11 Assessing personal development

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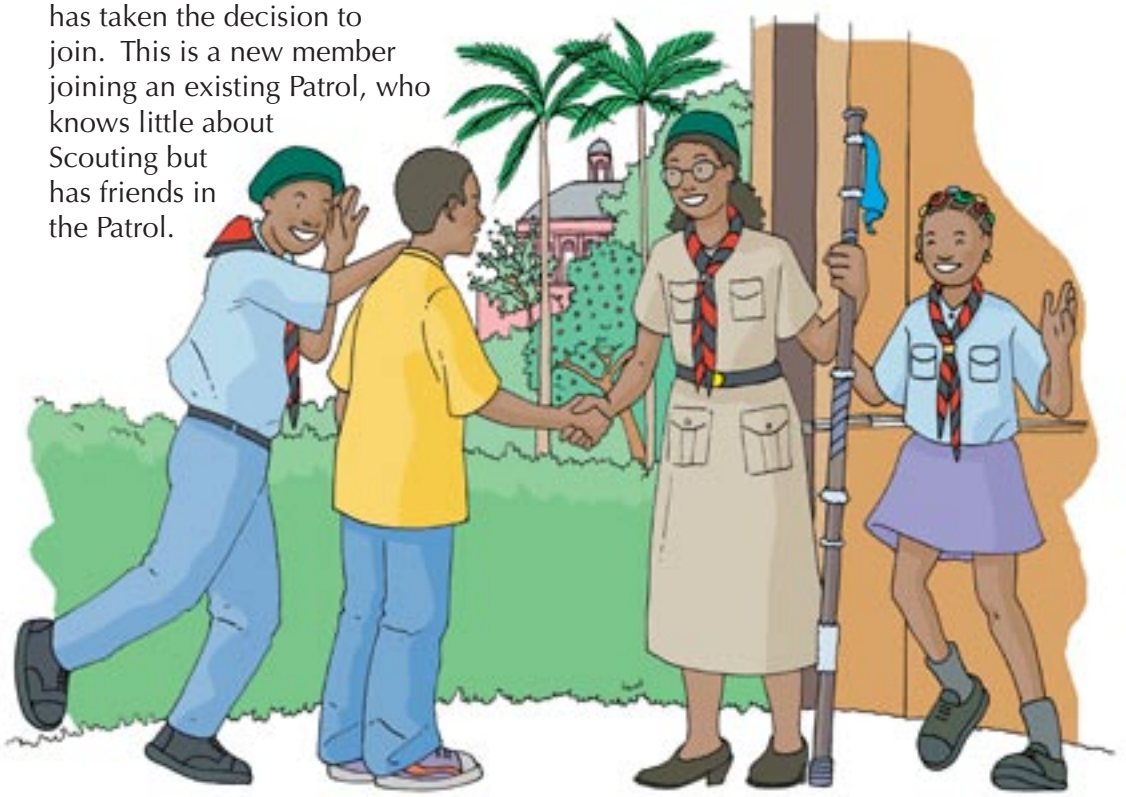
THE INTRODUCTORY PERIOD

We begin working with the system of objectives and evaluating the young people's personal progress when they join the Unit.

The first step is an *introductory period*, which begins when the young person joins and ends when he or she receives the badge for the stage on which he or she will begin working. Even if several young people have joined the Unit at the same time, this period is *personal* and each individual will experience it differently.

YOUNG PEOPLE COME INTO THE UNIT BY DIFFERENT ROUTES

- A new member may be a Cub Scout from the Group's own Pack. In this case the new member will know the Unit and most of its Scouts.
- He or she may be a friend of a member of one of the Patrols, who has been in contact with the Patrol previously and, in agreement with the others, has taken the decision to join. This is a new member joining an existing Patrol, who knows little about Scouting but has friends in the Patrol.



- A new member may be brought by his or her parents, at the suggestion of a teacher, or at his or her own initiative. This might be because of the prestige the Scout Group has acquired in the local community or because the young person has seen what the Scouts do and would like to be one too. This situation is similar to the previous one, except for the fact that the new member probably does not yet have friends either in the Patrol or Unit.

- He or she may be a member of an informal group of friends who, at the invitation of the Unit or at their own initiative, have decided to "become Scouts". In this case we are dealing with a new Patrol which lacks Scout experience.

In any of these situations the young people join in immediately with the activities that are underway, without differences of any kind in relation to the others and irrespective of the point of the programme cycle the Unit is at. The idea is for the new member to feel part of the Patrol and Unit as soon as possible.

However, the nature of the introductory period varies depending on whether it is an individual joining (a new member, whether from the Pack or from outside the Scout Group), or a group (a new Patrol).

WHEN A NEW MEMBER JOINS INDIVIDUALLY, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE INTRODUCTORY PERIOD IS SHARED BY THE PATROL AND THE MONITORING ADULT LEADER

In parallel with his or her participation in the activities, the new member begins a dialogue with the Patrol, Unit and the Adult Leaders that is rather more intensive than usual. This dialogue, which we call the *introductory period*, is not a progress stage. It lasts for about 2 to 4 months and its main objectives are:

- To *integrate* the boy or girl into the Patrol.

- *To find out what stage of the objectives* he or she has reached and *determine the stage at which he or she should begin working*, since young people do not necessarily join at the age of 11, but at any age between 11 and 15.

As we have seen, when an individual joins, the responsibility for the introductory period is shared by the Patrol Council and the monitoring Adult Leader.

- Integrating the young person into the Patrol and presenting the proposal of objectives are tasks for the Patrol Council, with the support of the monitoring Adult Leader.
- Determining which objectives can be considered to have been achieved is the responsibility of the monitoring Adult Leader, in agreement with the young person.
- The decision on the stage at which the young person should begin his or her progress is taken by the Unit Council at the proposal of the monitoring Adult Leader, after arriving at an agreement with the young person in question.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THIS PERIOD FROM THE YOUNG PERSON'S POINT OF VIEW?

- The young person makes friends with the Patrol members, learns about its structure, roles and internal culture and "find his or her own place" in relation to the others. This process may be slower when the new arrival does not already have friends in the Patrol, and in this case the Leaders will have to devote more attention to the situation and help to facilitate the integration process.
- He or she establishes a more profound relationship with the monitoring Adult Leader.
- He or she begins to experience the group life in the Unit, with its structure, vision, names, symbols and traditions.
- The young person becomes familiar with the system of objectives, stages, badges and Logs.

WHAT HAPPENS FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE PATROL?

- The Patrol incorporates the new member into the activities and encourages him or her to take part in the Patrol Council.
- It adjusts its internal balances to the presence of a new member, reinforces existing bonds of friendship and extends them to the new boy or girl.
- It gives the new arrival the basic information he or she needs about the Patrol, Unit and Scout Group.
- It presents the system of objectives and helps him or her to form an opinion about his or her own progress with respect to the objectives proposed in accordance with age.

WHAT HAPPENS FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE ADULT LEADER WHO MONITORS THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PATROL MEMBERS?

- He or she forges links of friendship with the young person and introduces him or herself to the young person's family, initiating the contact with the parents.
- The Adult Leader tries to get to know the young person and his or her environment as well as possible, by observing his or her behaviour and keeping in contact frequently. This process is especially important when the boy or girl is not already a friend of the other young people in the Patrol or Unit.
- He or she helps the Patrol Leader to integrate the young person into the Patrol and provide information about the system of objectives.
- The Leader forms his or her own opinions about the young person's position with respect to the achievement of objectives.

YOUNG PEOPLE JOINING FROM THE PACK ALSO HAVE AN INTRODUCTORY PERIOD

When a new member comes from the Cub Scout Pack, the processes outlined above will probably be easier since he or she already belongs to the same Scout Group. But, even so, except for the information about the system of objectives –to which the boy or girl will have been accustomed in the Pack– just as much care must be taken with this period as with any other new member.

Sometimes, however, the process may even be more complex. For example, when several Cub Scouts want to join the same Patrol, due to "prestige" generated in the Scout Group or to affinities that the children may have established already with some of its members. The opposite can happen too, when a Patrol has gained a "reputation" for being difficult or boring and is therefore unattractive to Cubs.

Some Scout Groups have *transition periods* before a young person leaves one Section to join another, in order to avoid possible "splits". These periods are individual and prepare for both the departure and the arrival. In this case, the transition period shortens the introductory period or the two are combined into one.

When the step from the Pack to the Unit involves a large group of Cubs all at the same time, it is not a good idea to "distribute" the young people by numbers or in equal proportions. Even when there is a large entry, we must respect the Patrol's nature as an informal group of friends, and avoid breaking the natural affinities that spring up between the children who are joining, or interfering dangerously in the cohesion of existing Patrols.

If there is a relatively large entry of Cubs into the Unit, there is likely to be a departure of a similar magnitude towards the next Section. This will affect the Patrols at both ends of the system and may destructure them.

One way of avoiding this is to separate the entry process from the leaving process, leaving time for the changes to be assimilated and cohesion to be gradually rebuilt. The basic rule in this regard is that arrivals and departures should take place with the agreement of the Patrols or even at their own initiative. The young people will always find the best solution.

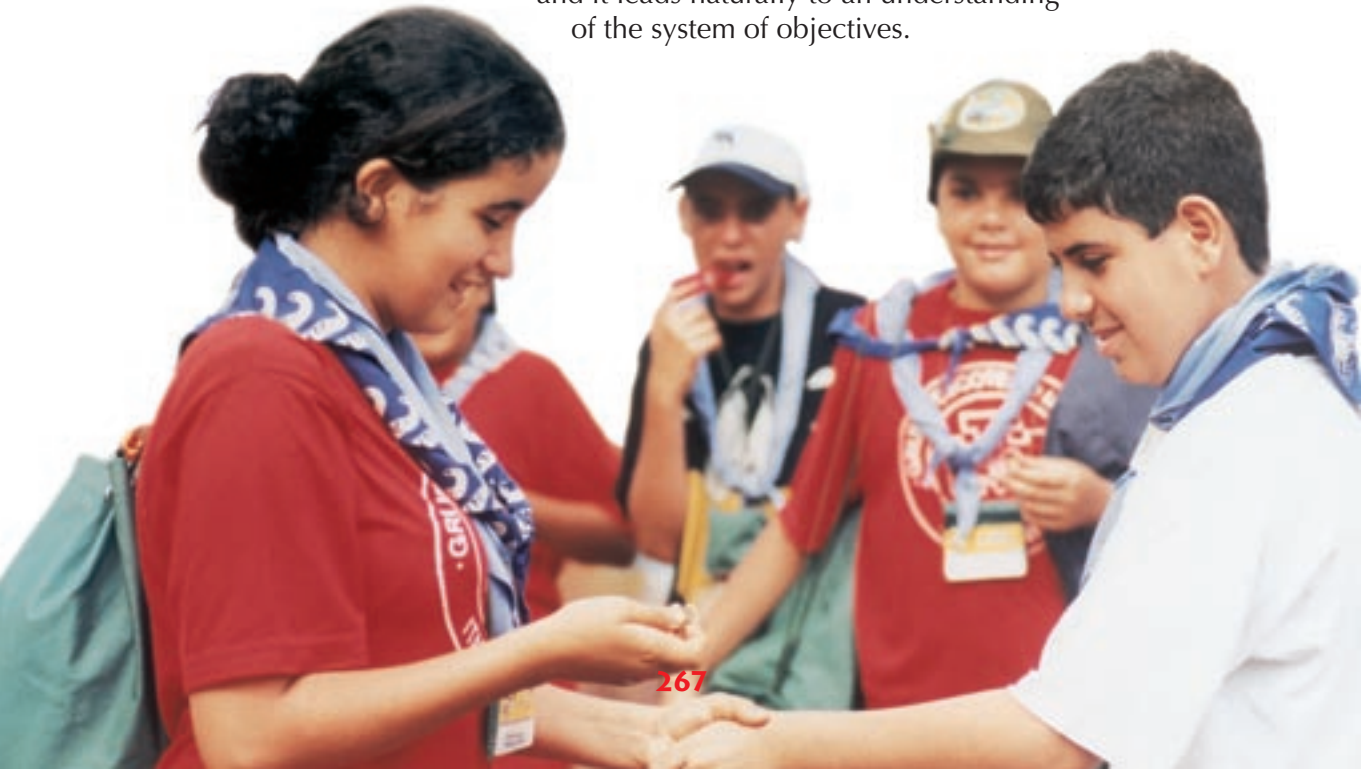
WHEN AN INDIVIDUAL JOINS, THE OBJECTIVES ARE PRESENTED BY THE PATROL

Presenting and *talking about* the objectives are things that happen within the Patrols, with occasional backing from the monitoring Adult Leader. The Adult Leader does not replace the Patrol in this task, but intervenes only to provide support for the Patrol Leader, clarify certain aspects and avoid imbalances.

By joining the Patrol, the new member also joins the learning community that operates within it: he or she will take part in the Patrol Council, observe the mutual assessment, see the others' Logs and the seals that are placed in them. New members will probably ask about the progress badges on the uniforms and will enquire more than once when they can join in too.

Thus, no formal discussion or session is needed to present the objectives or talk about them. Presenting and talking about the objectives are things that happen spontaneously through observation and a series of short conversations, questions and answers which come about as a natural chain of events during this period.

It is a spontaneous subprocess within the introductory process
and it leads naturally to an understanding
of the system of objectives.



DECISIONS ON OBJECTIVES ARE TAKEN BY AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE YOUNG PERSON AND THE MONITORING ADULT LEADER

At a given point in time, which will require a special meeting or conversation, talking about the objectives will give rise to a consensus between the young person and the monitoring Adult Leader.

A consensus is reached on two things:

- *Personalization* by the new member of the growth objectives contained in the proposal. Boys and girls will have to adapt the respective column of objectives to their needs, interests, aspirations, abilities and potential. This adaptation involves accepting the objectives contained in the proposal, and altering them or adding others. The young person writes alterations and additions, in his or her own hand, in the corresponding Log. Once this adaptation has been carried out, the Unit objectives will have become that boy's or girl's *personal* objectives.

- The *agreement* on the stage at which the young person will begin his or her progress. This depends on the number of objectives of the respective column that the new member and the monitoring Adult Leader agree can be considered to have been achieved. Some general criteria for this are given in chapter 9, when we talk about the badges for the progress stages. This agreement is reached by sharing opinions, and if any discrepancies arise, the Leader responsible for monitoring will accept the young person's self-assessment.

Depending on the number of objectives that are considered to have been achieved and the individual characteristics of the young person, the Adult Leader proposes to the Unit Council the stage at which the boy or girl should begin his or her progress, and the corresponding badge is given.

THERE ARE A NUMBER OF VARIATIONS TO THE INTRODUCTORY PERIOD WHEN A NEW PATROL IS JOINING

In this case the introductory process is the sole responsibility of the Adult Leader who monitors the development of the young people. The other variations are as follows:

- As it is an informal group of friends, the challenge is not to integrate the young people into a Patrol, but to integrate the group, as a Patrol, into the Unit.

- The introductory period also involves advising the Patrol to help it structure itself as such: roles, name, meeting place, Record Book and other elements of its identity. A careful approach is also needed to the informal group's pre-existing elements of identity, some of which may not be entirely compatible with the style of the Unit.

- It also involves supervising the progressive interaction of this Patrol with the others. In this aspect the Leaders and Assistant Leaders of the other Patrols play a key role in creating a welcoming atmosphere.

Little by little, the Adult Leader is replaced in these tasks by the Patrol Leader, whom the Patrol will elect at a given point. From the time of his or her election, this young person will receive more intensive training than the other young people.

WHEN A NEW PATROL JOINS, THE MONITORING ADULT LEADER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PRESENTING THE OBJECTIVES

When a new Patrol joins, the purpose is still to observe how many of the objectives each young person has already achieved. The difference is that this process does not happen within the Patrol, but by means of a dialogue with the Adult Leader responsible for monitoring.

The Adult Leader is relatively free to handle this process as he or she sees fit, in accordance with his or her experience, together with the characteristics of the informal group that has joined and the way in which it reacts. The Leader may receive support from the Unit Council, or may ask other Adult Leaders and the Patrol Leaders and Assistant Leaders of other Patrols to help with specific tasks.

The new members are probably full of questions and, as they take part in the activities, they constantly acquire bits and pieces of information, so it will be difficult to impose a logical sequence on the process. This lack of structure, however, will help the young people to assimilate the information naturally and avoid the need for theoretical group presentations.

We must not try to hasten the natural speed of the process. The most important thing is the participation in the activities and integration into the Unit. As the young people become motivated by this and committed to it, they will take an interest in the system of objectives by themselves.

ARRIVING AT A CONSENSUS ON THE OBJECTIVES CONCLUDES THE INTRODUCTORY PERIOD

Once a consensus has been reached on the objectives, the introductory period can be considered to be over. Some important and tangible events are associated with this:

- The young person makes a record in his or her *Log* of the objectives which are considered to have been achieved. This is done by placing a seal for the respective area at the corresponding place, as explained on pages 220 and 221.

- A similar record is kept on the *personal progress sheet,* which the Adult Leaders keep in each young person's personal file.

- The objectives achieved can also be marked on the *progress chart*. This is an optional chart which some Patrols or Units put up on the wall to keep a visible record of everyone's progress, using the same seals. It could take the form of a giant explorers' map.

- The Unit Council gives the boy or girl the *progress badge* for the stage on which it has been agreed he or she will start working.

- A brief ceremony, to which the parents may be invited, can be held at any time during the introductory period to give the young person the neckerchief used by the Unit's Scout Group. This ceremony is not necessary, however, if the new member has already received his or her scarf in the Pack.

  This ceremony may be conducted in a simple manner at the end of a normal meeting, or more formally with the participation of the parents of the young person who is being welcomed.

  Some Units make this celebration an occasion for the whole Scout Group to get together for a party. They hold investitures only every so often, when there are a number of members entering the different Sections. In this case, the celebration acquires greater proportions, the parents of all the new members take part and invitations are extended to authorities of the sponsoring institution and of the Association. A special venue is set up and decorated, and giving the symbols can even be made part of a religious ceremony. The event ends with a party in which everything is a celebration of the growth of the Scout Group. Even if several young people are being invested at the same ceremony, however, the moment of investiture is individual and care should be taken to ensure that it is *personal*.

The young person may make the Promise at any time after the introductory period. The only requirement is that he or she wishes to do so and requests the acceptance of the Patrol Council. As discussed on pages 142 and 224, the Promise is not linked to the progress stages and a request to make a Promise must never be questioned.

In spite of all these things that happen at the end of the introductory period, we must remember that the young people are members of the Unit from the moment they join and participate with full rights in the Patrol Council and Unit Assembly. The only difference is that those who come from outside the Scout Group wear their uniform without the neckerchief until they are formally invested.

MONITORING PERSONAL PROGRESS

Once young people have completed the introductory period, they begin their personal progress at the stage which it has been agreed is most appropriate.

Except for determining which stage this will be, for the young person nothing has changed from the time that he or she joined the Unit. He or she continues to take part in the Patrol and in the activities just as all the other boys and girls do.

ASSESSMENT OF PERSONAL PROGRESS IS ONGOING AND FORMS PART OF LIFE IN THE UNIT

While we are watching how an activity develops, it is inevitable that we will be looking at how the young people are performing and looking for any changes in them. Thus assessment of personal progress is a continuous process, a *subsystem* within the system we are using: it is part of everything that happens and is carried out simultaneously.

MONITORING PERSONAL PROGRESS IS ACCOMPANYING YOUNG PEOPLE ON THEIR JOURNEY OF DEVELOPMENT

By "personal progress" we understand a young person's gradual progress towards the types of behaviour envisaged in his or her objectives. This involves all the dimensions of the personality and encompasses variations on the similar ideas of growth and development. Although growth and development have subtly different meanings, they are sometimes used as synonyms of personal progress.

"Monitoring" consists not only of gathering and compiling information in order to determine how close a young person's behaviour comes to his or her objectives. It is a friendly process that accompanies development, encourages the participation of the young people in the Unit, raises their self-esteem and helps them to improve the level of achievement of objectives. It is accompanying, not controlling.

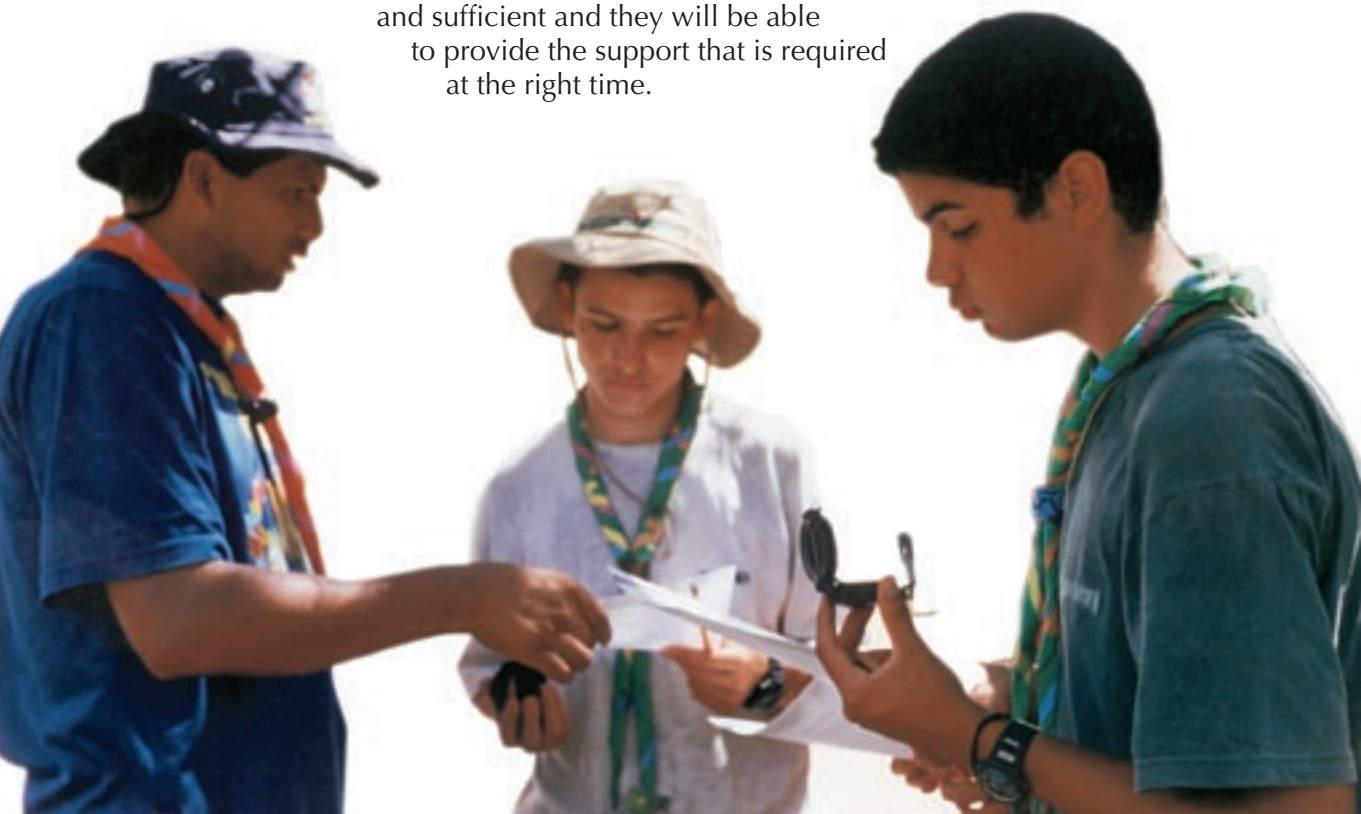
A YOUNG PERSON'S DEVELOPMENT IS ASSESSED BY OBSERVATION

We have said that the young people's objectives propose the achievement of types of behaviour that refer to all the dimensions of their personality. This implies that a young person's harmonious development also consists of subjective components that allow for a broad range of appreciation.

Appraising subjective factors is a lot more complex that measuring weight or establishing knowledge of a mathematical theorem. Many measurements are simply not practicable and others require technical instruments or specialized staff.

We therefore assess the development of a young person by observation. This is compatible with the subjective nature of personal progress, but also with the complementary purpose of the Scout Method with respect to other educational agents and with the voluntary status of our human resources. This does not imply that assessment by observation is by any means an inferior sort of evaluation. On the contrary, it is the most appropriate type in an educational process that encompasses the whole person.

In the Unit environment, the young people give signals that indicate their progress towards the achievement of their objectives and the problems that they may be facing. If the Adult Leaders have been prepared to act as free-time educators, they will know how to perceive those signals. Their observation will be reliable and sufficient and they will be able to provide the support that is required at the right time.



ASSESSMENT BY OBSERVATION TAKES TIME, PATIENCE AND DEDICATION

Assessment by observation takes time. Time to be with the young people and build on contacts, visit the family, meet their friends, arrange appointments with their teachers or practise a sport or hobby together. This is time for talking about everything we have to talk about, listening to everything that needs to be heard, thinking about what has to be said and saying what is fair, at the right time and with respect. A time for providing company, as the process is just as important as the result: it is not just a case of establishing whether an objective has been achieved or not, but also knowing how it was achieved or why it was not.

You also need patience. In order to form valid judgements that enable us to give the young people more solid support, we have to listen calmly and observe unhurriedly and analyse things on a firm basis. We must not become discouraged easily or seek quick success, which in any case is unlikely in education.

Lastly, assessment by observation takes dedication. To give an exam or apply a test you need certain technical skills, but to constantly accompany a young person on the journey of development is a matter of voluntary and generous dedication.

AN ADULT LEADER MONITORS AT MOST EIGHT YOUNG PEOPLE FOR AT LEAST A YEAR

For the reasons we have set out, it is advisable for an Adult Leader to undertake to monitor a maximum of eight young people. He or she is unlikely to be able to carry out the task effectively with a larger number to monitor.

In addition, it is not appropriate for Leaders to assess all the boys and girls in the Unit indiscriminately. This would make for very generalized impressions that would be too imprecise to determine whether objectives had been achieved and to establish the type of support that is needed at a given point in time. Also, some young people would not receive the personalized attention they need.

If possible, the eight young people the Leader monitors should belong to the same Patrol. This facilitates the Leader's task, as it is not necessary to have a detailed knowledge of what is happening in several Patrols at the same time.

The monitoring task should be carried out over a relatively long period. In order to do a good job, the Leader needs to gather information and obtain the young person's trust, which will not be possible if the Leaders change constantly or alternate for brief periods. The Leaders should maintain the responsibility for at least a year, and may do so for longer, unless there are reasons to recommend their replacement. When a change is made, it should be gradual, and the boy's or girl's feelings should be taken into account very carefully.

THE LEADER'S ASSESSMENT CONSIDERS THE ASSESSMENT OF OTHER EDUCATIONAL AGENTS

The various educational agents who are involved in the young person's life can provide the Leaders with very valuable information.

PARENTS

Parents are their children's main educators. Given that the young people achieve their objectives through everything they do and not only in the Unit, parents provide essential input for the assessment process. In turn, they should value and trust in the education their children are receiving in the Unit.

For an optimum relationship between the Leader and the parents, the Leader should approach the parents, get to know them and allow them to get to know him or her, create bonds and become gradually integrated into the family environment. Parents will not consent readily to talk about their children with a person who has not already earned their confidence.

TEACHERS

The young person's school teachers may be able to provide important information about his or her behaviour. This also requires the Leader to have established a relationship with them previously, especially if the Scout Group is not part of the school community. Teachers may have difficulty in accepting that a volunteer, who is not necessarily an educator by profession, has an educational role to play in a young person's development. Leaders must try to overcome that resistance and earn recognition as valid interlocutors in educational terms.

OTHER AGENTS

This category includes people such as the authorities of the religious community to which the young person belongs, proficiency monitors, other Adult Leaders in the Unit and non-Scout friends. These people's opinion is important if they have regular contact with the young person or they have a significant influence on his or her education and development.

All these opinions are complementary. They help the Leader to develop a broader vision, but in no way substitute the consensus that is reached between the Leader and the young person.

THE YOUNG PERSON'S OWN OPINION IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ASSESSMENT

Young people of this age think
constantly about themselves,
-mostly unconsciously-
and examine their actions,
their life, their dreams and
the attitudes of their friends.
They often judge themselves
harshly, since between
the ages of 11 and 15
they tend to ask a lot of themselves.
This may even threaten
their self-esteem, and the Leaders
will have to compensate for
this tendency by means of
positive reinforcement,
to help each young person to realize
how valuable he or she is and how important
he or she is for the rest of the group.

The Scout Method relies to a large extent on young people's tendency to ask themselves searching questions. Every so often, usually during a more individual activity or meeting, the monitoring Adult Leader invites the young person to take a look at the objectives he or she has undertaken and think about how these relate to his or her self-perception. The conclusions drawn from this exercise can be shared later with the Patrol or the monitoring Adult Leader. It may also be useful for the young people to write these conclusions in their Logs, which will serve to mark their progress when the exercise is repeated at a later date.

Young people should be made aware of the kindly interest of the Adult Leader in hearing what they think of themselves. This facilitates self-assessment and makes it a more conscious process, which helps the young people to be the main agents in their own development. We must not forget that the Scout Method is basically a system of self-education.

Except for occasional suggestions and frequent dialogue, there is no need to do anything else during the process. The rest is up to the young people themselves, the unbidden action of their peers and the natural results of the method applied. The young people should not be made to feel pressured and there is no educational advantage to be gained in generating obsessive tendencies.

The young person's self-assessment forms the basis for the consensus which will be reached when conclusions are drawn at the end of a programme cycle.

PEERS CONTRIBUTE TO THE YOUNG PERSON'S OPINION OF HIS OR HER OWN PROGRESS

As we discussed in chapter 1, the opinions of their peers have a powerful impact on the way young people view themselves. In a group of friends, this opinion is expressed informally in a number of ways, from jokes to more personal conversations. Young people are highly sensitive and, even though they may not always express it, they easily perceive the opinions that are implicit in their companions' every gesture and attitude.

By means of internal life in the Patrols, the Scout Method seeks to ensure that these opinions are expressed in the form of support, to reduce aggressiveness to a minimum and to contribute to learning, as explained in detail in chapter 3.

As the Adult Leaders do not participate in the internal life of the Patrols, they can only perceive the peers' opinion by observing how the young people relate to each other. The only more formal means of learning this opinion is through discussion with the Patrol Leader and the analysis that is carried out in the Patrol Council. By this means, and through direct contact with the young person, the monitoring Adult Leader attempts to clarify the opinions of the peers and encourage the young person to analyse their causes objectively, while seeking to offset the possible negative effects or reinforce the positive impact of these opinions.

CONCLUSIONS OF PERSONAL PROGRESS ASSESSMENT

THE UNIT COUNCIL SETS THE CRITERIA FOR CONCLUDING THE ASSESSMENT OF PERSONAL PROGRESS DURING A CYCLE

Shortly before the end of a programme cycle, the Unit Council considers the general guidelines for concluding the personal progress assessment and the timescales in which this will take place.

Exceptionally, for example when the cycle is very long or when it becomes clear that it will need to be lengthened, conclusions may be drawn on two occasions: midway through the cycle and at the end. In any case, as we have seen, a certain length of time must elapse before we can determine if the activities have helped a young person to make headway towards his or her objectives.

Setting criteria for evaluation does not mean recreating the rules of the system. Its only purpose is to decide on a single means of proceeding and avoid disparities between the monitoring Adult Leaders or within the Patrols.

This task is closely related to the Unit analysis, and especially to the balanced development of the young people in the different growth areas, the personalized attention that each has been given and the general level of achievement of objectives. A few examples serve to illustrate the nature of these criteria:

- If, during the programme cycle that is finishing, emphasis has been placed on service activities, in the assessment special attention should be paid to the objectives in the area of social development. This will make it possible to measure the level of results generated in the young people by the emphasis in the cycle.

- If the cycle included long activities that took up much of the Leaders' attention and not enough time was devoted to monitoring the young people, then more time will need to be spent on the conclusions, as they will require more in-depth or longer conversations with the young people.

If in general major progress is seen in achievement of objectives, the conclusions of the evaluation will tend to recognize the efforts involved in this. Paradoxically, if there has been a lack of motivation, an emphasis can also be placed on the efforts deployed, but in this case as a means of positively reinforcing the young people's self-esteem.

The meeting at which the Unit Council sets these criteria should be held before the meeting that is called to conduct the Unit analysis and set the emphasis for the coming cycle. This will ensure that there is sufficient time to conclude the personal progress assessment before drawing up the proposal of activities for the following cycle, as we will see in the next chapter.

AT THE PATROL COUNCIL THE SELF-ASSESSMENT IS COMPARED WITH THE OPINION OF THE PEERS

Once the criteria for the conclusions have been set, the Patrol Leaders call a meeting of the Patrol Councils, with the sole purpose of exchanging opinions on the progress of their members. At this meeting the young people's progress is assessed individually, on the basis of the self-assessment of each of its members.

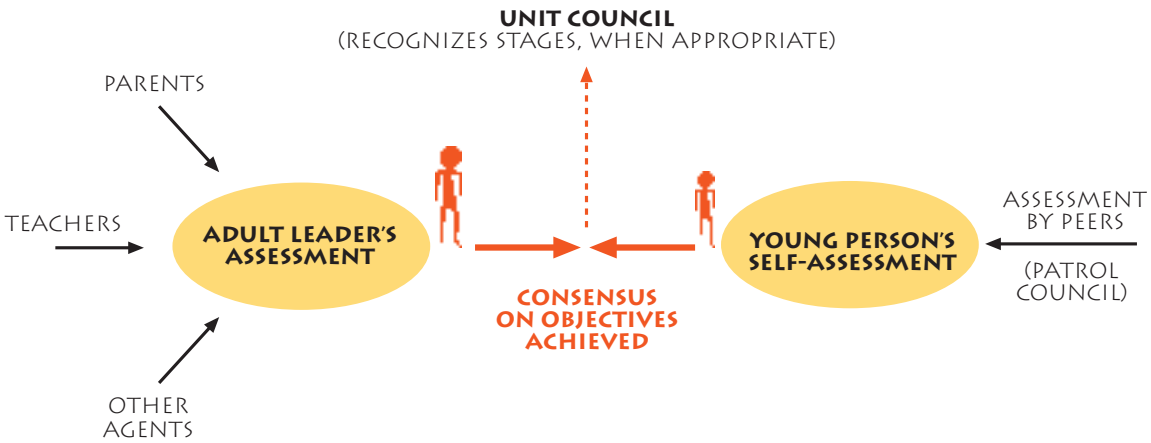
The form, length and intensity of this meeting depend on the internal culture of each Patrol. In any event, it can be assumed that an intimate atmosphere of mutual support will be necessary. In particular, the Patrol Leader sets the pace, controls aggressiveness, encourages the more timid members and mitigates any interventions that are over enthusiastic or hostile.

The results of this assessment are retained by each young person, and used to reconsider his or her initial self-assessment.

ASSESSMENT CULMINATES IN A CONSENSUS BETWEEN THE YOUNG PERSON AND THE MONITORING ADULT LEADER

In order to establish this consensus it is advisable for the young person and the monitoring Adult Leader to have a meeting solely for determining which objectives can be considered to have been achieved during the cycle.

This meeting is just one more of the many occasions on which the Leaders and the young person meet, so it will not be difficult to achieve a relaxed atmosphere. For the young person, this conversation concludes the process of assessment of personal objectives for this cycle.



In this conversation the boy or girl sets out his or her self-assessment, which has been nourished by the opinion of the other Patrol members, and indicates the objectives that he or she considers achieved during the cycle that is ending. The Leader shares his or her opinion with the young person, which has in turn incorporated the observations of other assessing agents.

As well as agreeing upon the objectives that have been achieved, this meeting serves to support and encourage the young people in their personal development, including suggestions to help them make the most of their participation in the Unit and raise their level of achievement of objectives. The meeting also serves to assess how much of the progress made in previous cycles has stood the test of time.

In the course of this conversation the Adult Leader may reach whatever consensus he or she sees fit for the development of the young person, providing this remains within the criteria set by the Unit Council.

The opinion of the Adult Leader is important for the young person, but should never be considered more important simply because it is the opinion of a Leader. On the contrary, as Leaders we must always be prepared to question our own points of view, bearing in mind that we will probably encourage the young people more by accepting the conclusions of their self-assessment than by insisting that they accept ours.

Self-assessment always prevails in the event of discrepancies that cannot be resolved. It is preferable for the young person to over-estimate his or her achievements than to lose self-esteem or become discouraged because the Leader has imposed his or her point of view.

At the end of the meeting, the Leader invites the young person to stick the seals corresponding to the objectives that have been achieved into his or her Log, then stamp them with the Unit or Group stamp, as described on pages 220 and 221. The seals may be brought by the Leader or by the young person, depending on the Unit's custom.

If the number of objectives approved warrants a step up to the next stage, in line with the general criteria set out on pages 222 and 223, then the Adult Leader will make the corresponding proposal to the Unit Council.

A CHANGE OF STAGE MEANS A CHANGE OF LOG

When a boy or girl moves up from the Track to the Trail stage, or from the Course to the Traverse stage, the objectives are the same, but there is a new Log. The young person must therefore be supplied with enough seals to record –in the new Log this time- the objectives that were marked as achieved in the previous one.

When a boy or girl moves up from the Trail to the Course stage, there is not only a new Log but also new objectives. It is advisable to discuss the new column of objectives with the young person at this point since, although they are aimed at the same types of behaviour, the objectives are slightly more demanding.

The award of a stage badge by the Unit Council calls for a celebration, as explained on page 224.