



# Scouting Around the World



## FACT SHEET

### Background

Scouting began in England in 1907 based on Robert S. S. Baden-Powell's ideas and book *Scouting for Boys*. The book and program proved to have universal appeal for boys and quickly spread worldwide. Some aspects of the program vary around the world, but the principles of the Scout Promise and Law unite the world brotherhood of Scouting and prepare boys for adulthood in today's world.

From its beginning on Brownsea Island, the Scouting idea spread around the world until it became what it is now—the largest voluntary youth movement in the world, with a membership totaling more than 25 million. Although there might be some differences in program administration, the entire movement adheres to these fundamental principles:

### Worldwide Principles

- Duty to God and respect for individual beliefs
- Loyalty to one's country and respect for its laws
- Strength of world friendship and Scouting brotherhood
- Service to others—community development
- Universal regard for the Scout Promise and Law as a life guide
- Voluntary membership
- Service by volunteer leaders
- Independence from political influence and control
- Training youth in responsible citizenship, physical and mental development, and character guidance through use of the patrol system, group activity, recognition through awards, and learning by doing
- Outdoor program orientation

### Universal Practices

These acts and symbols of Scouting are familiar all over the world:

- Scout Promise and Law—duty to God and country
- Design of badge—basic trefoil
- “Be Prepared” motto
- Universal three-finger Scout sign—sign of personal honor
- Scout left handclasp
- Use of the patrol system
- Basic ideal of the Good Turn

### World Jamborees

A world jamboree is thousands of Scouts from many nations camping together in the spirit of world friendship. Such friendships and the desire to know one another overcome barriers of language and differences in custom, race, and religion, making Scouting relevant to world brotherhood.

At jamborees, Scouts compete in Scout skills, trade friendship tokens, meet around campfires, and make lifelong pen pals. They sample each other's foods; play games; swim together; and learn Scout stunts, how to make gadgets, and how Scouts live around the world. They also learn words and phrases in different languages.

## **The World Organization of the Scout Movement**

The first world jamboree, called by Lord Baden-Powell in 1920, was held in England. Since then every four years, except during World War II, Scouts have met in a jamboree. The 17th World Scout Jamboree was held in Korea in August 1991. The Netherlands hosted the event in 1995; Chile hosted it in 1998–99; and Thailand will host it in 2003.

The World Organization of the Scout Movement is composed of three parts.

**The World Scout Conference** is the general assembly of Scouting and is composed of six delegates from each of the member Scout associations. If a country has more than one association, the associations form a federation for coordination and world representation. The basis for recognition and membership in the World Scout Conference includes adherence to the aims and principles of world Scouting and independence from political involvement on the part of each member association.

The conference meets every three years, at which time basic cooperative efforts are agreed upon and a plan of mutual coordination is adopted. The last World Scout Conference was held in Durban, South Africa.

There are 151 member associations in the World Scout Conference.

**The World Scout Committee** is the executive body of the conference and represents it between the meetings of the full conference. World Scout Committee members are elected at the World Scout Conference for a term of six years. The members are elected without regard to their nationality.

**The World Scout Bureau** is the secretariat that carries out the instructions of the World Scout Conference and the World Scout Committee. The World Scout Bureau office is in Geneva, Switzerland, with regional offices in six areas around the world: Africa Region (Nairobi, Kenya), Arab Region (Cairo, Egypt), Asia-Pacific Region (Manila, Philippines), European (Geneva, Switzerland), Inter-American Region (Santiago, Chile), and Eurasia Region (Yalta-Gurzuf, Ukraine).

The World Scout Bureau is administered by the secretary-general, who is supported by a small staff of technical resource personnel. The bureau staff helps associations improve and broaden their Scouting by training professionals and volunteers, establishing sound finance policies and money-raising techniques, improving community facilities and procedures, and assisting in marshaling the national resources of each country behind Scouting.

The staff also helps arrange global events such as world jamborees, encourages regional events, and acts as a liaison between the Scouting movement and other international organizations. A major effort in the emerging nations is the extension of the universal Good Turn into an organizationwide effort for community development.

## **BSA Involvement**

The Boy Scouts of America is represented in world contacts and developments by the international commissioner.

The BSA is a charter member of the World Scout Conference and is an active participant in its many and varied projects, services, and committees.

The BSA shares its resources, program materials, and volunteer and professional expertise with the World Scout Bureau and its various associations throughout the world.

The international efforts of the BSA are supported by the International Committee, one of the operating committees of the National Executive Board, and the staff of the International Division at the national office.

## **World Friendship Fund**

The World Friendship Fund (WFF) of the Boy Scouts of America was developed during the closing days of World War II. At the time, there was a great need to rebuild Scouting in those nations that had been wracked by war and were just emerging from the shadows of totalitarianism.

In the years that have elapsed, the WFF has aided virtually every nation in the free world that has Scouting. Both those nations that have had Scouting before and those newly emerging nations that desire the Scouting program for their youth have been helped.

Through the WFF, voluntary contributions of Scouts and leaders are transformed into cooperative projects that help Scouting associations in other countries to strengthen and extend their Scouting programs.

A sampling of WFF-supported projects in recent years includes improved facilities at Kandersteg International Scout Centre in Switzerland; desktop publishing and Scout literature for the Scouts of Greece; adult training materials for the Scout Association of Nicaragua; youth Scout program literature for 11 Scout Associations of the Caribbean; supply of BSA handbooks to the Scouts of Micronesia; assistance in the resurgence of Scouting in Ethiopia; and camping equipment for underprivileged Scouts of the Guatemala Scout Association.

Since the beginning of the WFF, more than \$1 million has been voluntarily donated by American Scouts and leaders to these self-help activities.

## **National Boy Scouts of America Foundation**

The United States Fund for International Scouting (USFIS), within the National Boy Scouts of America Foundation, provides the opportunity for substantial support of World Scouting by individual business, corporate, and foundation grants. This fund is administered by an appointed committee of the BSA International Committee. The National Boy Scouts of America Foundation has full tax privileges and is not a private foundation.

Provision is made for trust and endowed instruments as well as current support of special Scouting projects around the world. Grant proposals from Scout associations around the world are received and reviewed for disposition by a volunteer committee.

**Member Scout Associations of the World Organization  
of the Scout Movement and Their Membership (www.scout.org)**

Albania (4)	1,284	Germany (4)	127,012	Nigeria (1)	46,701
Algeria (2)	10,045	Ghana (1)	2,311	Norway (4)	15,234
Angola (1)	5,600	Greece (4)	19,467	Oman (2)	9,495
Argentina (5)	45,452	Grenada (5)	1,542	Pakistan (3)	508,176
Armenia (6)	2,035	Guatemala (5)	7,247	Palestinian Authority (2)	20,275
Australia (3)	109,527	Guyana (5)	294	Panama (5)	2,367
Austria (4)	16,323	Haiti (5)	9,859	Papua New Guinea (3)	1,674
Azerbaijan	1,213	Honduras (5)	4,319	Paraguay (5)	1,340
Bahamas (5)	3,173	Hong Kong	69,121	Peru (5)	12,727
Bahrain (2)	1,820	Hungary (4)	13,369	Philippines (3)	3,491,911
Bangladesh (3)	1,325,014	Iceland (4)	1,808	Poland (4)	117,733
Barbados (5)	3,041	India (3)	1,963,266	Portugal (4)	66,766
Belarus (6)	7,500	Indonesia (3)	9,961,921	Qatar (2)	6,000
Belgium (4)	91,198	Ireland (4)	38,784	Romania (4)	4,930
Belize (5)	869	Israel (4)	21,920	Russian Federation	14,000
Benin (1)	19,605	Italy (4)	108,656	Rwanda (1)	5,479
Bhutan (3)	1,145	Jamaica (5)	5,526	San Marino (4)	200
Bolivia (5)	7,600	Japan (3)	227,566	Saudi Arabia (2)	19,267
Bosnia & Herzegovina (4)	8,000	Jordan (2)	14,238	Senegal (1)	5,882
Botswana (1)	4,660	Kenya (1)	190,505	Sierra Leone (1)	7,902
Brazil (5)	60,518	Kiribati (3)	1,333	Singapore (3)	11,290
Brunei Darussalam (3)	2,617	Korea, Republic of (3)	247,445	Slovakia (4)	3,680
Bulgaria (4)	2,000	Kuwait (2)	6,061	Slovenia (4)	6,624
Burkina Faso (1)	10,165	Latvia (4)	1,179	South Africa (1)	18,496
Burundi (1)	6,661	Lebanon (2)	8,450	Spain (4)	82,971
Cameroon (1)	6,535	Lesotho (1)	371	Sri Lanka (3)	21,653
Canada (5)	238,957	Liberia (1)	2,418	St. Lucia (5)	393
Chad (1)	8,132	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (2)	14,220	St. Vincent and the Grenadines (5)	1,017
Chile (5)	35,180	Liechtenstein (4)	421	Sudan (2)	13,550
China, Scouts of (3)	69,353	Lithuania (4)	1,500	Suriname (5)	2,601
Colombia (5)	13,636	Luxembourg (4)	5,634	Swaziland (1)	4,994
Comoros (1)	2,200	Macao (3)		Sweden (4)	65,486
Congo, The Democratic Republic of The (1)	62,842	Macedonia, the former Yugoslav, Republic of (4)	3,443	Switzerland (4)	29,909
Costa Rica (5)	11,729	Madagascar (1)	9,473	Tajikistan (6)	1,100
Cote-d'Ivoire (1)	6,436	Malaysia (3)	96,409	Tanzania, United Republic of (1)	49,993
Croatia (4)	3,607	Maldives (3)	4,518	Thailand (3)	1,237,515
Cyprus (4)	6,183	Malta (4)	2,900	Togo (1)	15,759
Czech Republic (4)	26,133	Mauritania (2)	3,790	Trinidad & Tobago (5)	6,600
Denmark (4)	51,727	Mauritius (1)	3,009	Tunisia (2)	40,920
Dominica (5)	1,100	Mexico (5)	59,531	Turkey (4)	6,257
Dominican Republic (5)	6,047	Moldova, Republic of (6)	1,540	Uganda (1)	65,152
Ecuador (5)	5,536	Monaco (4)	67	United Arab Emirates (2)	5,824
Egypt (2)	74,598	Mongolia (3)	6,623	United Kingdom (4)	542,277
El Salvador (5)	4,180	Morocco (2)	12,304	United States (5)	6,253,606
Estonia (4)	1,131	Mozambique (1)	11,403	Uruguay (5)	4,510
Fiji (3)	2,445	Namibia (1)	1,378	Venezuela (5)	10,754
Finland (4)	30,545	Nepal (3)	25,814	Yemen (2)	6,481
France (4)	113,570	Netherlands (4)	59,315	Yugoslavia (4)	12,080
Gabon (1)	3,835	New Zealand (3)	28,531	Zambia (1)	7,427
Gambia (1)	14,134	Nicaragua (5)	2,298	Zimbabwe (1)	3,111
Georgia (6)	1,063	Niger (1)	3,241		

(1) Africa Region  
(4) European Region

(2) Arab Region  
(5) Inter-American Region

(3) Asia-Pacific Region  
(6) Eurasia Region