



Examples of Projects – Scouts over 15 Kids having Kids



Identifying the problems:

There is growing recognition that teenage pregnancy and early parenthood can lead to poor educational achievement, poor physical and mental health and social isolation. Socio-economic disadvantage can be both a cause and effect of young parenthood. Every year 17 million adolescents become pregnant and give birth, nearly four and a half million young women aged between 15 and 19 undergo unsafe abortions and around 60,000 adolescents die from health problems related to pregnancy. Whilst girls bear the burden of pregnancy and parenthood, young men also need information and education to overcome the problem.

Activity 1: What's our situation?

Find out about the situation in your own country perhaps by finding out the answers to the following questions.

- What are the average ages of young men and women that marry and have their first child?
- How many babies are born to young women under the age of 20 and what percentage to unmarried women?
- Do the figures vary for different parts of your country and what might be the reason for this e.g. Is there a difference in rural, urban and inner-city areas, areas which are more and less economically developed?
- What facilities exist for young mothers, so that they can complete their education?
- What sex education is there for boys and girls and who is responsible for providing this?

Activity 2: Exploring Options

Invite a healthcare professional to come and talk about the options that are open to young parents. Discuss the impact on all the groups of people involved - the young women and men, the baby which will grow into a child, the parents of the young people. Using the Flowchart - see Activity Treasure Chest, look at the decisions which need to be made and explore the situation for the first few years after the birth of the baby.

Discuss the key factors in taking decisions - are they influenced by religion, culture, the health facilities available?

Activity 3: Money for Sex

In many countries around the world young women and young men are forced into prostitution in their own country or sold as sex-slaves to other countries. These young people suffer physically and psychologically and young women run a very high risk of becoming pregnant. In small groups identify 2 or 3 countries in different parts of the world and find out about the situation. Present the findings to the others and compare the results.

Developing awareness and empathy:

After actively participating in identifying the problem, Scouts need to be helped to develop their awareness of the issues.

Here are some activities which will help Cub Scouts to explore the issue of kids having kids and develop skills and empathy. These activities use the Scout method of active participation and exploration. The project in the community should help the Cub Scouts use the skills that they have developed.

Activity 1: What the community thinks!

Undertake a survey in the community to discover the views of different groups of people on the topic of teenage motherhood and fatherhood - see Interviews in the Activity Treasure Chest or ask people to indicate whether they agree or disagree with statements by placing a cross on a line e.g.

Agree -----Disagree

Some questions which could be asked are:

- Should the community help young mothers to finish their education by providing adequate healthcare?
- Are young unmarried mothers a burden to society?
- Should all young men be taught about responsible parenthood?
- Is it true that young unmarried fathers do not take full responsibility for their children?
- Does sex education encourage young people to become sexually active at a young age?
- Should sex education be provided for all young people?

Activity 2: What the media tells us?

Explore the attitudes to young parents and children brought up by single parents by looking at articles in newspapers and magazines and analysing the story lines of popular TV or radio programmes. How are young mothers, fathers and children brought up by single parents portrayed?

The media is a powerful tool, both reflecting and influencing views in society. Are the views expressed in the media positive and responsible or negative and sensational? How can the media be used to highlight the issue and support young mothers, fathers and their children?

Activity 3: Our Response

Using the activity 'Problem Letters'- see Activity Treasure Chest, divide into groups and develop some situations as letters to a magazine and ask another group to respond. Compare and discuss the answers. Some possible letters are provided below:

Situations for 'Problem Letters'.

Dear ...

I am 14 years old and have a baby son. My parents are very supportive but my friends still go to school each day and see each other - I feel like I am missing out and do not have any fun. I am very lonely and don't spend time with people who are my age.

What can I do?

Dear ...

I am 15 years old and my girlfriend thinks that she may be pregnant. I don't know what to do about this - who can I ask? How can we be sure? Is there somewhere we can go for advice or someone that we can talk to?

I am in a panic and do not know what the future will hold? Please help!

Dear ...

My girlfriend and I are 16 years old and we are expecting a child in a few months. This situation was not planned but we are both coping with it. The problem is the reaction that we are getting from many people in the community. My girlfriend gets abuse when she walks down the street, her old friends call her names and make fun of her. My friends are laughing at me and say that my life is over.

Will this go on for ever? Should we ignore it? Should we shout back or should we move away until after the baby is born?

Dear ...

My boyfriend is pressurizing me into having sex but I am not sure that I want to. I have never done it before and I am not sure that I will know what to do. He says that he will leave me if I do not have sex with him. He says that he loves me but I am not sure that I feel ready to have sex with anyone yet, but I don't want to lose him.

What should I do?

Taking action:

The Gifts for Peace project should make a difference in the community. Actions need to be developed which are appropriate to the community and are challenging and fun for the Scouts involved. Here are some projects which may be appropriate for Scouts to support the issue of kids having kids.

Project 1: New Opportunities

Working with others in your community arrange to meet with some young mothers and fathers and plan some activities together. Scouting could offer some new experiences and provide a supportive network. Make sure that appropriate health care is provided for the children.

Project 2: Developing skills

Young people who are parents often become isolated and find it difficult to continue their education or develop skills which will help them to find a job. As a team set up a mentoring scheme to help young parents, perhaps supporting them with studying for exams or helping them to develop new skills e.g. Computer skills, filling in job applications etc.

Project 3: Peer Education

Collect information on sex-education which has been written by professionals and develop a peer education programme on young parenthood considering the following aspects:

- **Health issues** - physical impact on young women having children at an early age, psychological health, dangers of sexually transmitted diseases.
- **Personal issues** - young people's right to make informed choices, the impact on young people's education and future employment.
- **Social issues** - the attitudes in society to young parents and children brought up by single parents.

Develop some suitable material and activities and try them out on some young people, ask them for feedback and amend the activities as necessary. As a group organise some training sessions.

Measuring change:

The project is designed to help young people to develop their capabilities, attitudes and values in response to situations where there is conflict, and then apply these to a project in their community. Scouts can make a difference in their communities and develop capabilities and empathies related to peace education. Two dimensions of change should be measured - change in the communities and change in the Scouts themselves. Measuring change should be built into the design of the project in a fun, participative way. Here are some activities which will help to measure change.

Activity 1: Our views

As a group share your views on what you have learned and how your attitude to the subject has changed. This could be undertaken in a number of ways - sharing views in a circle and listening carefully to each input, interviewing each other, recording thoughts and views on tape or on a video.

Activity 2: Measuring training

Develop a simple questionnaire to find out if your peer training has been effective. Devise some yes/no questions to test the knowledge of the participants. Share your results with other leaders in your community.

Case Study:

Here is some information from the Arab Region where there have been programmes on reproductive health for many years.

Reproductive health has been on the agenda of 8 NSOs in the Arab Region for a number of years. Scouts in Jordan, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Tunisia, Sudan, Palestine, Morocco and the Lebanon have been involved in a programme with the United Nations Family Planning Association since 1997. This programme builds on many years of work on this topic in the Region which was presented to the International Conference for Population in Cairo in 1994.

Young men and women are helped to understand five subjects in the programme:

1. Maturity during adolescence
2. Reproductive health
3. Family and social roles
4. Marriage, delivery and family planning
5. Sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS awareness.

Workshops have been organised for leaders and workshops targeted at young people were held at Rover Moots in the Arab Region and at the 19th World Scout Jamboree, held in Chile. The messages in the programme have been delivered in the form of guide books, manuals and in 1999/2000 calendars were also produced to spread the messages widely.

Scouts learning about family and social roles as part of a reproductive health programme



"There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children. There is no duty more important than ensuring that their rights are respected, that their welfare is protected, that their lives are free from want and that they grow up in peace."

Kofi A. Annan