



Dr Hanne Tange

Abstract

The World Organization of Scout Movements (WOSM) is unique in its dedication to youth, education and global citizenship. In its mission statement, WOSM declares that the aim of scouting is to "contribute to the education of young people, through a value system based on the Scout Promise and Law, to help build a better world where people are self-fulfilled as individuals and play a constructive role in society" (WOSM n.d.). Ongoing projects such as Messengers of Peace and the Scout of the World Award encourage youth to become involved in community service, acting locally to address global issues such as Peace, Development and Climate Change. Focusing on the international dimension of scouting, the current paper asks to what extent a scout camp can function as a site for intercultural learning. The paper relies on a conceptual framework that combines theories of intercultural learning and international education. Central is the idea of cosmopolitanism, which is defined by Rizvi (2006, 21) as "a mode of learning about, and ethically engaging with, new cultural formations". Rizvi's idea of "engaging" with other cultures takes us beyond the concern with understanding (national) cultural differences that has characterised much research in intercultural communication, suggesting that one creates in education a space where learners can exchange cultural perspectives and experiences regardless of national origins or present location (Marginson & Sawir 2011). Arguably, a world scout jamboree has the potential to become such a site of intercultural learning. The research was carried out at the 23rd World Scout Jamboree, where the author participated as a unit leader for a Danish troop. During the jamboree observations were made of the display of 'culture' at unit camps, in the exhibitions tents organised by national scout organisations, and during jamboree 'festivals' such as The Interreligious Ceremony and The Cultural Exchange Day. Observations were jotted down in log book kept throughout the jamboree. Field notes have been supplemented by photos as well as jamboree artefacts such as national contingent badges, scarves, T-shirts and gifts. The data has been analysed thematically, grouping objects and events into the categories of national, global and hybrid culture. Undoubtedly, the global village that scouts inhabit during the jamboree will increase their awareness of other cultures. The scouts learn what it means to be members of one global movement with common symbols, rituals and practices. This offers a potential platform for cosmopolitanism of the kind proposed by Rizvi. At the same time there is a risk attached to the celebration national difference experienced at the jamboree. An exposure to 'banal nationalism' might thus fuel processes of "Othering", confirming existing stereotypes rather than facilitate intercultural dialogue and learning.

Bio

Dr Hanne Tange (Ph.D., Glasgow 2001) works as an Associate Professor in the Department of Culture and Global Studies, University of Aalborg, Denmark. Her research interests include intercultural learning, international education, sociology of knowledge and (Scottish) Cultural Studies. She has published articles on international pedagogy, language politics, intercultural communication, and Scottish cultural history. She is presently working on a research project dedicated to the "Internationalisation and social practice in Danish Higher Education". The work presented here is inspired by her long-term involvement with the scout movement (internationally as well as nationally).