

GUIDELINES ON **SCOUTING** FOR CHILDREN IN ESPECIALLY DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES



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Youth Programme



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...IN ALL COUNTRIES IN THE
WORLD, THERE ARE CHILDREN
LIVING IN EXCEPTIONALLY
DIFFICULT CONDITIONS, AND THAT
SUCH CHILDREN NEED SPECIAL
CONSIDERATION...

PREAMBLE, UNITED NATIONS
CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE
CHILD (CRC)

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Who are Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances (CEDC)?

Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances (CEDC) are those children who are for shorter or longer periods in their lives, exposed to intense, multiple risks to their physical and mental health. A common characteristic of these children is that they lack proper adult care and protection, and that they lead their lives outside mainstream society.

These children are socially marginalised and this is becoming a growing problem in the world today. Many National Scout Organizations (NSOs) are working in this field, particularly with ethnic minority communities, child labourers and children living and working on the streets, to improve their quality of life and harness socially acceptable skills so these children may take a meaningful place in local communities.

Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines 'children' as persons up to the age of 18. United Nations states that this was intentional, as it was hoped that the Convention would provide protection and rights to as large an age-group as possible and because there was no similar United Nations Convention on the Rights of Youth. For this document, we shall consider the definition of 'Children' as defined in Article 1.

Characteristics of Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances (CEDC)

As a means of coping in their particular situation, these children may be forced to acquire characteristics that are different to those of their peers. This important issue should be considered by Scout leaders when working with these young people. The characteristics may include, but are not limited to the following:

- *being impulsive*
- *becoming easily attached and detached*
- *lacking verbal communication skills*
- *having low self esteem as a result of neglect and abuse*
- *demonstrating a lack of care or concern about others*
- *refusing to recognise authority*
- *disregarding rules and structures, which leads to having little or no respect for laws*
- *exhibiting unacceptable and antisocial behaviour e.g. drug abuse, etc.*

Community attitude

Because of these characteristics which may cause difficult and antisocial behaviour, communities may reject these children. Such actions increase the likelihood of children demonstrating further socially unacceptable behaviour which leads to the downward spiral and vicious circle of social marginalisation.

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SCOUTING FOR CHILDREN LIVING AND WORKING ON THE STREETS



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Peter Kariuki, KENYA

Peter Kariuki was only six years when he was forced by necessity to leave his family in the slums and plunder for food in the streets. By the age of nine, he was a gang leader living on the streets where most people in the gang were surviving by begging and stealing.

At the age of ten, Peter was begging outside a local school when the workers of Kenya's 'Street Scouts' now known as Extension Scouting Programme (ESP) discovered him. The aim of this Programme is to reach youth who are in especially difficult circumstances (CEDC).

Peter has since gone back to school and is currently a second year student at the University of Nairobi, studying Community Development. Through his innovativeness, he has also been able to start a small business of selling charcoal and is able to support his mother and other siblings. He is a Scout leader of Muthurwa Scouts Group, which is one of the pioneer Extension Scouting Programme units. He wishes to assist other young people who are in the same predicament he was in.

TAKING SCOUTING TO CEDC MEANS,
WE MAY HAVE TO CONDUCT THE SCOUT
MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES IN THE
SURROUNDINGS WHERE THEY EXIST.



Why working with these young people is important for Scouting?

The vision of Scouting is to create a better world through supporting the development of young people. If Scouting is to increase its impact, it needs to reach out to all young people, especially to those who have not traditionally been attracted to its membership.

There are many examples of good practice where Scouting has reached out to young people who are socially marginalised. Such practice requires leaders to develop special qualities and to access specific training and support. A welcoming and confident Leader can make a big impact on all children and this can be very rewarding for all concerned- Scout Leaders, Scouts, the young people themselves and the community at large.

Successful practices include:

- *Young people in Kenya have moved from a life on the streets to life at university, thanks to the support of the Scout Leaders in Kenya, UK and Canada who support the project.*
- *Young people in the Roma community in Slovakia are continuing longer at school and have been more successful when finding employment or giving up habits of smoking and drinking, thanks to their involvement in Scouting.*

Scouting has much to offer to young people, including those who are socially marginalised. It offers young people peer support (through the patrol system), membership in a team (the unit), access to a small community (through the shared value base) and the opportunity to create a new vision for their future (through promising to do their best) and support to achieve this (through peers working under adult guidance).

SCOUTS WHO HELP TAKE SCOUTING TO CEDC HAVE AS MUCH TO GAIN FROM THE EXPERIENCE AS THOSE WHOM THEY ASSIST.



How Scouting can assist?

All National Scout Organisations can assist. The extent to which this occurs is dependent on the resources of each NSO and its specific situation. It may include:

- (a) Awareness and advocacy**
- (b) Working directly**

a. Awareness and advocacy

Scouting with its large youth membership has an opportunity to make a difference in the minds and attitudes of young people towards marginalised people. This can be shared among their friends (peer group), their families and their local community. Being aware of issues is the first step towards understanding them. From this understanding a young person can be encouraged to take action and this is likely to affect decisions taken later in his/her life.

Ways of bringing about awareness:

Once young people are more aware of the issues and the causes that contribute to these, they can be involved in advocacy to bring the issue to the attention of others. Ideas to involve others include:

- 1. Running awareness raising activities related to a specific situation regarding CEDC, during regular Scout group meetings,*
- 2. Celebrating special days such as 'World Day Against Child Labour' (12th June). Organise a local event which helps to publicise both Scouting and the cause.*
- 3. Inviting an expert speaker (from an NGO/UN/Government) and conducting an awareness workshop.*
- 4. Organising a visit to a particular site- drug/alcohol rehab centre, refugee camp and follow this by a well facilitated group discussion.*

b. Working directly

Before commencing however, it is important each NSO considers its particular situations. Actions directed at supporting Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances (CEDC) must be based on genuine commitment. From that step, it is important to gain an informed knowledge of the needs of the specific groups of young people so that suitable methods and strategies of intervention may be developed to improve the lives of these young people. It is important to identify the many issues which impact at the social/community level as well as at the individual level. It is useful to work in partnership with others to collect information, assess the needs and share suggested findings to gain a clearer community picture of what is occurring.

Because Scouting operates in local communities throughout the World, it is in a good position to contribute to collecting quantitative and qualitative data on young people in especially difficult circumstances. In partnership with the specialized organizations, Rover Scouts in particular, can be trained by researchers and other specialists to be able to conduct a survey under their supervision to identify local needs.

The Scout Method

The Scout Method builds on the belief that all young people have potential and Scouting's role is to uncover and release this potential. Scouting does this by putting each young person at the centre of his or her own development and by helping young people to work in teams to achieve their full potential.

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SCOUTING FOR CHILDREN IN ETHNIC MINORITY COMMUNITIES

Marián Gábor, Roma Scout Leader, SLOVAKIA

(Romas are a minority community often referred to as 'Gypsies' who are marginalised from the mainstream society and spread across different countries, especially in central and southern Europe)

Marián Gábor, also called 'Bandy' is a Scout leader in a Roma settlement in eastern Slovakia. He works with around 90 Roma children and is a Roma himself. Apart from managing a scout house he is a member of the local town parliament. A leader who can inspire all of us, Bandy Says: "Before I joined Scouting, I used to spend my days doing nothing, just waiting for the social welfare, drinking with my friends. But then I was given the opportunity to do something good for children from my own settlement. I liked that it was so easy. It was enough just to meet and do something good and just to think about the Scout values. A lot of children want to join Scouting in my settlement, because they like it. And it gives my life, and not only my life, a meaning."

...TAKE ALL APPROPRIATE MEASURES TO ENSURE THAT THE CHILD IS PROTECTED AGAINST ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION OR PUNISHMENT ON THE BASIS OF THE STATUS, ACTIVITIES, EXPRESSED OPINIONS, OR BELIEFS OF THE CHILD'S PARENTS, LEGAL GUARDIANS, OR FAMILY MEMBERS.
ARTICLE 2, UN CRC



Important Considerations

Here are some things to consider specifically for working with CEDC:

- **Recruitment**
- **Keeping Scouts safe from harm**
- **Helping CEDC to become resilient**

Recruitment

While Scouting has a lot to offer young people in especially difficult circumstances, it can be a challenge to reach these young people. Some successful ways include:

- **Entering their world** – It is important that adults working with these children can 'enter their world' and build up a rapport with them. Not all young people will be interested in what Scouting has to offer, so initial contact will help to identify those who are interested in working with the adults in a positive and constructive way.
- **Building Trust** - It may take some time before the leaders are trusted by the young people. This stage cannot be rushed and there will inevitably be setbacks. Leaders should be trained and given support to build trust and develop relationships with these young people.
- **Working with community leaders** – The importance of working with community leaders, where they exist, cannot be overemphasised. If projects are to be successful the community leaders need to fully support the work that is being undertaken and be kept informed of progress and any problems that arise.
- **Providing incentives** – Many of these young people have particularly difficult lives and by meeting some of their basic needs, young people may have a greater incentive to join and remain part of Scouting. These incentives could be provision of some food, a place to meet, a uniform which gives them a sense of belonging, or participating in some games to help them enjoy their childhood. In one project in Slovakia, access to bicycles during meetings proved most successful.
- **Using role models** – once projects have started, young people who have successfully been members can be very powerful ambassadors, for external audiences but perhaps more importantly for other young people themselves. Other children can see the results and perhaps visualise a different life for themselves in the future, based on a similar experience.

Keeping SCOUTS safe from harm

When working with Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances (CEDC) it is important that the standards set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child are met, especially in relation to child protection, as these children are more vulnerable to the various forms of abuse.

A Policy "Keeping Scouts Safe from Harm" was adopted at the 36th World Scout Conference in 2002 which encourages all NSOs to adopt policies and practices to keep young people safe from harm. Each NSO was encouraged to:

- *develop policies (statement of commitment) and procedures (ways of implementing the commitment).*
- *identify guidelines to ensure that only appropriate adults are accepted as leaders in Scouting.*
- *provide all adult members, irrespective of their role, with training and support in this area.*
- *help young people to develop self-confidence and self-esteem so they are confident to express and protect themselves.*

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SCOUTING FOR CHILDREN IN ETHNIC MINORITY COMMUNITIES



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Overture Network, National Scout Organizations (NSOs) in the EUROPEAN SCOUT REGION

An informal network working in close cooperation with European Region of World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) and World Organization of the

Scout Movement (WOSM), 'Overture Network' encourages Guide and Scout associations in Europe to open up the association for young persons originating from ethnic and other minority groups.

The Network meets twice a year over long weekends (always the 3rd weekends of March & October). Each meeting has a specific theme, dealing with an aspect of intercultural Scouting with workshops, case studies and sharing of experiences in work being done in the Associations.

Overture Network also engages in specific tasks/projects based on the needs of its members, like the 'Diversity Tool-Kit':

www.overture-network.org/toolkit

Members attribute its success to the informality of the Network and also the fact that it draws a lot of support from the Associations, WAGGGS and WOSM.

Helping CEDC to become resilient

Resilience is an important attribute to be developed in Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances (CEDC) and the Scout Method offers many ways to develop this. Resilience is the ability to 'bounce back' from adversity, and to overcome negative influences that often block achievement. Resilience research focuses on characteristics, coping skills and support that help children and young people survive, or even thrive, in a challenging environment.

Researchers have identified 'protective factors' or characteristics which are common to children who have succeeded in spite of their difficult lives. To build resilience an individual needs to receive:

- *effective feedback and praise*
- *quality attention from a caring adult*
- *a multigenerational support network*
- *access to personally supportive role models*
- *unconditional acceptance by at least one other person*
- *clear and enforced boundaries*
- *encouragement of pro-social values*
- *appreciation of his/her unique talents*

Scouting enhances this by providing:

- *exposure to mainstream society*
- *access to resources for meeting basic needs*
- *access to leadership positions*
- *opportunities for decision-making*
- *meaningful participation in the community*
- *reduction in frequency and duration of stressful incidents*

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CHILD LABOUR PROJECT, EGYPT

**Mustafa Khamis Mohamed,
ALEXANDRIA.**

Mustafa was born in a family of 7 brothers and sisters. His father worked as a daily wages carpenter and the family lived in 'Al Laban', one of the poorest neighborhood in Alexandria. At a very early age Mustafa dropped out of school and started to work in a blacksmith's workshop to help feed his family.

When the Sea Scouts in Alexandria announced this project, Mustafa joined as a very moody, pessimistic boy with behaviour problems and lacking any hope or ambition for his future. He started with showing interest in physical activities like swimming & table tennis but was soon learning the basics of music. What transformed him was discovering Karate (a martial art) at this Scout project. His progress in Karate matched with dramatic improvements in his behaviour. Soon he obtained a Black Belt, the highest rank in Karate.

The workshop owner, surprised by remarkable turnaround in Mustafa's punctuality and way of dealing with the customers, encouraged him to continue with the Scouts.

Convinced by his leaders, he started literacy classes and passed exams conducted by Illiteracy Elimination campaign to earn himself a certificate from the local authorities.

Mustafa now owns a workshop and has become a Karate trainer at a youth center.

SCOUTING FOR WORKING CHILDREN

THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN WORKING WITH CEDC IS THE FACT THAT SOME OF THEIR BASIC NEEDS ARE NOT FULFILLED.



Resources & Partners

Partnering with non government organisations, United Nation's agencies, for example ILO-IPEC and local government bodies who are experts in working with such children is crucial to be able to make a long term impact. Partnerships also benefit from the sharing of resources including skills and expertise and to providing mutual support.

Here are some things to consider

Fundraising and sponsors:

- Corporate Sponsors can make a big difference in supporting projects which are for a social cause. Working with young people and CEDC is of interest to some big companies who have a commitment to fulfill their corporate social responsibilities (CSR). For example, Kenya Scout Association's very successful project to take Scouting to Street Children was started in 1993 with initial financial support from 'Cadbury Schweppes, Kenya'.
- It may be beneficial and important to work with other National Scout Organizations (NSOs). Often the best examples of partnership and support are between National Scout Organizations. For more details on how to look for support from other National Scout Organizations for your project on CEDC, please write to worldbureau@scout.org.
- Partnering with international organisations (United Nations & its various organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations, etc.) helps through the sharing of resources as well as generating publicity, which may lead to other sources of help and support.

Networking:

It is important to link up with other Scouts who are working on similar projects around the world. If you would like to be a part of an informal network, please contact worldbureau@scout.org



Conclusions

Scouting is in a unique situation to support Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances (CEDC) because it has contacts in most local communities throughout the world. Baden Powell's vision was that Scouting should be available to all and that young people would learn and develop their own personal skills through working with others. One significant way to encourage these principles is through supporting programs for CEDC.

All NSOs can be involved in this, whether it be through creating awareness and advocacy or through direct program support. It is important that before commencing any involvement there is a clear commitment by Scouting personnel to the project and that an informed needs analysis occurs. Cooperation with other NSOs, non government agencies, government groups and corporate sources will assist in this regard. Based on Scouting's experiences it is apparent that with effective training and support, all involved in the project – Scouting personnel, the children who are marginalized and various sponsors and supporters will be enriched through the experience.

References & Website

References

The definition of CEDC used in this publication has been taken from a training resource material of United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), 'Background Document on The Social Context of Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances (CEDC): Problems and Possible Actions' written by Ms Wanjiku Kaime-Atterhög, CEDC Expert, Uppsala University, Sweden.

Website

www.scout.org/sp4 This link leads you to the World Organization of the Scout Movement's (WOSM's) web page on 'Reaching Out' part of Strategic Priority No. 4 in The Strategy for Scouting. Here you will find News, Resources, a Photo Gallery and Useful Links on extending Scouting to Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances (CEDC).



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