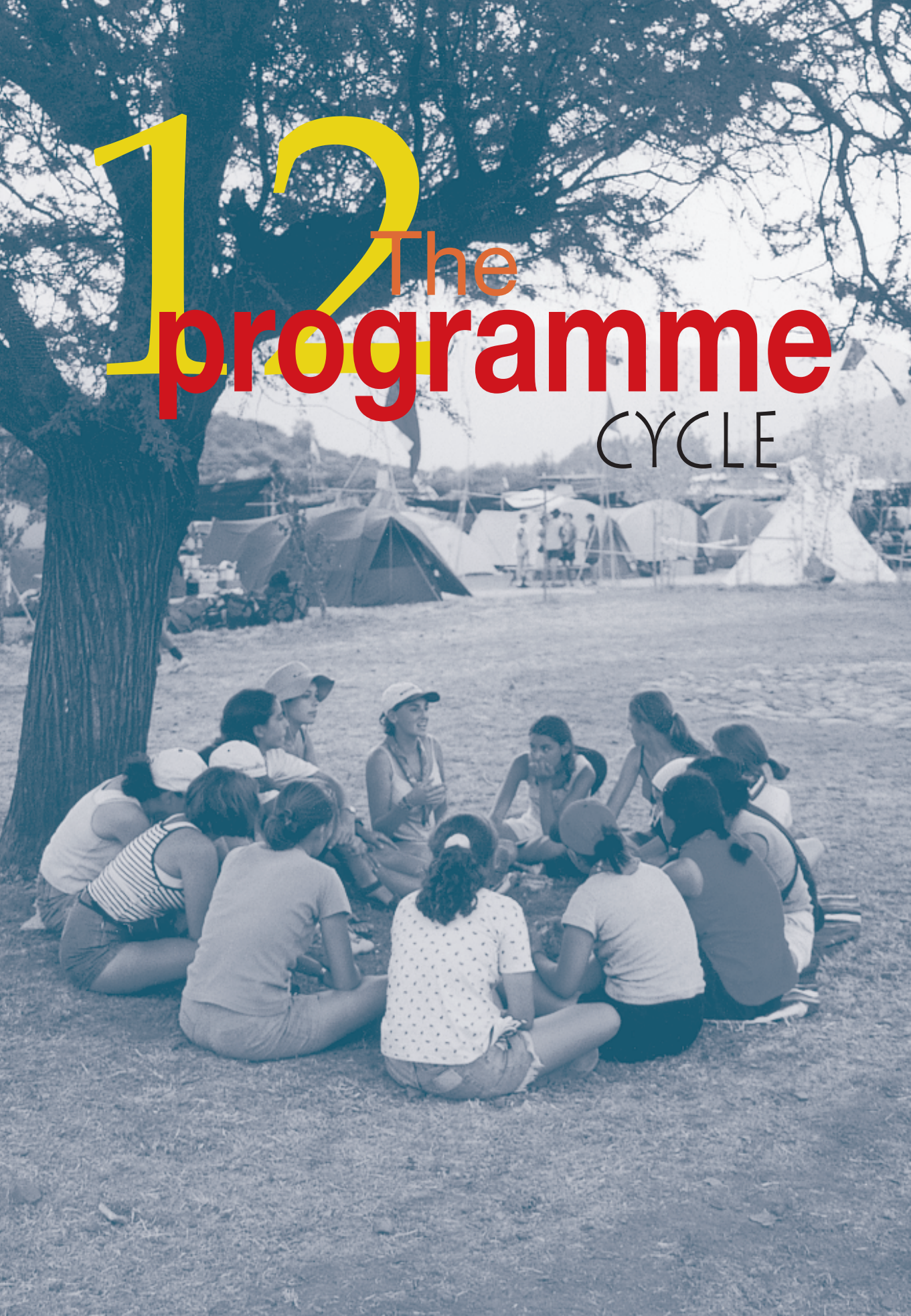


12 The programme CYCLE





CONTENTS

GENERAL CONCEPTS

- The programme cycle is the way in which the activities are coordinated
- A programme cycle has 4 successive phases
- About 3 cycles are conducted per year
- The programme cycle is an educational tool that makes consulting the young people into a system

UNIT ANALYSIS

- The analysis is conducted in the Patrol Councils and in the Unit Council
- The analysis conducted by the Patrols is different from the analysis by the Unit Council

- The analysis is of a general nature
- The analysis refers to group life, to objectives and activities, and to the performance of the Adult Leaders
- Once the analysis is complete, an educational emphasis is set for the cycle that is beginning
- Once the emphasis is set, the activities are pre-selected

PROPOSING AND SELECTING ACTIVITIES

- The proposal contains the emphasis, some Patrol activities and all the Unit activities
- The proposal is analysed in the Patrol Councils
- The Unit Assembly selects the shared activities for all the Patrols
- Democratic games are just one more activity and they provide a means to establish the majority opinion
- Many activities can be used as democratic games
- The outcome of the democratic game determines the Unit activities

ORGANIZING, DESIGNING AND PREPARING THE ACTIVITIES

- The activities are organized into a calendar
- The Unit Assembly approves the calendar
- Once the calendar is approved, the activities are designed
- Defining the objectives of the activities is an essential part of their design
- Once the objectives are defined the design is completed
- Once the activity is designed, it is prepared to be carried out on a certain date

CARRYING OUT AND EVALUATING THE ACTIVITIES

- Patrol and unit activities are conducted at the same time
- It is always necessary to provide motivation for the activities
- Carrying out the activities must generate excitement
- Those responsible for an activity keep up its momentum
- Carrying out the activities helps to make us responsible
- Activities must minimize potential risks
- Activities are evaluated by the level of achievement of previously defined objectives
- Activities are evaluated by observation
- Activities are evaluated in the course of the activity and at the end and several parties are involved
- Evaluation of the activities provides input for assessment of personal development



GENERAL CONCEPTS

THE PROGRAMME CYCLE IS THE WAY IN WHICH THE ACTIVITIES ARE COORDINATED

The programme cycle is a period in which the activities are prepared, conducted and evaluated in a sequence of phases, the way we apply the Scout Method is analysed, and the personal growth of the young people is observed and recognized.

Group life and the programme cycle are closely related to each other:
While group life is the result of everything that happens in the Unit,
the programme cycle is the way in which everything that happens is organized.

The programme cycle is a planning tool,
as it is used to evaluate the current situation in the Unit,
plan changes and adjustments for the future,
carry out the programme and evaluate its results.

It is also a participatory planning tool, as all these stages are conducted
with the active participation of the young people and their Patrols.

A PROGRAMME CYCLE HAS FOUR SUCCESSIVE PHASES



The phases of a cycle are coordinated so that each phase is the natural continuation of the one before and natural precursor of the following one.

Phase 4 takes up most of the time available in a cycle and phases 1, 2 and 3 do not mean that we interrupt the activities to devote ourselves exclusively to “planning”. These phases are conducted just like any other activity, in a sequence that reflects a *continuum* encompassing everything that is going on in the Unit.



ABOUT THREE CYCLES ARE CONDUCTED PER YEAR

The length of the programme cycle varies from three to four months, so that there will be about three cycles in a year. It is the Unit Council, however, which determines the length of each cycle, in line with past experience, the situation of the Unit and –the most influential factor of all– the type of activities the young people have chosen.



Moreover, the length originally planned may be altered in the course of a cycle if it is sufficiently flexible. A cycle with lots of short or medium-duration activities is more flexible than one with only a few long duration activities.



In any case, the cycle should not be shorter than the minimum time suggested, because:

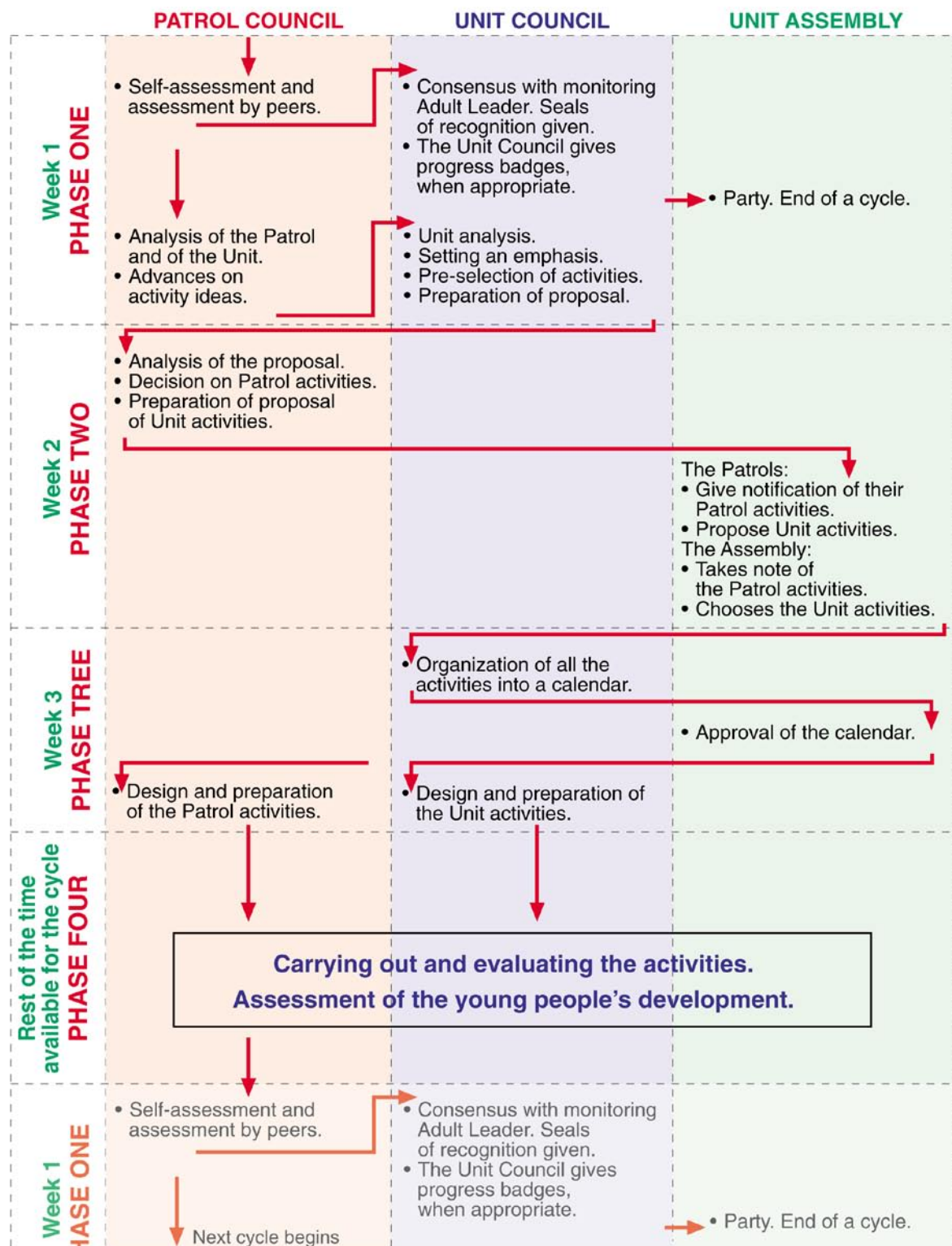
- ✚ Conducting interlinked Unit and Patrol activities requires time for organization and for both types of activities to run smoothly.
- ✚ Adolescents tend to prefer medium- and long-duration activities, which cannot easily be accommodated in too short a cycle.
- ✚ It takes time to form an impression of whether the young people have achieved the behaviour patterns envisaged in the objectives, since several agents are involved in this assessment, as discussed in the last chapter.

The cycle should not last longer than the maximum time suggested, because:

- ✚ A very long cycle is not suited to the rapidly changing interests of the young people, especially the younger members.
- ✚ The young people need constant encouragement in their personal development, which they receive through recognition seals and progress badges. In a longer cycle these would be spaced far apart, as they are awarded usually at the end of a cycle.







The Programme Cycle SUMMARY



THE PROGRAMME CYCLE IS AN EDUCATIONAL TOOL THAT MAKES CONSULTING THE YOUNG PEOPLE INTO A SYSTEM



The programme cycle is not just a way of organizing everything that happens in the Unit. It is also an educational tool which facilitates the type of learning proposed by the Scout Method. Through the programme cycle the young people:

-  Learn to have and express an opinion and take decisions in keeping with it.
-  Use mechanisms of participation which take their opinion into account and teach them to respect and value the opinions of others.
-  Learn to develop, present and defend a proposal.
-  Acquire organizational abilities and develop negotiation skills.



The different phases of a programme cycle –especially the first three, which usually take three weeks– coordinate different points in time and situations which give the young people the opportunity to participate and to practise democratic life.

At first these “steps” may seem to represent a more complicated approach than some Scout Units usually take, but they are simply a sequence that orders and puts names to what is needed to encourage young people to participate naturally.

Baden-Powell used to say that “the Patrol system helps Scouts to understand that they hold considerable sway over what their Unit does. This system is what makes the Scout Unit, and therefore Scouting in general, genuinely cooperative.” (*Aids to Scoutmastership*, 1919).

“Genuine cooperation” takes a certain amount of time. Time to see what is happening, to listen and to find a way of doing it better. In *Aids to Scoutmastership*, Baden-Powell also recommended, “When a Scout Leader finds him or herself in the dark about a young person’s preferences or character, a lot of light can be shed on the subject by listening. By listening you can discover each young person’s innermost character and find out how to interest him or her.”

The programme cycle is an efficient tool for listening and for the young people to make this attitude part of their personality. New ideas emerge when we listen, and when there are no new ideas we run the risk of “making the Scouts do activities that we think they should like” (Baden-Powell, *Aids to Scoutmastership*, 1919).

The Founder raised this concern repeatedly in different texts. He even brought it up in his farewell speech at the World Conference in The Hague in 1937, when he said that “...before I take any decision of this kind [choosing activities], I ask the best authority: the young people themselves.”

**The programme cycle is a very effective way
of asking the young people their opinion.**

UNIT ANALYSIS



While one cycle is ending
with the conclusions of the personal progress assessments
and achievements are being acknowledged,
another cycle is beginning with Unit analysis,
which includes setting an emphasis,
pre-selecting activities
and preparing the proposal to make to the Patrols.

As the last chapter discussed progress assessment, here we begin to examine the programme cycle, starting with the analysis of the Unit.

THE ANALYSIS IS CONDUCTED IN THE PATROL COUNCILS AND IN THE UNIT COUNCIL



The first
part of this analysis takes
place at one or several

Patrol Council meetings. This may be the meeting held to hear each member's self-assessment and the others' input to it, or the following meeting.

The Patrol Council conducts an **analysis** of how the Patrol and Unit have performed in the cycle that is ending; and **puts forward ideas** about the Patrol and Unit activities the members would like to carry out during the next cycle.

The Patrol Councils continue with a Unit Council meeting, in which:



The analyses of the Patrols are considered and a **general analysis** of the Unit is conducted, including aspects that we will discuss later.



On the basis of the analysis, an **emphasis** is defined for the new cycle, with particular reference to the growth areas that need most work.



In line with the emphasis and with the ideas put forward by the Patrols, the Unit Council **pre-selects** ideas for Patrol and Unit activities for the next cycle.



Once the activities are pre-selected, the **proposal** to be made to the Patrols is prepared.

Carrying out these steps is very simple.
There is no need for the process to be very long.



When the Unit analysis has been completed, the emphasis needed for the next cycle will automatically become clear. Once the emphasis is defined, we must imagine activities that respond to that emphasis. After generating activity ideas, we have to think of a way to propose them to the young people. From the point of view of the Unit Council, all this can be achieved in one well-run meeting; in the conversation these steps are related and follow on from each other naturally.

THE ANALYSIS CONDUCTED BY THE PATROLS IS DIFFERENT FROM THE ANALYSIS BY THE UNIT COUNCIL



The analysis conducted by the Patrols tends to focus more on the individual Patrol than on the Unit, and refers to subjects that are of more immediate interest to the young people.

They will tend to talk about future activities, the atmosphere in the Patrol, the relationships between its members, internal roles, the progress achieved, problems that have been carried over and outstanding tasks. It is not necessary for these analyses to follow any pre-established plan. Experience shows that better results are obtained when the young people discuss their points of view without being tied to a specific format. Their appraisal will naturally throw up concerns that constitute valuable clues to the Unit's performance.

The analysis conducted by the Unit Council takes these evaluations into account, but it takes a more educationally focused approach based on the application of the Scout Method, the development of the activities, the achievement of personal objectives by the young people and the performance of the Adult Leaders.

The difference between the two analyses lies in the fact that the young people are interested in organizing adventures with their peer group, while the Unit Council and the Adult Leaders are concerned with the educational results of these.

The analysis by the Unit Council examines the Patrols and the Unit as

a whole, seeking to determine how much headway was made in the previous cycle and what should be done in the immediate future. The Unit Council does not examine the results of any specific activity or the individual situation of any Patrol or member, although the general analysis will clearly draw on the conclusions of such evaluations.











THE ANALYSIS IS OF A GENERAL NATURE

THE ANALYSIS REFERS TO GROUP LIFE, TO OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES, AND TO THE PERFORMANCE OF THE ADULT LEADERS



In keeping with its educational nature, the Unit Council's analysis must answer a number of basic questions:

-  **Does life in the Patrols and the Unit reflect the application of all the elements of the Scout Method?**
-  **Is there a good balance between fixed and variable activities?**
-  **Are our fixed activities interesting and meaningful for the young people?**
-  **Have the variable activities carried out in the Patrols and in the Unit been attractive, challenging, useful and rewarding?**
-  **Have the activities provided the young people with opportunities for balanced development in the different growth areas?**
-  **Is each young person's personal growth monitored adequately?**
-  **Do the young people appear to be achieving the behaviour patterns envisaged in the objectives?**
-  **Are the Adult Leaders carrying out their role effectively?**



Each of these questions have several aspects that may or may not be considered, depending on how in-depth the analysis is intended to be.

Each Unit Council will deal with these questions in the way they think best. They may also alter them or add other questions, as there is no single right way of conducting this analysis. The content will not vary a great deal, however, as an educational analysis concerns the basic mission of the Unit.

ONCE THE ANALYSIS IS COMPLETE, AN EDUCATIONAL EMPHASIS IS SET FOR THE CYCLE THAT IS BEGINNING



The emphasis is a certain tone that will be given to the new cycle, which arises from a comparison between the Unit analysis and the objectives that the Unit has set for itself that year. As the objectives for the year are the concrete expression of the Unit's vision of the future, the emphasis is a means of steering the actions towards the vision, by strengthening the positive aspects that were identified, trying to mitigate or eliminate the negative ones, and directing corrective action for the cycle that is beginning.

The emphasis represents a framework within which the programme cycle will operate. The Patrols are involved in defining the emphasis through their Patrol Leaders and Assistant Patrol Leaders, who are members of the Unit Council.



Examples of analyses and the respective emphases

ANALYSIS

- The young people find the activities attractive. There is a good balance between fixed and variable activities. All the growth areas are covered.
- There are too many Unit activities and not enough for individual Patrols.
- The life of the Patrols is not very intense.
- Individual monitoring is not constant.
- No contact with other educational agents.

EMPHASIS

- Increase the variety of activities and keep them attractive.
- Reduce the number of Unit activities and encourage Patrol activities.
- Strengthen the internal culture of the Patrols and work on training the Patrol Leaders and Assistant Patrol Leaders.
- Each Adult Leader to enhance personal contact with the young people he or she monitors.
- Establish links with the young people's families and school teachers.

In the Unit in this example, the activities work well, but the Patrol system exhibits some weaknesses and personal monitoring is inadequate. Both are serious lacks, and the emphasis immediately sets guidelines to correct them.



ANALYSIS

The Unit works well, but the Patrols carry out too many activities in their meeting pace and in the city; and the young people's progress shows that they lack experience of life in nature.

EMPHASIS

Encourage more Patrol activities in the open air during the new cycle.

In this case –which is less descriptive than the first– the Unit has realized that it is very “urbanized” and has proposed to correct this situation in the next cycle. The fact that this analysis is succinct in the extreme makes it no less valid. It may be a new Unit that has limited its analysis to the subject of life in nature. Alternatively, it may be a more experienced Unit that has opted to summarize the other aspects of the analysis in the expression “the Unit works well”, and concentrate on the only area it considers to be lacking.







ONCE THE EMPHASIS IS SET, THE ACTIVITIES ARE PRE-SELECTED



Once the emphasis for the new cycle is set, the Unit Council pre-selects the activities that will be proposed to the Patrols. These are both activities for the Patrols themselves (Patrol activities) and activities for them to consider in their proposal to the Unit Assembly (Unit activities). This pre-selection includes as many as possible of the ideas raised by the Patrols at their Council meetings, providing that these are not contrary to the emphasis and do not, in the opinion of the Unit Council, involve any risk for young people of this age.

In principle, only the variable activities are pre-selected. Exceptionally, some aspects of the fixed activities may be pre-selected also, such as the place chosen for camping. The fixed activities are incorporated into the calendar when the activities are organized, as we will see later.

When we pre-select activities, we should consider a number of points:

-  The activities must be related to the emphasis and must contribute to the achievement of objectives in all the growth areas, even if the emphasis affords priority to one or several areas.
-  We should select more Patrol activities than Unit activities.
-  The Patrol activities must be suitable for the age of the Patrol members.
-  The pre-selection must be varied and must not repeat activities that have been carried out recently.
-  The activities chosen should be of different lengths.
-  It is advisable to pre-select about twice the number of activities that can feasibly be carried out during a cycle. This increases the options and encourages the creation of other ideas.



**Once the activities are pre-selected,
the proposal to be made to the Patrols is prepared.**

PROPOSING AND SELECTING ACTIVITIES



The emphasis is presented to the Patrols together with the proposal of activities that have been pre-selected by the Unit Council.

Each Patrol selects the Patrol activities that it will carry out and prepares a proposal of shared activities for the Unit as a whole.

The Patrols inform the Unit of the Patrol activities that they have chosen and present their proposal of Unit activities, which are then selected by means of different democratic games.

For these purposes a new round of Patrol Council meetings is held, followed by a Unit Assembly.

THE PROPOSAL CONTAINS THE EMPHASIS, SOME PATROL ACTIVITIES AND ALL THE UNIT ACTIVITIES



The Patrols are informed of the emphasis because, if they are unaware of it, they will not know which direction to steer decisions and propose activities. It is counterproductive to allow the Patrols to generate activities which are then discarded because they fall outside the framework of the emphasis.

Only the part of the emphasis that is related to the activities is presented. It will not benefit the young people to know about the Unit Council's conclusions on the application of the Scout Method or the way in which their personal growth is assessed.

The pre-selected Patrol activities that were generated by the young people can be returned to the Patrols that thought them up, unless they were proposed to be carried out by the whole Unit. Patrol activities that were generated by the Unit Council can be presented to all the Patrols, or only to a few, depending on the features and needs of each.






Pre-selected Unit activities are proposed to all the Patrols without exception, no matter who generated them.



THE PROPOSAL IS ANALYSED IN THE PATROL COUNCILS






Once the proposal has been drawn up, a new round of Patrol Council meetings is called. At these meetings:

-  The Patrol Leader and Assistant Patrol Leader present the emphasis established by the Unit Council, explaining the reasons for it.
-  This discussion leads to a decision on the activities the Patrol will conduct during the next cycle.
-  They also present the pre-selected activities.
-  Finally, the Patrol prepares its proposal of Unit activities to present to the Assembly.
-  They encourage the Patrol members to discuss the different ideas that have been raised for Patrol activities: the ones suggested by the young people themselves at the previous Patrol Council meeting, those suggested by the Unit Council and others which may arise then and there as they consider the emphasis defined.

THE UNIT ASSEMBLY SELECTS THE SHARED ACTIVITIES FOR ALL THE PATROLS



At a Unit Assembly held to conclude this second phase:

-  Each Patrol presents the Patrol activities it has chosen to carry out, including their order of priority and the estimated duration of each.
-  The Patrols then present their proposal for the Unit activities, using a *democratic game* chosen in advance.
-  As part of the democratic game itself, the Unit chooses the shared activities for the cycle, which are given an order of priority in accordance with the preferences recorded.

DEMOCRATIC GAMES ARE JUST ONE MORE ACTIVITY AND THEY PROVIDE A MEANS TO ESTABLISH THE MAJORITY OPINION



Democratic games are simulations in which the young people play a given role and try to obtain the Unit's support for their proposal, acting in accordance with the rules of the chosen environment.

Democratic games are given this name because they are a mechanism by which the opinion of the majority is expressed through role-play, even though the simulation does not always represent an institution or private activity pertaining to democratic life as such.

Through the game the young people put forward ideas, defend positions, learn to debate, take options and develop many other skills and attitudes that are inherent in a democratic decision-making process.

Thus, in common with the other phases of the programme cycle, selecting the activities is just one more activity which blends in with all the others that are normally conducted in the Unit.



**MANY ACTIVITIES
CAN BE USED
AS DEMOCRATIC GAMES**

The *democratic game* can be a parliamentary debate, an electoral process, a court hearing, a public auction, a shopping trip round the market, a stock exchange, a cabinet meeting or any similar situation.





DEMOCRATIC GAMES

CONTENT

WAY IN WHICH THE ACTIVITIES PROPOSED ARE REPRESENTED

VARIABLE THAT DETERMINES THEIR SELECTION

ELECTION DAY

The members of a community organization are to be elected: each Patrol presents its candidates and runs their campaign.

Each idea is a candidate competing for the favour of the electorate.

The number of votes received by each candidate.

THE SESSION IS OPEN!

A parliament meeting at which each Patrol represents the front bench of an imaginary political party.

The ideas are draft laws presented by the benches, which try to obtain approval for them.

The number of votes obtained determines the approval of ideas and their order of priority.

CONTENT

WAY IN WHICH THE ACTIVITIES PROPOSED ARE REPRESENTED

VARIABLE THAT DETERMINES THEIR SELECTION

STAKING IT ALL ON THE STOCK MARKET

The Scouts are provided with a certain amount of capital and become investors who buy and sell shares.

The ideas are shares which are traded at different prices.

The shares which make most profits.



GOING, GOING, GONE!

An auction at which the Patrols have a small supply of capital to buy and sell.

Paintings or works of art that are auctioned.

The objects are placed in order of priority by value, according to the sum paid for each.

CABINET MEETING

The President and his or her Ministers examine different projects that are competing for implementation.

The activity ideas are development projects for the country (the Scout Unit).

The projects that received most votes from the Ministers (all the young people).

CONTENT

WAY IN WHICH THE ACTIVITIES PROPOSED ARE REPRESENTED

VARIABLE THAT DETERMINES THEIR SELECTION

A MORNING AT THE MARKET

The Scouts are supplied with specially made banknotes, and become stall-holders and market-goers at an improvised market.

The ideas are the everyday products that are bought and sold at a street market.

The best-selling products.

SEE YOU IN COURT!

The Scout Unit becomes a Court of Law.

The activity ideas are put on trial, with defence and prosecution arguing in favour and against, respectively.

The number of votes by which the Court (the Unit Assembly) declares an idea innocent.



The activity sheets available in the Association include a number that describe these simulations in detail, and other activities that can be used as democratic games. The game chosen can be complemented by scene-setting, use of materials and the costume of the players involved. The idea is to make the most of the simulation, as both an exercise in participation and an attractive activity in itself.

THE OUTCOME OF THE DEMOCRATIC GAME DETERMINES THE UNIT ACTIVITIES



The democratic game –which constitutes a Unit Assembly– determines the activities that will be carried out during the cycle and places them in order of priority according to the preferences recorded. The Adult Leaders are facilitators, undertaking support roles that vary according to the game chosen. They must never interfere in favour of any particular alternative. Even if they consider that the outcome is not the best option, they must respect the decision taken. If their decisions are not acknowledged, the young people will never have the experience of facing the consequences of their own decisions, within reasonable safety margins. If the organization of the activities into a calendar –a task that corresponds to the Unit Council- should make it necessary to postpone or add any Unit activities, the amendment requires the agreement of the Unit Assembly, as will be discussed later.



ORGANIZING, DESIGNING AND PREPARING THE ACTIVITIES



In this phase the Patrol and Unit activities that have been selected are organized into a calendar.

Once the Unit Assembly has approved the calendar, each activity is designed and prepared.

THE ACTIVITIES ARE ORGANIZED INTO A CALENDAR



All the Patrol and Unit activities that have been selected are laid out and coordinated in a calendar for the programme cycle.

Making a calendar is a task that requires a certain amount of skill in order to schedule different activities of varying lengths in a harmonious manner, resolving variables such as time, resources and the balance between Patrol and Unit activities, and between fixed and variable activities. The calendar is drawn up by the Unit Council, in which all the young people are represented through their Patrol Leaders and Assistant Patrol Leaders. The way in which the calendar is organized determines how long the cycle will last.



Recommendations for drawing up the calendar

-  All the activities –both Patrol and Unit activities– that have been selected are included in the calendar. In order to coordinate all the activities it will probably be necessary to postpone or alter a number of selected activities, particularly those involving the whole Unit. This should be done in accordance with the order of priority established during the selection process and the changes must be approved by the Unit Assembly.
-  It is advisable to include activities that provide opportunities for progress in all the growth areas, without detracting from the emphasis established for the cycle.
-  As far as possible, the activities should refer to a broad range of subjects, and a balance must be struck between the fixed and variable activities, and between the Patrol and Unit activities.
-  Sometimes, for a number of reasons, diversity and balance can be lost during the selection process. In order to correct this, the Unit Council may incorporate some Unit activities providing that these do not substantially alter the selection made by the young people. Patrol activities added for this purpose require prior consent from the respective Patrol Council.
-  It is advisable to put the fixed activities into the calendar first. Remember that some of these have to be carried out on a specific date (for example, the anniversary of the Scout Group), and that others will last for several days (such as a camp).
-  Next, the variable activities are entered into the calendar, bearing in mind that many of them will be conducted simultaneously and that a number of fixed activities (meetings and camps) may include several variable activities. It is best to programme the longest ones first, as shorter ones are easier to slot in at the end.
-  Short-duration fixed activities, such as games, songs, dances and other spontaneous activities, do not need to be included in the calendar. Providing that the meetings, camps and long and medium-duration activities are programmed with some room for manoeuvre, these can be fitted in when necessary.
-  Back-up activities and proficiencies are not entered into the calendar either, as these are conducted on an individual basis. Again, if the calendar has sufficient leeway, these can be fitted in at different moments.
-  Activities have to be planned, and time devoted to designing and preparing them. Insofar as the balance between activities allows, it is a good idea to programme the activities that need more preparation for the second half of the cycle and keep the simpler ones for the early weeks.
-  Without neglecting other activities, a certain amount of time is needed at the end of the cycle for the conclusions of the personal progress assessment process.
-  The process of drawing up the calendar will help to establish whether there are enough Adult Leaders to carry out the task in hand at the rate required. If not, there are several options: reduce the number of activities, slow the programme or expand the team.
-  The calendar must be flexible, so that activities can be redistributed or substituted in unforeseen circumstances.



THE UNIT ASSEMBLY APPROVES THE CALENDAR



Once the calendar is ready, the Unit Council puts it to the consideration of the Unit Assembly, which gives the final approval. It is advisable to present the calendar to the Patrols a few days in advance of the Assembly, especially if alterations have been made to the selection or activities have been added.



ONCE THE CALENDAR IS APPROVED THE ACTIVITIES ARE DESIGNED

By designing an activity, we mean identifying all the elements involved and analysing the interaction between them. The Patrol activities are designed and prepared by the Patrols themselves, with the support of an Adult Leader, when required. The Unit activities are designed and prepared by the Unit Council or by a special team that it designates, with the support of the Patrols.

This task is simpler, though it can never be avoided altogether, when the activity has been carried out before or has been taken from one of the activity sheets supplied by the Association. In these cases, the task is facilitated by previous experience or by the suggestions provided, especially with the activity sheet, whose variations have been thought out and tested by a specialized team.



But this will not apply to all cases, and most of the activities selected will be broad outlines of ideas that need to be fine-tuned. Even when it has been taken from an activity sheet, some thought needs to be given to the activity to adapt it to the characteristics of the young people, the Patrols and the conditions in which the Scout Unit operates.

Design work can begin with the activities scheduled early in the cycle, as those which come later can be designed as the date approaches – without falling into the trap of leaving the task to the last minute, however.

Activities are usually designed at different points in the programme cycle, as they draw closer. We must remember, however, that longer or more complex activities need to be designed further in advance than shorter or simpler ones. Those that require a lot of materials will need to be thought out sooner than those which do not. Activities that call for external human resources need more planning ahead than those which use only internal resources, and activities that the Patrol or Unit is conducting for the first time need more careful consideration than ones which have been done before.

DEFINING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE ACTIVITIES IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THEIR DESIGN



The activity has probably been selected and slotted into the calendar with an implicit or general idea of what it is intended to achieve. This is not enough – we must specify its objectives more precisely.



This definition, which should be put down in writing, is essential for evaluating the activity afterwards, since evaluation consists of establishing whether the proposed objectives were achieved. If no objectives have been defined, there is nothing to base an evaluation on; and if the objectives have simply been assumed to be obvious, the evaluation will be confused and ambiguous.

The objectives of an activity are the results we hope to have achieved in the group of participants by the end of the activity.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITY OBJECTIVES

THE PATROL'S GOT RHYTHM!

Choosing a melody, composing a song, making the instruments needed to play it, organizing a festival, presenting the song and choosing a winning number are some of the challenges of this activity, which puts the young people's musical skills, creativity and humour to the test.

OBJECTIVES

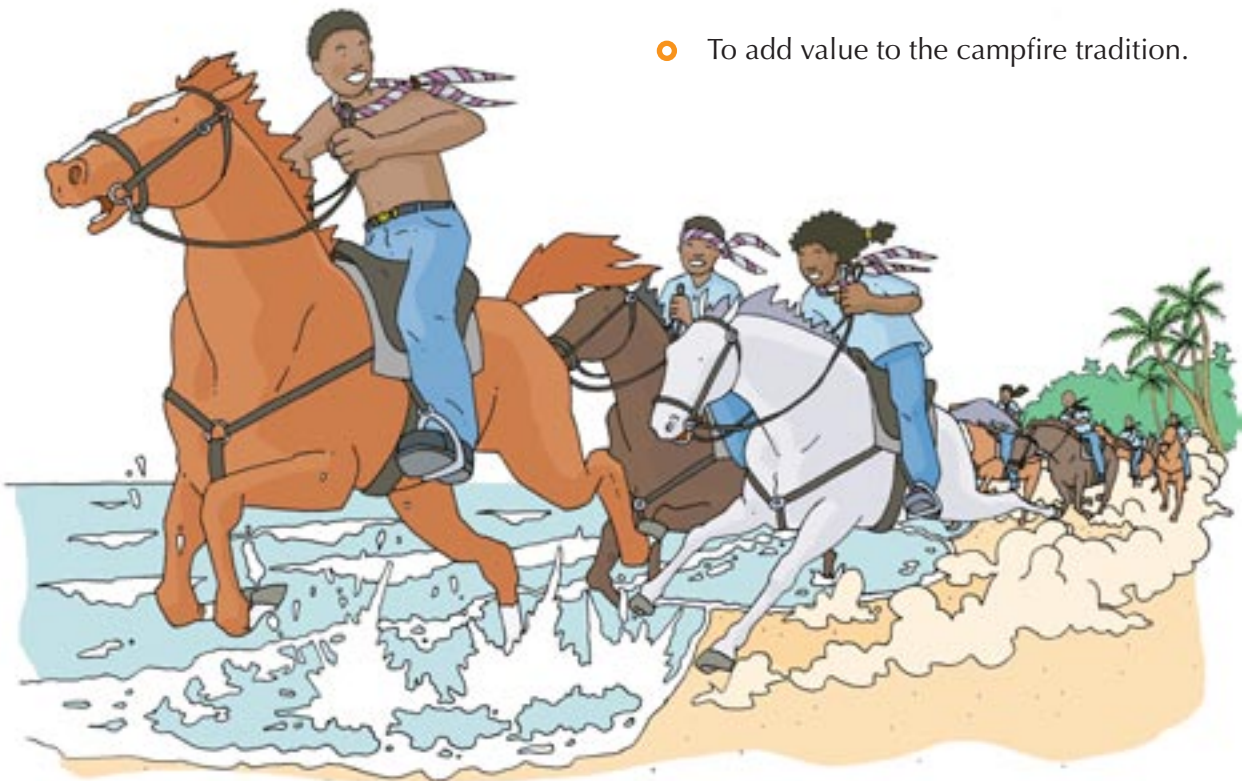
- To become familiar with and learn to make simple musical instruments.
- To develop artistic and musical skills.
- To develop team working skills.

THE FIRE CELEBRATION

The members of each Patrol examine the difficulties they have had as a group. The "shortcomings" are represented creatively with cardboard figures, which are burned one night at the campfire, while the Patrols make commitments to put right their mistakes.

OBJECTIVES

- To express his or her point of view in a creative manner.
- To constructively criticize aspects of the Patrol that could be improved.
- To learn to make symbolic cardboard figures.
- To add value to the campfire tradition.



ONCE THE OBJECTIVES ARE DEFINED THE DESIGN IS COMPLETED



By designing an activity we can expect better results and avoid surprises when we come to carry it out. As well as defining the objectives, other design issues include:

- What kind of place would be best for the activity?
- How long will it take?
- If it is a Unit activity, what will the role of the Patrols be? And if it is a Patrol activity, what role will the young people play?
- What kind of adult resources and materials do we need and in what numbers?
- How much do these materials cost and where can they be obtained?
- Is the activity conducted all at once or does it have several stages?
- Does it involve any risks that we must guard against?
- Are there any possible variations?
- How is it evaluated?
- What criteria are used for evaluating it?



ONCE THE ACTIVITY IS DESIGNED, IT IS PREPARED TO BE CARRIED OUT ON A CERTAIN DATE



The preparation tasks vary depending on the type of activity involved: preparing for a one-hour activity is very different from preparing for a seven-day camp.

When you are preparing any activity, however, it is very useful to have a look at the “route sheet” on the next page:

ROUTE SHEET

Although a number of Adult Leaders, young people and even external experts are involved in preparing an activity, there must always be someone who is **responsible** for the activity, and to whom everyone else reports.

Does everyone know who is in charge of the activity?

Any activity, however attractive, needs to be **promoted**, and this needs to be planned in advance.

**How is the activity to be promoted?
Who will do it?
What materials are needed?
Who will obtain or make them?**

The **place** where the activity is held is a key to its success. The outcome of the activity is affected by the venue's size, privacy, surroundings, tidiness and cleanliness and noise level. The venue is even more important when the activity is outside the usual meeting place. In the case of camps and excursions it is important to visit the site in advance and ensure that all the planned activities can be carried out there.

**Have the place and the person responsible for finding and preparing the place been identified?
Have you visited the place to check that it is suitable?
Has permission been obtained to use it?**

Some short activities take place in a single stage, while others, especially the longer ones, have several **phases** of different duration and with different requirements.

Have you gone over the various phases of the activity and designated someone to be responsible for each?



Almost all the activities have **variations**, which can be implemented one after the other or simultaneously.

Have you prepared the materials you will need for the different variations you intend to use?

Patrol activities are prepared by the young people, and the Unit activities by the Unit Council with the **participation** of the young people.

Are the young people taking part in the preparations for the activity in an appropriate manner?

When we need **external human resources** we need to arouse their enthusiasm and commit them to the enterprise in advance. We cannot have an early morning's fishing without a fishing expert, or a brief photography course without the support of a photographer.

Are the people from outside the Unit committed and have you secured their participation?



One dark night on a hill outside the city, everyone is ready and waiting to observe the stars. But the person responsible for obtaining the telescope, who arrives late, remembers only on arrival that he was supposed to pick it up on the way. Anyone who has had an experience like this will never forget the importance of **support materials**.

Have you checked if the materials you need for the activity have been obtained or made?



Many activities have no **cost**, but others which last longer or use more materials, such as camps or longer variable activities, need funding to be obtained and administered properly.

Has a budget been drawn up for the activity?
Have the necessary resources been obtained?
Is someone in charge of administering them?
Have accounting rules been established?

The person who is responsible for the activity should **supervise** continually, checking that allotted tasks are being carried out, until the activity is fully prepared.

Have you checked that everything is ready before you begin the activity?

When you prepare an activity you may have to make changes to the original calendar, as this is when you establish definitively how much time you will need for each activity. If the calendar is flexible it will be easy to make adjustments.



CARRYING OUT AND EVALUATING THE ACTIVITIES



After the Unit has devoted time to taking decisions and getting organized, it moves into the central phase of the cycle which accounts for most of the time available.

This phase involves what the young people enjoy most: doing things! It also involves what most interests the Adult Leaders: helping the Scouts to develop by means of the things they do.



In this phase it is therefore necessary to distinguish between carrying out and evaluating the activities and monitoring personal development.

As we discussed personal development in chapter 11, here we will examine the way in which the activities are conducted and evaluated.

PATROL AND UNIT ACTIVITIES ARE CONDUCTED AT THE SAME TIME



In accordance with the calendar established, each Patrol carries out its activities independently, under the coordination of the Patrol Leader, with the support of the Adult Leaders when necessary, and supervised by the Unit Council.

The Patrol activities are coordinated with the Unit activities, which may be either successive or simultaneous. These activities are coordinated by the Unit Council, directly, through a number of Adult Leaders or by designating special teams formed by Adult Leaders and Patrol Leaders or Assistant Patrol Leaders. These teams are created for a specific activity and dissolved when it is over.

Coordinating and conducting the Patrol and Unit activities –fixed and variable, long and short– is like putting together a giant jigsaw puzzle. Each piece may appear unimportant on its own, but together they form an image that would not be the same if any of the pieces were missing. The Unit Council is responsible for assembling the pieces of the puzzle –the activities– by checking each week that the programme is proceeding as scheduled in the calendar.

IT IS ALWAYS NECESSARY TO PROVIDE MOTIVATION FOR THE ACTIVITIES



it is always necessary to motivate them as their interests can change between the time when the activity is selected and when it is begun. Motivation determines how keen young people are to throw themselves into something, and to commit themselves to aiming for good results.

Although the young people themselves selected the activities,



Motivation starts not moments or days before the beginning of an activity, but long before. It takes different forms and creates an expectant atmosphere that lasts until the day or the time the activity begins. Motivation must continue during the activity too, to keep up enthusiasm and self-confidence, which tend to wane when difficulties arise and the result looks more uncertain than at the outset.

CARRYING OUT THE ACTIVITIES MUST GENERATE EXCITEMENT



The young people need to experience the activity as a celebration. It must create a *buzz* in them that will encourage them to leap into the next one with renewed enthusiasm. If they do not see Scout activities as one of their main priorities, then these are unlikely to generate experiences capable of influencing development and helping them to make progress towards their objectives.

**In order to make sure that the activities are exciting for everyone,
a number of points must be borne in mind:**

- ✚ All the young people need to have something interesting to do in the activity. An activity has participants, not spectators.
- ✚ The tasks involved in an activity have to be shared out fairly, taking into account the personal abilities of the participants.
- ✚ We must not allow ourselves to be influenced by gender-related cultural stereotypes. We must not, for example, give challenging tasks only to the boys and more passive ones only to the girls.
- ✚ Although the result of an activity is important, the Leaders should encourage the young people to enjoy the activity for its own sake, independently of the result that is obtained. This will help to develop an emotional stability that does not hinge on success or failure.
- ✚ We must ensure that those who do not achieve the results they hoped for are not humiliated, that members who work at a slower pace are not left out and that less popular boys and girls are not ignored.
- ✚ If a young person does not wish to take part in or continue with an activity, that wish must be respected. We should observe his or her behaviour more closely, and try to talk to him or her to find out what the problem is and provide whatever support is necessary. This may be done within the Patrol or by the monitoring Adult Leader.






THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR AN ACTIVITY KEEP UP ITS MOMENTUM







Activities always have a certain *momentum*. The Adult Leaders who are in charge of the activity –or the Patrol Leader or Assistant Patrol Leader in the case of Patrol activities– are responsible for *keeping up the momentum*.

Experience shows that certain situations can upset the momentum of an activity.

-  An activity may be a little “cold” to start with, but the enthusiasm and interest will increase gradually as results begin to be obtained and the action generates new experiences. If the person responsible for the activity is brimming over with enthusiasm, the others will soon find themselves infected by it.
-  There is no need to create a song and dance or become a star attraction to generate enthusiasm. Quiet encouragement, support that disappears and reappears as necessary, is at least as effective.
-  The person in charge of the activity does not solve all the problems that may arise. It is better not to give too many instructions or suggestions, and instead let the participants overcome obstacles, think up alternatives or invent solutions for themselves.



-  We should try to avoid gaps, which are usually a result of poor preparation. When they have been caused by unforeseen circumstances, we must make whatever alterations are necessary and use whatever back-up action we can to recover the momentum of the activity. In the case of short activities, it is always useful to have an alternative “gap-filler” or replacement activity to hand, such as a surprise activity, an evaluation game, a variation on the same activity or simply another activity.

-  During more passive activities it is a good idea to intersperse songs, dances, little games or other minor activities that involve movement.
-  When people from outside the Unit are involved in the activities, they should step in at a suitable point, thus forming part of the context, and not cause a break in the momentum. This means that people who lend their services must know their role in advance and cannot turn the event into a separate show of their own.
-  Those responsible for the activity must be the first on the scene and be ready for the activity, especially at the regular meetings. Being there in advance enables us to reduce anxiety levels, ensure that everything is ready and provide motivation.

CARRYING OUT THE ACTIVITIES HELPS TO MAKE US RESPONSIBLE



A Scout activity is not a casual or chance meeting in the street, and those in charge must make the Scouts aware of this. Activities constitute a special opportunity to develop habits that make us more responsible people.

Being punctual, looking after the places that have been lent to us and returning them cleaner than we received them, giving equipment back on the date agreed, keeping the Unit and Patrol tools in good repair, discharging the tasks entrusted to us and demanding the same in return are attitudes which form habits and social skills that are very important for the development of the personality.

People who do not act in this manner will soon find doors closed to them. Those who display a responsible attitude, however, will earn a good reputation that will be a great asset and their best calling card, in Scouting and outside it.



ACTIVITIES MUST MINIMIZE POTENTIAL RISKS



There are potential risks in all our activities. It is the duty of those in charge to ensure that Scout activities do not cause accidents.

Our equipment, our materials, the route we choose for an excursion, the means of transport, the type of activity, the place it is conducted, the location of the kitchen, handling of the cooking fire, the food we eat, the clothing we wear, the location of the tents – everything we do and everything we use may involve a degree of risk and could potentially cause an illness or an accident. We must therefore pay as much attention to these things as we do to the young people's immediate safety.

Below are a number of recommendations which are applicable to any situation or environment. Adult Leaders need to know and follow these recommendations:



Prevent: take time to imagine and identify all the potential hazards that are implicit in what we do, work out how to minimize these and set clear limits.



Inform: everyone has to be informed, clearly and directly, what the risks are, in order to avoid dangerous behaviour. When appropriate a system of notices and signs may be used.

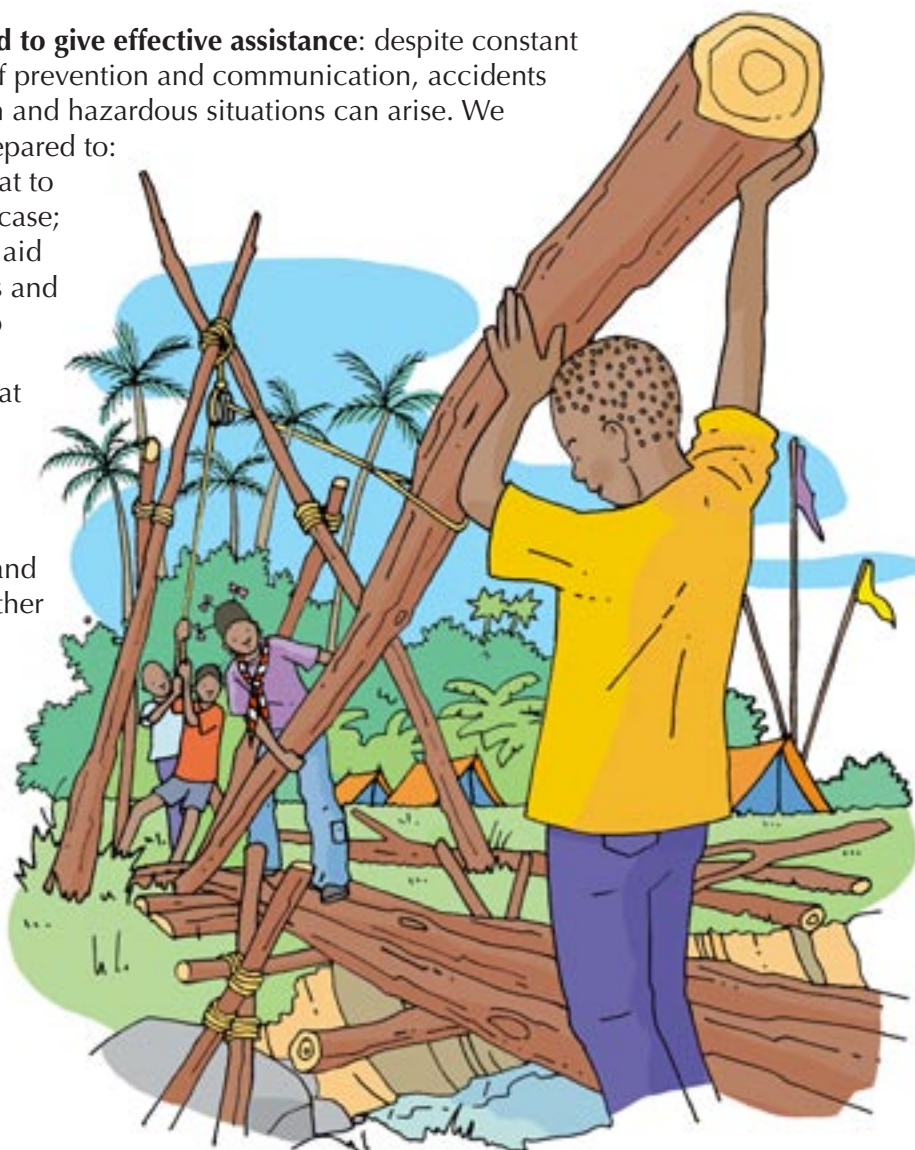


Be constant with prevention and information: prevention is an ongoing requirement. Repeat information about risks or hazards frequently and keep signs in good repair.



Be prepared to give effective assistance: despite constant measures of prevention and communication, accidents can happen and hazardous situations can arise. We must be prepared to:

- know what to do in each case;
- have first aid implements and materials to hand; and
- know what measures to take to provide timely assistance and not leave other potentially hazardous areas uncovered in the meantime.





ACTIVITIES ARE EVALUATED BY THE LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT OF PREVIOUSLY DEFINED OBJECTIVES



Evaluating an activity consists of:



Observing in the course of the activity, to see whether it is possible to improve the way it is carried out. This means following the action to try to optimize the results.



Analysing the results in order to establish whether the objectives that were set at the beginning have been achieved. This means determining whether the group of participants got from the activity what was intended.

In order to deal with these two aspects of activity evaluation, we need to have set objectives in advance and put them down in writing. If there are no objectives, there can be no evaluation. If the objectives are not in writing, the evaluation is likely to be ambiguous, as each person will have a different understanding of what the activity was expected to achieve.

If the objectives are vague, there will inevitably be a temptation to reduce the distance that separates them from the actual results, thus exaggerating the achievements and encouraging complacency.

Objectives should always be written down for the *variable activities*, given their broad range of aims and contents. Exceptions are:



Instantaneous activities, for which there would be no sense in writing down objectives, given their surprise nature.



Individual backup activities, as these are suggestions made to a young person by the monitoring Adult Leader, and there is no need to write down the objectives.



Individual tasks within a group activity, which amount to sharing out responsibilities.



Proficiencies, for which objectives may or may not be written down, which is a matter for the Adult Leader and proficiency monitor to decide, depending on the agreement they have reached with the boy or girl.

By contrast, the *fixed activities* generally do not need written objectives, as their content is always quite similar and they are conducted in a fairly standardized way. This is the case of the regular meetings, games, stories, songs, dances, ceremonies and so on.

We should write down objectives, however, for some fixed activities, such as *camps and excursions*, which have varied contents and encompass a number of variable activities.

ACTIVITIES ARE EVALUATED BY OBSERVATION



Activities are evaluated by observation. Young people, Adult Leaders, parents and other people who have a part to play in evaluating an activity observe in the normal way: by watching, listening, feeling, perceiving, analysing, comparing and forming opinions. In chapter 11 we explained that the achievement of objectives is assessed in the same way. It is worthwhile to develop the habit of recording your observations in a little notebook, as it is easy to forget them.



Evaluation by *measurement*

–which corresponds to the formal education system and enables us to measure relatively accurately through tests what young people have learned about certain knowledge or skills– is not really applicable to Scout activities, as these have little to do with acquiring formal knowledge. We are interested in the person as a whole and that places us firmly in the domain of attitudes. Exceptionally, however, certain manual skills and specific techniques may be evaluated by measurement.

ACTIVITIES ARE EVALUATED IN THE COURSE OF THE ACTIVITY AND AT THE END AND SEVERAL PARTIES ARE INVOLVED



DURING THE ACTIVITY

It is advisable to evaluate in the course of the activity when it is of medium or long duration and has several phases. These will usually be *Unit activities*, so the evaluation will involve the young people, the Adult Leader and occasionally third parties, when appropriate.



With these activities, evaluation along the way is intended to determine if any corrective or back-up action is needed. If not all the young people are taking part, we have to find a way to get them all involved. If the activity is becoming unnecessarily prolonged, we have to speed it up. If there is little interest, we must think about motivation. If it is going off at a tangent, we need to find a way to get it back on course or turn it into two parallel activities.

In order to take whatever corrective action is deemed to be required on the basis of this evaluation, those responsible for the activity must be flexible and prepared to reinvent it.

AT THE END OF THE ACTIVITY

All activities must be evaluated when they come to an end. Even the shortest ones should have an evaluation, albeit as brief as the activity itself.

The *Patrol activities* are evaluated by the Patrol Council. The Patrol Leader or Assistant Patrol Leader then informs the Unit Council of the results.

The Unit activities are evaluated first in the Patrols and then in the Unit Council. Exceptionally, a Unit Assembly may be called to conclude the evaluation of an activity, if the activity has been very significant for everyone or if it is necessary to establish rules as a result of experiences during the activity.

The parents are involved in the evaluation only insofar as they took part or helped with the activity. Also when they have witnessed the impact of the activity, such as when the young people have carried out part of an activity at home or when the parents have had the opportunity to see what they do; or when they see the way their child has been involved in a long duration activity; or upon return from a long camp; or at the beginning of a year with respect to the activities of the preceding period.



Evaluation by third parties, like by the parents, is possible only when they have played a part in the activity or are in a position to measure its impact. For example, a specialist who took part in an activity which was directed at learning a certain skill, or teachers when the activity involves the school.

The Adult Leaders always evaluate the activities, during the activity and at the end, after all the other evaluations. The purpose of their evaluation is to draw conclusions about the way the programme is being put into practice and to examine their own part in it, to establish whether they discharged the responsibilities that were expected of them in a satisfactory manner.

EVALUATION OF THE ACTIVITIES PROVIDES INPUT FOR ASSESSMENT OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT



Throughout this Handbook we have emphasized the

difference between evaluating an activity and assessing the young people's personal development. However, although the two processes have different objectives they both draw on the same instances of observation.

When we observe an activity in full flow, we cannot avoid seeing at the same time the way a boy or girl is performing and noticing the changes in him or her. Thus observing an activity also provides us with information on the young people's personal development.

At the end of a programme cycle, when a few months have gone by and a number of activities have been conducted, this information enables us to arrive at a conclusion on the progress a boy or girl has made towards his or her personal objectives. The monitoring Adult Leader will then share these conclusions with the young person when they are in the process of reaching a consensus, as explained in chapter 11.

