

Àngel Castiñeira

Educating in Leadership



Fundació Escolta
JOSEP CAROL

Collection

“Reflections
out loud”

Educating in Leadership

Presentation

We live in a time of profound and accelerated change. One of these changes is the substantial increase in the population of Catalan society, which, under the influence of migratory flows, is becoming increasingly plural and diverse. Another change is that of new technology, which has revolutionised many existing patterns of communication and relations, encouraging young people to seek new forms of participation. We can also cite the long economic crisis and its knock-on effect on society and politics, which is giving rise to the rapid emergence of new and not-so-new ways of addressing the present and future, both from the perspective of social and economic stability and from the perspective of the promotion of collective values. And last but not least, Catalonia is experiencing a historic moment in its nation-building that offers opportunities for reflection, dialogue, public involvement and shared illusion, regardless of what lies at the end of this gripping stage in our history.

In these and many other aspects, education is one of the priorities on which collective action and strategies should focus, given that it is one of the most effective tools for reinventing ourselves as a society and preparing for these challenges. In the light of this, we

believe that Scouting continues to play the structural role that it has always played in our society. The Scout movement's ability to adapt to the most diverse historical, cultural and social contexts has guaranteed it a presence virtually all over the world. In Catalonia, Scouting has played a vital role in times of great difficulty, such as when it acted as a hub of cultural resistance and space of freedom for Catalan citizens during the dictatorship.

Scouting – and hence, the educational movement – is ready to tackle these challenges. We are working to intensify our impact, improve our recognition and become the benchmark in areas that are specific to us, like values education. This is how we wish to make our mark on the social transformation and building of our nation, while assuming responsibility for co-leading thinking and action in areas related to our expertise. How do these processes of social leadership come about? What makes Scouting a good candidate for joining this leadership for change? What makes this good leadership possible?

The answers to these questions no doubt lie in the definition of *Scouting* itself. The educational action of our movement has a twofold aim: to help children and young adults to reach their full potential and strengthen their abilities as individuals, and to ensure that these same individuals mature into conscious, responsible, committed and active citizens in their communities, and that they work to transform their environment, thus helping to build a freer and fairer society. Hence, we educate individuals to become actively involved in the construction and transformation of society. These children and young

adults naturally refine their critical thinking and actively commit to taking part in the processes leading this change.

Therefore, although we may not always be fully conscious of it, our educational task incorporates many of the aspects that are necessary to bring about processes of leadership. Firstly, we have a shared goal: from the very local to the most global level, Scouting is nourished by the dreams, desires and energy of those of us who work to leave the world better than how we found it. Secondly, we share a system of values that every individual takes on as his or her own, a system through which we educate and act. And thirdly, we have people who are prepared to lead our project and people willing to commit to our values and the mission of our movement, and we all work together as a team. The older individuals in the section help the smaller ones; the leader is seen as a natural model and reference for the children in his or her section; the members of the leaders' councils direct the educational project of their groups; the members of the association teams coordinate projects to drive the movement forward at national level; and the same can be said of the international dimension of Scouting.

When we talk about leadership, we often only think of the leader, as opposed to understanding leadership as a broader process in which everybody plays a part and where the emphasis is placed on the process and its consequences. As we explain below, Scouting has a project, leaders and followers, all essential elements for the generation of a leadership process.

Although this relationship between Scouting and leadership may seem obvious, we are not always mindful of it, or we confuse leadership with practices that deviate from our internalised values and the ones we wish to convey to children and young adults. We cannot deny that certain leaderships can result in authoritarian practices or undemocratic systems of decision-making, and these are the types of leadership that have generated misgivings – and even suspicions – in the concept.

We probably all agree that these types of leadership have no place in Scouting. Well, perhaps only to the extent that they show us what we do not want to be and hence, what we do want to be. What Scouting is really interested in is “good leadership”, how it develops and what it requires. The concept of leadership is constantly evolving and is a subject of study in many areas of social science and business, with new theories emerging all the time about good leadership and what its ingredients are.

This link between Scouting and leadership is one that we regard as an essential area of research. Analysing the concept of leadership, reflecting on it and understanding how it relates to our educational work and role as representatives of our groups, teams or the association is a good way to improve the quality of what we do and to reflect on internal democratic decision-making processes.

It is our pleasure to present to you this new book from the “Reflexions en Veu Alta” collection entitled *Educating in Leadership*. In this work, Dr Angel Castiñeira, Director of the Chair of Leaderships

and Democratic Governance, tenured lecturer of the Department of Social Sciences at ESADE and one of Catalonia's leading experts on the subject, invites us to delve deeper into this vital topic for our educational work.

We would like to thank Eduard Vallory, former Head of External Relations of Escoltes Catalans and former Chairman of the *Fundació Escolta Josep Carol* (Josep Carol Scouting Foundation), who is currently coordinating the WOSM 21st Century Leadership initiative, for his advice on adapting the book for Scouting.

We leave you, then, to absorb yourselves in this work and enjoy its reflections on Scouting and good leadership.

Víctor Muntés i Mulero
Chairman
Escoltes Catalans

David Pérez i Martín
Director General
Fundació Escolta Josep Carol



Educating in Leadership



In English, Scout educators are called *Scout leaders*. Would we say that a Scout educator is a leader? In fact, although we do not usually talk about it, Scouting is an educational movement that promotes leadership among both children and young people and among its leaders. But what do we mean when we talk about "leadership"?

A widespread definition states that leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives.¹

In fact, leadership is a virtuous triangle that incorporates a cause or project, followers and leaders. Thus, for there to be leadership, and good leadership at that, the people at the top and their human qualities are important; but there must also be followers, and a good common project is essential. In Scouting, this can be seen very clearly: every Scout unit has a shared goal - from the specific goal of organizing a camp to the generic goal of improving society - and everyone acts as a follower at different times, by relying on

1. Gary Yukl: *Leadership in Organizations* (8th ed.). Prentice Hall, 2010.

a companion who knows the way at that moment or who is responsible for an activity. But they also act as little leaders, by undertaking responsibilities, taking the initiative, having a project to carry out and putting themselves at the head of a group, either to drive it or to unite it and mobilize it.

Leadership, therefore, goes far beyond the stereotypical image of the charismatic person that tells the people the way to go. Leadership usually involves everything from the smallest scale, such as a Scout group, a neighbourhood or a group of neighbours, to the largest scale, such as the country or the world, and involves detecting opportunities or problems, taking shared responsibility for them and taking charge of the situation.

Studies in the social sciences have shown us that leadership consists of an innate component and a learned component. This means that, almost from infancy to adolescence, there are people who have the skills or predisposition to lead people, unite them, mobilize them, etc. But there is also 50% of cases of leadership that are learned. Hence, certain people in certain contexts, such as in Scouting, have learned through experience different formulae for becoming the yeast in the social dough.

If we think of the professional world, there are institutions where we can find people with formidable academic skills and, therefore, an excellent CV, which ensures that they will be good executives. However, it does not at all guarantee that they will be good managers, from the perspective of the leadership function. This is because there are skills that are not

just learned with the usual academic CV, but are often learned in parallel, before, or afterwards, such as experience in associations.

In fact, while the academic world has given pride of place to the theoretical and cognitive approach to leadership, this approach is limited. Because reducing learning leadership to this dimension is beset with dangers, including believing that assimilating the theory (or theories) is enough. A good analogy is what often happens when we first get our driver's license. We may pass the theoretical exam but we need to master the practical side. For this reason, in recent decades, management schools and other institutions specializing in management training have made major efforts and innovations to incorporate practical learning relating to the exercise of leadership. Role playing techniques, case studies, working in groups, competitive simulations, games of negotiation, mediation and problem solving, communication strategies, etc. are instruments that make it possible to work on the practical side of leadership and on some of its skills.

Although we have said that theory is not sufficient in leadership, but practice is also necessary, we can go even further and state that practice is also not enough, i.e., knowledge and skills are also insufficient. The reason is clear: leadership is not merely a matter of "how to do" but also a matter of "how to be". It is important to master how to do things, but the greatness of good leadership lies in the quality and character of people, in their authenticity and their self-awareness. It depends, ultimately, on their interior state and on the quality of their conscience.

This means that, fundamentally, besides logical-formal intelligence (knowledge) and practical intelligence (skills), leadership is also a matter of existential intelligence (awareness). If we only look at action strategies, we will end up forgetting the sources of our objectives and the profound nature of our commitment: working on the practices but forgetting to work on the purposes that guide these practices and make them relevant. Whereas in the Scout group, in fact, activities are the means for achieving objectives and not objectives themselves.

Indeed, in the Scout movement, this separation of theory and practice is not found. The Scout movement generates a highly experiential educational dynamic aimed at actions and persons. That is, unlike most educational environments in Western society, instead of separating theory and practice, it acts directly on practices from a position of solid theoretical foundations - the educational objectives. Nor does it isolate individuals and their purposes; rather, through belonging to the Scout movement, people develop links to their community and to the collective purposes.

Furthermore, in the Scout movement, the difference between leadership and followership makes little sense. In any of the educational stages of Scouting, every boy and girl finds themselves at different times being a follower (trusting other companions) or being a leader on a small scale (the Cub who has to distribute tasks in his or her group or the Explorer responsible for proposing a development project).

Thus, the potential of Scouting as a leadership school is that it affects not only the rational side of the brain

but also comprehensively prepares the person through the experiential aspect. This comprehensive training includes living together, teamworking, distribution of roles and functions, cooperative work, contact with and respect for the environment, etc. It is precisely all these elements that make it possible to develop many of the attitudes that favour the emergence of leadership at a later stage.

Leaders and Leadership

When talking about education in leadership, we should point out that leadership is more important than the leader. The leader is always a part of a process that includes other pieces, where the important thing is the leadership itself and the action it involves. For there to be leadership, and for it to be positive, the people at the top of the organizations and their human qualities are important; but it is also essential for there to be followers, as is the way they involve themselves and the existence of a shared dream, project or cause. The concept of “follower” does not refer to uncritical acolytes but to people who share the need for the objective and who rely on someone to take on certain responsibilities.

Hence, as stated above, we can see leadership as a virtuous triangle that includes cause, followers and leaders. If these three elements do not occur simultaneously, there is no leadership. To be a leader, you have to have followers, because leadership is not something we do *to* others but something we do *with* others. And if there are followers but no leader, there

can also be no leadership. Finally, if there is a cause but no-one to lead or defend it, it becomes like the play by Luigi Pirandello, *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, where the cause is there but nobody raises the flag!

We should not, therefore, talk about leaders (people) but about leaderships, understanding that leadership is not a medal or a position or a hierarchy, but a dynamic process that sets in motion people who take on responsibilities, followers who are called and mobilized, and causes for which it is worth fighting.

Leadership is not a question of elites but is made up of scales and levels of all kinds: micro-leadership ("small changes are powerful"), meso-leadership (intermediaries make a project possible), macro-leadership (the example of Nelson Mandela, who went beyond his own country), and, even on the global level, meta-leadership. Leadership has no more qualitative value because we project it onto specific groups at very high levels or with a certain elite status; it can be exercised at practically all human and organizational scales and dimensions. Thus, leadership tends to be exercised from the more *micro* sector, such as neighbourhood actions, to the *macro* end of the scale. At all these levels, leaders do the same: they see what problems there are or what opportunities present themselves, they generate a shared vision of what is wanted, take on responsibilities and promote joint work to undertake it.

Ignacio Ellacuría distinguished between "realizing the weight of reality", "shouldering the weight of reality" and "taking charge of the weight of reality".

The three expressions are related to the commitment of leadership. "Realizing the weight of reality" means understanding the situations without ignoring them. "Shouldering the weight of reality" means serving in situations and not serving oneself from them. And "taking charge of the weight of reality" means acting by getting involved and by building the new reality that we want. All three logics form part of a kind of practical intelligence and ethical intelligence that is found in leadership. There is, therefore, a clear link with the basic training of Scouting, which encourages children and young people to work for their shared project, to learn to share responsibility for it and to lead collective projects in a collaborative and non-authoritarian manner - through participation and involvement with the environment.

It should be noted that there is often some confusion between leading and ordering. Leadership does not necessarily involve ordering. The Romans differentiated between *potestas* and *auctoritas*. Just because someone gives orders does not mean they are a leader. The person giving the orders may not have the authority to exercise leadership, even though they have the power to make decisions. Leadership is a moral quality that is acknowledged and granted by the others. It has to do with the legitimacy or credibility that you have earned with the team. Thus, it is possible to have the power, to order and to make people do something yet not have the authority.

Leadership, Good Leadership and the Moral Dimension

We have said that leadership combines cause, followers and leaders. These three elements may exist and yet there may not be *good* leadership. There must also be a positive attitude, i.e., the cause must be good and have associated values that the followers and leaders share.

The question of good leadership becomes clearer if we look at the Hitler-Gandhi dilemma. Both Gandhi and Hitler, and the millions of people who followed them, believed they were fighting for a better society. But what did they mean by "better"? Certainly, Gandhi was a leader, he knew how to mobilize people and he achieved many of his goals. And what about Hitler? Was he a leader? Evidently so. And did he have the ability to mobilize people? Most certainly. And did he have a cause? Indeed he did! And did he accomplish it? Well, not in the end, but he largely achieved many of his objectives.

So we can see that, from a technical standpoint, both Hitler and Gandhi were leaders and that, from the perspective of achieving their causes, they were highly effective. Yet, when we compare them, there is something that grates and that allows us to differentiate between them. Both types of leadership are not the same, nor can we evaluate them in the same way. That is, to talk about *good* leadership we must include a moral dimension, and this is what separates Hitler from Gandhi. Good leadership, then,

depends on the values associated with the cause. For this reason alone, Hitler could never be considered a good leader. And thinking of Scouting, we can even add a second dimension: it is not just the goodness of the values that counts but also the way in which we want to achieve them. The contexts, the means and the consequences count.

Indeed, to think of values is not to think in the abstract but to think of situations, the contexts in which they occur, that condition their importance and opportunity. Hence, thinking of values is not just thinking of ideas but thinking *on* and *from* the reality of the context in which these ideas are inscribed. Similarly, no matter how good the cause, the way it is achieved may contradict the values that inspire it. To think that, in the name of a good cause, any means are valid, that we can act at any price, may end up perverting the goodness of the objective. Finally, we cannot dissociate the values that mobilize us from the consequences generated when we act in the name of these values. When talking about leadership (which means talking about action), I can only understand what my values are if I understand the effect they have on my environment.

In the social or political arena, all this is very often not taken into account. Clearly discerning these elements means that, in the field of leadership, action is not enough, as the danger of responsibilities aimed only at action is activism with nothing else, which may end up blinding the action by forgetting the values of the cause that we are striving for, like a hamster on the wheel in its cage: it runs and runs but goes nowhere. Good leadership, therefore, also

involves reflection - a dimension we will discuss in greater detail later.

In this regard, Scouting has in its favour the fact that it has its own shared *values* associated with a cause, which leads the members of the movement to feel that they identify and that they are participating, and that they also acquire the critical ability to question, reflect and propose regarding the objectives and the means for achieving the common cause.

Thus, the people who form part of the Scout movement are there because they believe in the shared cause, which is to transform the world to leave it better than they found it; but they are also there because the values that define the movement, values of inclusive coexistence that they all hold to be true and that are perceived in the actions, attitudes and decisions taken in the Scouts.

The Scout method is based on becoming aware, acquiring knowledge and action, elements that are essential for developing the critical spirit of the people who form part of the movement. In this way, it is even possible that children and young people in the Scout group can question their leaders if they feel that their attitude does not correspond to the shared values.

Leadership forms an implicit part of the educational method of Scouting from two perspectives. The first, because the objective of Scouting is to contribute to the self-training of children and young people as autonomous individuals and responsible citizens, which means training subjects with criteria and an

active predisposition to influence society. The second is because Scouting promotes the idea that Scouts "try to leave the world better than they found it", i.e., they are agents of change from the smallest level to the biggest. And leadership is exactly about making possible change based on common values.

Charismatic Leadership or Shared Leadership?

It is sometimes uncomfortable to talk about "leaders" and "followers" because it makes us think of toxic relationships, relationships based on authoritarianism where, instead of working for a common objective by potentiating and encouraging the best of the skills of others, what the leader does is take advantage of those skills or, directly, bury them. Unfortunately, there are many cases of this in the professional and social sphere, where the person in charge sees the relationship from the logic of domination, even to the point of questioning the dignity of the other. Threats, bullying and verbal violence are characteristics of toxic leadership, which is unquestionably bad leadership.

Toxic leadership is, however, not the same as "charismatic" leadership, a highly idealized model of leadership that, perhaps, responds to other historical contexts. We often hear talk of charismatic leadership when specific social, cultural, religious or political projects have at their head people with an ability to unite or fascinate. We could describe many highly positive cases, such as Gandhi or Nelson Mandela.

These are people who exude values so strong that they mobilize millions and millions of people.

But we cannot talk about good leadership if we do not adapt them to the situations. Since today we live in complex and diverse societies, in the information and knowledge societies, where each of us knows things that the other does not, charismatic leadership plays an increasingly small role, because we tend rather to need *shared leadership* or distributed leadership. The traditional idea of leadership was like that of a mountain guide who knows the route very well, has prepared it, has experience, and can accompany everyone; on the other hand, what better suits in the current context is that of migratory birds flying in a delta formation, i.e., aligned in a V. If we think of these birds, *which one of them is the leader?* The answer is: *it depends*. When they fly in a group, the leadership of the formation rotates, and the bird that was leading before is now at the tail of the formation because it needs to rest and has passed the baton on to another, which, at that moment, takes on the responsibility of guiding the group for whatever reason, perhaps because it is more rested and, at that moment, it is the one breaking the force of the wind. Among them, then, there is no bird that *is* the leader but a bird that *acts* as leader.

If we adapt this to our reflection on shared leadership, the idea of a group of birds flying in a V formation transmits to us this sensation of a common spirit. Whatever happens to one will happen to the group as a whole. And everyone shares a kind of struggle, emotional strength and destiny. Here, then, good leadership is also knowing how to distribute this

effort and, therefore, adapt to changing contexts, knowing how to manage, to delegate, etc., in order to achieve the common objective. Consequently, *we cannot detach leadership from contexts and situations*. Charismatic leadership continues to have a function; but distributed or shared leadership is becoming increasingly more important because it is more dynamic and permeable in concrete situations.

Thus, being able to empower, to delegate, being able to build or create a team, is very important. In many professional and social areas, management teams are not able to do this. And here, Scouting has something it can teach us because just what it teaches through experience is the value of taking on responsibilities, sharing responsibility, cooperating, understanding, etc. In a Scout group leaders' council, for example, there is this shared spirit, in which the different members that make up the council share responsibility for the project, distribute tasks and functions, work as a team, etc.

Educating in Leadership: Action-Reflection

As we have said, good leadership involves both action and reflection, i.e., *refle-action*, reflective action. People who occupy a position of leadership are not always able to work on the reflective dimension. Whereas we all need to find spaces where we can truly discover the purpose that guides our actions. And this is perhaps the most important part of

leadership: building sense – where we are going, why we do things and what the thing being done means.

Action is the first essential part of learning about leadership. Aristotle said that justice was learned through the exercise of justice. We could say that the same is true of leadership, as it is of skills in general: there is no better way to develop it than by encouraging its exercise and learning from the mistakes made. For this to be possible, however, people must assume certain margins of trust and initiative, and our society does not really make this possible. In this regard, Scouting has certain advantages.

The Scout method, based on the pedagogy of action, promotes learning through experience, *learning by doing*, which involves developing the autonomy of the person. Through this autonomy, the Scout experience generates a space of self-reliance and self-esteem that sends a clear message: "take the risk and do not be afraid to fail". If the action of a young person is highly guided or supervised, overprotected, and they only look to the immediate consequence, there is no room for learning through error. Hence, it is very difficult for a person to develop leadership skills. On the other hand, giving children and young people responsibility and trust allows them to take a step forward, to think in the long term, and to develop a project or a vision that goes beyond themselves.

If action is key in leadership, its counterpart is reflection. And teaching people to reflect is always more difficult than developing leadership through

action. For a Scout leader, this is the review or evaluation of an activity. Put in another way, in a context such as that of Scouting, the pathways to practical learning are already there but they must be complemented by spaces for discernment and reflection that help to respond to questions such as: What have we done? Why have we done it? What is the sense of it all? Where do we want to go? Otherwise, the action lacks sense.

A major advantage of Scouting is that its system of transmitting values is highly intuitive² and establishes objectives based on shared values - a system that makes the values easy to assimilate. The review of activities carried out to achieve the objectives is essential in order to be sure of what is being done and to become aware of it. It is precisely this aspect of reflection that is one of the major failings of the dynamics of blind activism that are so widespread today, where only the action seems to be important and there is no provision for strategy, vision or evaluation.

In this regard, the combination of both axes (reflection) makes it possible to work on the growth of the person and even to ask ourselves what our purposes and values are, whether we have been consistent with them (critical spirit) and whether we have been able to become role models.

2. Eduard Vallory, *World Scouting: Educating for Global Citizenship*. Palgrave Macmillan: 2012, p. 64-65.

Role Models

Good leadership should link leaders and role models. A role model is a person whose behaviour exemplifies specific values and who has a positive influence on the behaviour of others. This is true even though they do not try to be an example but simply live based on their own options. The role model's condition as a moral voice becomes a life model to the point of exercising the power of attraction and imitation over us. For this reason, the moral stature of a group (Scouts, the people, the country) depends on the stature, brilliance and nobility of some of its individuals, on the ability to acknowledge them and admire them and, of course, the courage to want to imitate them.

Role models tend not to be leaders, although they are people who, with their vision and energy, unite and mobilize people around a common project. Nevertheless, they can be considered as beacons in the dark or peaks that stand out in a mountain range. The authenticity of their testimony is able to move us, to generate in us a vital jolt, because their example allows us to glimpse the materialization of an ideal - it reminds us of their existence and invites us to access it. Leaders set out challenges and drive change: they transmit the message that "we can aspire to more". Role models are living witnesses to a quality human lifestyle: they transmit the message that "we can be better".

We have said that role models are "living witnesses". This does not mean that their memory cannot be disseminated and endure. But it does mean that the

force of their impact depends, above all, on their currency and proximity. Thus, the moral stature of a group also depends on the forging, maintenance and renewal of its role models.

Just as causes need leaders and people who work together to achieve them, leadership also needs role models to inspire it. Leaders are agents for change, on the small scale or the large. Perhaps, in most cases, we will not all exercise leadership, as with the flock of birds. But all of us, on a greater or lesser scale, can be role models. For better and for worse, through our actions and our attitudes, we are role models for those around us. We can all become for someone else an exemplary image of life, so that everyone who has taken on the role of leader, has a role model beforehand. And at the moment of taking on their responsibility, the role model, whether they know it or not, maintains an internal dialogue with themselves.

This dialogue is clear in the example of the relationship between educator (leader) and educatee (child) in the Scouts, where the educatee has the leader as a role model more than as a leader and, later, it may be that the child themselves will become a leader and, therefore, a new role model. Thus, the child or young person who becomes a leader will often wonder in this new stage: "how would my leader act if he/she was in my place?"; "what message did they transmit to me?"; "what was it about them that moved me inside?"

Therefore, we must link good leadership to these elements. We cannot all be leaders in all circumstances

because we do not always have the opportunity and the ability to promote change and set out challenges, nor are we always in the right context. However, we can all, on a small scale, be role models: in the family, at school, in the area of socialization, in the Scouts, etc. And without a role model, there can also be no leadership.

Collective Construction: the Story and the Project

Scouting places emphasis on the sum of efforts, on teamwork, but also on effort and surpassing oneself. So we must remember that when climbing to the top of a mountain, we must do so in a way that ensures that everyone else gets there. But this can be understood in two different ways. One way is that those who are less inclined to walk decide whether the group ascends or not. And another way is that those in better shape help those who are not so fit, and also that those who are less able make twice the effort. The objective should be both ambitious and reasonable, and everybody must contribute.

Talking about leadership means also talking about meritocracy. About acknowledging effort, talent, tenacity and willpower. We all have something that we are good at if we make the effort. A meritocratic dynamic that dismisses those who make the effort to give the best they have is as negative as an egalitarian dynamic that tries to hide talent and penalize effort.

In reality, both in the Scouts and in society, we should want there to be many people with talent, with the will to surpass themselves, with motivation and effort, who are present in all areas: cultural, social, entrepreneurial, political, etc. Because if we have many of them and they are of high quality, they will infect others with their enthusiasm and commitment, and make us all more exacting of ourselves. And this also forms part of leadership. Like the mother who can mobilize associations to prevent the Scouts from ending up without premises. Like the leaders who prepare a magnificent audiovisual presentation to better explain environmental problems. If every time someone stands out, we clip their wings, if we are unable to appreciate, acknowledge and promote excellence, we will end up immersed in mediocrity.

Nor does acknowledging excellence mean rejecting failure. Quite the contrary! We have said that we want autonomous people who will take risks, who will dare to work and to strive for the cause that they believe in. There are groups and countries that do not tolerate failure and this is a problem because failure is an extremely important pathway to learning. On the other hand, there are societies that do not tolerate success and who would like everyone to be at the same level of mediocrity. The worst thing that can happen to us is for us to be a society that tolerates neither failure nor success, that condemns us to aspire to nothing.

To encourage people who stand out, who strive, who help us to be better is to encourage role models. If we renounce promoting the role models with whom we share values, the role models will come from outside,

such as from the advertising and consumer industries or from the audiovisual world, such as cinema or television. Evidently, there may be very good role models, but there are also many that are not positive. These are the role models that our children will hang on the wall of their rooms, but not necessarily the ones that transmit the values that we hold to be good. The diagnosis is that when a society, in the first place, has no historical memory of its role models, it has a problem. And worse still, when, secondly, a society is unable to renew and create and re-create new role models, it has an even bigger problem. It would be good if generations could have a living memory of their role models and could, at the same time, constantly re-create them. If we are not able to do this, in all areas, cultural, social, intellectual, sport, etc., we will be a society with no destination because there will be no positive mirror in which to see ourselves reflected.

This has a negative effect on a more profound matter, which is the lack of a project. Associations, like countries and societies, need a project. The project is not built by the role model but by the leaders, the people who say: "we have to go there". And this project may be attractive and challenging enough to mobilize everyone. Creating a project, and more so from shared leadership, means constructing a story, having a sensitive enough ear to correctly read the historical moment and verbalize the collective concerns, things that everybody wants without being aware that they want them. This is the virtue of the person who exercises leadership: they must have a finely attuned ear. First, to understand what the signs of the times are, and second, to know what it is

that concerns the community and society, put it into words and move it forward.

When we transfer this reflection to an association or a country, we see the importance of having a story and a project and of having role models that inspire them and leaders who promote them. As it is not always possible to have a project that captivates, in associations or countries with a strong institutional structure (the association structure or the institutions of the state), the absence of a project is a problem that can be borne for a time because the strength of the institutions does the job of filling in for the non-project. However, in groups that are organizationally weak and in countries with insufficient self-government, such as the case of Catalonia, the absence of a project is serious because, sooner or later, it would mean becoming residual, assimilation into another project or, simply, disappearance. The worst that can happen to us, then, is not to have a project. If this project is lost or diluted and we are left simply with management, our days are numbered. Hence the importance of leadership.

Fragmentation

Today, it is not easy to share a project and the same story. In the society in which we live, there is a difficulty when creating a shared story, due to fragmentation: processes of individualization are rife and, therefore, personal realizations count for much more than collective projects. This yearning

for personal realization does not allow satisfaction to be put off. That is, it does not accept the value of sacrifice and, therefore, as individuals, we want it all and we want it now. The only way to avoid the perils of this micro-fragmentation resulting from the process of individualization is to build forums or public spaces where the different voices that represent the country can meet.

This is one of the great changes taking place. Until very recently in our history, the public space was still the political space *par excellence*. And parliament was the central place where everything had to be discussed. Today, this is not the case. With the development of new communication technologies, the public space is much larger and much more complex, and from the Scout movement, it is possible to share in a way that politicians, businesspeople and other sectors are not doing.

So developing a story or a project for a country also means *finding spaces for congregation, deliberation and dialogue*, and this cannot be improvised but must be planned. This is the challenge for countries that want to be serious. When Denmark, France or Finland suddenly find themselves in the midst of globalization and on the wrong foot, what they do is they create a strategic plan in which they call on everyone to define the common future. In this way, they end up with a plan of action to face the world with. When Finland establishes what it will do, it defines few things as projects: we want to be a leading country in globalization and in new technologies, we want to give an important role to education, and we want to build a welfare state or approve a social contract that

really binds the country together. No more and no less. From here, they move forward, they have a road map and they move together.

Establishing a common project, whether for a country or for an association or a Scout group, is essential. If there is fragmentation, what we are promoting is "every man for himself", and this gets us nowhere. Therefore, overcoming micro-fragmentation is a challenge for the present generations. There are currently virtual communities of different affinities throughout the world, so that it is possible to find a reference in groups that have not even met each other. The international dimension of Scouting is an example of this. In all of this, the current generations are much more open, although they are therefore much more disperse.

The Hidden Agenda

A final reflection: we have talked about leadership as a tool for change, but it is also a quality that serves in professional life. Many Scout leaders have heard that they should dedicate less time to Scouts and more to their studies, not knowing that the winds are blowing in favour of Scouting. The type of skills with the most added value today in the professional world are very similar to the skills that are worked on in the Scout educational project. Without going into it in depth, we should remember that leadership skills include some basic skills such as *knowledge, orientation toward action, vision and relationship*. These four skills are important and are considered to different

degrees depending on the context, the organization and the type of objectives to be accomplished.

However, in all cases, leadership is essentially a work of relationships. When we analyse what those who act as leaders spend their time on, we know from different studies that more than 90% of the time is dedicated to talk with other people. *Interpersonal relationships* have much to do with *emotional intelligence*. But this cannot be explained or learned at university because the processes of teaching and learning at university are highly individualized.

Therefore, today we know that interpersonal skills, which involve empathy, putting oneself in the other person's position, cooperation, distribution of roles and teamwork, are very clearly increasingly valued in professional environments. But this is not shown on a professional or academic CV. For this reason, institutions looking for skills of this type analyse aspects that show that this person has had some kind of civic-association responsibility, such as in the Scouts, but also in an outward-bound association, a social foundation, a cultural group, etc, and they take note of the years spent and the positions and responsibilities undertaken.

Three Ideas to Finish Up: Advice for a Scout Leader

We have seen that leadership is the engine for changing what we do not like about our environment

and that leadership is increasingly cooperative rather than charismatic. We have stated the importance of a common cause, without which leadership makes no sense, and we have said that role models feed leadership and shared projects, and that effort, merit and the will to surpass oneself makes us all better. And, finally, we have shown that the skills that Scouting transmits are important for building a better society and for forging people with good professional qualities. Now, before finishing, I would like to put forward three ideas in the form of advice for a Scout leader.

First, in a highly competitive professional setting, do not underestimate what you are doing in the Scout group or in your association teams. You are contributing to building and improving reality. Being a Scout leader should give you a high level of self-esteem. Furthermore, if you are a Scout leader, you are definitely developing some very important skills for your life and for the life of others. Remember that there are executives holding high office in the public and private sectors who do not have half the skills a Scout leader has. The skills that a Scout leader brings into play are coveted, highly valued skills for a world that will be seeking multi-purpose management functions. A Scout leader can respond to very different life contexts.

Second, beware activism through inertia. The greatest danger for people who are highly oriented toward action, even group leaders, is to believe that action for the sake of action is enough. It is true that we need results, but these results must be guided by a point of reflection that makes sense of what we do and

what we want to do and gives it transcendence. What followers most value in leadership is an intangible: the building of sense. That is, for someone to tell us where we are going. And this is not action. Building sense is a philosophical and spiritual construction. Building sense involves reflection and depth. Therefore, this point means that when you exercise, you must work not only on the physical musculature, nor simply the mental aspect; you must also work on the axiological, existential and spiritual aspect. Because this is where the fount of sense is to be found.

And third, in the field of Scouting, one of the biggest dangers facing a Scout leader is burn-out. Social leadership involves giving a lot of energy to others and this leads to a draining effect. Social leadership generates in the leaders a positive transmission of energy. Followers immediately sense this, want it and demand it. This is hope-giving, positive energy. The question is, where does the Scout leader find the source for regenerating this energy? Or, in other words, should the Scout leader be a battery or a dynamo? When we say "we need to recharge our batteries", we imagine that the energy comes from without. But this is a mistake. Because you are always dependent on energy that comes from without. But, if you become a dynamo, if you find an interior source to boost your energy, you will avoid burn-out. And this, as we have said, comes not just from physical exercise or just from academic or intellectual exercise. It has more to do with axiological or spiritual exercise. This means including in our training and growth moments of silence, reflection, distancing, self-awareness, meditation, etc. Here is where we will find this interior energy. And from here, good work!



Collection "Reflections out loud"

1. Raül Adroher i Montserrat
La laïcitat a l'escoltisme
Una experiència viscuda
Laicity in Scouting/Guiding.
A Lived Experience
2. Marta Mata i Garriga
Amagatalls de la renovació pedagògica
En els 25 anys d'Escoltes Catalans
Secret Hiding Places of Pedagogical Renewal.
On the 25th Anniversary of Escoltes Catalans
3. Marta Rosàs i Cortada
La coeducació.
Una oportunitat per descobrir-nos
Coeducation.
An Opportunity for Self-discovery
4. Eduard Vallory i Subirà, David Pérez i Martín
La participació associativa genera implicació política
Participation in Associations Leads to Political Involvement
5. Xavier Godàs i Pérez
Democràcia participativa a les organitzacions
Participatory Democracy in Organisations
6. Àngel Castiñeira i Fernández
Educar en el lideratge
Educating in Leadership

