

Submission from Scouting Ireland Ireland 2040 Plan

October 2017



Scouting is an non-formal educational experience for young people that is open to all. It is firmly rooted in the 'experiential educational model' which is that by 'learning by doing' and examining and internalising that learning through a review process, young people gain knowledge about the task completed but also about themselves - leading to the personal growth of the individual.

In Scouting we undertake this process in small teams so that the experience is both individual and team based. This process enables an extended learning process and results in higher personal realisations and inter-personal skills. Ultimately, those young people who engage with Scouting possess higher levels of 21st Century skills and competences.

Our programme is firmly based on the development of young people to be active citizens – young people who will be responsible, caring, creative, assume leadership and contribute to their communities.

Scouting in Ireland has been tremendously successful and Scouting Ireland membership is currently 50,000 strong in 507 local Groups across the island of Ireland and experiencing growth year on year of 4%. Scouting Ireland has 12,000 adult volunteers and 34 full-time staff.

Scouting worldwide has a membership of 40 million in 156 countries and a 110-year history of creating active citizens who contribute to the creation of a better world. So, we can claim some track record and expertise in developing young people and enabling and empowering them to be active citizens!

Other essential elements encapsulated in the Scout Principles and Law are a character building value system and the ideal of the daily good deed and service to our communities.

Scouting is a movement for young people SUPPORTED by adults. What happens as part of the programme of Scouting is determined by young people, across all age sections.

Supporting young people within Scouting means allowing them the space to learn and grow; to empower them, by allowing them to make decisions, think creatively and determine their direction; and to be there to help, advise and coach.

The outdoors environment is a key learning space, as it is within this environment that the intensity of the Scouting experience is witnessed. The small team is, in fact, a micro-society and young people get to 'play' the game of life. Solving problems, organising the routine, getting on with others and getting things done are some of the great advantages for young people.

The Team system

The team system exploits the natural gang instincts of young people and is the natural medium for learning – both in terms of inter-personal skills development and scouting skills expertise. The team work together and learn for each other in the process.

- **It is a natural learning space of young people**
- **It is a natural place to learn inter-personal skills**
- **It is the natural place to gain and learn leadership skills**
- **It builds friendship and mutual support structures**
- **It is a place to develop creativity and problem solving**
- **It allows democratic interactions**
- **Task management is learned by experience**



Scouting Ireland's aim is to encourage the physical, intellectual, character, emotional, social and spiritual development of young people so that they may achieve their full potential and, as responsible citizens, to improve society.



Ireland 2040

The future, and preparing for the future, is a concern of today. A young person joining our organisation today at 6 years of age will be 29 years of age in 2040. By 2040, will have undergone their educational journey and will be a short time in the workplace with ambitions to perhaps have a family in the near future. They will, hopefully, be part of the dynamic that will be the planners, engineers and innovators of our country.

The Ireland 2040 plan presents an ideal that everyone can relate to – a decentralised Ireland built around strong local communities, communities that support its inhabitants and foster community support, awareness and inclusion of all. Building and infrastructure do not create communities, they help to cluster and provide people with homes, work and services but people themselves create communities. In the main this happens by community's interactions, community leaders and pro – active citizens; people who care about others, hold out the hand of friendship and provide an interaction space where people can reach their full potential. The community fabric and the real wealth of that community are derived from people.

Scouting Ireland is in the business of developing the citizens of tomorrow. Our programme is designed to develop in young people the personal qualities and outlooks of pro- active citizens. These young people are pro-active citizens with a focus on local and nation; but who are also keenly globally aware and global citizens. They possess a suite of 21st century skills and are aware and actively pursuing the UN sustainable goals. They also have a strong values framework and integrity and can naturally assume leadership and responsibility.

By supporting our young people through education (both formal and non-formal) over the next 20 years we will be providing them with skill sets, attitudes and outlooks to match the infra structural ambitions of the Ireland 2040 plan.

While many areas are covered in the plan we feel that perhaps some extra focus should be placed on how people will live, interact and develop the communities and social fabric of a decentralised population feature of the proposed plan.

Scouting Ireland fully supports this visionary plan for the future and would like to suggest some additions and observations to consider for inclusion in the final drafts of the Ireland 2040 plan.

Of particular interest to Scouting Ireland are sections:-

4.5 Open countryside

5.1 Quality of life

5.3 Healthy communities

5.5 Diversity and inclusion

8.1 Sustainable goals

'Better Outcomes - Brighter Futures Plan'

Objective 13 - Community and place



Be prepared

Scouting Ireland we will also need to be prepared for the future. Currently, we operate in 507 communities across the state, urban and rural. Decentralisation and a growing population offer many new challenges. We would expect our membership to grow over the next 20 years. Currently, we enjoy an annual growth rate of 4% and over the next 20 years we would expect our membership to double to 100,000 members by 2040. This will entail, developing new groups in many communities' countrywide, increased adult volunteers and outdoor and meeting facilities.

We also need to educate our members so that they can become the pro-active community leaders and actors of the future. They need to know how to communicate, work with others and create sustainable communities. They also need to love the planet, its people and its environment and the need to protect it and interact with it for their own self wellness. The work we are currently doing with young people needs to be improved and focused to map to the challenges of the future – community life, health and wellbeing, work and education.

Scouting Ireland has been working in support and development of young people for over 110 years, constantly evolving and changing to meet the needs of young people. The future will present many new challenges and Scouting Ireland will respond to this need and prepare young people to respond in a positive way to creating a quality of life for themselves and others in which they live.

Scouting Ireland therefore will play its part in realising the ambitions of the Ireland 2040 plan.

We would anticipate that we will need to have an additional 500 groups by 2040. A Scout Group operates in a community and provides Scouting to young

people from 6-25 years of age. Typically, a Scout Group will operate from their own Scout Hall or den or by using shared community facilities such as community and school facilities.

Increases in urban settlements, large and small towns will require that Scouting Ireland understands the population dynamics and has in place Groups that can grow and develop as the population increases. Scouting Ireland does not start Groups for the short term but rather it has long term ambitions for Groups, some of our Groups have existed for over 100 years in a location. Its strength is based on community support and willing and enthusiastic volunteers to work and support young people. It is open to all and outreach and partnership is a key focus of our organisational strategy.

To realise the ambitions of Ireland 2040 and our organisation we need to affirm the need for the 2040 plan to provide some key elements in the development aspects of community life.

Facilities that can be used by community groups which allow people to interact together, socially, educationally, and in pursuit of artistic and cultural interests. In essence, community halls with multi-functional use. Sporting organisations and Scouting groups have halls and buildings which are focal points in communities and many different bodies of people use them – however it would be our recommendation that every community would have such a facility available to them. This can be achieved by including the building of same in the conditions of property developers or by providing funding and incentives to local communities to build such facilities.

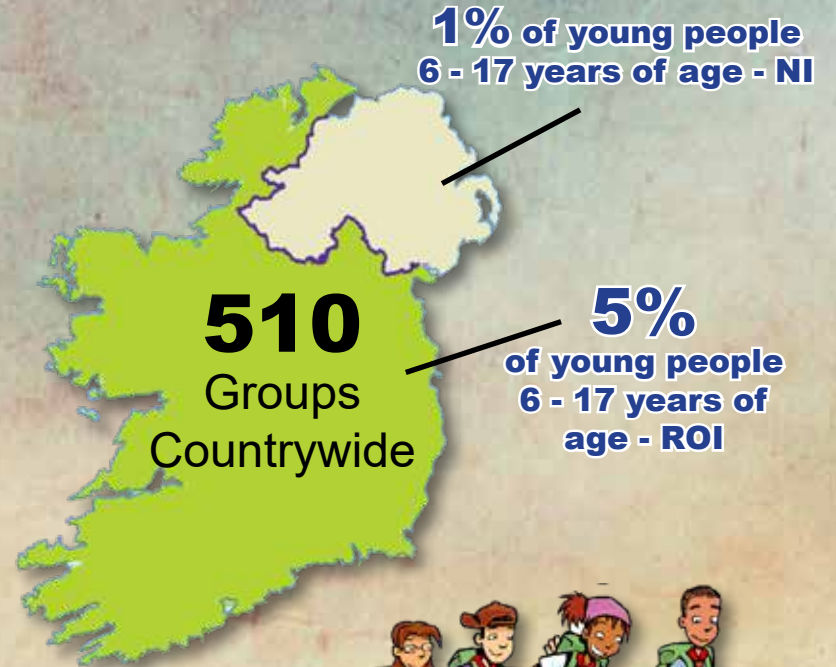
For Scouting and other local bodies to flourish and enhance the fabric and quality of life of our communities – a place to meet and interact is a key concern.





50,000 members
12,000 adult volunteers

Non-formal educational programme from 6 - 25 years of age



Adults provide 4.8 Million hours of service to young people a year



Co-educational 40% Female 60% Male



Adult Volunteers - 12,000
47% Female 53% Male

30% of all Irish youth volunteers in Scouting Ireland



12,000 X 400 HPY = 4.8 million (HPY - hours per year)

€44.4 million per year

4.8 million hours X average minimum wage hour €9.25 = €44.4 Million



Education

Within the 2040 plan three levels of education are listed – the formal educational system. No account has been taken of the non-formal sector. The plan does acknowledge the support of 'Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures' but fails to list it as a supporting and vital educational factor in the rounded education of young people.

The formal educational system, for example, does not provide sufficient education in citizenship, leadership, creativity and sustainable development whereas the non-formal sector do provide these vital skill sets and compliment the formal educational inputs.

Scouting Ireland therefore would request the inclusion of non-formal education as a key feature in the educational provision of young people and a key building block in the development of the whole person and citizens of tomorrow. This will reinforce the commitment of the 'Better Outcomes - Brighter Futures' plan and firmly support the actions of local organisations in communities and the creation of the Ireland of 2040.

Creative play

The development of young people is firmly rooted in creative play. This begins in the local play spaces in our communities where young people begin to learn social interaction skills. Friendships are developed and young people can explore nature and discover the world around them.

Once a young person moves beyond its home or immediate space (roadway) the first general play space will be a local green space and play ground. Play

grounds however do not cater for everyone and facilities need to be provided for older young people to play and interact. Open green spaces are required to compliment the closed playground space. More open spaces are also required locally for young people to expand their area of play – open park space, local walks and cycle ways and wilderness areas.

By providing such place, and the relative safeguarding, young people can be presented with alternative to on screen time and development of physical pursuits (walking, sport, cycling, athletics) leading to long term good health and wellbeing.

In a Scouting context the out of doors is our educational space and to compliment local play spaces we also need to expose young people to open and wild countryside. These spaces should be easily accessible and within the reach of all communities. It can be mountainside, coastal areas or wilderness strips and environments such as river and canal banks. To love and appreciate the environment, and develop a caring attitude to it, young people need to be exposed to the wonders and awe of nature. This is a long term endeavour and by exposure and interaction in the environment we instill in young people the care, respect and protection of the planet attitude that needs to prevail to ensure our survival.

Scouting Ireland therefore fully supports the recognition of the value of such spaces in the development of Ireland 2040. It also supports the development of green and blue ways and access points to the countryside. It suggests also that the provision of such spaces is important in the development of communities and the quality of life and health for the people living in such communities.

Scouting Ireland has a number of national facilities and campsites that have been developed via the support of state agencies such as Coillte and local county councils who have provided space for camping and

outdoor activities that adjoin large state forestry, wilderness areas and mountainside. These locations are a key feature of Scouting programme delivery and are also available for the use of other organisations and school to provide a non-formal educational space and experiences.

In the development of the Ireland 2040 plan, and the ambition of the increases and decentralisation of population, Scouting Ireland will seek to identify and develop further camping and actiity locations for the delivery of the Scouting programme. We will seek and illicit the support of government, state agencies and local councils to assist in their development via the recognition of non-formal education, the development of young people and the protection of our environment, care for habitats and wild countryside mandates and objectives as identified within the Ireland 2040 plan.



Better outcomes brighter futures - The national policy framework for children & young people 2014-2020

Outcome 1 - Active & Healthy, physical & mental well-being

Aim 1.4 Play, recreation, sport, arts culture and the natural environment are essential to the health and well being of children and young people, and promote the development of creativity, imagination, self - confidence and self-efficacy, as well as physical, social, cognitive and emotional strength and skills.

The Government recognises:

- Play is important for all ages
- Play, sports and recreation are an immensely important part of the lives of children and young people and are highly valued by them.
- Play is central to children's spontaneous drive for development and is very important in brain development, particularly in the early years
- Play and recreation facilitate children's capacities to negotiate, regain emotional balance, resolve conflict and make decisions
- Through their involvement on play, recreation and the arts, children and young people learn by doing; they explore and experience the world around them; they experiment with new ideas and experiences and in so doing, learn to understand and construct their social position within the world
- Through play and recreation, children explore new roles, activities and areas that can help to understand gender based stereotypes and gendered choices in education and career
- Early and ongoing exposure to art and culture lays a positive foundation for creativity, an essential component in critical thinking and innovation.
- The important role of youth, community and sporting organisations and volunteers in engaging with young people on their healthy development and well being.

'Scouting Ireland and the global programme of Scouting develops young people through activities and programmes that are designed to enable young people to play in a creative environment.

By doing so, young people develop personal qualities and attributes such as teamwork, leadership, communication skills, creativity, and responsibility - contemporaneously coined 21st century skills and competencies'

**Scouting Ireland is actively engaged
in fulfilling and achieving the
aspirations of the Government's
'Better Outcomes Brighter Futures'
Policy Framework**



Research findings

Employability impact

'Employers agree that the skills gained through engaging in Scouting are important to their organisations with **41%** reporting that an applicant's involvement in Scouting is viewed as a positive influence on the decision to employ them'
(Scouts & PACEC, 2012)

'Engaging in Scouting can assist the development of team-working, leadership, resilience and problem-solving, as well as demonstrate commitment and resolve'
Birdwell and Wybron (2014)

Mental health

'Those young people who engage in Scouting are more likely to report better mental health later in life'.
(Scouts & PACEC, 2012)

'Engaging in Scouting activities seemed to remove the higher risk of mental illness in those from poorer socioeconomic backgrounds'.
(Scouts & PACEC, 2012)

Personal impact

'Emotional development was identified as being positively impacted; this included increased confidence, positivity, maturity and patience. In addition, personal development was identified with positive impact in teamwork' (Scouting Ireland 2015)



Volunteering

'Scouts are more likely to engage in voluntary activities than children and young people not engaged in Scouting'.
(Scouting Ireland 2015)

66 %

'Of the former youth members that do volunteer, said that Scouting positively influenced their decision to get involved'.
(Scouting Ireland 2015)

55%

'Of Scouting Ireland's adult volunteers stated that they volunteer in multiple areas of their community'
(Scouting Ireland 2015)

National frameworks

Scouting aligns with 15 of the 20 key objective statements of the national framework, Better Outcomes Brighter Futures.



Diversity and inclusion

As our population becomes more diverse, organisations that have core principles that state they are 'open to all' are to be encouraged. Scouting is one such organisation and there are many more within our communities. Young people organisations are particularly important in this regard as they enable young people to share, explore and understand together. Lifelong friendships are developed and fostered and attitudes are changed. By educating young people today about the wealth of human culture and diversity (difference is good and more interesting) we breakdown the stereotyping, fears and xenophobia tendencies.

Living in diverse communities will be a feature of Ireland in the future and we support the dialogue within the Ireland 2040 plan related to these issues. Education backed up with friendship and direct interaction will break down these fears and stereotypes. Direct interaction in community groups and organisation will enable this to happen and weave an inclusive and rich fabric of Irish society.

Local organisations need to be highlighted as a rich resource in providing these interactive spaces and are perhaps more important than the formal educational establishments in this regard. Scouting Ireland therefore would again support more reference to the Government strategy framework for children and young people 'Better Outcomes Brighter Futures' within the plan particularly across those objectives related to 'Quality of life', shared values, harmony, inclusion and welcoming of different cultures.

Better world

Ireland does not exist by itself, it is part of the global civilisation, in today's world and more so into the future we will be all part of the global village. We will be aware of issues across the globe, and will be active in finding solutions, seeking and supporting equalities and protecting our planet. The UN sustainable goals are the concern of everybody and by collective action we can reverse the faults and mistakes of the past.

'Creating a Better World' is a keystone of the Scouting programme. 40 million Scouts worldwide are active in the pursuit of this aim. The World Organisation of the Scout Movement are key partners with the United Nations and the pursuit of this objective, in particular the UN Sustainable Goals. Young people through are programmes are actively involved in seeking to resolve those issues identified in the goals. This is a three-fold activity based on education and awareness, understanding the issues and creating relative and real actions at local level to realise and reduce the threat that each goal presents. In essence, everyone playing a part, and through collective actions at local and national level improving Ireland contribution to achieving the goals. Education and action are therefore key areas that need to be present in the development of our young people to realise the future.

Throughout the Ireland 2040 plan, there are numerous references to the elements of the UN Sustainable Goals. However, the actions are aimed at government agencies and services in the main. It would be our belief that the UN goals are everyone's business and they need to be engaged in their achievement. Providing clean energy, protection of environment, healthy living, sustainable cities and communities are achievable by providing well designed infrastructure, homes and living space but equally people need to also care about our planet and want to protect it.

Scouting Ireland recommended that the Ireland 2040 plan should also seek to engage people in realising the goals. Government can do the heavy lifting but without the engagement

of people they will not be sustained into the future. Scouting Ireland has clear strategies in this regard as do other active community based organisations. Recognition of the educational value of these programmes and action should be highlighted within the plan as key partnerships that can be developed with government and state agencies in realising Ireland commitment to the goals

Scouting Ireland also note the development of a 'National Strategic Investment Fund' and how it will the supporting mechanism for the realisation of the Ireland 2040 Plan. While a considerable amount of this funding will be directed towards infra-structural development we will await with interest the provisions that are provided for in the preparation of young people today for the future of tomorrow. We will seek interactions with government bodies and agencies to see how Scouting Ireland can support the Ireland 2040 plan and avail of additional funding in this regard.



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