

Keeping Children Safe from Harm – a global responsibility

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Summary

The Convention on the Rights of the Child sets out clearly the responsibilities to protect children from all forms of abuse, however making this a reality in the lives of all children, remains a global challenge.

The paper presents a practical example of how Scouting is rising to the challenge of keeping children safe from harm also through the provision of open and distance learning. An e-learning on keeping Scouts safe from harm for 12.700 volunteer leaders at the World Scout Jamboree 2011 is one part of an extensive engagement in global development. The course, delivered in five languages, provides adults with knowledge and opportunities to reflect on the attitudes and values which are a part of protecting children from all forms of abuse. The preliminary results show an increase awareness of these questions.

Pedagogically this learning supports different learning styles with the combination of media, cases and interactive exercises with individuals having a choice of pace and place of delivery.

It also seems to be possible to create a self-paced and individual training with a level of interaction and pedagogical layout enough for the participants to absorb the content and aim of a difficult subject. This experience is used in further development within both Scouting and other NGOs.

Keywords:

ODL, Convention on the Rights of the Child, Non Governmental Organization, global

Scouting - a global youth Movement

Scouting is a global youth Movement with over 30 million members in 161 countries around the world. Scouting started in 1907 when Robert Baden-Powell, then a retired Lieutenant General from the British Army, held an experimental camp on Brownsea Island off the south coast of England.

This camp brought together 20 boys from different social backgrounds with the aim to help the adolescents to develop skills and instill values that would be useful for their lives and would be taken into their adult lives; offering them education in a non-formal setting. The fundamentals on which Scouting is based are duty to Self, Others and God. The context of life in Great Britain at this time was a great deal of poverty and unemployment and Baden-Powell saw the potential to influence the lives of individuals as a means to changing society.

Following his experimental camp, Baden-Powell published his ideas in a series of regular articles 'Scouting for Boys'. The original intention was a methodology to be used by existing clubs but young people came together to use the methodology and Scouting was established.

Scouting expanded rapidly and it now exists in all parts of the world extending across many religions, customs and cultures. Adult training was seen

by Baden-Powell as critical to ensure quality Scouting for youth members.

Scouting today remains true to the original fundamental principles on which Scouting was founded. The methodology, while further developed, still retains the key elements which were proposed by the Founder. The Scout Method involves:

- voluntarily living by the values in the Scout Law and Promise
- learning by doing
- experiencing life in small groups
- self-directed learning focusing on personal progression
- guided by adult leaders (Scouts and leaders working in partnership)
- activities in nature
- a symbolic framework (WOSM, 1998)

The relationship between youth members and adult leaders proposed by Baden-Powell and the focus on leader training have been key pillars that help Scouting retain its attractiveness to young people and retain quality and consistency in the Movement.

Scouting became an international Movement in 1920, with the establishment of an International Conference as the governing body of the Movement.

Scouting throughout its history has striven to maintain its ethos and values in response to changes in society which can be seen in the Conference Resolutions passed since 1920 by the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM). One example, among others, is the work carried out about the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child – a focus on child protection

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, sets out the rights that must be realized for children to develop their full potential, free from hunger and want, neglect and abuse. The near-universal ratification of the Convention reflects a global commitment to the principles of children's rights.

Scouting as early as 1990, at the World Scout Conference in Paris, expressed its support for the Convention on the Rights of the Child through (Conference Resolution 16/90):

- inviting National Scout Organizations (NSOs) to encourage their governments to adopt the Convention
- requesting NSOs to find a way to make the Convention familiar to its leadership and
- using the articles of the Convention as a basis in understanding the needs of children and young people.

In partnership with UNICEF a training pack was developed and distributed to all Scout associations. Seminars were also run at regional level resulting in the development of materials for leaders and adults to educate them on the Convention of the Rights of the Child and introduce child right's

education in Scouting.

During the 1990s the need to protect children rose higher in the agenda of many countries as a result of high profile cases of abuse and paedophilia. A small number of Scout associations developed policies, procedures and practices as their response to ensure that all Scouts were provided with a safe passage through the Movement.

A survey of Scout associations in 2000 however revealed that only a small number (14%) had effectively risen to the challenge to develop and implement policies and procedures to ensure that Scouts were free from abuse:

- 22 Scout associations have some policies and procedures in place to protect members of the association from sexual and other forms of abuse.
- 26 Scout associations have some plans in place to deal with problems when they arise, including publicity.
- 16 Scout associations have published some materials on this topic.
- 16 Scout associations work with other youth organizations and government officials on this topic.

As a response to this, a Conference Resolution 07/02 on Keeping Scouts Safe from Harm was adopted at the World Scout Conference in 2002. This resolution recognised the growing awareness in public life of the need to keep children safe from harm, the responsibility to protect children from all forms of abuse and the need for Scouting to provide a 'safe-passage' for its members, respecting their integrity and their right to develop in a non-constraining environment. It urged Scout associations to adopt and implement policies and procedures to keep Scouts safe from harm, recognising the need for these to be within the framework of the legal requirements within each member country.

The resolution also recognised the need for adult training on this topic and that developing self-confidence and self-esteem in children and their right to express themselves will protect them from being victims of abuse. It also stressed the need for those responsible for managing Scout associations to implement policies and procedures for intervention, including risk management, incident management and public relations.

This resolution resulted in some new initiatives, particularly at regional level with two regional resources produced in the African and European Scout Regions to further implement policies, procedures and practices in Scout associations.

Child Protection – a global responsibility

The protection of children from all forms of abuse is a responsibility for all societies and the speed and extent of the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by governments around the world indicates the support for this. However, the actual situation for children in all countries of the world indicates that there is still a long way to go before all children are protected from

abuse.

In a recent speech made by Dr Susan Bissell, Chief of Child Protection for UNICEF, at the World Scout Jamboree (Sweden 2011), she revealed that

- roughly 220 million children under the age of 5 are alive right now, in the 'global South' who don't have a birth certificate. These children don't have an identity and it is very difficult to protect them from abuse.
- 13 countries listed by the Security Council that are at war where children are engaged as combatants, cooks, porters, and servants
- more than half the children in the world in detention have neither been tried nor pre-sentenced
- an estimated 115 million children worldwide are engaged in hazardous forms of child labour

The international community and individual governments can pass legislation, but until there is, within the general population, knowledge of what constitutes abuse, a commitment to stop child abuse in all parts of society and the skill set to intervene when abuse occurs, then legislation, or keeping the knowledge, skills and attitudes within a group of experts within society is likely to limit the improvement of the situation for children who are subject to abuse if this is the only strategy for action.

The engagement of groups within civil society e.g. Scouting, sports groups, faith communities and the provision of accessible training, through e-learning, has the potential to engage more people action to keep children safe from harm, through advocacy, action and positive interventions when young people are subject to abuse.

UNICEF has been working to protect children from abuse for many years and in 2002 it adopted a framework for child protection which recognises the multifaceted approach that is needed to protect children from abuse. (UNICEF 2008) The framework is set out below:

The Protective Environment Framework

1. *Governmental commitment to fulfilling protection rights:*
2. *Legislation and enforcement:*
3. *Attitudes, traditions, customs, behaviour and practices:*
4. *Open discussion, including the engagement of media and civil society:*
5. *Children's life skills, knowledge and participation:*
6. *Capacity of those in contact with the child:*
7. *Basic and Targeted Services:*
8. *Monitoring and oversight:*

In addition UNICEF has recently adopted a global strategy for its work on child protection which includes the need for broad-based partnerships that can leverage gains in child protection.

Scouting, through its work on child protection is already contributing to sections 3, 4, and 6 above and with more extensive availability of information and training through the e-learning package it can contribute to this global agenda in more countries around the world.

There is a synergy between UNICEF's strategy around Child Protection and WOSM efforts in this area. There is a big potential for Scouting to contribute to the overall effort in the area of child protection and Scouting will have the opportunity to further work in partnership with UNICEF under this framework.

Through membership of Scouting, young people develop skills, self-confidence and self-esteem which will also decrease the likelihood of them being victims of abuse. A recent declaration at the World Scout Conference in Brazil (2011), requested Scout associations to include child-rights education in Scouting which will further help young people to resist potential abuse.

Scouting also provides some direct support to young people who are the victims of abuse and many of these projects are well established and have been running for many years, often with some extraordinary results.

In Kenya, offering Scouting to street children has resulted in individuals turning around their lives and becoming useful citizens of the country. Since 1993, Kenya Scouts Association has been actively engaged in this project and currently there are 3500 street children across 50 locations in the country engaged in rehabilitation process through Scouting. After rehabilitation, children are lead to schools in Kenya where primary education is free, older children are trained on vocational skills and in most cases help is provided for family connections to be re-established.

In Egypt, Scouting has been running a project for working children, offering them education, health care, opportunities for recreation and providing them and their employers with workshops on safety.

In Pakistan, Scouting has been working with girls who do not attend school to help them to learn to read. Every year, Pakistan Scouts Association celebrates the World Day Against Child Labour by involving their Scouts in an advocacy campaign in association with the International Labour Organization's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour.

Training and e-learning on Child Protection in Scouting

Adult training has been a feature of Scouting since its inception and alongside the introduction of new topics in training, Scouting has also embraced developments in adult learning, including e-learning, particularly in Scout

associations with a large Scout population and well developed internet access.

In relation to training in the area of child protection, the training developed by Scout associations has focused on three distinct target groups

- managers who have responsibility for implementing policies and procedures on Keeping Scouts Safe from Harm,
- adults (leaders and parents) who have direct contact with young people,
- Scouts themselves.

The Boy Scouts of America is the Scout Association with the most comprehensive approach to child protection as it has training and information in a number of different formats for all three target groups mentioned above. The approach includes: e-learning on Youth Protection targeted at all adults in Scouting and the parents of Scouts, videos with age-appropriate materials that can be shown to Scouts of all age-ranges (8 years to 20 years), booklets and general information. Their policy, procedures and guidelines have been made available on the web-site:

<http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/HealthandSafety/GSS/gss01.aspx>

Subsequently, Scouting Ireland and the Swedish Guide and Scout Council have introduced e-learning as part of their child protection training in the last decade.

In relation to child protection training, the need to reach all adults involved in an association makes e-learning a very suitable medium, as in the delivery of the training:

- the quality of the message is ensured and not reliant on the ability/effectiveness of a trainer,
- the flexibility to take the training enables parents and leaders with very different life-styles to arrange a time and place that is suitable for each individual,
- there can be an assessment of the learning by each trainee and,
- a database and record of the people that have accessed the training can be built into the system.

The need to encourage all Scout associations to work on child protection received further impetus from WOSM and in 2005 a small work group was identified to take this forward. It was decided that the World Scout Jamboree in the United Kingdom (UK) in July-August 2007 could be a useful focus for this work as child protection training would be mandatory for all adults working on the event based on the Scout Association (UK) own emphasis and national regulations for large gathering of children and youth. The training package developed by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, UK (NSPCC) was the chosen package for the management team and all adults received an additional face-to-face training on child protection.

However, there was limited take up of the e-learning package at the World Scout Jamboree in 2007, mostly due to the timing of the delivery of the training and the languages in which the training was available (English and

French only).

Large Scout events like the Jamborees present opportunities to extend and experiment new initiatives in Scouting to a larger audience and the World Scout Jamboree, which is the flagship event in World Scouting, brings together Scouts and adults from the vast majority of the 161 member countries. It is therefore, in addition to being a significant event for the people present, an opportunity to introduce new ideas and tools that will support the development of Scouting.

Around the same time the Swedish Scout and Guide Council had developed an e-learning package in Swedish language for their national Jamboree which was also held in the year 2007. By this time, it was compulsory for Scout leaders in Sweden to complete the more generic e-learning Trygga Möten (also in Swedish) before they could take up any leadership position in Scouting.

As a follow up from the World Scout Jamboree in United Kingdom, in addition to the provision of e-learning for the next edition of the event two other initiatives were identified to extend the scope of the work within World Scouting.

1. The Swedish Scout and Guide Council submitted an application to the Childhood Foundation to hold an International Conference Seminar on Keeping Children Safe From Harm (Child Protection) in the backdrop of the next World Scout Jamboree to be held in Sweden. This Conference was to reach out to 250 high profile participants (those in decision making positions) in Scouting and other Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations working with children and youth.
2. The World Scout Bureau applied for funding to develop a generic e-learning package, taking the key messages on Keeping Scouts Safe From Harm (Child Protection within Scouting) and making them available to all adults in Scouting. This reach of this e-learning was targeted at the 4 million plus adult members supporting the Scout Movement.

Both these initiatives received funding and have been significant in positioning Scouting as a Youth Movement that has a global commitment to the cause of Keeping Scouts Safe from Harm Child Protection.

E-learning at the 22nd World Scout Jamboree, Sweden 2011

Prior to the World Scout Jamboree 2011 a decision was made by the organizers, The Swedish Guide and Scout Council, to further develop the possibility of e-learning in the field of Keeping Scouts Safe from Harm.

Developing e-learning on child protection for the World Scout Jamboree in Sweden, targeting 8,000 adults from 161 countries, posed a number of challenges:

1. **Language** – while English and French are the two official languages of WOSM, for many leaders these languages are not their first language. To make the package as accessible as possible, the new e-learning was

developed in the five working languages of WOSM: English, French, Arabic, Russian and Spanish; the language was kept as simple as possible and voiceovers were included for all languages.

2. **Culture** – there was awareness that for many adults attending the Jamboree, this would be a sensitive topic and maybe one which cannot be discussed openly in their own culture. It was important therefore to situate this within Scouting and the shared values of Scouting to help all adults relate to the topic and content of the training.
3. **Prior learning** - many adults from Scout associations that have well developed training will have covered much of the content in training at national level. It was therefore important to place it in an international event setting as the Jamboree may be a new experience for many adults.

The theoretical framework

The training was developed with the prerequisite of a self-paced delivered training with limited resources of individual feedback which there for had to be provided within the training package. Within these limitations the training was developed on the bases of certain pedagogical ideas.

The training supports different learning styles with the combination of media, cases and interactive exercises with individuals having a choice of pace and place of delivery. The main pedagogical theories the course is inspired by can be identified as both the constructivist learning theory and experimental learning.

The participant is encouraged to construct knowledge and one aspect is to create a positive context of learning and the relevance of the content. The latter is closely connected to the participation in an upcoming event and the content of the e-learning, especially through the cases which are placed in that context of Scouting and a Camp/gathering framework. This is also valid for the principle of incorporation of the reason for learning into the learning experience itself and also to embed the learning in realistic and relevant contexts. The course is self-paced and it is possible to return and continue the training at a later point in time. The participants are encouraged to complete the course within two weeks for the benefit of learning but also to return to the course prior to the event for a revision and to re-reflect on the content. The learning environment gives feedback to the participant of the progress and what parts are completed. This supports the principle of self-regulation by the learner and to take one's own responsibility. The parts that ask reflective questions is part of the idea to encourage self-awareness in the knowledge construction process. (Honebein, 1996)

The different parts of the course; reading, audio, interactive exercises, reflective questions and the final test tries to support the all parts of the Experiential Learning Cycle of Kolb (Kolb, 1984) - The Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization and Active Experimentation. The cases and the questions related to previous experience is to help change and generate new experiences, observation and reflection are encouraged both through the reading and interactive questions. The participants are urged to

reflect and start the abstract conceptualization in the various parts of the e-learning, the fourth part of the cycle, the Active Experimentation is included in the 'cases' which could refer to situations during the event, the 'how would you react' questions as well as the reference to their home environment and activities. The aim is to have a clear connection between the content of the course and the practice both during the event and in their local contexts.

Another aspect taken into consideration during the layout process of the training is the transactional distance built into the course. According to Moore (1993) the structure and dialogue are important factors to take into consideration. Due to the number of expected participants, language options and other available recourses the choice was made to make the course individual and self-paced. Built in throughout the course were different ways of feedback to facilitate some sort of dialogue with the participants. The participant still had the choice of in which order to do the different parts as well as choice of pace and place.

Results achieved of the training

The 22nd World Scout Jamboree in Sweden ended in the beginning of August and in a few months time a detailed evaluation of the training will be done. Meanwhile is it possible to present some tentative results on the basis of the knowledge at hand.

Before the event started 98% of the support staff completed the training and received the certificate prior to arrival at the campsite. The course was mandatory for the above mentioned staff but nevertheless the rate of completion was not expected to reach such high number. In total 12 700 people completed the training before the event, this number also includes the some others for whom it was not mandatory to take the training. The organizers were hoping for a ideal number of 8 000 persons to complete the course so these figures are a lot higher than expected and can be considered a great success.

There was a possibility for the participants to provide feedback as part of a short evaluation survey at the end of the course. From the comments it was clear that the participants who took up the course came from a wide range of background on this subject where for some the level of the training was too basic and for others this was the first time they had to deal with the subject and it was a challenge. Another recurring comment was the wish for the possibility of maintaining other forms of communication on the subject both while participating in the course and after the completion such as through a group/page on Facebook. This was a possibility that was discussed during the planning phase but had to be dropped due to unavailability of additional human resources to facilitate the discussions on social media.

During the event the level of improved awareness and importance given to the issue was clearly noticeable. A strong observation, reporting and handling mechanism had been put in place during the Jamboree and it seemed that the only abuse situations occurring during the event were those between children. This result of having minimal or negligible incidents of abuse reported between

adults and children observed must also be considered a big success.

The global rise (480% since 2000) in accessibility to the internet currently reaching over 2 billion people (Internet World Statistics, 2011) and the ease of access means that e-learning is increasingly more accessible and with each new generation of adults, there will be improvements in accessibility to the internet both in relation to the technology available and the skills and willingness within civil society.

Scouting's venture into providing e-learning for adults across national boundaries at the World Scout Jamboree has shown that leaders are receptive to learning about the topic and to engaging with distance learning, recognising that for many this would be a totally new experience.

Scouting is a Youth Movement and the results from the World Scout Jamboree indicate that the instances of abuse were young person to young person rather than adult to young person or adult to adult. This highlights the need for resources (information and training) to be provided for young people on this topic too if all forms of abuse are to be minimized.

The way of introducing the important, but for some, completely new, topic of Keeping Children Safe from Harm as part of leader training by using e-learning as the method made it possible to reach the large number of adults as well as achieve at the high rate of completion. For some this was a new and novel way of learning and the experience was used for the global launch of a new generic e-learning material on the same subject open for use by all Scout associations. This time the material also includes parts of e-learning that are focused on helping the associations put in place policies and a section focused on life skills for Scouts through learning about Children's Rights and ways to protect themselves from potential abuse situations. The training for the large event and the experience drawn is used when preparing the new global material which will be part of the educational possibility and opportunities for over 4 million adults in Scouting.

Conclusion

Scouting, as an organisation that is concerned not only with the well-being of children and young people around the world, but with their potential to develop into responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society, is well placed to make a significant contribution to the development of society, particularly if it can reach leaders across barriers of class, culture and language.

Through e-learning on an important social issue such as Child Protection, Scouting contributes through a number of ways. Although it has to work within the legal frameworks in the countries, with over 30 million members, Scouting can contribute to creating new social norms, develop life skills for children and young people to tackle and prevent abuse and work closely with other members of the civil society in creating new legislations and policies. E-learning is a good way to get lots of people to discuss and come to a common understanding on the basic (but relatively new) knowledge that is needed to be

built in the society as part of tackling the issue. There is a quality assured in the training delivered across the globe by Scouting in the area of Child Protection and this is largely possible because of the opportunity to reach widely that e-learning offers.

The results of this particular e-learning developed for the World Scout Jamboree 2011, show that it is possible and is appreciated to use distance learning in the setting of a global NGO (Non Governmental organization). This will increase the possibility to influence the local society since the local organization generally has an important role in the community as part of the work for building the knowledge base of the society.

It also seems to be possible to create a self-paced and individual training with a level of interaction and pedagogical layout enough for the participants to absorb the content and aim of a difficult subject. This experience is used in further development within both Scouting and other NGOs.

The challenge to develop materials in a suitable and accessible format, targeted at children and young people still remains.

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