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## Looking At Quality In Scouting

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*Another Scout I know, Paul, left the local Scout troop the other day, after 2 years. He said he did not like doing the same old things over and over again. He was promised exciting activities, challenges and fun, but that is not what he was offered. He mentioned other Scouts feel the same way...*

Is Paul any different to Pawel, Paolo, Pavle or many other young people who are leaving our movement? They have expectations, dreams or needs but we fail to meet those – so they leave. In other words, Paul made a decision to exercise his right to say enough is enough. He is in fact just like us. We continually make decisions as to the level of 'service' we receive when we go shopping or out to dinner. As a customer we make judgements all the time and we decide to either use the supplier or not. So why would we be surprised that Paul made the same judgement call. He is a customer and we failed to satisfy his needs.

If we do not think of what level or kind of service we currently offer the 'Scouts' then we may well just keep on providing more of the same.

*A British banker put it succinctly when he said 'one form of managerial madness is doing the same thing over and over again but expecting to get different results'.*

If we in Scouting do not wake up and "smell the coffee" then we will continue to see this happen time and time again. If we could improve the 'quality' of Scouting in Paul's old troop then that just might be enough to keep the other scouts involved.

Of course there are many troops, groups or associations that need to improve the way they work and the scouting they offer – in other words their quality.

*"Aiming for good quality is a stupid idea. The only thing that counts is your quality getting better at a more rapid rate than your principal competitors".*

*Tom Peters*

We will not explore who the competitors are now but suffice to say there are many other activities, clubs, gadgets, leisure industry, things for young people to do today – many more seemingly attractive than Scouting.

Quality in Scouting must not just be another 'trendy idea' that is overtaken by the next idea. It must become the way we work. Everything we do must be high quality – all the time.



## So what is quality?

People often find it difficult to define quality precisely. Definitions are often subjective and include words like goodness, luxury, appearance, high price, long lasting. There are without doubt differences of opinion about the meaning of quality.

*Quality is rather like the old joke about the elephant - it is hard to describe but you certainly know it when you see it.*

Quality does not mean "the best". In fact the word "best" is not part of any definition of quality. In business, "quality" is defined as "meeting the customer's expectations". Translating that to Scouting, "quality" is quite simply "meeting the expectations of the youth and their parents". The Quality Program Standard is not a description of the best program; it is the description of the basic minimum (Quality Program Standards, Greater Toronto council, Canada, <http://www.scoutgtr.org>)."



Not long ago you would see in many advertisements on TV, magazines etc using the word "quality" to describe their product. Today it is implied and we are much more aware of quality companies and their branding. Some ads do not even have any words but the company still manage to get you to believe it is very high quality.

Of course it is not only the actual product that people make judgements on today. It is the full end to end service. "They make terrific cars. Pity about their lousy after sales service. And you can never get the right person on the phone to sort out problems."

From a Scouting example: you may have great fun earning a badge but if there is a delay in being presented with the badge you can feel let down.

Quality covers everything:

- Quality is about customer satisfaction
- Everyone in an organisation is responsible for quality (though lead comes from the top)
- All aspects of a product or service contribute to the customer's perception of quality - even those over which the organisation has little or no control
- Delivering poor quality not only leads to lost business/service/members. It also costs money.

It could also be explained as 'what the best do better'.

So the responsibility for quality starts at the top and that is what many have already started to consider – looking back over the past few years and thinking about "where we're going and how?" It is vital that we get our plans right and that they are implemented in an effective manner. With the commitment of the most senior people to improving quality it is likely that the organisation will shine.

*Everyone, no matter what position they hold, makes a contribution to Quality. No - one can say: "It isn't my job".*

Only organisations which take total responsibility ~ for quality ~ will react in the way customers now expect.

*'The pursuit of quality is a journey, not a destination'*

The injection of a quality approach into everything we do will without doubt greatly help us in the achievement of our goals. Careful consideration is required in the planning of this journey, as is the kind of 'vehicle(s)' we wish to use. It is easy to rush out and shout: "we must improve our quality", but the effort can be lost if people are not listening or prepared as to what they need to do.

We must be careful and encourage people to consider reusing or improving what already exists, in such things as helping improve our programmes, development, adult training, management and other important areas. We have developed many excellent tools/methods such as Adults in Scouting, Renewed Approach to Programme, ARGOS, Scout.Boom.Comm, etc; so why would we wish to reinvent the wheel?

### So who is responsible?

What we are really saying about quality is that we are all responsible for it and our members (including us) expect it. It could save valuable resources if we get things right first time. Quality in Scouting applies to everything we do.

Now is the time to consider how best to uplift the movement and really bring improvements to all our members. This will require us honestly and earnestly to:

- Put customers (Scouts and Scouting) at the heart of what we do
- Understanding what is important to our customers is vital
- We must listen to them and act on their feedback to improve the customer experience

*If we do not consider how to improve, then the alternative is quite obvious there will be many 'Scouts' looking for other ways of filling their spare time.*

We must clearly understand and then implement a strategy to improve 'quality' in all areas but the real challenge is to know where to start and how to measure success. Of course the question of whether to focus on a few or many areas will bear different fruits. Perhaps there is greater impact on improving 100 things by 1% than vice versa.

*Remember 'What gets measured – gets done'*



The other way to think of quality is to consider Moments of Truth. A moment of truth is any moment when a customer comes into contact with the products, systems, people, or procedures of an organisation and the result of this contact leads the customer to make a judgement about the quality of that organisation's products or services.

Watch out for more information on the idea of 'Moments of Truth'.



## So what next?

Start the debate and get people talking about 'how to improve what we do'. There is no need to even mention the word 'quality'. You may find the following questions useful to kick off the debate on how you can improve the Scouting experience for both the youth and adult members:

- Leadership – what can we do to improve the leadership at a certain level?
- 'Customers' – do we understand who they are and what they get from Scouting – can we measure their satisfaction, if so how?
- Responsibility - who is/would be responsible for delivering improvements and how does/should it happen?
- Strategy - how well do we it – (Plan, Do, Review), what can we do now to improve?
- What quality indicators are there in Scouting or how do we know how well we are doing?



This material was produced by the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Core Group, WOSM European Region, using outcomes from the Workshop on Quality organised in 2004 and the European Scout Symposium, held in 2006.

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## Examples of work on Quality in Scouting

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The following examples are offered 'for information' as an example of what others are doing to improve 'quality' in their associations. We are sure that you will like some of the ideas and maybe not all. Reuse what is best for your own situation.

### Self Assessment - Quality in Scouting

#### WOSM - European region

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The 21st Century Core Group in the European Region have designed a form to help you to assess the capacity of your organisation and to identify where you may be able to improve. It has been designed to be used by the National Management Team of your organisation. It is focused on organisational capability. You can find the Tool on our website on the address [http://www.scout.org/en/around\\_the\\_world/europe/about\\_scouting/21st\\_century/self\\_quality\\_assessment\\_tool](http://www.scout.org/en/around_the_world/europe/about_scouting/21st_century/self_quality_assessment_tool)

The form should be completed by each person individually first and then the results shared in order to see if a consensus result can be achieved. When agreement has been reached on your current position, you may decide that there are some areas you wish to improve.

It might be a good idea to have a facilitator present for this work to ensure a smooth-running process where everyone gets a say and to avoid discussions getting bogged down with too much politics.

When you have identified areas that you want to work on you may need help with this work from other associations or from specialists from the European Region.

The Core Groups of the European Scout Committee are here to help you with this work and so please don't hesitate to contact us if you need anything.

*For questions in relation to the use of this form and/or to request help please contact Milutin Milosevic - [milutin\(a\)scout.org](mailto:milutin(a)scout.org)*



## On the right track

### A handbook to assist in quality assessment in Scouting

In the last few years there has been a growing awareness of quality work in different areas. The Icelandic sport federation began using a quality tool for their clubs in the year 2000 and growing pressure began to rise on the local Scout group to show what they were doing so that local communities, companies and parents would see that this Scout group is doing a good job.

Bandalag íslenskra skáta (BÍS - The Icelandic Boy and Girl Scout Association) began in the year 2003 to look for some system to measure quality in scouting. It was decided to use the tool from the sport federation and also to look at what Scouting Ireland had done in that field. A team was formed to work on that tool and later on a project leader was hired for the project. In the year 2005 it was ready and tested on three local groups and published in the fall of 2005.

#### What does the tool measure?

The tool assist groups in measuring how they are doing in organising them self. Is the group running, does it have leaders, how are their finances taken care of, housing etc. The movement has to show that it has an active control on what we are doing and that it's a quality work.

You can download the tool in English on following addresses:

<http://www.scout.is/gogn/pdf/wosm/ontherighttrack.pdf>

<http://www.scout.is/gogn/pdf/wosm/frondpage.pdf>

[http://www.scout.is/gogn/pdf/wosm/end\\_e.pdf](http://www.scout.is/gogn/pdf/wosm/end_e.pdf)

With this quality award for Scouting we are saying that local Scout groups can let an outsider look at what they are doing according to accepted norm – if their Scouting is as they say then they get the award.

What do local Scout groups gain from this award is:

- Easier to get support from local community and companies. Parents are more likely to send their children to good Scout group.
- Encouragement to improve Scouting.
- The goal is to improve Scouting in the group, that's why it's important that those who are going to use participate in design of the handbook.

Already there are three groups that have got the award: Scout Group On The Right Track. They are raising their awareness in the community and it's easier to seek for funds. The next step for BÍS is to develop a tool to measure how the leaders in the group are doing, how Scouting is in the group?

*For more information questions in relation to this project, please contact Jón Ingvar Bragason - [jon\(a\)scout.is](mailto:jon(a)scout.is).*



## Qualité plus

### Eclaireuses et Eclaireurs de France

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#### The purpose of the project

The “Qualité Plus” project aimed to improve the quality of education and the organisation of the association and thus to contribute to an increase in membership.

The principles underlying its implementation were based on shared concerns, the feeling of continuous improvement and the role of a project within each structure.

Used as a tool to evaluate and improve our collective project, this process of quality improvement enabled us to verify the relevance, usefulness and effects of our educational work.

The “Qualité Plus” project was based on training in implementing a quality process, offering ways to better understand the challenges and usefulness of such a process in Scouting; it involved reflection and a situation analysis of each structure based on the shared concern that each team had observed; the identification of objectives and means to set in place so as to make improvements; and a tool to evaluate the work undertaken.

Support tools were developed for each occasion: documents to help with the analysis, setting of objectives and evaluation; the production of a “Quality Charter” that set out the association’s commitments.

The expected outcome of the project was that it should have an impact on the whole organisation, as much in terms of functioning as in the educational quality of the activities. In actual fact, it concerned all of the children and adolescents in the association (and their families), as well as all of the association’s structures.

#### The outcomes of the Project

The first observation that can be made is the strong level of involvement on the part of the majority of structures in terms of implementing the process.

The “Qualité Plus” project aimed to help Scout groups and regions to establish a common concern and to envisage what could be modified so as to improve the situation. Sometimes the changes were quite considerable and led to new projects.

The most notable results of the project concerned the structural change of attitude in terms of welcoming and supporting others. We noted a substantial improvement as a result of a change of attitude and the amount of time spent on making the individual feel welcome.

The quantitative indicators show an increase in the number of members and campers: over 600 new members.

There was a tangible increase in the reaction level of each structure concerning external requests, an improvement in the information and level of service offered to the public, an increase in the number of trainees from outside of Scouting (+15%), opening the Scout group camps to the public, and opportunities to create new groups.

The issue of supporting young unit leaders or young directors led to a strong level of mobilisation and the implementation of relevant and original means of doing so: a director-training platform, new training modules, the creation of a “passport” enhancing the value of the person’s commitment, and an increase of 30% in the number of trainers taking basic training.

The satisfaction of those involved is evident and the feedback of the local and regional commissioners all points in a positive direction. The project has generated conclusive results.

The project needs to continue. It will take time for the process to become a habit and to get the structures that did not become involved on board in 2006.

The outcomes are interesting and show that the project has been successful. The “Qualité Plus” project has generated new opportunities and innovations, but it is still far from transcending all of the association’s structures. There is still more work to be done.



## The 2007 OSU Plan

### Improving quality day-by-day at local level Les Scouts - Belgium

#### Why?

The 2007 OSU Plan was developed in 2000 to be applied in 2001.

Its ultimate goal: to enable each Scout group to have a better idea of where they can make improvements and to launch a challenge to the whole association so that the Scouting offer has a better chance of being enriching!

The challenge that was given to each of the 420 Scout groups is simple: over the following few years, to become a more operational Scout group in which quality is a priority.

#### The name?

OSU stands for Operational Scout Unit.

Why 2007? The Plan covered two periods of three years. Three years is the term of office of the chairman of our association.



#### How?

By consolidating its foundations and by working on some basic conditions, each Scout group was invited to strengthen (or establish) 14 fundamental pillars. These aimed to enable the group to become stronger so as to fulfil its educational role in our society.

It is not because the group implements it that meetings and camps will automatically be better. However, it will certainly increase the odds!

The OSU Plan is therefore not a new invention. Its simply brings together concerns that are as old as the Movement itself. The advantage of it is precisely that it brings these concerns together on the same plan so that they can be examined together.

#### What are some examples of the pillars?

Relations with parents, leadership of spiritual development, pedagogical coherence, leader training...

Each pillar has three action points that offer concrete areas of work that mark the progress made.

#### How does it work?

The OSU Plan is an urgent invitation to each Scout group council. It could be summarised as: "Advance at your own pace, select your priorities, but do something!"

The key time to assess the group's situation with respect to the 14 fundamental pillars is certainly when a Scout group leader takes up his or her function.

That person is the pilot: he or she leads the team of leaders towards achieving further progress. When that person is appointed, a contract is established with the leaders. For the subsequent two years, they decide together on the improvements to be made in one area or another.

The OSU pillars offer an ideal range of "ingredient" areas so that the group council can compose its future menu.

However, one does not have to wait two years to go over it all again! There are other councils, ongoing training in units, and the work of a small group of leaders supporting several leadership teams that exist to help things get moving.



The support structure (commissioners) is also involved in making the plan work. It is used as a working framework to guide us in many of the choices we make in terms of magazines, training work and meetings with leaders.

The Scout group leaders also work on the pillars, especially on how to make progress in them: in fact there are several workshops each year known as "group leader relays".

The commissioners thus do everything they can to support each Scout group closely.

OSU is not and will not be a system to classify groups as being "good" or "bad". The OSU Plan is more of an additional opportunity to tell those who isolate themselves: "We always lose something, sooner or later, in cutting off ties with others; so join the 2007 OSU and do things at your own pace!"

The list of the 14 pillars (currently being updated)

- Scout group council meetings
- Pedagogical coherence
- Taking part in the life of the Movement
- Parents as partners
- Scout group finances
- Reaching out
- Leader training
- Accompanying the development of faith
- Getting leaders in place
- Educational progression
- The size of units
- The size of Scout group councils
- External relations
- The frequency of meetings.



The full kit can be downloaded from [www.lesscouts.be](http://www.lesscouts.be) → "Télécharger" → "Cahiers de la farde de l'animateur" → "Le plan USO"

## Quality in Youth Programme Design Toolbox

### WOSM - European Region

Youth Programme is the core business of Scouting, its soul and main purpose, its most essential and unique characteristic. Quality in Youth Programme should be one of the deepest and permanent concerns of a Scout Association, as it is the only guarantee of adequacy in the fulfilling of the mission, of relevance in answering the needs of young people, of maintaining a sound membership.

Remember that in Scouting Youth Programme covers the totality of the experience proposed to young people:

- **Why** we do it, i.e. the educational objectives, in accordance with the purpose and fundamental principles of the Movement;
- **What** young people do in the Movement, i.e. the activities;
- **How** it is done, i.e. the method.

In Youth Programme, quality can be assessed at four distinct moments:

- **In designing**, i.e. in the process of creation, evaluation, revision and restructuring of a Youth Programme;
- **In design**, i.e. in the Youth Programme conception, architecture and contents;
- **In dissemination**, i.e. in the process of diffusion and spreading of the Youth Programme, from the national level that coordinates its creation or renewal to the local level that applies it; in fact, dissemination is a joint task of Youth Programme and Adults in Scouting;
- **In implementation**, i.e. at the local level where Scouting is directly applied to young people.

Many associations already have assessment tools for quality in implementation, which is definitely the most specific aspect of Youth Programme quality assessment, as it is narrowly correlated with the national Youth Programme design.

In this context, it was thought that the regional level should have an assessment tool for quality in designing and design as its priority, as these the priority tasks attributed to the associations at national level concerning Youth Programme. Such a tool is crucial to analyse and evaluate Youth Programme, leading – if it proves necessary – to a renewal process. The Youth Programme Core Group produced the "Quality in Youth Programme Design Toolbox" and it is now available from the Region.

An important issue of quality assessment, concerning the designing and the design of the Youth Programme, is that it should be done regularly on a medium-term basis. It requires an objective, neutral, and critical approach, which should have outcomes.

*To get a copy or for questions in relation to the use of this form and to request help please contact Radu Stinghe - [rstinghe\(a\)scout.org](mailto:rstinghe(a)scout.org)*

