

## Analysis of WOSM's Census 2000

Now that we are preparing to propose a strategy for 2007 and beyond, it is important to have a clear understanding of the Movement's current situation.

The preliminary analysis which we have undertaken, based on the 2000 census, covers two aspects:

- The extent of Scouting's educational programme, its lower and upper limits
- The age sections

Since several associations have provided incomplete data, it has not been possible to include them in the analysis. For this reason, the statistics cited in this document do not always correspond to those in the census.

### 1. THE EXTENT OF THE SCOUT PROGRAMME

#### 1.1. Duration in years

The Movement originally comprised only one age section, namely "Scouts" from age 12 to 16. Several years later, the "Cub Scouts", aged 8-12, were created, followed by the Rovers, from 16-20. Scouting's entire programme therefore lasted approximately 12 years.

Since the 1960s, many associations have added more age sections, before the Cub Scout and after the Scout sections, with the result that Scouting's educational programme has been extended considerably. Among the 73% of national associations which represent more than 17 million Scouts – i.e. 76% of the total membership examined – the Scout programme lasts for a total of 16 to 20 years. For nearly 14% of national associations (admittedly representing only 3.5% of the total WOSM members), it lasts more than 20 years.

Number of years covered	Number of associations	Percentage of associations	Number of members	% of total membership
More than 20	22	13.7	808,349	3.5
From 16-20	73	45.6	17,504,803	76.0
From 11-15	59	36.8	4,677,364	20.3
10 and less	6	3.7	30,804	0.1
	160	100.00	23,021,320	100.00

This duration might be considered excessive. Scouting has specific characteristics which restrict its effectiveness to a limited phase in a young person's development. By wanting to extend it over an excessively long period of time, are we not changing its very nature? Do associations which claim to provide an educational programme lasting more than 15 or 16 years really have the necessary means to reach their goals?

#### 1.2 Lower age limit of the Scout programme

It was initially by bringing down its lower age limit that the Scout programme was lengthened. In fact, during the 1970s many associations created a new age section, "Pre-Cubs" (under 7/8). This undoubtedly corresponded to public demand in numerous industrialised countries, which faced the urgent challenge of providing leisure-time activities for children aged 5-6, in particular due to the growing proportion of women employed outside the home.

The Pre-Cub section, usually called "Beavers", was successful to some extent in several countries, such as Canada and the United Kingdom. In fact, this resulted in modifying the traditional system of age sections by introducing two "pre-adolescent" age sections (see 3.2).

This kind of decision entails certain risks:

- Firstly, that of destabilising the age section system and stretching the Movement excessively to cover childhood. Several associations which use a system with two pre-adolescent sections suffer from a lack of older adolescents (see 3.5).
- Secondly, that of using the educational tool of Scouting outside the field of application for which it was designed. In essence, the Scout method is founded on the principle of co-operating within a peer group. Yet it is only around the age of 7-8 that children generally acquire the ability to co-operate fully within a group. In cases where the Beaver section starts at age 6, this raises some questions, but the problem is not too serious. However, what about associations which claim to start Scouting at age 3-4, or even refuse to set a lower age limit and present their first age section as being from age 0-6(!)? We cannot help wondering whether this is not a deviation: that of believing that Scouting, as an educational tool, has no limits and can be applied to everything. On the contrary, we believe that Scouting is an educational method with precise characteristics (see "The Essential Characteristics of Scouting") and a necessarily limited field of application.

The table below indicates the current situation:

Lower age limit	Number of associations	Percentage	Number of members	% of total membership
0	4	2.5	76,172	0.3
3-5 years	20	12.5	4,152,807	18.0
6-7 years	103	64.7	17,241,504	74.9
8-9 years	32	20.1	1,539,111	6.7
	159	100	23,009,594	100.00

- 4 associations out of 159 (2.5%) do not indicate a lower age limit for their programme! Luckily these only represent 0.3% of the membership.
- 20 associations (12.5%) have set a lower age limit which, in our view, is too low (age 3-5). They represent 18% of the membership!
- 132 associations (84.8%), representing 81.6% of the membership, have set a reasonable lower age limit (age 6/7 or 8/9).

Observations show that it is not by bringing down the lower age limit that an association gains many members. It may even be that a short-term increase is counterbalanced in the longer term by a loss of membership in the adolescent and post-adolescent age sections.

### 1.3 Upper age limit of the Scout programme

The upper age limit of the Scout programme has also increased since the 1970s. The average upper age limit is 22. The table below indicates the distribution of this limit in various categories. This limit is generally set at the age of civil majority (18 or 21) or at the age limit for youth determined by numerous international organisations (25-30). It is the latter limit which is used by the majority of Scout associations.

Lower age limit	Number of associations	Percentage	Number of members	% of total membership
17-19	29	18.8	1,384,617	6.0
20-22	43	27.9	4,388,467	16.9
23-25	48	31.1	12,756,155	55.4
26-28	10	6.4	543,328	2.0
29-30	3	1.9	106,711	0.5
No limit	21	13.6	3,902,077	16.9
	154	100	23,081,355	100.00

However, it can be observed that 13.1% of associations, representing 16.9% of the membership, have not set any upper age limit for their senior age section. This is harmful for at least two reasons:

- Without an upper age limit, it is impossible to define precise final educational objectives for Scouting: how can these objectives be set for the end of a young person's development, when the end point has not been set (see "RAP User's Guide")?
- Since the end of the educational experience within Scouting has not been set, there is no clear distinction between the status of a Scout leader or educator, responsible for the development and implementation of the Scout programme, and the youth member, who takes part in and benefits from the Scout programme. In fact, this is extremely important:
- Whereas Scouting is open to all young people without exception, according to the terms WOSM's Constitution, this is not the case for adults. In order to protect young people from harm, it is essential that adult leaders be selected and appointed according to precise criteria (morality, psychological balance, motivation, training, etc.) and for a limited period. How can such selection take place if there is confusion between adult leaders and members of the senior age section?
- Experience shows that when there is no clear distinction between young adult leaders and the youth members in the senior section, the latter tends to disappear. Local group leaders tend to be more interested in using young adult leaders than in making the effort required to support the development of a genuine senior section.
- A post-adolescent age section (over 15-16) is a necessity for Scouting today:
  - On the one hand, it enables concrete educational objectives to be set for the end of a young person's experience in Scouting - the moment when he or she becomes integrated into adult society. It is from these "final" objectives that the objectives for the younger age sections will be set as intermediate steps in a continuous development process.
  - On the other hand, supporting young people in the transition from childhood to adulthood is at the core of the mission of Scouting, as it was founded to help young people in this difficult transition. The relevance and quality of the Scout programme are measured by parents and potential partners, as well as by governmental and intergovernmental agencies, through Scouting's ability to support young people until the age of entering adult society.

## 2. THE AGE SECTIONS

It is difficult to analyse the results of the census correctly based on standard age sections: "Pre-Cubs", "Cub Scouts", "Scouts", "Venture Scouts" and "Rovers". In fact, these names correspond to very different age sections from one association to another.

### 2.1 Three broad stages

For the purpose of analysis, we propose to retain three broad stages of development, which we could call:

- Pre-adolescence
- Adolescence
- Post-adolescence

In general, despite minor differences, most associations respect two main passages: from childhood (pre-adolescence) to adolescence at the moment of puberty, around age 11; and the passage from adolescence to post-adolescence at around age 15.

152 associations out of 156 put the break between childhood and adolescence between the ages of 10 and 12 (the average is 11).

Between pre-adol and adol	9	10	11	12
Number of associations	4	48	82	22

134 associations out of 156 put the break between adolescence and post-adolescence between the ages of 14 and 15 (the average is 15).

Between ados and post-ados	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Number of associations	3	48	51	36	13	4	1

## 2.2 The different age section systems

We have identified five different age section systems:

- The traditional system dating from the Scouting's origin: PAP (a pre-adolescent section, under age 10/11); an adolescent section (between age 10/11 and 15/16); and finally a post-adolescent section over the age of 15/16. According to the 2000 census, out of 140 associations which gave complete statistics on their age sections, 58 associations, comprising more than 4 million members and representing more than 18% of the membership studied, use this system.
- The most widespread system is PAPP (a pre-adolescent section, an adolescent section and two post-adolescent sections). 61 associations use this system. They comprise more than 14 million members and represent 61.3% of the membership studied.
- Next there is the PPAP system (two pre-adolescent sections, one adolescent section and one post-adolescent section). It is used by only 8 associations, but they comprise 3,800,000 members and represent 16.5% of the membership studied.
- There is also a more sophisticated system: PPAPP (two pre-adolescent sections, an adolescent section and two post-adolescent sections). 21 associations use this system, comprising 918,000 members and representing 4% of the membership studied.
- Finally some associations use the PAAP system (one pre-adolescent section, two very short adolescent sections (for example 11-13 and 13-15) and one post-adolescent section). These associations only comprise 41,500 members and represent only 0.18% of the membership studied.

Systems	Number of associations	Number of members	% of total membership	% Pre-Ados	% Ados	% Post-Ados	Average length of programme (years)
PAAP	7	41,517	0.18	33	48	14	14
PAP	58	4,099,836	17.80	37	47	15	16
PAPP	61	14,136,905	64.39	37	44	25	17
PPAP	8	3,790,734	16.46	48	44	8	17
PPAPP	21	818,454	3.99	47	32	21	19

## 2.3 Adolescent sections

What emerges from all this is, above all the extraordinary, stability of the adolescent section, which usually bears the name of the Movement itself (Scout), as it was the first to be established. In most associations it represents approximately 45% of the members. This proportion varies little, regardless of the age section system used:

Systems	Percentage
PAAP	48
PAP	47
PAPP	44
PPAP	44
PPAPP	32

The only exception seems to be the PPAPP system. Caught between two pre-adolescent sections and two post-adolescent sections, the Scout section undoubtedly struggles to find its place.

## 2.4 Pre-adolescent sections

The proportion of pre-adolescent sections varies between 33 and 47%. The percentage clearly increases in the PPAP and PPAPP systems, which contain two pre-adolescent sections and increase the proportion of under 11s to 48 and 47% respectively.

Systems	Percentage
PAAP	33
PAP	37
PAPP	37
PPAP	48
PPAPP	47

## 2.5 Post-adolescent sections

It comes as no surprise to note that the systems which attain the highest proportion of young people over 15 are those with two post-adolescent sections: PAPP et PPAPP.

Systems	Percentage
PAAP	14
PAP	15
PAPP	25
PPAP	8
PPAPP	21

The associations which use the PPAP system are those with a significantly lower proportion of members over 15 (8%). The existence of two pre-adolescent sections "drags" the entire membership down towards childhood. With 48% of under 11s and only 8% of over 15s, the associations in this category risk being perceived as children's movements and therefore becoming less and less attractive to older adolescents. This risks setting up a vicious circle.

In this category, most members belong to two associations: The Scout Association of the United Kingdom and the Boy Scouts of America. The UK association has a particularly high percentage of pre-adolescents (68%) and a particularly low percentage of post-adolescents (5%).

Country	Pre-ados	Ados	Post-ados
United Kingdom	68	28	5
USA	38	55	7

In the PPAPP category, it can be noted that several other associations present similar results:

Country	Pre-ados	Ados	Post-ados
Canada	74	19	7
Korea	80	12	8
Hong Kong	64	28	7
Ireland	66	26	8
New Zealand	62	32	6

A number of other associations should probably be added to this list, such as Finland, Sweden and the Netherlands, which do not distinguish between adult leaders and members of the senior age section in their census, resulting in their post-adolescent statistics being artificially high.

## 2.6 Conclusions

What conclusions can be drawn from these observations?

- Except for the United Kingdom and the USA, associations with weak post-adolescent sections also have adolescent sections which are weaker than average. The cases of Canada and Korea are particularly significant in this respect.
- All the countries mentioned here are industrialised countries. However, other industrialised countries have strong adolescent and post-adolescent sections. Some examples:

Country	Age section systems	Pre-ados	Ados	Post-ados
Australia	PPAPP	54	31	15
Japan	PPAPP	47	30	23
Taiwan	PPAPP	39	41	20
Spain	PPAPP	37	31	32
France EEDF	PPAPP	44	41	15
France SdF	PAPP	40	30	30
Germany DPSG	PAPP	34	31	35
Portugal CNE	PAPP	27	33	40
Belgium VVKSM	PAPP	54	25	21
Italy AGESCI	PAP	39	40	21

- On the other hand, certain large associations in developing countries also have weak post-adolescent age sections:

Country	Age section system	Pre-ados	Ados	Post-ados
India	PAP	27	70	3
Pakistan	PAP	31	62	7
Bangladesh	PAP	57	40	3

- It is therefore difficult to affirm that the weakness of the adolescent and post-adolescent sections is a general phenomenon in industrialised countries. It is a characteristic of certain industrialised countries, particularly among those which have a system with two pre-adolescent sections (PPAPP et PPAP). However, the cause does not seem to lie only in the age section system, since certain associations with a PPAPP system, such as Japan, Australia and Taiwan, also have relatively strong adolescent and post-adolescent sections.
- More detailed studies need to be made to identify the causes of the membership loss from the adolescent and pos-adolescent sections in some associations. There are certainly numerous factors at stake and these need to be analysed carefully. It would be particularly interesting to undertake comparative studies between associations in industrialised countries which are losing adolescents and those which, on the contrary, are gaining members, in order to identify these factors. They could be on different levels, for example:
  - Youth programme: Are the programmes of the adolescent sections significantly different? In what way exactly?
  - Adult resources: Is the recruitment and training of adult leaders managed differently? If so, how exactly?
  - The general profile of the association, its place in society and the partners which support its action, particularly at local group level.

Our knowledge of the phenomena affecting membership growth is still very limited. It is necessary to encourage national Scout associations<sup>1</sup> to examine the evolution of their membership, by age section and sex over a long period, in order to identify what causes the changes. It is only on the basis of such studies that it will be possible to establish and implement real membership management policies.

---

<sup>1</sup> We refer here to national Scout organizations. When a national organization takes the form of a federation comprising several associations, it is at the level of the federation that such a study should be conducted, in order to take into account the totality of Scouting in a country as well as all sectors of the population.