

# INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Presented by the Adult Resources Service  
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In this issue No. 5 of Information Exchange, the European Region is sharing its experience in disseminating and implementing the Adult Resources Policy. Damian O'CONNOR (Ireland) and Kjeld JESPERSEN (European Office) have been the main contributors to this issue.

## The European Scout Region

The European Scout Region consists of 36 countries with a total of 64 Scout associations. These associations have a membership of nearly 2 million Scouts. Out of a total youth population of 65 million in Europe, one out of every 35 young people is a Scout.

The work over the last 10 years has been concentrated on the geographical growth of the region. Following the fall of the communist regimes in central and eastern Europe and the break up of Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, the European Scout Region grew with 15 new countries. Several of these countries were the founding members of the World Organization of the Scout Movement. In some countries knowledge and tradition of Scouting had been maintained throughout the period during which the Movement had been banned, but others totally lost these roots.

A lot of effort has been put by the European Scout Region to re-establish Scouting in these countries. So far all countries but three are members of WOSM, and the Scout associations are growing stronger and stronger.

The remaining countries are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bulgaria. In all three countries there are strong Scout associations and we hope to welcome them in the Scouting family soon.

When the Asia-Pacific Region in the last issue mentioned the diversity in size of the associations in the region, the challenge in the European Region is very much to bridge the diversity in experience. Some associations have had 90 years of experience while others have started or restarted five years ago.

However, when it comes to implementing the Adults in Scouting and the Youth Programme policy it is sometimes an advantage not to have long established traditions in these fields. When the basic infrastructure challenges have been solved there is a strong desire amongst new associations to be in the fore front when it comes to implementing these policies.

When the need for new adult resources occurs the Adults in Scouting policy has shown to be a very strong tool, especially in the recruitment and introduction phase. These experiences need to be shared with other associations in Europe in order to facilitate the implementation.

It may happen that the new associations will be the "locomotives" of Europe when it comes to implementing Adults in Scouting or the Youth Programme policy.

## "ADULTS IN SCOUTING" IN EUROPE

### The Review Process

When people look at the Adults in Scouting model they often concentrate on recruitment or mutual agreement, as they feel that these are the most appropriate places to start. Indeed this may be the case in a new association which is in the process of recruiting many adults for Scouting.

However, many adults already have a function in a Scout association and it

may therefore be more important to focus on how to deal with them. It is quite obvious that you do not have to recruit them all again and it is more likely that you would first use the adults in Scouting model to carry out the review process. This review process will then provide a new starting point to identify the needs of future functions to be carried out in Scouting.

### Why is review important?

You are strongly encouraged to take the opportunity to review the performance of individuals or indeed of a team of adults and we are confident that this will prove very worthwhile. There is no question that the review process is a most important part of the overall model, one that will provide opportunities for both the development of Scouting and of the individual adult or team.

Providing an opportunity to sit and meet with another adult shows that you care. It tells people that you care about the role they are playing and that you also care about them as individual. These of course will mainly be unit leaders, but could indeed be other adults, such as, for example, a commissioner or a group leader.

If we pause for a moment to reflect on the many hundreds of Scouts who have left the Movement because "they just kept playing the same games and doing the same thing over and over again", this alone should encourage us to review our performance and the standard of Scouting that is provided to young people.

Clearly if you do not review, you will never know how well you are doing or what has gone well and what areas need improvement. Scouts do this for us all the time and they use their feet!

(continue overleaf)

These show two sides of the same case: if Scouting cannot attract adults of the appropriate quality, we cannot expect Scout associations to implement a youth programme that meets the needs of young people in a society and help them reach their full potential.

What kind of review?

To any one who has read about the adults in Scouting model there are different outcomes of the review process. In principle there are two different kinds of review: one is ongoing and the other one should be conducted at the end of a term of office. The ongoing review will help identify new needs for training or support. It is extremely important that this ongoing review is built into the association's work so that it becomes current practice. The other review - at the end of a term of office - may lead to three outcomes, which are known to some as the 3 Rs, that is: renewal, reassignment or retirement.

In most cases renewing the position that someone currently holds or reassigning the person to a new position will be the "normal" outcome. Both options of course involve agreeing on new challenges and development actions. It is, however, important to be prepared to use and take the best course of action. There is naturally the option that someone should retire and this may come as a mutually agreed decision, but it will not always be so.

To sum up, all options must be considered and used with respect and understanding. Of course, it goes without saying that all should also be implemented in a caring manner that is respectful of the individual. So whenever the review is ongoing or conducted at the end of a term of office, both must be conducted in the best Scouting spirit possible.

The "team" concept

Scouting is based on the team concept, which is first experienced when a young person joins Scouting in a Cub Scout six, continues in a Scout patrol and ends up in the Rover crew. But it is not only true for young people. All adults in Scouting will be members of a team to carry out their tasks. This could be the team of leaders of a Scout

troop, a team of commissioners at district level or a task force at national level. The adult team is vitally important to the success of Scouting. It is with this in mind that we encourage you to ensure that the review process is used within your teams. There is of course a need to meet and discuss matters on a one-to-one basis, but it is equally important to ensure that all the team members have a clear understanding of what they are trying to achieve. With this in mind it would be useful, before or after the one-to-one reviews, to have a team meeting to review its performance, successes and areas for improvement. It will be a great opportunity for the team to agree on objectives for the next project or a new period of time. Based on these objectives each member could agree to take responsibility for a particular part or activity. This would naturally be included among their individual objectives or in their development action plan.

Potential problems in conducting a review

One major problem with one-to-one and team reviews is that there is no point trying to pretend that it will be easy and without any problems! However, be sure that the single fact of taking time to show other adults that you care will be very much appreciated and worthwhile. This is about making the adults and teams stay together longer, enjoy being part of a team and providing young people with high-quality and enjoyable Scouting.

Another difficulty is that some people may consider the review as a top-down process, whereas it is also an opportunity for upward review! There will be a need for training in reviewing, giving and receiving feedback, but if we all do it, it will become the norm and we will all see the benefits. People will stay longer in Scouting when someone cares about how they felt or what they would like to do and takes appropriate action.

So what do you do now?

Firstly you should take time to reflect and consider the team or individual you work with by answering the following questions:

- What is the purpose of the team?

- How long have all the members been together?
- How well have they worked together?
- Do all members enjoy being part of this team?
- Have all the members played their part?
- Does anyone want to try something new?
- How can we improve?
- What part have I played in the success or failure of the team?

These are only a few questions to get you thinking. The real work starts when you break the news to other members that you believe you should all review the success of the team.

Conclusion

Careful preparation will help you overcome many difficulties. We suggest that you be honest with the team, explain why you are suggesting the review; perhaps give them a copy of this document, to show them what you are talking about. Discuss the idea with the team and arrange to meet one day or evening to carry out the team review.

Maybe you have heard the 5Ps expression: Proper Planning Prevent Possible Problems. So the message is PLAN what you will review and agree on how it will be done. Remember to include some social side to the review, such as going for a meal afterwards or having a barbecue or a party. Remember the saying: the team that plays together stays together!

For more information on World Scouting in general and Adults in Scouting in particular, visit the Internet pages of the World Organization of the Scout Movement at: [www.scout.org](http://www.scout.org) These are being updated every week or so. Also visit the pages of the European Scout Region: [www.scout.org/europe](http://www.scout.org/europe)

In Europe a "mailing list" for Adults in Scouting has just been started. Its purpose is to create a forum, to discuss the development and implementation of Adults in Scouting. Contact Kjeld Jespersen <[kjespersen@ibm.net](mailto:kjespersen@ibm.net)> for more information.