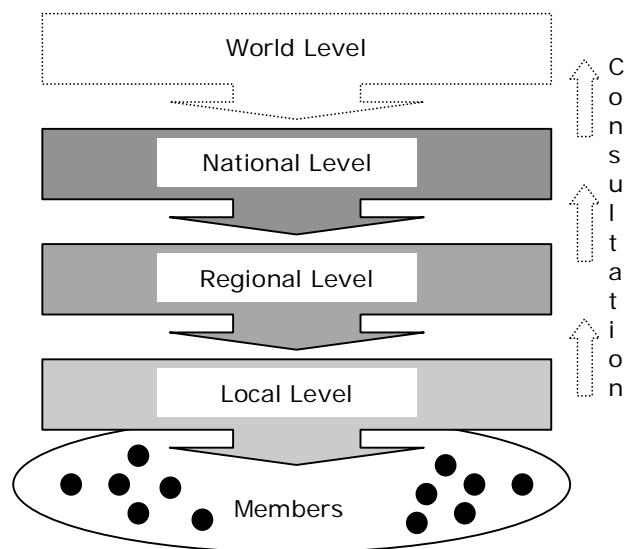


The role of the WSB – Central Office and the Regional Offices in the area of YP:

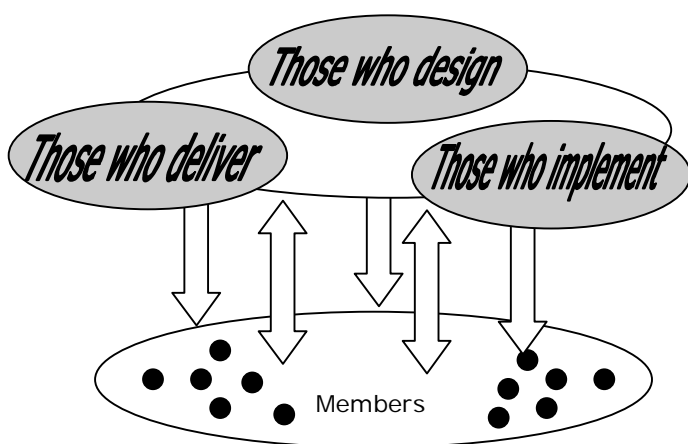
- *Provide services primarily directed to those responsible for the development of programme at national level.*
- *Publish relevant documentation in the field of YP.*
- *Provide direct assistance to national Scout associations on YP revision and updating.*
- *Carry out research related to YP.*
- *Initiate and promote seminars, workshops, etc. to facilitate cross fertilization of ideas, dissemination of new experiences and programme updating and evaluation.*

The Operational Approaches

From the above it's easy to see that the traditional approach of operation in a national association is a top-down one:



However, if we take into consideration the times we are living in (technology available, increasing mobility possibilities, information and communication flow) and the shifts on mindset and relations, there's no reason why we shouldn't consider a network approach when performing the Youth Programme tasks:



This will bring obvious advantages in terms of involvement of different actors, capacity of to change, accuracy and relevance of the programme, just to mention some.

Setting up the structure

Being aware of the different main tasks that have to be performed at national level in terms of Youth Programme, it's time to set up the necessary structures to ensure the best results in terms of leadership and support. It may be needed to coordinate the action of, or the connection to a number of teams and people, such as:

- 🌐 The Youth Programme national team
- 🌐 The commissioners/teams for each of the sections
- 🌐 Project managers
- 🌐 Task forces
- 🌐 The Youth Programme Committee (which can be an advisory body composed by different personalities)
- 🌐 The Adult Resources team

Different models can be adopted according to the human and financial resources available, the scope of the action and the type of relation you are prepared to establish.

For example you may want to choose between a more hierarchical model (fig. X) or another one in which you work more as a council (fig. Y), with each member having his/her own team.

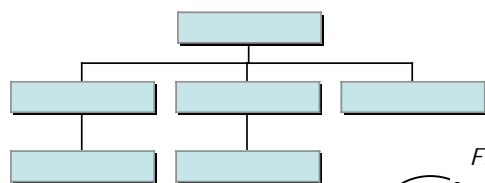


Fig. X

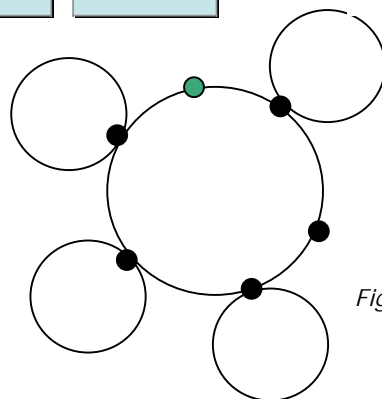


Fig. Y

Keep also in mind that, if you want to produce materials (books, manuals, posters, leaflets...), this takes a considerable time and effort; it can be wise to have a separate structure or specific teams to produce all the contents.

Being a YP National Commissioner

The World Programme Policy states that "In each association there should be a National Programme Commissioner supported by a National Programme Committee (or equivalent titles) charged with this responsibility as their main task and backed by the necessary financial and human resources".

As said before, being a National Programme Commissioner requires a set of specific skills and competences. He/she will no longer work with young boys and girls but mainly with adult people, being his/her own team, commissioners from the districts (if any), leaders in general, his/her colleagues and even members of other organisations in civil society.

For this reason, a set of competences is likely to be identified as important when performing this job.

This doesn't mean that the National Programme Commissioner has to be a "superhuman being" but only that he/she should take care of his/her personal development. The more he/she progresses, the better and more easily he/she will perform.

The exact Job Description of a National Programme Commissioner varies according to the association (its dimension, needs, resources available...). A suggestion from the World Programme Policy can be seen in the annex.

Personal competences	Functional competences
Empathy & perspective taking	Project management
Assertiveness	Managing teams
Active listening	Managing people & relations
Creativity	Planning & budgeting
Leadership	Organising and running meetings & events
Values clarification	Communication skills (also how to address in public...)
Autonomy	Evaluation, control & reporting methods
Interpersonal trust	Networking
Managing time	Change management
Decision-making skills	Scouting knowledge
...	...

Tips and Hints

Also when performing as National Programme Commissioner, the "learning by doing" approach is valid. The experience of solving the different problems and try different solutions will allow you to face challenges progressively in an easier way. Nevertheless, it might be useful to take some of these tips into consideration:

Gather your team and organise it

Most probably you won't work alone and that's good but a team is more than just a number of people together. There are a lot of documents and resources that can be useful in managing your team; it's worth it to devote some of your time to do it in the best possible way.



- Ensure **different backgrounds** - this will bring complementarity and diversity
- Inform about **what you expect** from them – it has to be more than "join the team"
- **Care about their qualification** and provide tools – most of the people need (and welcome) some training about working at national level. Also it's important to highlight how they can benefit from the experience
- **Delegate** – a good leader knows how to delegate and to support
- **Keep the spirit high** – it's very important to ensure a good team spirit; people will feel well and the performance will be better
- Use **diverse working methods** (meetings, msn, week-end workshops, reports, community...)
- Choose the best **internal organisation**

Plan your work and work your plan

To spend time in planning usually turns out to be a good investment; it will help you by saving time and resources.

- **Take «broader» plans into consideration** – you are working within the context of a bigger movement/organisation. Whatever you plan should be compatible with other broader plans
- **Plan long, medium and short term** – you should not want to do everything and at the same time. It's good to distribute the different initiatives along your term
- **Set clear objectives** – by doing that you are enabling to better measure the result of all your effort
- **Set some milestones and review moments** – you have to monitor if the plans you have made are turning into reality or not. Therefore, is important to define milestones and moments for internal review
- **Inform other people about your plans** – it will facilitate your work and make people understand what you plan to do



Keep communications channels open

A lot of the success of your work depends on communication. There are channels that have to be kept open and there are a number of tools that you can use according to the "public" you need to address.

Key relations

- Colleagues on the National Team/Board, members of own team
- Project managers and task forces leaders
- Regional/District Commissioners and adult leaders in general
- Peers from other associations and other international bodies (Regional or World Offices, Committees...)
- External organisations, institutions, media...

Choose your «public» and use adequate means to communicate:

- Meetings (in person or via Skype, for example)
- Website, mailing lists
- Newsletters, magazines
- Personalised contact system
- Phone, etc.

Organise the right events for the right people

There's no point in organising events just because it's a tradition or because you have to do something. Organise the ones that are relevant for your situation/plans and according to the public.

Choose the right ones: bare in mind the frequency, not too many or too few, and the appropriate type

Meet people's needs and yours too – you'll want to organise events that meet people's needs but also others that you feel adequate to convey a certain message

Make them worthwhile, relevant and useful – when returning home from one of your events, people have to feel that they take something with them, that the time was well spent. Creativity is needed!

Reference activities – events in which participants experience things in practice are a good way to convey a certain concept (e.g. a programme); learning by doing also works here.

Seek for excellence – pay attention to the details and try to do each event better than the previous one. Evaluation is a crucial tool.

Involve other people in the implementation

Besides the work done by your team, you can assign specific tasks or projects to other persons or teams. Even if you have to follow their work, it will expand the possibilities of what you can deliver.

Assign tasks and projects - will allow you to expand the scope of your work

Provide them with «qualification» opportunities - probably you know more people and resources; put them at their service

Make your plans their plans – share information and make them aware of the «full picture» in which their task is included

«Head-hunt» - in the different initiatives pay attention to the participants; try to spot some potential future collaborators.

Review and adjust

Even if you do all the planning to better help you in your work, it's important that you keep enough flexibility to adapt this according to results and feedback from your work and initiatives. This means that you should schedule regular reviews, use evaluation tools and flexible planning methods.

YP & AR Connection

Among the different key relations to establish, the one with the Adult Resources/Training Commissioner/Team should be very important and one of the closest.

The World Programme Policy, states clearly:
“Those responsible for Youth Programme and Adult Leader Training in a national Scout association should, together:

- *analyse the role of leaders,*
- *identify their training and personal development needs,*
- *evaluate the effectiveness of that personal development in terms of its impact on the implementation of the Youth Programme”*

The 37th World Scout Conference approved a resolution which recognises this close link and encourages associations to establish structures that bring YP and AR people together.

Resolution 10/05 Educational Methods Structures
The Conference

- *recognising that it is not possible to develop the youth programme without looking at the consequences for the management of adult resources (e.g. recruiting, supporting, training and monitoring adult leaders) and also that it is not possible to manage adult resources independently of the youth programme*

Urges National Scout Organizations to review or design a structure that allows an integrated approach to youth programme and adult resources, for example by creating a committee or a body that oversees and co-ordinates the work of the youth programme and adult resources departments.

Conclusion

Being a National Programme Commissioner is quite a responsibility but also a very attractive challenge because you are dealing with the “core business” of Scouting and your action can really make a difference.

It is worth building from other people's and your own experiences, explore new ways, seek new knowledge, be creative, try different solutions and make everything to perform in the best possible way. This will not only ease your task but allow you to maximize the scope and impact of your action, therefore, better supporting the education of young Scouts in your association.

¹ Youth Programme: World Programme Policy, WOSM, 1992

² For clarification on these terms and of a process of designing a programme see RAP – Renewed Approach to Programme, WOSM

³ RAP_Toolbox_eBook, WOSM

ANNEX

The National Programme Commissioner - Job description (World Programme Policy)

Qualifications

The suggested qualifications for appointment as National Programme Commissioner are as follows:

- Knowledge of how children and adolescents learn and of the needs and aspirations of young people.
- Creativity skills.
- Skills necessary to motivate, coordinate and manage others.
- Ability to work in harmony with others and to influence decisions.
- Strong Scouting background, with experience and/or training in the field of Youth Programme development

Duties

The duties of the National Programme Commissioner should include:

- Develop a National Programme Policy consistent with World Programme Policy
- Planning and coordinating at national level all aspects of Youth Programme in the NSA
- Creating an awareness among leaders at all levels of the association of what that YP is and of its importance
- Regularly evaluating and further developing the YP to meet the changing needs of young people in their society
- Producing handbooks for youth members and adult leaders in all age sections
- Ensuring that the programme is delivered at a satisfactory quality level in each local unit of the association
- Integrating specialized dimensions such as environmental education, community involvement, Scouting with handicapped, into the YP
- Leadership of the National Programme Committee and responsibility for the training and development of its members
- Strengthening the unity in Scouting through the Programme by close cooperation with other National Programme Commissioners and World Scout Bureau

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