

## THESIS

### **Let's be outdoors, adventure program in scouts summer course.**

Development project for Útílfsskóli Skáta, Skátasamband Reykjavíkur

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# ABSTRACT

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This thesis is done as a final project in Humak University of Applied Science Bachelor's degree in Adventure and outdoor education. The thesis focuses on the improvement of the daily routine that is offered in the scout summer courses Útilífsskóli skáta in Iceland and how it can be connected to the learning goals of Scouting and Adventure and Outdoor Education.

The reason for the topic is the commissioner's desire to make the program unique scouting experience and make an equal experience for all children participating in the summer courses in different locations every year. Útilífsskóli Skáta is a place where children can gain a basic knowledge of scouting and a platform for youth leadership training for teenagers. Útilífsskóli Skáta has been for a long time in the same tracks for the past decade and has had little development on a larger scale. The summer camps have adult leaders who are organizing and managing many things at once, and therefore it is necessary to look for ways to support them and simplify when keeping the basics of scouting present and t.

The main research methods used in this work were surveys and results show that parents and participants are satisfied with the current work of the Útilífsskóli Skáta, but strengthening the program can improve the experience of the participants and support the learning progresses they gain when participating in the courses. It is additionally important that leaders, youth staff members receive support, reflect and understanding of the purpose of their work and what is being offered in the outdoor school which is presented in this essay. It acts as a framework and a foundation that can be utilized for the program in the courses of Útilífsskóli skáta in the future.

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**Key words:** scouting movement, Iceland, summer Camps, pedagogy, adventure and outdoor education, youth organisations.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

During summertime in Iceland when schools are closed from early June to mid-August and parents are working, leisure activities for children are offered by private and public youth centers, associations, and sports clubs. It can vary from a daytime course in urban areas as well as weeklong overnight summer camps in the countryside. Children go to those places to socialize, have fun, and try new things. Those kind of courses and camps are a valuable experience for every child to meet new friends, self-develop and explore new environments. As a child I went to multiple camps and courses during the summertime, from theatre plays in my neighborhood to religious summer camps 500km from home. Sometimes I went to the same places as my friends and family members or tried out something new. When I was 11 years old, I tried out a scout summer course in my neighborhood that my sibling had gone to a few years back. During that course was the first time I tried grilling bread over an open fire, jumped in a bag in an obstacle course, climbed a small cliff and made new friends that made the experience unforgettable. Five years later I applied for a summer job at that scout summer course and ended working there for four summers in a row, and now a days I work for the organization that oversees the applications and training for the staff of this summer course.

For two decades, the scouts in Iceland have been operating *Útilífsskóli skáta*, or as it can be translated, outdoor school of scouts. It's a scout's summer recreation course in the urban areas of the capital city of Iceland and in this thesis, I will be simplifying it to a "scout course". It is a week full of scouting activities open for every child from 8 to 12 years old to participate in seven neighborhoods in Reykjavík. After 20 years, the development of the operation and program has not changed much since the beginning. New activities have been mixed in to them and others have been dropped out. Every year, a new head of each' courses' hub is hired every year, so the consistency of the course is mostly draft paper that is copied every year and mixed in with classic simple pastime activities. The development project aim of this thesis is to simplify the work of the course's heads, a program that brings out a unique experience and the aims of scouting to the participants and staff, to create a red thread across every hub in the city, so everyone gets an equal experience.

## 1.1 Commissioner

Since 1969, Skátasamband Reykjavíkur, a regional scout association has been operating for scout groups in Reykjavík, the capital of Iceland. Its purpose is to be an umbrella association for the scout groups in Reykjavík in matters related to communications with the city council, common projects, and support center.

Útilífsskóli skáta (outdoor school of scouts) is a project and a brand that has been operating since the year 2000 across seven scout groups in Reykjavík. It is an urban summer youth recreation course, a weeklong course that provides active and social experiences through scouting recreation for youth ages 8–12 years old. With focus on incorporating development skills such as confidence, teamwork, and promoting children and young people to become independent, active, and responsible individuals. For seven weeks over summer holidays in Iceland, Útilífsskóli skáta offers program that includes games, crafts, and activities related to the outdoors and scouting. Over six weeks in the summer, there are weekly up to 30 participants every week, six to eight teenage staff members that are 15-17 years old and two to three leaders that are 18-25 years old.

Researcher looked at the data from the past three years on participants numbers that had been collected by the commissioner for the past 10 years. Each year there is a fluctuating number of participants that take part in the program, some participants come back every year or twice that same summer. The city financially supports the summer courses to keep the participation cost low to offer a summer program for families in various economical situations and diversified summer courses for children in the summertime. Comparing the total amount of yearly participants of children aged 6-12 years old living in Reykjavík, the estimated percentage of children that did participate in the scout summer courses in the years of 2021 to 2023 is 5-7% of the total amount of 6–12-year-old children in Reykjavík. (þjóðskrá)

## 1.2 Needs

Útilífsskóli skáta has been operating in scout groups in Reykjavik, and Skátasamband Reykjavíkur acts as a quality manager to keep the courses equal across the city and manages the structures for the organization sides of the operation. The scout groups have free hands to arrange the program, expectations, and operation as they see fit. The city financially supports the scout summer course by providing the base salary for leaders and youth staff and that has helped scouts to be able to provide those summer courses yearly. The market for summer courses for children has been growing but many leisure and training courses are offered for children during summer. For the past years the program offered in Útilífsskóli skáta has similar things to offer as the general daycare program by other public youth centers and clubs. With simple activities like free play, crafting, sports games and puzzles, the children spend time playing together freely or the group goes to the public swimming pools and hang around the usual school area with no specific goals. From the year 2000 the summer courses were new, and the scouts were eager to create something exciting and memorable, time and effort was put in to making a program that involves the participants to get the most experience of scouting within two weeks and ended in an overnight camping trip. After more than 20 years the community, regulations and scouts' enthusiasm towards the summer courses has changed and the effort in preparing and overseeing the operation of the summer courses has diminished. The program offered in the past met the standards of that time, the scouting methods and values are the key assets for the program but effort in using them nowadays has decreased which makes the summer courses stand out less and has fewer returns between years. The program at the scout summer courses has immense potential with the mixing of scouting and adventure and outdoor education.

## 1.3 Objectives

The goal of the research is to develop a formal program structure for Útilífsskóli skáta for leaders of the summer courses to work with. Formal program structure is defined here as the process of clarifying, modelling, and creating a program in line with aims and values of the scouts and Útilífsskóli skáta. The objective of the study is to provide a review of literature and field practices in relation to analyze and outline a framework

for the program that is offered in the summer courses that meets the aim of Útilífsskóli skáta and scouts.

1. To provide a comprehensive review of sources and characteristics of The Scout Method and adventure and outdoor education.
2. To review current industry practices with program making.
3. To develop a program formalizing method for leaders of the summer courses for easier identification and modelling the program.
4. To outline a framework for scout group and heads of the summer courses to work with.

The result of this study will be valuable to the industry practitioners as well as related providers in developing better practice and tools within the Útilífsskóli skáta.

## 2. KNOWLEDGE BASE

### 2.1 Scouting history

In the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century ideas of youth work on volunteering basis had just started and scouting was one of the first and had connections to the two biggest community values at that time, religion and military. In 1907 Lieutenant-General Robert Stephenson Smyth Lord Baden Powell of Gilwell, started The Scouts in the United Kingdom as its focus to give young boys opportunity to learn and take on active role in support their local community with teamwork, survival skills, community service during the war time. In 1908, Baden-Powell authored the book *Scouting for boys* (Baden-Powell, 1911) and shortly after, young boys started marching down the streets of London with a cloth around their necks helping citizens and following the ideology preached in the book. A few years later, the scouting movement had spread, first nationally and then internationally. In 1922 World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM) and in 1928 the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) were founded as Baden-Powells teachings and ideology had spread worldwide. With the rapid growth of scouting a controversy regarding the religious part of scouting was brought up and Baden Powell emphasized that religion was a part of a Scout's life, without dictating a particular faith and transformed the concept to spirituality (Britannica, 2023). Now in 2024, 57 million people in 174 countries and states are part of the world associations and growing. In Iceland, scouting formally started in 1913 when a young Danish man used the Scouting for boys' ideas as a recreational activity for local Icelandic children and started the first scout group in Iceland, Skátafélag Reykjavíkur which is now Skátasamband Reykjavíkur, the commissioner of this thesis. Scouting is shaped by each country's cultures, terrain, and social circumstances, but they all have scouting values and methods in common and the outdoor pursuits that connects all the world movement (Bandalag íslenskra skáta, 1993).

### 2.2 Scouting values and method

Scouting is a journey, a lifestyle of adventure. Scouting aims to connect people and transformative ideas to create a community of equality, inclusivity, and mutual respect.

The skills gained in scouting will enable young people to gain inspiration, self-discovery, become action-oriented and committed to a life of purpose and optimism for the future (WOSM, 2019A).

The core values of the scouting method is what brings the movement together as one. They are followed and reflected in all scouting organizations today. They are the following:

- **The Scout Promise and Law:** A code of living with the promise to oneself and others. The promise and law bring unison and connection on an international level but is also adapted to fit the unique culture, traditions and diversity of each National Scout Organization. As an example, we have the Australian scout promise:

On my honour, I promise to do my best,  
To be true to my spiritual beliefs,  
To contribute to my community and our world,  
To help other people,  
And to live by the Scout Law

- **Learning by Doing:** Scouting focuses on having fun and being relevant, the use of practical and real-life experiences to reflect and facilitate ongoing learning and development. Challenge and failure in the first or second try creates learning opportunities for the individuals to grow their self-development and resilience. Scouts are encouraged to try out new things, make mistakes and be open to changes if needed.
- **Personal Progression:** Scouting opens new views for individuals in their personal lives and the community they are part of. Growth in intrapersonal progression, autonomy, social adaptability and to be an active world citizen. By acquiring skills for life like freedom of choice and recognition in their own competence scouts take on new challenges to learn and grow.
- **Team/patrol System:** Scouting operates by using the patrol system. A small team from four to eight individuals taking on challenges and tasks together to engage in social interactions and interpersonal growth. Each patrol shares with each other responsibilities and ensures that all are part of the decision-making processes. A representational system is also in place when making decisions

within scout groups where one scout presents the patrol to important meetings and councils.

- **Adult Support:** A youth organization does not hold its foundations and traditions if there are no adults involved. Scouting is a volunteer operating movement where adult volunteers are present to support, mentor and guide the young scouts towards growth and independence and ensure safety for the youth. Not only are adult volunteer leaders, but teenagers are also trained and encouraged to support and take on guiding of younger sections.
- **Symbolic Framework:** When people think of scouts, the first thing that comes to their mind is the neckerchiefs, uniforms, badges, and flag parades. The traditions and the uniforms give scouts a visual symbol within the community but in scouting the symbolic framework is much bigger than it is seen from the outside. Scouting is for various ages and every age section has a distinct symbolic framework like skill badges and theme that is worked with to level challenges and enhance the learning and growth of that age range.
- **Nature:** An ideal learning environment isn't inside, but outside, in the woods, the plains, by the sea, in the mountains and the desert. Nature is an ideal setting that offers a sense of adventure and authenticity, positive atmosphere enables learners to be able to effectively engage with the raw settings that is presented to them and gives feedback in the present. The scouting method can be applied in outdoor activities and natural environments. Scouting focuses also on environmentally sustainability and practices.
- **Community Involvement:** The goal of the scouts of creating a better world is a long and slow process. Together, scouts aim to be a part of the community, being active citizens, making meaningful contribution to the society and being involved to gain inter-cultural understanding, appreciate inter-generational heritage and diversity to create a sustainable society for future generations.

(WOSM, 2019B)

Scouts share knowledge and skill through experiences for the future, Scouting is a non-formal education with active participation and experiential learning, with the support of adult volunteers and the peer team system. The program actively engages individuals' personal growth, community participation and environmental awareness to create a better world. With the scout law, the scout method and symbolic framework

young people get an understanding how effective collective mindsets and group of people can have influence on this world.

### **2.3 Adventure and Outdoor education**

Adventure and outdoor education is both widely known and unknown. When the majority of people think of adventure and outdoor education they think of thrilling, exotic, dangerous experience, that costs a lot of money, but that isn't the main ideology behind it.

The elements in Adventure and outdoor education reaches various fields, recreational-, educational-, developmental- and therapeutic programs. Adventure and outdoor education in action is opposite to didactic learning. It reaches out to people and uses personal agency to learn new skills and methods that move them towards the goal of development. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, a hint of the first form of adventure and outdoor education ideology was introduced by John Dewey (1859-1952) a pragmatist, American philosopher, and educator. His ideas of experiential education made the public rethink "what is education" and "is there just one form of education?" with the then current classroom format of didactic learning. Dewey thought of other ways for pupils to learn and with the ideology of using learning through experience and engage the human senses in traditional education, a new era in educational transfer for pupils had begun in the US. Instead of being stuck inside to a desk all day, students would spend time outside the classroom learning about soft skills (self-perception, self-esteem, pride, and cognitive growth), hard skills (motor skills) and environmental education for sustainable development and reflect on what they have been doing (Karppinen, Marttila, Saaranen-Kauppinen & Marttila, 2020)

Today experiential education is one of the bases of adventure and outdoor education where the individuals actively engage in personal development, becoming a team player and use the environment as tools to grow their soft and hard skills. The key factors of the activities in experiential education and adventure and outdoor education are firstly a voluntary participation. Individuals need to be entered in to voluntarily. Secondly the participants have an intrinsic motivation to be part of it, a sense of pleasure

or enjoyment just to be part of it and not any rewards or obligations. Finally, an unknown outcome, in advance the participants do not know what the results or the final outcome for them or the team will be at the beginning of the activity. Another key term associated with adventure and outdoor activities is the uncertainty of risk, if the outcome is uncertain then there is the possibility that the participant might lose something of value. For example, wetness or cold, getting hurt, wasting money or time, and failing or not reaching the desired goal (Beames and Brown, 2016). Another form of adventure that many think of is adventure tourism, it is a product for the tourist to experience an adventure and outdoor activity and have paid to get the desired outcome as well as a guidance to reach it. It has some parts of adventure and outdoor education but for the guide it's a day-to-day job that is predictable, repetitional and has an inevitable outcome for them so it doesn't fully fall into the criteria of the educational process.

In adventure and outdoor education, authenticity and autonomy play a big part. The philosophic theory challenge by choice gives a deeper experience and learning than individual being thrown into a situation unexpected, and participation in forced and clashes with needs, thus slows down the learning process with the new challenge (Karppinen, et al, 2020). To view the self-directory in learning processes the Learning Zone Model by Luckner Nadler (Nadler & Luckner, 1992) is also a concept to use and observe in adventure and outdoor education, the zone levels are three; comfort-, challenge- and panic zone. Humans naturally want to stay in the comfort zone but occasionally they like to take a step in the challenge zone to get new experiences. The most critical area in the zones is at the overlapping edge of the challenge zone and the panic zone. There the individual has pushed his comfort to his limits when taking on the challenge but is on the edge of panic. When in the panic zone, the individual normally locks themselves in a phase of fight, flight or freeze behavior and in those cases stops the learning process and can paralyze the individuals as the feeling of fright has taken over (Brown, 2008).

Additionally, adventure and outdoor education is all about transfer effect. An experience of a moment and reflection process that individuals go through where they learn to understand themselves, society, and nature consciously or unconsciously and transfer that behavior, method or learning to a different setting. After returning home mem-

ories and experiences transfer in to learned behavior or skills to use in different situations. The “Kolb’s experiential learning theory” by David Kolb (1984), works on four stage cycles of learning and four separate learning styles: experiencing – concrete experience, reflecting – reflective observation, thinking – abstract conceptualization, and acting – active experimentation. Much of Kolb’s theory is connected to the learner’s internal cognitive processes. Kolb stated that learning involves the acquisition of abstract concepts that can be applied flexibly in a range of situations. With Kolb’s theory, every time an individual goes through the model they develop, understand, and collect new experiences that will help them further process the aimed goal (Hodgson & Berry, 2011).

Adventure and Outdoor education at its core is a person’s experience that is giving the individual something meaningful, unplanned, new and unexpected. It breaks up the everyday norm life and gives the person new experiences and pushes their comfort towards growth in various levels and settings.

#### **2.4 Compare and contrast.**

Many parts of the Scouting Movement and Adventure and Outdoor education overlap, As the core of them aim to engage the individual with nature and the cognitive process in learning about oneself and the world around us.

The two have a different approach in leadership training, to be an adventure and outdoor educator one can go through a formal education or do many different skills courses and training to gain the skills that they reflect into their work. When on the other hand a non-formal process of training is something many scout leaders go through as it is mainly volunteer based. Scout leaders are not necessarily formally trained in safety, psychology, or educational methods and some do not even know the basic of what scouting is about but are more operated on learning on the go on how to work and communicate with children and adults. Both are great ways to learn but a strong foundation and quality control comes with basic training before jumping into the pool. Adventure and outdoor educators and scout leaders proudly carry their knowledge and experience and see themselves in a supportive role for the learning processes that the participants acquire.

The scouting community is strong and makes a significant connection between people and trust even though the people haven't met before because they know they have common values and historical connection. Adventure and outdoor education have a connection ground for its people, but it's not as finely defined as in scouting.

Something I find that adventure education is doing better is the ongoing reflection and looking at every moment as a learning opportunity when in scouting the skills to focus on it are not as much practiced and sharpened. My favorite part about both fields which I have had the joy of experiencing is the self-agency, participants gaining more confidence and challenging themselves after going through the experiences scouting and adventure and outdoor education has to offer. The individual has learned that there is more to themselves and don't have to hold themselves back just to fit in and follow the crowd but to show their authentic selves and enhance their strengths and understand their weaknesses.

Taking from the theory presented here above we can see that there are strengths in both adventure and outdoor education and scouting. By combining them into the program of the scout summer courses, new skills, knowledge and practices can be formed in the young generation. And create more active engagement with nature, the community, and get them to look at the world around them with a new perspective when going through personal growth with every step.

### 3. METHODS

For this thesis I used surveys to get a wide range of responses from a diverse pool of people. The questions could not be broad and cover a wider topic but needed to be simple and short to get specific and clear responses. Both quantitative questions were in the surveys to get numeric data and qualitative questions were also included with the aim to get in depth information on specific subjects with open questions and a more individual opinions and voice. The first survey was an open survey for active scouts at the start of the year to get to know the perspective of the general scout on the summer course program. The second survey was open during the summer, from June to August, the survey was sent to all participants and parents at end of each week of the summer course so they could give feedback on their thoughts on the program and operation at the hub the child attended. To get professional, personal and hand on experience answers, the third survey aimed to past course leaders of previous years to hear their experiences, knowledge, and thoughts. And lastly the fourth survey at the end of summer sent to all staff members of the summer courses to hear their learnings and development they made that summer, and they want to see in the scout's summer course future.

## 4. RESULTS

Surveys were the main research method used for the thesis. I used the web page Survey Monkey which offers numerous ways to construct a survey as the commissioner had access to the professional version. Issues of validity and reliability did come up as a challenge but after a further thought altering the research was not possible due to it already being submitted. Research is an integral part of scientific work and drafting a thesis as such thus the already made research had to be included.

The first survey was an open survey for active scouts in the end of March 2023 to comment on their perspective of the summer course program. I shared the survey only twice in a public Facebook group with over two thousand members. About 11 people answered the survey with an average of 7 answers per question or 4 persons that skimmed through the questions without answering. The respondents were 16-year-old and older and had all been active within the scouts. The majority of the respondents or 70% saw the summer course to be an important operation for Icelandic scouting. 50% viewed that the current courses offer program in line with the scouting method, which was specified as: adventurous, fun, challenging and accessible program. 40% viewed that the scouting methods are used in the program and operations and 90% see the course as a training opportunity for leaders and that the program can be elevated. The respondents/participants would also like to see the program more out in the raw nature and not in the city local playgrounds. The improvements they would like to see are more experienced leaders facilitating the courses, have a summer course for teenagers, and lastly make scout summer courses stand out from other courses offered in the city.

The second survey was for participants and parents to give feedback on the course. The survey link was sent to all six hubs heads, to include in their thank you letter at the end of every week that was sent via email. Some hubs heads made it a habit to send the letter and others did not. The participants and parents survey had 65 responses. 83% of the participants were for the first time in the summer course and 17% were there for the second time or more. General thoughts on the experience like welcomed reception, inclusion, trying out new things, interest and learning about scouting and being outdoors had all over 60% positive feedback but doing something challenging

and making new friends had an equal positive and negative feedback from participants. When asking an open question of what the best thing about the summer courses the most written answer was “being outdoors” or 28 times. Second most popular answer was the program, written 27 times, 11 times was the staff/leaders mentioned, 8 times anticipation or excitement to attend the courses and lastly 6 times making new friends. When asking what could be improved, mentions like more challenging program for the older children, intergrade more scouting activities and have more experienced leaders and staff to handle difficult situations and lastly some of the children might try out joining the scouts in autumn. All in all, parents and children were happy with the current courses but would like to see some development.

The last survey to be mentioned was a survey sent out via email at the end of August to all youth staff and leaders of all seven hubs. The survey had twenty-nine questions. Questions in the survey varied from management, communication, program, staff training, personal learnings, and the future. All questions were something that the commissioner wanted to gain view on along with the questions related to this thesis on program and management. Twelve individuals responded to the leaders/staff survey, three of them were head leaders of the six operating hubs. In the questionnaire there were multiple choice answers, a scale, and written questions. Nine respondents had participated in scouting and three had never been in scouting. The staff members answered questions mostly with neutral to positive feedback on the current program, two hubs copied programs from the past year and/or rearranged the former program to fit current needs and knowledge when only one hub made a brand-new program. Activities offered in the programs were campfires and outdoor cooking, swimming pools or the beach, common days with other hubs and going to green areas in the city. 2/3 of the hubs went cycling and rock climbing. None of the hubs went paddling or did overnight camps. When asked what traditional scouting program they offered in the courses, all the hubs had games, neckerchiefs, and the patrol system. When only 30% said they included singing, flag ceremonies, opening and closing rituals and patrols emblems. All hubs included some type of reflection and evaluation with staff members during the weeks but not consistently. In the free comment sections, there were some challenges mentioned such as the workplace chain of command and communication, little transfer of scouting values and methods in the program and that it was hard to create time for staff meetings with reflections after the day/week.

The survey to the past hub heads was never concluded due to personal protection procedures and all the contact data to the individuals had been removed as per the law. Additionally, a tryout of the final product of this thesis program in two hubs was planned but not executed. A delay was in prepping the pilot program and the decision was made to drop it when time ran out. Afterwards there was supposed to be an interview with the leaders and participants of the pilot hubs, but the interviews were put on hold due to other tasks and at the end they were cancelled.

#### **4.1 Analysis**

To conclude the overview of the surveys we can see that quality and expectations are met by participants' parents but like always there is a space for improvement. By separating the sections in to focus groups of scouting program, reflection and transfer, leadership training and communication a clearer topic cover can be dissected and analyzed.

For participants that have little to no experience of scouting, the current summer course program is new and exciting, but it is just the tip of the iceberg of scouting activities. They give participants an insight into scouting but are missing the deeper imprint of scouting and the freedom within the activities and the participants a sense of what scouting is all about. The program is mainly copied from the previous years with changes to fit the current leaders' skills and knowledge which is understandable so that leaders don't push their limits but if the leaders don't have a scouting or outdoor knowledge the unique focus points of the courses are missing.

With reflection and transfer, the hubs leaders carry many tasks and responsibilities and are new to the role of management and leadership. Little time is given to focus on reflection with both the participants and the staff members. With that the participants and staff members don't necessarily reflect or share what they learned on the courses nor are the program's goals clear and transparent in action.

Most of the youth staff members are aged 15-16 years old. The children don't notice that they are inexperienced at working with children and mostly look up to the young energetic leaders and staff. On the other hand, when something happens parents ex-

pect the staff members to be trained and have skills in working with children and handling many types of situations. Only three leaders at each hub are over 18 years old and carry the responsibility to take care of 30 children and oversee the youth staff members that are legally also children. With that comes a challenge for the hubs leaders to have expectations and reliability towards the youth staff members that are just taking their first steps in this working environment. All leaders and staff members are expected to go through staff training offered by the national scouting organization and the commissioner of this thesis, Skáttasamband Reykjavíkur.

The layover from the summer courses to the winter program is low as promotion from the leaders of the summer course is non-existent as the leaders have little to none experience of what they would be advertising. Some participants do try out the winter program and want to see the same leaders and expect the winter program to be pre-made like during the summer which is not how the winter scouting lays out.

## 4.2 Reliability and validity

The first survey to general Scouts was made in a hurry and questions were dry and single focused and did not give in-depth answers. A comment from one of the respondents about the survey caught my attention,

Dear Erika, this survey is fun, but I am thinking about how it can be useful for your studies. Respondents are not given any prerequisites, i.e. goals and agenda are not included in the introduction, which is a necessary prerequisite in order to be able to take a stand on the various aspects that are asked about. There are quite a few spelling or typing errors in the questions, which undermines the participant's belief that this is a real university project. I'm not being negative, don't get me wrong, but I think you could have had better guidance and direction. I take my hat off to you and your project - congratulations on starting this project, but as I say, more effort could have been put into the preparation of the survey - I hope that this develops you and continues to do decent work.

Overall, it was a remark about what the research topic was missing and an explanation on what Útílfsskóli skáta is. When writing the survey this did not cross my mind as I considered everyone knew what the course is about but of course a proper survey should have this in it. After reading this comment a long reflect and doubt on the validity of the survey and if it should be included in this thesis research data. After reflecting and further thoughts, I concluded that time had run out and the survey could not be republished with updates so using the current answers was decided.

The survey to the scout leaders could have been simpler and clearer structure. I would have liked answers from each hub to get more data. Another idea was to conduct a survey in the beginning of the summer and another at the end to see the changes and reflection experience from the summer. It also could have been done as an interview as then more personal perspective answers could have been received but more time and preparation would have been needed for that.

The participants' parents' survey was good but with such a wide range of answers the focus points and questions could have been more simplified and more yes or no or a few answers choices so it would be quicker for parents to answer.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The general responses of the surveys are happy with the current program offered at the Útílfsskóli skáta, but it doesn't transfer the experience and the values of scouting to participants nor leaders. With focus on creating a framework for a program that touches both the scouting values, adventure and outdoor education and free play in the program. I here present the final product of the program formed from the information and data collected for this thesis. By implementing the theory and research gathered here in this thesis and mix it in with the current program of the summer courses a comprehensive, engaging and quality expectations of the courses can be met.

### 5.1 product

Using the current winter scouting program can be a challenge as it operates on the participants' choice and interests. But by picking bits and pieces of the winter scout program that are hits with the young scouts, the summer program would have the daily program drawn from scouting skill badges. With the goal to promote the winter scouting program in the summer courses as the children have dipped their toes in the vast opportunities of adventure. The week's overall program can have a theme that is kept throughout all days and makes each week a unique experience and spice it up for leaders that repeat the same activities every week, program theme ideas such as alien, space, cultures, holidays, pirates, superheroes, Star Wars, or Indiana Jones, etc.

Throughout the week the participants will be operating in patrols of 6-8 children with one teenage staff member per patrol to supervise and guide. Leaders will see the participants go through the forming, norming, storming and performing stages as a patrol and support the teamwork.

**Monday** madness, start as an introduction and foundation day. Focus on this day is for the children to get to know one another, the leaders, and the environment where they will be spending time at for the upcoming days. Starting as a big group, it's good to have a walk around the scout's home and the grounds and go over the rules. When the children are exploring on a scavenger hunt, leaders will observe the dynamic of the group and the connections between the children. Once that is done the kids will

freely form a patrol that they will be in throughout the week. The patrols are not carved in stone, so changes are welcomed on that same day or in the next days if needed. Participants and leaders will carry a neckerchief all week as that is a unique scouting identity and can easily be identified when the group is in public or among other groups. Using the patrol system the scouts will focus more on a small group of children and they will form a connection and understanding of each other. Some might have the social and empathic understanding of working together when others don't and that is fine if they are not hindering each other. The rest of the day goes on to some introduction and social games for the patrols. To make the patrol a significant and a unique connection for the participants, a patrol name, logo, flag, song, or slogan can be made that will be their identity as a group throughout the week.

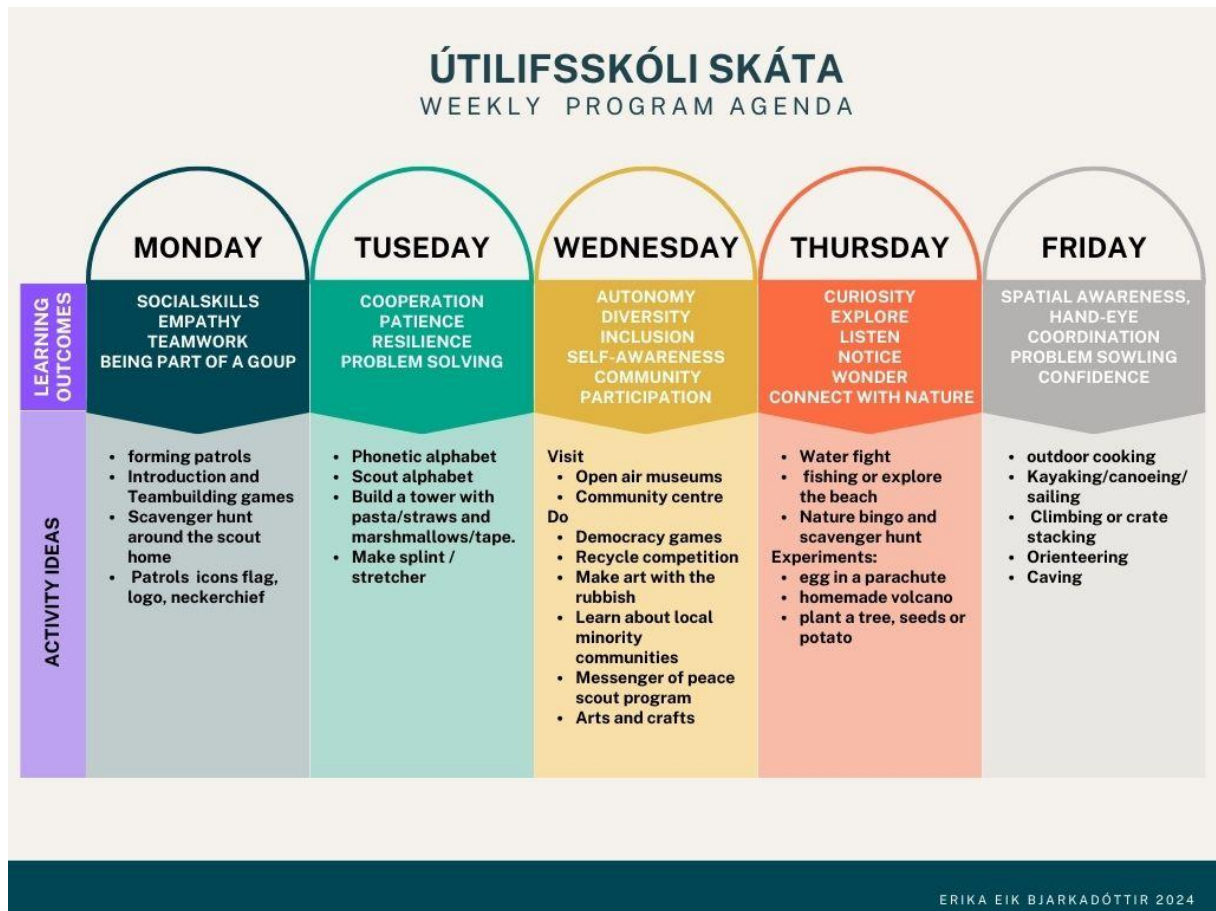
Thinking **Tuesdays**, the day participants will find the adventure in doing new things in a safe space. The focus is on teamwork as a patrol to strengthen cooperation, patience, resilience, and problem solving. With activities like codes and riddles, first aid and challenging team building activities. The main objective of the day is to learn that when working together they can do more than by themselves.

**Wednesdays** are exploring days, then it's time to explore new environments as a patrol. Going out to public spaces or open-air museums to learn about the different culture and communities that live in the area or local history. Using games and crafts that connect the topic to awareness and gaining understanding of diversity and inclusion, self-awareness and being part of a community.

**Thursdays** are nature days, the day can be spent in a local green area where participants get to grow their curiosity, explore, listen, notice, wonder and connect with nature. Participants can try some experiments with nature's resources, use UN sustainable developments goals projects to work on and open the eyes of the participants to their impact on the natural world. It's always good to add in little fun like water fights or building a fort in the woods or beach.

**Friday's** festivities! The final day of the 5 days course. The day to push the comfort zone, do something new and adventurous on this day, try out visual to practical coordination, spatial awareness, problem solving, gain confidence in challenges and more.

The participants get to try out new experiences like rock climbing, sailing, or canoeing, outdoor cooking over an open fire and make lasting memories together.



**Reflection** settings can happen often over the course of the week, they can be formal or non-formal. At the beginning and end of each week a formal staff meeting of 10-15 minutes is held to go over the program of the week, duties of staff members and other important information. At the end of each day patrols and staff get 5 minutes to discuss what they learned that day, give feedback on the day and information on what will be happening the next day.

Examples of reflection activity:

- The five fingers: thumb:
- Fun experience, Index finger: stood out for the day,
- Middle finger: Something that was challenging or did not go so well,

- Ring finger: Learning outcome/ experience participant takes with him from the day,
- little finger: What was lacking or too little,

With this the leaders have active evaluation from each patrol and can easily adjust the plans, programs, learning goals, behaviors and tasks if needed.

With staff a fun game could be that each youth staff gets a paper with a focus observation of the day like teamwork, empathy, emotional awareness, behaviors, integrity, spatial awareness, inclusion, diversity etc.

and at the end of day a group reflection is on those observations and self-reflection.

## **5.2 Authors Reflection**

The thesis topic of program for the scout summer course came mainly from me and had been hovering in the air for the commissioner for many years. It is a topic of development as time changes and the program will never be perfect as the future is uncertain and the courses are in a social setting and not an excel sheet that is mass printed.

When writing this thesis many challenges of time and efficiency, coherence and authenticity came on and what makes it a good thesis. A thesis is not perfect, this is a bachelor thesis so it's only the first formal thesis I have written.

The question on my mind since the start of writing was the usage of this thesis. I view that the commissioner might not use or even share this thesis, but it is a step into reflecting deeper to what the summer scout courses are offering and how they want to be present in the community and leave a lasting memory to the participants.

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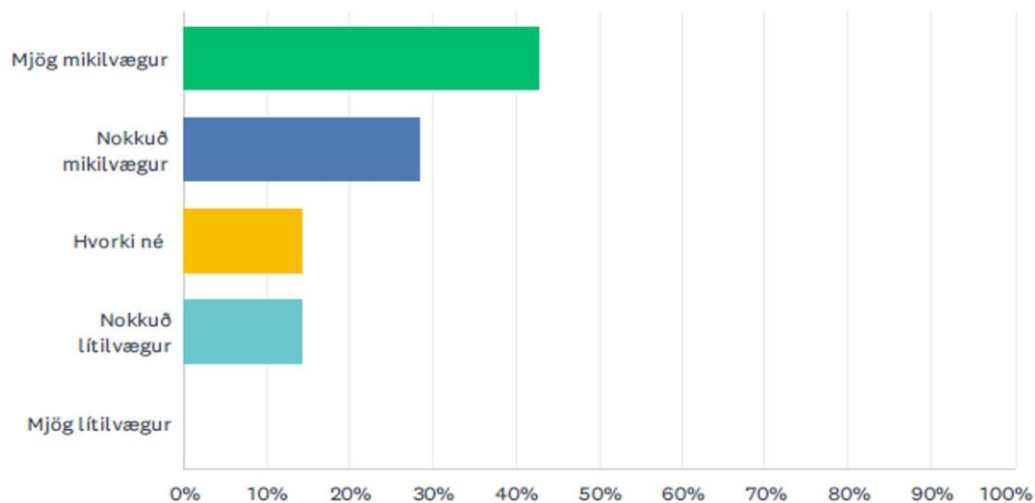
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## APPENDIX

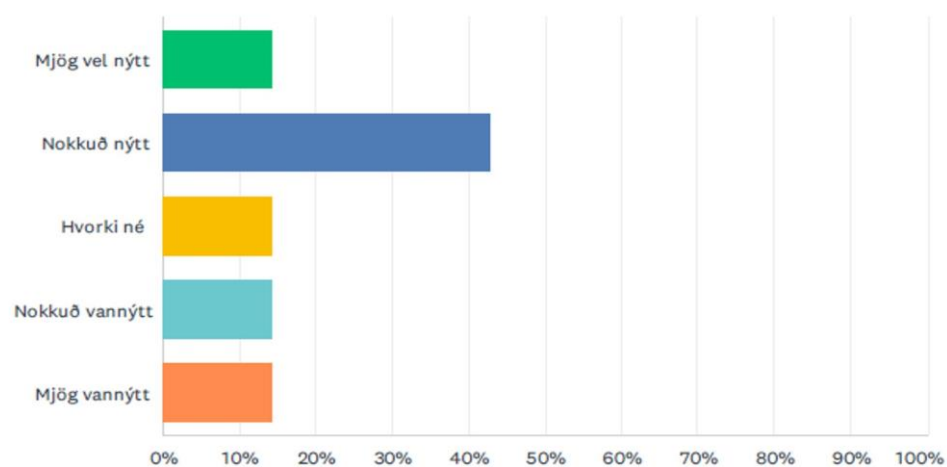
### APPENDIX 1 Open survey for active scouts - four main questions.

**Q5. Do you find Útilífsskólinn to be an important part of scouting in Iceland?**



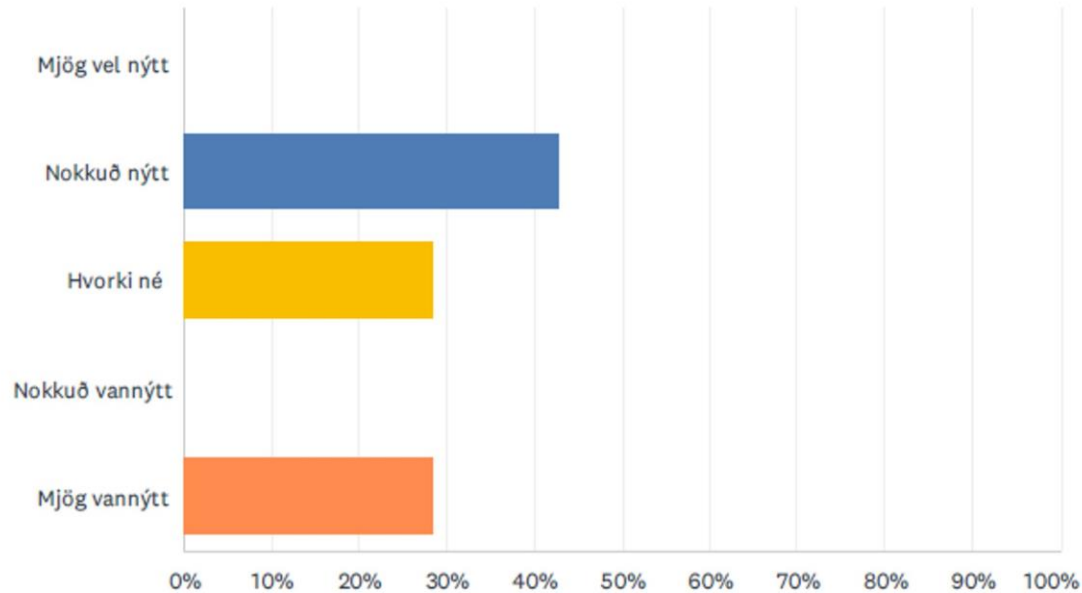
(green: Very Important, blue: Fairly Important, yellow: Neutral, light blue: Slightly Important, orange: Not at all important)

**Q6. Do you find Útilífsskólinn offer program in line with Æ.S.K.A? (adventurous, fun, challenging, accessible)**



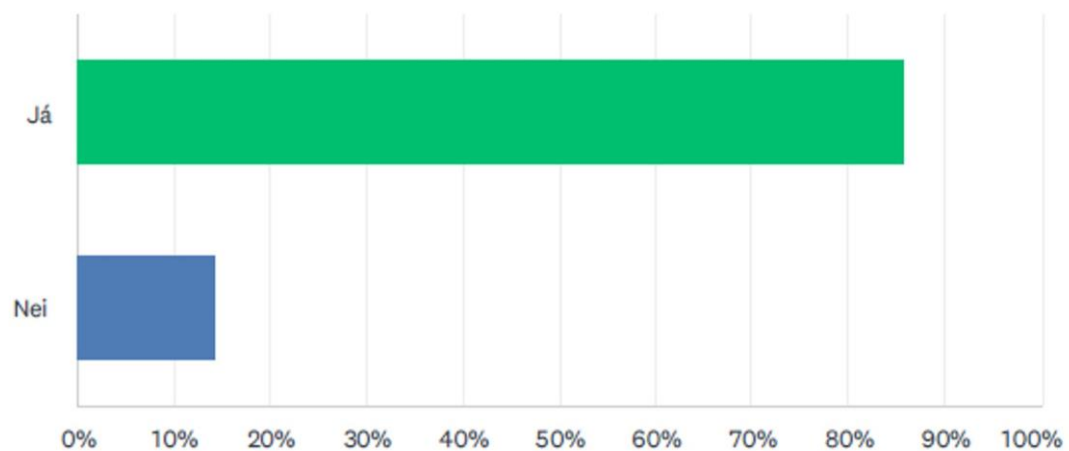
(green: Always, blue: Often, yellow: Neutral, light blue: Rarely, orange: Never)

**Q7.** How likely do you find/think Útilífsskólinn uses the scouting method?



(green: Always, blue: Often, yellow: Neutral, light blue: Rarely, orange: Never)

**Q8.** Do you think there is an opportunity for program development and leadership development within Útilífsskólinn?



(green: Yes, blue: No)

## APPENDIX 2 Survey answers from participants and parents survey.

### Q7. Has the participant attended Útilífsskóli before?

| ANSWER CHOICES  | RESPONSES |
|---|-----------|
| Nei, þetta var í fyrsta sinn                                      | 83.08%    |
| Já, þetta var annað sumarið sem þátttakandi fór í útilífsskólann  | 13.85%    |
| Já, þetta var þriðja sumarið sem þátttakandi fór í útilífsskólann | 1.54%     |
| Já, þetta var fjórða sumarið sem þátttakandi fór í útilífsskólann | 1.54%     |
| Þátttakandi hefur verið oftari í útilífsskólunum                  | 0.00%     |

(1 - no first timer, 2 - yes second time, 3 - yes third time, 4 - yes fourth time, 5 - more often)

### Q11. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

|  | Á MJÖG VEL VIÐ | Á VEL VIÐ    | HVORKI NÉ    | Á EKKI VIÐ   | Á ALLS EKKI VIÐ | TOTAL |
|--|----------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|-------|
| Participant got good reception on the first day                          | 72.31%<br>47   | 21.54%<br>14 | 1.54%<br>1   | 4.62%<br>3   | 0.00%<br>0      | 65    |
| Participant looked forward to the next day                               | 70.77%<br>46   | 20.00%<br>13 | 3.08%<br>2   | 4.62%<br>3   | 1.54%<br>1      | 65    |
| Participant made new friends   | 20.00%<br>13   | 33.85%<br>22 | 26.15%<br>17 | 18.46%<br>12 | 1.54%<br>1      | 65    |
| Participant found the program to be challenging                          | 21.54%<br>14   | 40.00%<br>26 | 23.08%<br>15 | 7.69%<br>5   | 7.69%<br>5      | 65    |
| Participant and parents were happy with the amount of outdoor activities | 78.46%<br>51   | 18.46%<br>12 | 1.54%<br>1   | 1.54%<br>1   | 0.00%<br>0      | 65    |
| Interest in scouting increased after the course                          | 63.08%<br>41   | 18.46%<br>12 | 10.77%<br>7  | 3.08%<br>2   | 4.62%<br>3      | 65    |
| The program introduced the participant to scouting                       | 35.38%<br>23   | 53.85%<br>35 | 6.15%<br>4   | 4.62%<br>3   | 0.00%<br>0      | 65    |

(1 - Strongly Agree, 2 – Agree, 3 - Neutral or Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 – Disagree, 5 - Strongly Disagree)

Q14. In your opinion, what is the best thing about the Útilífsskóli?

being outdoors – 28

Program – 27

Leaders – 11

Anticipation – 8

New friends - 6

Q15. In your opinion, what might be improved in Útilífsskóli?

Location,

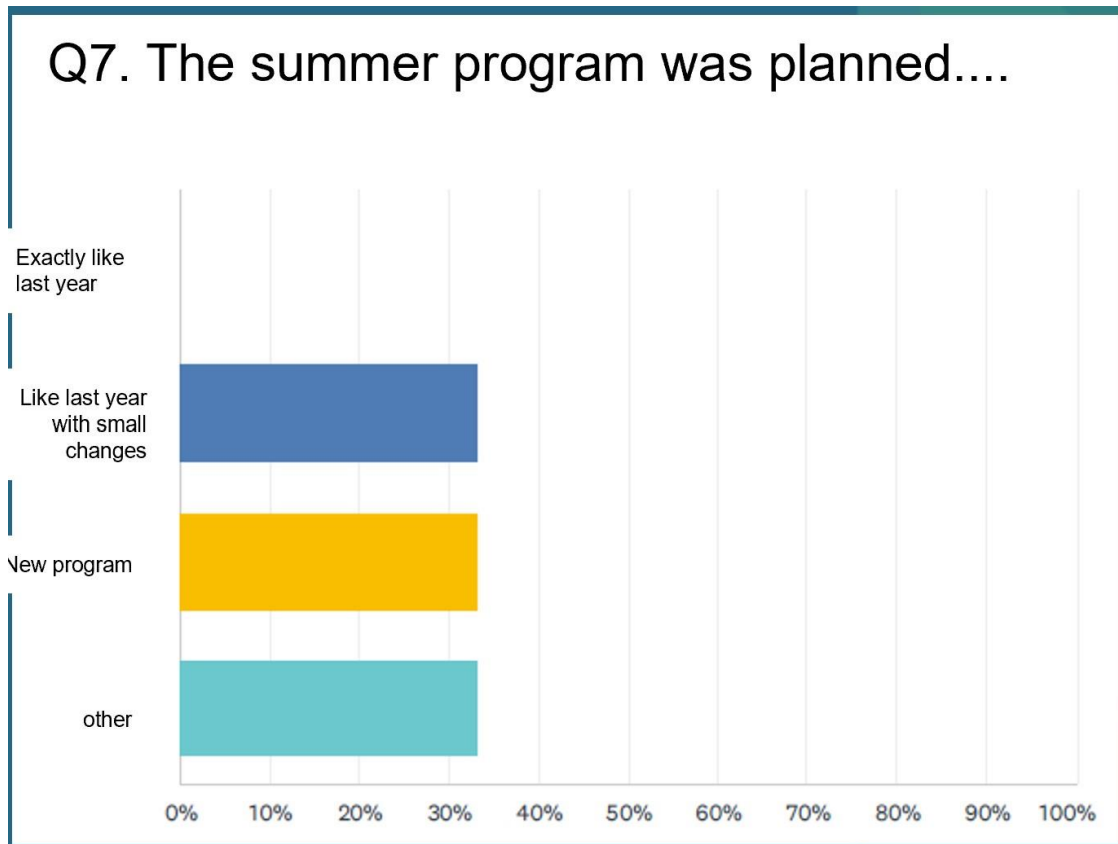
program to be right challenge for age,

more scouting activities,

staff training and management

“My child, who is nervous and doesn't like new courses every week, came home happy every day. The program is full of fun things for energy balls and the things that came up were well received. Leaders gets a huge compliment.”

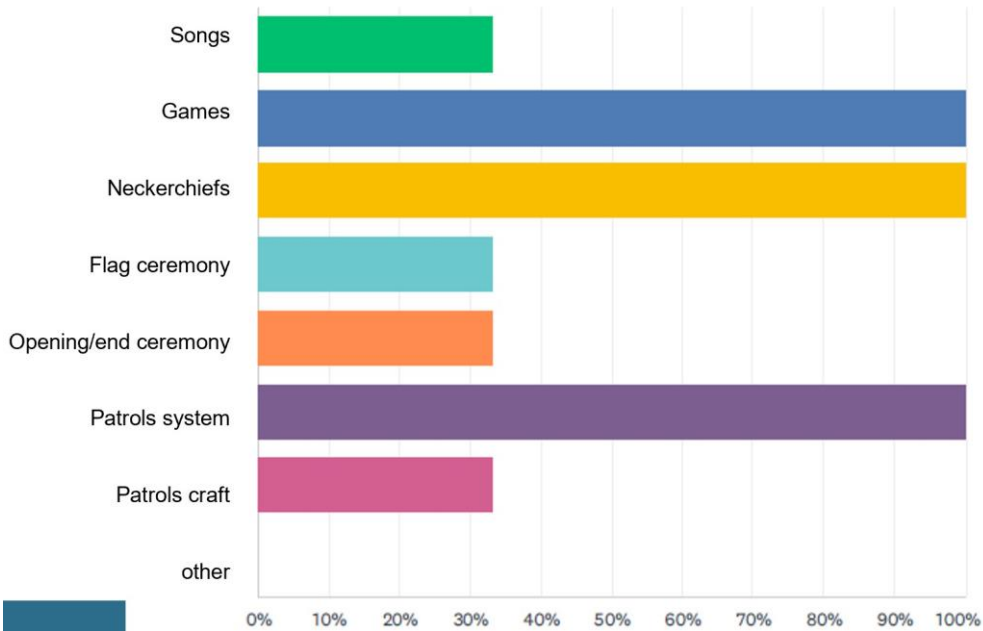
### APPENDIX 3 Survey to staff members of the summer courses.



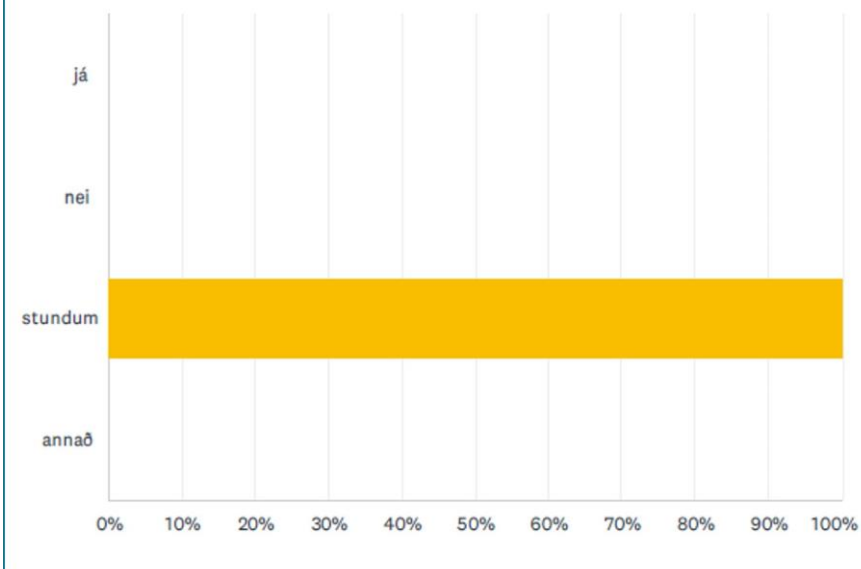
### Q8. The program of the courses included...

| ANSWER CHOICES                      | RESPONSES |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Outdoor/green areas                 | 100.00%   |
| Cycling, scooters, roller skating   | 66.67%    |
| Crate stacking                      | 33.33%    |
| Common days                         | 100.00%   |
| Visiting other scout summer courses | 33.33%    |
| Visiting museums                    | 33.33%    |
| Camping                             | 0.00%     |
| Swimming pool / beach               | 100.00%   |
| Outdoor cooking                     | 100.00%   |
| Climbing                            | 66.67%    |
| Canoeing / kayaking                 | 0.00%     |

Q9. What scouting traditions was use during the summer courses?



Q10. At the end of each day/week was a reflection done with the staff?  
(plan, do, evaluate)



(green: Yes, blue: No, yellow: sometimes, light blue: other)