



LO.01 Tool to Improve Educational Activities: the Reference Activities

Introduction

Many of the day-to-day activities observable in units and Scout groups are inspired by activities carried out in national or international events, training courses, and even presented in the traditional literature of the Scout Movement, which is produced by NSOs or WOSM.

Many of these activities experienced by young people and adults, either in Youth Programme events or on training courses, served as reference to educators when designing or proposing activities for their units.

When we talk about reference activities, we refer to a type of educational activity that functions as a source of ideas or inspiration for activities that can be carried out in the units while introducing innovative elements and improving the quality of the Youth Programme.

With reference activities, young people and adults have the opportunity to have a full first-hand experience of the concepts that are proposed by literature, training, and guidance.

Strategically speaking, reference activities are valuable tools to support the implementation and improvement of the Youth Programme. Showing the concepts that arise from theory through practice facilitates the understanding to later adapt and implement these concepts to the educational practices of our NSOs.

Objectives

This tool is intended to

- explore the concept of “reference activities” and analyse their importance in an innovative and quality-improving strategy for the Youth Programme.
- identify your motives, procedures, and styles of event organisation in relation to reference activities.

This tool is intended for

- the team responsible for the process of designing or reviewing your NSO’s Youth Programme.
- participants of a study or discussions (seminars, workshops, etc.) organised by your NSO while designing or reviewing its Youth Programme.



How to use this tool

1. Individually, read the text "Reference Activities" (annex).
2. Split into teams:
 - a) Analyse the concept of reference activities and its usefulness.
 - b) Answer the questionnaire and report your findings.
3. Have each team draw conclusions and later, in a plenary session, reach final conclusions with the whole group.

Questionnaire on the Reference Activities in our NSO

Educational Quality Improvement Strategy	
<p>1. Do our events respond to a strategy to improve the quality of the Youth Programme?</p>	<p>Organise activities according to the strategic needs. You should not organize events just because you think this is one of our core functions to comply with a calendar, to generate economic income for your NSO, or because it has been a long time since you held an event.</p> <p>When the Youth Programme's field representatives are considered only as event organisers and not as the ones in charge of improving and adequately implementing the programme in their territory, events in themselves are considered a goal.</p>
<p>2. Do we design our events from clearly defined objectives that are aligned with the NSO's strategy for the area of Youth Programme?</p>	<p>Sometimes, events have the exchange of knowledge between young people or fundraising for the organisation as the main and almost only objective. We don't mean that these aspects are not important, but when prioritising them almost exclusively, the content and activities are not the central aspects in the design of the event.</p>



Innovation	
3. In our events, do we propose something different from what is being done in the units and Scout groups?	In other words, do we offer "more of the same"? The event must ensure that young people and adults have the opportunity to experience activities that they do not usually have the opportunity to carry out in their units or groups.
4. Do we dabble in unexplored youth programme areas or topics creating difficulties for those responsible for the units?	For this, the Youth Programme team must clearly identify the unexplored areas or topics that create difficulties for those responsible for the units.
5. Do we give a new approach to traditional activities?	Are you updating activities that, for some reason, have ceased to be done but that we still consider valuable?

Event Organisation	
5. Do we consider the young person's point of view in the design of our national activities?	When organising the NSO's events, do you consult young people about the content for it?
6. Are the decisions, design, and definition of the events in the hands of the Youth Programme team?	Do you entrust the design and core formation of events to your Youth Programme Team, or a team assigned by the Youth Programme.
7. Do we explore activity models carried out by different levels of our NSO or other NSOs?	The Youth Programme team explores permanently the activities and events organised by districts, regions, or areas of your NSO and other NSOs as a source of ideas for our events.



ANNEX

Reference Activities

Introduction

Many activities traditionally carried out in units are inspired by several sources:

- Literature produced by NSOs and WOSM
- Training courses
- National or international events

These sources work as inspiration or reference for Scout educators when they are designing and adapting activities and projects in their units.

We call them reference activities.

Concept

Reference activities are one type of educational activity organised by various levels (district, region, global), which work as a reference and are part of a strategy to improve the quality of a Youth Programme.

They not only have an educational value but also a strategic value since they introduce innovation. They are a “plus” to the activities that are usually performed by the units.

Unlike a text or a training session, the main strength of a *reference activity* is realising many of the suggestions and ideas promoted in theory.

Throughout the reference activities, both young people and adults have the opportunity to go through a full first-hand experience of educational concepts that are presented in the literature, training, or given as advice to the adult volunteers.

Prerequisites for reference activities

- Form part of a strategy for the improvement of your NOS’s Youth Programme. Introduce innovation. The activity must offer both young people and their educators the opportunity to experience activities that are not usually done in the units, either because of the complex planning required, or because the programme content is considered new and not bound to pre-set formats. For example, a Moot may be a camp of a week or three days, performed in an urban environment or rural, containing routes of exploration, etc.
- Introduce content that, by its difficulty or novelty, is rarely explored in activities. This is especially important in the processes of change and implementation of a new Youth Programme.



- Venture into unexplored areas of the Youth Programme. Offer a new approach to traditional activities or update activities that for any reason have ceased to be done but are still considered valuable.
- Give the possibility of experiencing the dimension of the Scout Movement, beyond the traditional activities from the unit or Scout group.

Some common problems with reference activities

- a) The execution of an activity is considered an end in itself. This usually happens when the role of the Youth Programme team is seen as to organise events not to manage and improve the quality of the Youth Programme.
- b) The decision and definition of an activity is not in the hands of the Programme teams but under the responsibility of other areas that do not take into account the considerations, criteria, or strategy of those who manage the Youth Programme.
- c) Activities have other purposes. For example, when activities are motivated by financial profit, or the sole purpose is the exchange and understanding between young people, or simply because it has been a long time since they held an event. These reasons should not be the only reasons for organising an activity.

Conclusion

Reference activities are part of the tools your NSO can use to improve its Youth Programme. They must be organised as part of a clear strategy of improvement of the Youth Programme.

The decision to carry out a reference activity, and its style and content should be defined by the National Programme Team, even when diverse actors from the NSO intervene in the event organisation.



LO.02 Tool for Developing Educational Activities and Learning Opportunities

Introduction

Scouting's proposal is based on the concept of learning opportunities, in that as well as having fun together, every activity, project, experience, role, and responsibility within your NSO contributes to the young person's development.

In the main, the young people are protagonists of the activities, as in they propose, select, prepare, develop, and evaluate them, and above all, they have fun!

In this tool we invite the teams responsible for designing or reviewing your NSO's Youth Programme to prepare some examples of educational activities, and interpret the learning opportunities to share with their NSO.

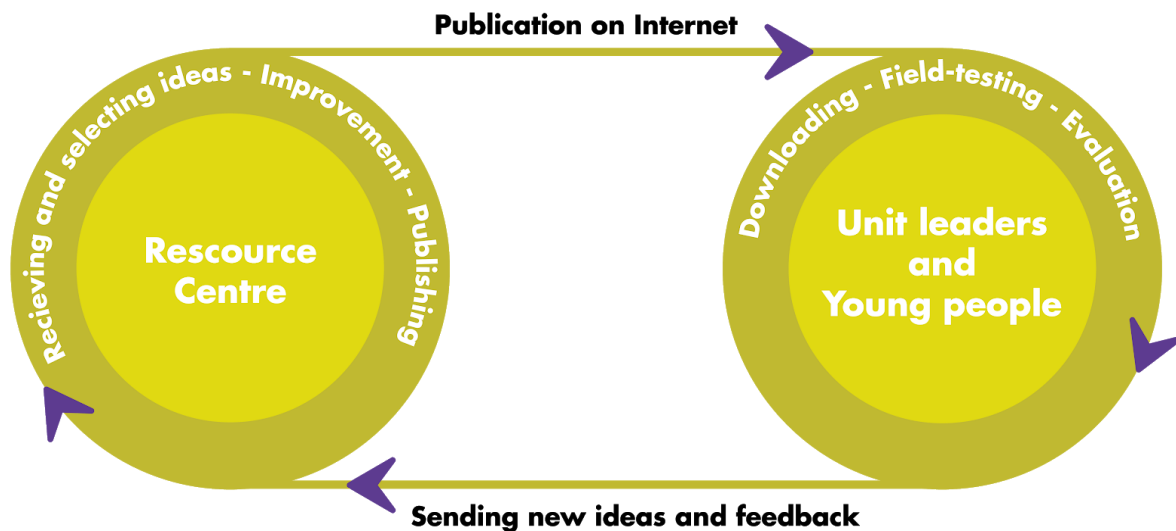


Fig.1



Objectives

This tool is intended to

- help understand the characteristics of a good educational activity.
- help design an educational activity.
- consider activities as a source of learning opportunities.

This tool is intended for

- the team responsible for the process of designing or reviewing your NSO's Youth Programme.
- participants of a study or discussions (seminars, workshops, etc.) organised by your NSO when designing or reviewing its Youth Programme.

How to use this tool

This tool is best used in a small group of young people, or including young people.

1. Choose a template that will best suit the needs of your NSO (example below).
2. In a small group, follow the text and ask the questions from the sections below.
3. In a plenary session, discuss the group's findings and agree the content to complete the template.

A learning opportunity is a flow of experiences that gives the young person the possibility to acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes that may correspond to one or more competencies. Those experiences are built around the interaction of young people in group life and also in the creation, development, and evaluation of educational activities, as well as their participation in the activity itself, or the celebration of the same.

You are likely to develop a new educational activity for one of two reasons:

1. Young people want to take part in a specific activity.
2. To enable young people to build specific educational competencies.

Mostly it will be for the first reason, but either way the approach is the same.



Characteristics of a good educational activity:

- Experienced through the Scout Method.
- Has seven characteristics: (step 6)
 1. challenging
 2. useful
 3. rewarding
 4. attractive
 5. fun
 6. safe
 7. inclusive

WHY: Mission of Scouting

The Mission or Aim of your NSO, reflective of the Mission of Scouting, is WHY you do what you do. It is presented as the goal of your Educational Proposal and as educational competencies in your Youth Programme. The educational competencies will cover each area of growth: social, physical, intellectual, character, emotional, and spiritual. Each of the learning opportunities will offer young people the chance to build on their knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values and ultimately develop the competencies they set out to achieve. The Youth Programme is everything we do in Scouting and the Learning Opportunities are all the pieces that together become your Youth Programme.

Example of Educational Competencies
See step 3 for Final Educational Competencies, and step 4 for Section Educational Competency examples

As well as educational competencies, each activity has general activity objectives.

Example of Activity Objectives
1. All Scouts have the opportunity to participate in the planning and the agreed plan is followed with everyone playing their part
2. All arrive home safely having enjoyed the experience and learned from it.
3. Each Scout has the opportunity to gain some knowledge, skills, attitudes, or values that contribute to specific competencies they wish to develop.



HOW: The Scout Method

The Scout Method guides the HOW in Scouting. The Scout Method is defined as a system of progressive self-education. It is one method based on the interaction of equally important elements that work together as a cohesive system. The implementation of these elements in a combined and balanced manner is what makes Scouting unique.

The following questions can be useful when considering how your activity includes each of the elements of the Scout Method:

The Scout Method Questions for Learning Opportunities	
Promise and Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How are the values of our NSO and the Law reflected in this activity? - Is there a practical way to enhance the activity using the Promise and Law? - How will the values of Scouting be evident in the way the team works together to create, organise, prepare, carry out, and reflect upon the activity? - What do the individuals contribute?
Learning by Doing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How will this activity enable the individuals and the group? - Will the learning happen in an exciting and enjoyable way? - What role will everyone play in the design, organisational, development, participation, and evaluation processes, and does the role suit their development needs? - Will this activity provide opportunities for young people to be the advisors or instructors, to pass on the knowledge they have gained, or to be supportive of others' participation and learning?
Personal Progression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Which of our NSO's educational competencies can be the main focus in this activity (less is more)? - What other specific competencies can individual young people progress towards during this activity? - What methods of reflection and/or recognition are suitable to capture the learning and individual development? - What are the unintended competencies that may be encouraged?



Team System	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- What are the roles of the team members in developing and organising the activity?- How is the team system visible during the activity, and which of the elements will be enhanced by it?- How is the learning environment of the team evident?
Adult Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- What supporting role will the adult have in this activity?- How is the adult's knowledge utilized to benefit the outcome of the activity and young people's development?
Symbolic Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- What concept or themes will facilitate learning through dreaming up, creating, developing, practising, evaluating, and celebrating this activity, and what form will it take in the different phases?- How will the symbolic framework engage everyone's learning and development?- What is the added value that the symbolic framework brings to the activity?
Nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- How does this activity benefit from its connection to nature?- What will be learned about which part of the natural world and our responsibilities to it?- What opportunities and challenges can be harnessed from nature to improve this activity?
Community Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- What are the participative skills used/encouraged in this activity in the group, and how are they transferable to development in the wider community?- How is diversity evident in this activity?- How will it be improved with intercultural and/or intergenerational engagement/exploration?



WHAT: Learning Opportunities

Scouting contributes to the education of Young People through its structured and active Youth Programme. Activities are its essence, and the involvement of young people in their creation, development, and evaluation, as well as their participation in the activity itself, or the celebration of the same, provides valuable learning opportunities.

Create a template for activity handouts, using the headings in the example below.

The template should be kept as simple as possible while still including all pertinent data. It should be easy to understand and attractive. Ideally it is two sides of an A4 page. Additional technical knowledge or cut-out patterns, etc., may be added as appendices.

Content of an Activity Handout	
Identification	Name of activity; age section name; area of growth; date of issue
Logistics	Most suitable place for this activity; duration; number of participants
Objectives	Both activity objectives and specific competencies (as above). The activity is evaluated to assess the experience of young people. The competencies are reviewed to assess young people's learning.
Description	A breakdown of the activity including the steps involved in prerequisites, preparation, implementation, evaluation, and celebration. Information may be allocated against time, those responsible, and materials required.
Reflection	Reflection is most important to capture young people's learning and development during the activity.



Name of the activity		Description of the activity		
Growth area	Section:			
	Illustration			
	Summary of the activity			Place
	Objective of the activity			Duration
				Participants
	Helps achieve the following educational objectives:			
	Author			Material:

Fig.2