



Scouting Ireland – Venture Scout Team

The Project Method ¹

First, what is a project?

In general terms, a project is something that one intends to achieve by a given time in the future. It involves setting a clearly defined goal to reach, working out what needs to be done – when and how – and then doing it! A project is not one activity but a combination of many different activities – each of which needs to be planned, organised and carried out in order to reach the goal.

Reaching the goal of a project is certainly something to celebrate – but before that, taking time to think about the whole adventure, what you learned along the way, what you would do differently next time, and so on, can give the celebration more meaning.

What then is a Scout project?

A Scout project is an educational approach that involves a collective enterprise, something that a team or unit decides to undertake together, for example, an expedition, a play or musical show, the renovation or construction of a building.

Whatever the project is, it must be:

- * Something the group would like to do.
- * Challenging, offering young people opportunities to take them beyond their skills – as a group and individually.
- * Relevant, providing positive learning experiences.

¹ Adapted from various publications of the World Organisation of the Scout Movement – European Region

- * Useful, so at the end, something has been achieved by the group.

It must have a clearly defined goal.

The project cannot be undefined. From the very beginning it has to be clear what the project wants to achieve. Some useful questions should be answered:

- * Why are we doing this particular project?
- * What will we have gained/ learned/ understood at the end of it?
- * How will we know that we have succeeded?

The project must be achieved in a set time. It is important to define clearly, from the beginning, when the project ends; it cannot go on forever.

Using the Scout Method

The way in which the project is planned, organised, and carried out, should make full use of the Scout Method. Everyone should participate in each of the phases, working in small groups and using the council system. Participants must respect the Scout values. The project could develop its own symbolic framework and it should enhance the personal development of the participants.

Providing a variety of learning opportunities

The project should enable each person to acquire knowledge and skills and to develop attitudes in different areas. The experiences lived within the framework of the project should provide concrete opportunities for Venture Scouts to progress in some areas of development such as:

- * Personality – allowing Venture Scouts to choose autonomously and responsibly and to live with the consequences of the choices made.
- * Creativity – enabling Venture Scouts to think outside the box, to be creative in how they approach given situations, and perhaps to make whatever it is they need themselves.



- * Solidarity – respecting others and learning to live in community and in democracy.
- * Health – Venturers should be responsible for their health and be able to live in harmony with themselves.
- * Sense of life – recognising God’s presence in the experiences lived.

Taking into account varying interests, talents, capacities and needs

Each Venture Scout is different but each one should have the opportunity to make his/her contribution to the collective effort, to offer ideas and to assume responsibility for certain tasks, putting their personal skills at the service of others. The project cannot be imposed upon young people. It should be based on a clearly defined goal that they have selected, one they want to achieve. They will discover a lot about themselves through personal and group effort; each will have a part to play that becomes indispensable to the group as a whole. Recognising the importance of the part they play will ensure personal commitment and thus assure the success of the project.

What is different about a Venture Scout project?

From an educational point of view, Venture projects use the same basic approach as the Scout Project referred to above. The difference lies in the Venture age. Because Venture Scouts are older, their projects can be more ambitious, have a broader scope, and last longer. Venture projects can be long-term and quite complex; projects where Venture Scouts have the opportunity to develop organisational skills, to share responsibilities, and to learn how to work together.

International projects are also very attractive to Venture Scouts: they get to travel, to discover new places, to meet new people, and to experience new cultures and different ways of thinking. Community-based projects are a real way of living one of the strongest dimensions of Venturing: Service. Besides the direct impact they can have on society, community-based projects offer Venture Scouts the opportunity to experience adult roles; to be involved with their society; to start to make a difference.



Phases of a project

The Project Method or Approach involves a clear process bringing the project from the initial ideas expressed to a celebration of achievements. WOSM has developed a particular model that uses seven different phases, each one building on that which went before.

1. What project?

Step 1: Time to dream – discussing in teams what the Venture Scouts would like to do.

Step 2: Sharing ideas – sharing the team’s ideas or discussing them as a group.

Step 3: Decoding the ideas – reflecting as a group on what is really important to Venture Scouts in the ideas expressed.

Step 4: Building consensus – creating a project by incorporating what was considered important in the ideas and linking them to an agreed project goal (for example, an expedition to X in order to do Y).

2. Integrating learning opportunities

This phase should be carried out with the help of the adult leadership team.

Step 1: Assessing the level of difficulty – considering and modifying aspects that are too difficult, not feasible, or too expensive.

Step 2: Building a project outline – taking a preliminary look at what learning opportunities could be integrated to enrich the outline of the project.

Step 3: Working out the learning opportunities – examining the project outline in terms of the learning opportunities.

Step 4: Making full use of the Scout Method.

Step 5: Making full use of group dynamics.



3. Planning

Step 1: Sharing the project with the team leaders' council.

Step 2: Working out the logistics – listing everything that needs to be done and by when.

Step 3: Estimating a budget – how much the project is going to cost.

Step 4: Working out the structure of roles and task forces.

4. Getting prepared

Step 1: Sharing Phase 3 with the Group – presenting the developed project to the entire Group.

Step 2: Matching personal educational objectives to the tasks – guiding each young person towards the roles and tasks which correspond to their personal interests and present challenges for personal progression.

Step 3: Learning to do the job – helping Venturers to gain the knowledge and skills needed to successfully do their part.

Step 4: Particular tasks for the adult leaders – monitoring progress and dealing with aspects beyond the Venturers' capacities.

5. Carrying out the project – “The big event”

Step 1: Carrying out the project – doing what it is you've planned to do.

6. Evaluating and recognising progress

Step 1: Evaluating the project and each person's progress – examining as a group what went well and what didn't go well: the highlights and the low points; and examining what the Venture Scouts gained from the project and to what extent they managed to make personal progress.

Step 2: Recognising progress – formally recognising the progress made by each Venture Scout.



7. Celebration

Step 1: Reflecting on spiritual values – organising a time for spiritual reflection based on the Venture Scouts' experiences.

Step 2: Organising the festivities – organising a celebration (for example, a parents' evening) with refreshments and an exhibition of photos or a slide show, to share what has been achieved.