

our heritage meerkats

national challenge 2025 guidelines



"Sometimes, it falls upon a generation to be great. You can be that great generation. Let your greatness blossom."

- Nelson Mandela -



be prepared

Every day Scouts around the world contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the Scouts for SDGs initiative. The SDGs are a call to action to end inequality and poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that everyone has access to health, justice, and prosperity. Scouts for SDGs is the world's largest coordinated youth programme that ensures and enables young people to take local actions that contribute to solving global challenges. (<https://sdgs.scout.org/>)

SCOUTS South Africa has adopted "**Our Heritage**" as the **National Challenge for 2025!** According to UNESCO, 'Heritage' is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations. Our cultural and natural heritage are both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration. The 2025 National Challenge aligns with the UNESCO World Heritage Education Programme and with World Scouting's Scouts for SDGs initiative.

The SDGs the programme addresses include:

- **SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Target 7 of SDG 4** calls for young people to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, equality, a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development. 
- **SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries.** Inequality threatens long-term social and economic development, harms poverty reduction and destroys people's sense of fulfilment and self-worth. **Target 10 of SDG10** calls for the promotion of social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status. 
- **SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Target 4 of SDG 11** calls for strengthening efforts to protect cultural and natural heritage. (<https://sdgs.un.org/goals/>) 

Embracing "Our Heritage" drives the SDGs in several ways, including deepening our understanding of one another, honouring our shared customs and traditions, and building a more inclusive and united future for the South African Scout Movement. SCOUTS South Africa's volunteers operate all around the country bring together people from all walks of life. Increasing awareness, cultivating knowledge, understanding and mutual respect will enable a generation that embraces cultural diversity and can contribute to supporting sustainable development in South Africa in the near future.

As the 'Rainbow Nation', South Africa is known for its wealth of diversity, uniting a vast array of nationalities under a single cultural umbrella. The country's symbolic moniker was first coined by Archbishop Desmond Tutu in 1994, recognising the many customs, histories, and languages which call South Africa home. (<https://www.africaoutlookmag.com/industry>)

This year's "Our Heritage" Challenge will encourage our young Meerkats to think about what they would like the world to be, and the heritage they would like to create.

the challenge:

- **Discover:** Encourage Meerkats to explore and learn about their local cultural heritage, including traditions, historical sites, and practices unique to our community.
- **Connect:** Facilitate intercultural dialogue and connections between Meerkats from different backgrounds. This could include joint activities with other Dens, exchange programmes, or community events that highlight diversity.
- **Action:** Empower Meerkats to take concrete steps in preserving and promoting our heritage. This could involve community service projects, awareness campaigns, or creating educational materials that can be shared with the wider community.
- **Africa Scout Day:** Africa Scout Day takes place annually on the 13th of March. A special programme-on-plate is included in this year's challenge to be run close to the date.

task 1: discover

Do TWO of the following:

- a) Work on the [Entertainer badge](#), focussing on other cultures (songs, dance, dress up), culminating with a campfire for parents.
- b) Arrange a Den visit to a strong institution – Fire Station, Sea Rescue, Wildfire Services, new Railroad, City Hall, Library, Place of Worship etc.
- c) Create a history timeline in your Den to display the history of South Africa, your city or your Group to where it is today. Use pictures to help build your timeline.

task 2: connect

Do TWO of the following:

- a) Organise a collection of books for a needy school or pre-school and arrange to visit and present the collection to them (towards the Community badge).
- b) Invite someone from another culture to come and visit your Den and share something of their culture with the Meerkats.
- c) Hold a Grandparents (or Elders) Day where they share games, foods and stories that they enjoyed as children (towards the [Family Heritage badge](#)).

task 3: action

Do TWO of the following:

- a) Take part in an organised Founder's Day event (e.g. Parade, Rally, Uniforms to School) to make Scouting more visible.
- b) Find a place in or near you that needs greening. Plant and nourish indigenous greenery for a term.
- c) Run a Giving Tree Project for a children's home. Collect "I WANT" cards from the children. Hang the cards on a tree in a shopping centre and/or share them on your neighbourhood WhatsApp sites for visitors to buy a gift. Take the gifts to the children's home.

task 4: programmes on a plate

Africa Scout Day is an annual celebration that recognises the Scout Movement's contributions to the development of Africa. Run this programme on or close to 13 March, Africa Scout Day.

reminder:

registration:

Den Scouters are requested to register their Den for participation in the **Our Heritage National Challenge 2025** by clicking on the [registration link HERE](#). (Ctrl + Click to follow link). It's simple, quick and will only take two minutes!

Please register your Den for participation in the National Challenge 2025 by the latest 28th February 2025

deadline:

National Challenge deadline: 30 November 2025. All entries are to be submitted online by 11 December 2025.

On completion of the National Challenge, the Meerkats and Den Scouters who took part will be awarded a special National Challenge badge and the Den will be awarded a special National Challenge Certificate.

note for den scouters:

You can help SCOUTS South Africa enhance our public visibility by embracing the PR value of the National Challenge 2025.

Please take advantage of the PR opportunities and (with parental consent) post your Den's "Our Heritage" activities and photographs on social media.

Suggested hashtags: #OurHeritage #NationalChallenge2025 #Meerkats #scoutssouthafrica #scoutssa #Scouts #Skills4Life #Communities #Upliftment #ChildEmpowerment #Scouts4SDGs

thank you for getting involved, for inspiring and empowering meerkats to create a better world!

appendices:

THEME:	African Scout Beats
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Date:

Duty Burrow:

Time	Mins	Activity	Who	Equipment
	05	Check in and opening circle:		Totem

Today we are celebrating Africa Scout today - so come let's explore our wonderful continent. Our first game is all about an African snake

	05	<p>STEAM RELEASE: Mamba</p> <p>Mamba is a traditional African children's game played throughout the continent. It gets its name from the African snake. This game is better played with lots of players, it adds to the fun!</p> <p>How to play:</p> <p>Mark out an area for the game and set boundaries. Everyone must stay within the boundaries during the game. One player is chosen to be the mamba. The mamba runs around the marked area trying to catch the other players.</p> <p>When a player is caught, they become part of the snake's body by holding onto the mamba's shoulders or waist. Only the first player can catch other people. However, the 'body' can help by not allowing players to get past (players cannot pass through the mamba's body). The game continues until one player is left, that player is the winner.</p> <p>https://pemburytours.com/traditional-african-childrens-games/</p>		None
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Let's see what countries are in Africa. There are scouts in 42 countries in Africa.

Time	Mins	Activity	Who	Equipment
	05	<p>DISCUSSION: Use a visual aid map of Africa and briefly discuss with the Meerkats that Africa is a continent with many countries and South Africa is one.</p> <p><i>At the different points you may want to point out the country or stick the pictures on the map.</i></p>		Print or draw a map of Africa showing the different countries.
<i>Kenya is the country with the most scouts in Africa. The youngest you can be to join is 6 years old (for Cubs) We are going to make something inspired by the Samburu Tribe.</i>				
	10	<p>ACTIVITY: Paper plate necklace</p> <p>Using paper plates, Meerkats decorate the plates in the style of traditional beaded necklaces.</p>		Paper plates, scissors, paint and paint brushes or wax crayons.
<i>Last year Scout leaders from all over the world had a big Conference in Egypt. When Scouts come together, we come to make new friends.</i>				
	05	<p>SINGING: Make new friends</p> <p>"Make new friends, but keep the old, One is silver and the other gold.</p> <p>A circle's round it has no end, That's how long I wanna be your friend."</p>		Tune can be found here: https://youtu.be/3V8S-gziaMc
<i>Ghana doesn't have as many scouts as Kenya, but it does have some good games.</i>				
	05	<p>CIRCLE GAME: Adaptation of Ampe from Ghana</p> <p>Ampe is a traditional African children's game in Ghana that has been passed down from generation to generation. It is a simple yet active game, full of clapping and jumping. It is great for groups but can be played with just 2 players.</p> <p>How to play:</p> <p>Meerkats stand in a semi-circle facing the leader. Everyone claps hands and jumps.</p>		None

Time	Mins	Activity	Who	Equipment
		They jump again, this time placing one foot forward. If they put the same foot forward as the leader, they "win". (You may want to talk about mirror image).		
<i>Drums are used all over Africa in religious ceremonies, to communicate messages or for dancing. Let's practise our drumming.</i>				
	10	Using some kind of percussion (shakers, pots and spoons, clapping) – leader claps a rhythm and Meerkats copy. They could also have a turn to lead a rhythm.		
<i>In most African countries Cubs are the youngest scouts, but we have Meerkats – do you remember the story of how Meerkats started?</i>				
	05	STORY: How Meerkats began		Copy of the story (see below)
<i>After our trip around Africa, it's time to go home.</i>				
	10	Closing circle:		Totem, badges etc

activity: Paper plate necklace

Step 1: Cut a 'V' shape out of the top of the paper plate. Then cut along the inside circle. (You might want to do this at home to save time).

Step 2: Paint the plate in bright and fun African colors and designs. You could also use wax crayons as an alternative.



Step 3: Wear the necklace proudly! Maybe dance to some African music.

<http://www.greenkidcrafts.com/african-paper-plate-necklaces-craft/>

SCOUTS ASSOCIATION KENYA (4.4 million members)



SCOUTS FEDERATION EGYPT (160 000 members)



GHANA SCOUTS ASSOCIATION (2500 members in 1998)



SCOUTS SOUTH AFRICA (34 000 members)



yarn: How Meerkats began

Once upon a time, deep in the jungle, Baloo met up with Akela and Granny Meerkat. Baloo was upset because while he was teaching the cubs the law of the jungle, their younger brothers and sisters were trying to join in the lesson. They were too young to sit still long enough and were a big disruption.

Granny Meerkat came up with the idea to take the younger cubs far away to her home in the savannah and to teach them to be kind and good until they were old enough to join their brothers and sisters in the Pack.

Akela and Baloo grumbled at first but eventually they saw that this would be a good thing, so all the younger brothers and sisters were gathered together and went with Granny Meerkat.

Granny Meerkat sorted the little Meerkats into burrows. There were 5 Meerkats in each burrow and the oldest of these were the Lookouts. She taught them how to stand tall and do their best to be helpful and kind.

When they were old enough the Meerkats would burrow their way back to the pack to Akela and Baloo and Raksha and Rikki-Tikki-Tavi and all the creatures of the Jungle, would begin a new journey as Cubs.

And that is how Meerkats began.

Source: Story written by Karin Carr from KZN soon after Meerkats launched in 2019.