



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 involves 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 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 did in 1998–99, and Thailand hosted it in 2003. The Scout Association of the United Kingdom will host the 2007 event, recognizing the 100th Anniversary of Scouting.

The World Organization of the Scout Movement

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 Thessaloniki, Greece. The next conference will be held in Hammamet, Tunisia.

There are 155 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 Region (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.

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 World Friendship Fund supported projects in recent years includes the building of a youth dormitory and activity center at the Eurasia Region headquarters, development of a new Scout camp in Guatemala, a leadership training program in Liberia, a "young electors" program in Poland, establishing a National Youth Center in Azerbaijan, constructing a Scout Service Center in Georgia, leader training materials for Moldova, training programs for Tanzania, a new Scout Service Center in Bolivia, reforestation program in Lesotho, support of leader development in Peru, and improvement of facilities at the Kandersteg International Scout Center.

Since the beginning of the WFF, several million dollars has been voluntarily donated by American Scouts and leaders to these self-help activities.

**National Boy
Scouts of America
Foundation**

The World Scouting Fund 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)	1,000	Ghana (1)	2,311	Norway (4)	19,329
Algeria (2)	11,120	Greece (4)	18,992	Oman (2)	10,654
Angola (1)	13,777	Grenada (5)	1,665	Pakistan (3)	526,403
Argentina (5)	44,981	Guatemala (5)	11,395	Palestinian Authority (2)	20,275
Armenia (6)	2,256	Guinea	NA	Panama (5)	2,263
Australia (3)	98,084	Guyana (5)	294	Papua New Guinea (3)	2,811
Austria (4)	13,785	Haiti (5)	9,859	Paraguay (5)	1,000
Azerbaijan	1,414	Honduras (5)	5,174	Peru (5)	12,677
Bahamas (5)	729	Hong Kong	74,147	Philippines (3)	1,956,131
Bahrain (2)	1,820	Hungary (4)	11,243	Poland (4)	85,822
Bangladesh (3)	908,435	Iceland (4)	1,526	Portugal (4)	70,863
Barbados (5)	3,032	India (3)	2,138,015	Qatar (2)	3,244
Belgium (4)	88,271	Indonesia (3)	8,909,435	Romania (4)	4,930
Belize (5)	1,211	Ireland (4)	36,783	Russian Federation	14,000
Benin (1)	19,605	Israel (4)	21,920	Rwanda (1)	18,884
Bhutan (3)	6,716	Italy (4)	100,675	San Marino (4)	159
Bolivia (5)	7,521	Jamaica (5)	6,272	Saudi Arabia (2)	19,267
Bosnia & Herzegovina (4)	1,514	Japan (3)	220,223	Senegal (1)	26,373
Botswana (1)	4,660	Jordan (2)	15,538	Seychelles	
Brazil (5)	66,375	Kenya (1)	151,722	Sierra Leone (1)	7,902
Brunei Darussalam (3)	2,772	Kiribati (3)	1,333	Singapore (3)	11,163
Bulgaria (4)	1,832	Korea, Republic of (3)	252,157	Slovakia (4)	4,118
Burkina Faso (1)	10,165	Kuwait (2)	6,061	Slovenia (4)	6,357
Burundi (1)	6,661	Latvia (4)	1,179	South Africa (1)	13,118
Cape Verde	1,500	Lebanon (2)	14,334	Spain (4)	74,561
Cameroon (1)	6,535	Lesotho (1)	371	Sri Lanka (3)	21,653
Canada (5)	212,259	Liberia (1)	2,418	St. Lucia (5)	393
Chad (1)	8,132	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya (2)	13,698	St. Vincent and the Grenadines (5)	541
Chile (5)	33,812	Liechtenstein (4)	752	Serbia & Montenegro	30,493
China, Scouts of (3)	69,452	Lithuania (4)	1,500	Sudan (2)	13,550
Colombia (5)	12,808	Luxembourg (4)	5,418	Suriname (5)	2,601
Comoros (1)	2,200	Macedonia, the former	1,988	Swaziland (1)	4,994
Congo, The Democratic Republic of The (1)	62,842	Yugoslav, Republic of (4)		Sweden (4)	60,122
Costa Rica (5)	9,752	Madagascar (1)	9,473	Switzerland (4)	52,349
Côte d'Ivoire (1)	6,436	Malawi (After Madagascar)	4,000	Tajikistan (6)	1,504
Croatia (4)	4,068	Malaysia (3)	96,893	Tanzania, United Republic of (1)	102,739
Cyprus (4)	4,478	Maldives (3)	4,518	Thailand (3)	1,305,027
Czech Republic (4)	26,435	Malta (4)	2,531	Togo (1)	8,890
Denmark (4)	47,475	Mauritania (2)	3,790	Trinidad & Tobago (5)	4,655
Dominica (5)	1,100	Mauritius (1)	3,076	Tunisia (2)	28,483
Dominican Republic (5)	8,702	Mexico (5)	39,327	Turkey (4)	8,174
Ecuador (5)	4,132	Moldova, Republic of (6)	1,540	Uganda (1)	77,894
Egypt (2)	74,598	Monaco (4)	49	United Arab Emirates (2)	5,824
El Salvador (5)	3,970	Mongolia (3)	8,655	United Kingdom (4)	498,888
Estonia (4)	1,167	Morocco (2)	12,304	United States (5)	6,239,435
Ethiopia	1,000	Mozambique (1)	16,675	Uruguay (5)	3,965
Fiji (3)	2,821	Namibia (1)	1,816	Venezuela (5)	14,513
Finland (4)	26,885	Nepal (3)	12,341	Yemen (2)	6,481
France (4)	102,405	Netherlands (4)	57,484	Zambia (1)	7,427
Gabon (1)	3,835	Netherland (3)	23,537	Zimbabwe (1)	1,612
Gambia (1)	15,632	New Zealand (3)	2,056		
Germany (4)	123,937	Nicaragua (5)	2,056		
		Niger (1)	4,352		
		Nigeria (1)	46,701		

(1) Africa Region
(4) European Region

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

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