



Getting the Most Out of Life – Brasil

PROMISING PRACTICES

The Results

The União dos Escoteiros do Brasil (UEB), in partnership with the Scouts de France, decided to make every effort to offer Scouting to children and young people living in the poorest parts of Brazil.



The project includes working with young people and their families to reduce the number of children on the streets

Through this project it has been possible to:

- strengthen the place and role of young people in the community;
- help the young people and adults in the communities concerned to develop their capacities;
- make Scouting more accessible to all young people by giving the most underprivileged the same opportunities as the rest to become responsible citizens;
- counter the marginalization of young people (dropping out of school, violence, drugs, delinquency);

- give young French people the opportunity to experience life in a country in the South and to take concrete action on their return home;

The Reasons

There are 32 million children under ten years of age in Brazil. Twenty million minors lives on the streets, nine million of them all the time.

Fortaleza, a large city in the Nordeste region, selected as a pilot site for this project, illustrates this situation:

- 40% of its two million inhabitants are under 18 years of age;
- over a third of its inhabitants live in shantytowns;
- over 30,000 children of school age have no school to go to;
- only half of the danger zones – areas liable to flooding, infectious outbreaks and shantytowns – have a health centre or health officer;
- the infant mortality rate exceeds one in ten;
- there are very few leisure activities.

The Methods

The two fundamental principles of the “Celebrando a Vida” dynamic are integration and partnership.

The target audience is mainly young people, girls and boys, from seven to 18 years of age, some at school and some



Strategic Priority 4

Reaching Out – breaking down barriers and working with all segments of society



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not. The project focuses on cooperation with different associations and social welfare partners. Meetings and exchanges between Scouts and the communities help to counter social exclusion.

Five types of activity have been implemented in Fortaleza, and in Tianguá (Ceará), since 1999:

1. *Involvement of Scouts in "Weigh-in Days" in cooperation with the Criança "Pastoral"*

Once a month, the local leaders gather families to weigh the 0-6-year-olds. Seven of the ten Scout groups in Fortaleza have taken part in these days to date. Their contribution has been to entertain the children so that the mothers can benefit from social advice. Some groups have gone further and offered families and children information on basic hygiene (dental hygiene, STDs, dengue). Nine communities have benefited in this way, reaching some 1000 3-10-year-olds.

2. *Organisation of local educational weeks*

Educational weeks have been organised in seven communities since 1999. These have taken the form of six half-days of educational activities run by teams of young Scouts from Brazil and France and young adults from the communities themselves. During these activities, the children have had the chance to play, learn, meet adults who respect them, listen to them and take care of them, as well as to be of service to the community after a mini training session on a health issue. More than 400 7-12-year-olds have been reached in this way.

3. *Welcoming young people from the communities into existing Scout groups*

The adults (potential Scout leaders) in these neighbourhoods know the children and families but do not have the means to organise educational activities for them. The Scouts already have a structure and knowledge in this field but are not part of the community. Scout groups and communities can enjoy a win-win relationship.

4. *Creation of Scout groups in the communities*

Three Scout groups have been formed in the communities of Fortaleza and Caucaia since 2000. To begin with, these new groups are being assisted by a more experienced support group. Someone from that group works with the adults in the community, who spend time with the support group from time to time for some practical training. A kit of educational material is provided to the group to help them get started with their activities. UEB training courses are offered to the leaders of these new groups, which bring together 150 7-15-year-olds and 20 adults.

5. *Creation of a group for problem youths*

In partnership with the Youth and Family Service and the Secretária Executivo of Fortaleza's Region II, a Scout group was set up in the centre of Fortaleza in October 2002. This group is led by experienced Scout leaders. A team from the "Pastoral" and someone from a residents' association liaise between the group and the children and families of the two communities concerned. This group has taken in as many as 150 7-17-year-olds.

Our Learning

Thanks to these five activities, four permanent educational structures have been created and 1800 children in the region have been given access to Scouting.

Fortaleza is a pilot site for educational work with underprivileged children and young people. This work is worth evaluating and building on in order to reach as many as possible and to offer food for educational thought to those already involved in the project.

Our Future Plans

A continuous process of developing and building on the existing project. As many UEB members and communities as possible are invited – individually and collectively – to take part in an evaluation process. Simple, user-friendly educational tools designed for any youth organisation wishing to run collective activities in the community will be made available. They will be distributed throughout the Movement. A "Weigh-in Day" manual already exists.

For more information contact: international@scouts-france.fr



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