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CENTER MANAGERS' CONFERENCE REPORT

Connect, Inspire & Grow

THE LOCHGOILHEAD NATIONAL SCOUT ACTIVITY CENTRE,
THE SCOTTISH COUNCIL THE SCOUT ASSOCIATION, SCOTLAND

21 – 25 OCTOBER 2009

Conference Report

The aim of this report is to give an overview of the content of the conference. This report has been produced by the planning team of the 11th Centre Managers Conference (CMC).

We would like to thank all the organisers of plenary and cornerstone sessions, and all participants that have given us written or verbal reports from workshops. Without this input we would not have been able to write this report. This report will be uploaded onto the CMC homepage (cmc.scoutshub.org) along with more detailed information such as the evaluation, pictures and several PowerPoint presentations.

Aim

The aim of the European Scout and Guide Centre Managers' Conference is to strengthen and develop co-operation among Guide and Scout Centres and to facilitate strong working relations between the staff of those Centres.

Conference Programme

A planning team comprising of Ingeborg Agterberg-van Dijk (Scout Centre Buitenzorg, The Netherlands), Peter Meulendijks (VVKSM De Brink, Belgium), Martin Steenstrup (Stevninghus, Denmark), Grace Farrelly (WAGGGS World Centre – Pax Lodge, UK), and Mark Knippenberg (Kandersteg International Scout Centre / WSB-ERO, Switzerland) were responsible for the organization and running of the Conference assisted by the staff at The Lochgoilhead Centre and its manager Mike Masino.

The important pillars of the conference are the 'Cornerstone' sessions (their aim is to treat issues of fundamental interest for Scout & Guide Centres and to do this in smaller groups to allow interaction and discussion between the participants) and the workshop sessions (sharing experiences between centres). After positive feedback from the previous CMC, we further developed the Group Work sessions and these proved to be a popular part of the Conference. The plenary sessions were an update from WAGGGS and WOSM, Speakers Corner, Celebrating Successes and the presentations from the Group Work. We also had 'Time to Connect' sessions which got the participants working on the CMC homepage and also connecting with each other on relevant issues. Last but not least the host venue organised a fantastic 'Scottish Evening' consisting of a traditional Scottish dinner at the Centre and a very popular Céilidh (traditional Scottish dancing).



Opening of the Conference

After the participants arrived on the bus from the airport we started giving out all of the 'welcome packs'. The next steps in the registration process were choosing workshops and cornerstone sessions, collecting scarves and informing the planning team of departure times. The participants then had to walk to the Village Hall next to the centre, which was used during this event as a second place for workshops, general sessions and fairs.

Theme Introduction

We started with a slideshow showing Scotland at its best and a powerpoint presentation of the three words: "Connect, Inspire, Grow". Then a piper walked in to the room closely followed by the Planning Team in kilts.

Grace and Mark opened the Conference officially with a speech. Eleanor Lyall, MBE, Chief Commissioner Scouts of Scotland welcomed the participants to Scotland and Lochgoilhead.

Mike Masino, manager of Lochgoilhead Scout Centre welcomed us to the Centre and gave us a brief introduction about the history of clans and tartans. Our CMC scarves were made of tartans from clans local to the area. Everyone was assigned to a 'clan' for the duration of the conference and we ended the plenary session with a short game to get everyone in their clans and then to get to know each other better.



The Theme: "Connect, Inspire, Grow!" is about what we wanted to achieve during the CMC.

At the CMC, Centre Managers can exchange ideas, plans and successes when they connect. They inspire each other and can grow as a manager.

Teambuilding games

We started Thursday morning with 3 teambuilding games:

1. Grow

The participants formed in their clans (those used for the Group work). Each clan got a number of bricks, one person had to run to a picture a few meters away, take a look and run a further few meters and start building the "tree". So eight trees grew at the centre.



2. Connect

This was played in 5 groups with no more than 2 clan members each. Every group had a number of pieces of guttering and a little ball. By connecting the pieces of guttering, they had to keep the ball keep rolling to the end of the field. We also made a big circle with all the participants and eventually had 8 balls running together round the circle.

3. Inspire

We played this with the whole group. Everyone had a kilt pin with ten beads in one colour. There were 15 different colours. You had to collect ten different colours of beads by asking another person what was her or his most inspiring moment in the last year and tell yours as well. Then you could exchange beads.



After this session, the conference photo was taken:



Group work

All of the participants were split into eight groups of approximately nine people. They started with a prioritisation exercise to get used to discussing things as a group. Then, each of them were given details of a fictional centre in a fictional country called Eldonia. For the remainder of the group work, they worked on tasks relating to their centres which they were given throughout this time as well as pieces of additional information. This ended with a final task where they received a letter from their national association saying they had to close five of the eight centres in Eldonia. Each group had to make a five minute presentation to the Board on the Saturday and then the winners would be announced.

Lots of creative thinking followed which saw secret meetings being held between the groups. At the final presentations all groups said that they would stand united in keeping them all open. We continued with the presentations and the Board left the room to make a decision. They announced to the group that the decision had been made to defer their decision for two years to give the centres more time to improve their situation. It also decided to commend three of the groups for excellent teamwork, an imaginative presentation and for their detailed research.

Workshops

A total of 11 workshops were run by participants over 2 different sessions on Friday and Saturday mornings. Subjects were proposed by the participants who ran the workshops:

1. Managing House and Catering with volunteers - KISC (CH) – Luiza Fontanazza

This presentation shows what KISC does with Staff training organisation and development of services and routines specific for the Catering and House areas. Also which ones are the keys to success.

2. Soft values and mass-communication - NAESBY CENTRE (DK) – Janus Reingaard

How to sell the product using appropriate media and the power of volunteers. We have to sell our products but we have a very small budget for marketing.

3. European Voluntary Service - HOUENS ODDE (DK) – Stine Kirk Jensen

European Voluntary Service is a way to get volunteers at your centre through a project in the EU. We like to share our knowledge about it.

4. Game DIMS + How to make a game ARRESO SCOUT CENTRE (DK) – Birgitte Rose

We will present some games we use at our centre. One is DIMS – you can put any theme in and it fits for all kind of groups. How to make a game? We will try the 'game-way'.

5. Volunteers and paid staff working together - PAX LODGE (UK) – Maia Faulkner

We will explore the motivations for each type of staff and try to come up with ways to improve the relationships between paid staff and volunteers.

6. Native Village : a way to promote environmental education - CHALET NIC ROLLINGER (LU) – Tom Lahr

Through the way of life and culture of native tribes who relied on a close relationship with nature to survive, young people get acquainted to ancient skills. We use various backgrounds to make them experience close to real life situations.

7. Gender Based Learning - OUR CHALET (CH) – Sally Thornton

How girls and boys learn differently.

8. Cooperation between scout centres - DUTCH LABEL SCOUTCENTRES (NL) – Johan, Jasper, Marjan

Presentation about the cooperation. We prepared a funny game to exchange ideas : 'Use your experiences to make black money'.

9. BP-Park model for Fund Raising - BP-Park (IT) – Achille Orzali

Learn from BP Park's experiences in improving its finances through self financing and external aid.

10. European Scout Voluntary Programme - WOSM (IE) – Caz Shields

Presentation of the programme and its present working systems. Evaluation of the current situation and explore the needs of the Centres for the future.

11. Environment activities to a Green World - GRIEBAL CENTRE (ES) – Esteban Urgel

Our centre has a big forest area around it (700 ha), every year we develop different environmental programmes to show our scouts the importance of the wild life and protection.



European Update, by Penelope Cooper (Director WAGGGS Europe) and Mark Knippenberg (Director KISC / WSB-ERO).

The aim of this session was to bring people up to date with what has been happening at European level since the last Conference. This was done by giving information first about the structure of both organisations, followed by the current situation in WOSM and WAGGGS, the different projects, the joint operations (such as this Conference) and where the Regions want to go in the future. After this information was shared with the participants, participants had the chance to ask questions for clarification or for more information. The joint PowerPoint presentation used for this update is provided to the participants on the CMC homepage.

My Centre, My Country

On the first and second evenings the participants were invited to present their countries and Centres. All Centres from the same countries had a chance to work together on their country presentations. Both evenings were very enjoyable and by running this evening on two different nights gave everyone a chance to both have a look around and present their Centre and country. This event gave participants the opportunity to become more familiar with the other Centres and to taste some of the different specialities from the various countries.



Excursion

On Friday afternoon, the Conference travelled outside Lochgoilhead to Inveraray. This is a small town on the shores of Loch Fyne. It is the home of the Campbell clan. The clan chief is the Duke of Argyll, his home is Inveraray Castle, which we visited. The participants also had the opportunity to visit Inveraray jail, the whisky shop, the tall ship, know as the Arctic Penguin. They had the opportunity to try on a kilt and visit other attractions.



Cornerstones of our work at Scout and Guide Centres

These sessions targeted fundamental aspects of management of Scout and Guide Centres and were run where possible by external experts. This allowed a more in-depth discussion based on the presentation of knowledge and experience gained both from inside and outside scouting. Nearly all sessions ran twice.

1. Running a safe Centre - Doug Stack & Julian Pierce, UK

This Cornerstone dealt with different aspects of daily life in and around your Centre. We had a look at them from different angles and came to our own conclusion if they are safe or need some work.

2. SCENES and your Centre - Lucy Mace, WOSM Environment Educational Task Team

Are you interested in becoming a SCENES centre? SCENES (Scout Centres of Excellence for Nature and the Environment) has recently been re-launched by WOSM. This session aimed to show you what SCENES is, how you can get involved and why your centre should consider becoming a SCENES centre.

3. Motivational Coaching - Scott Goddard, Live-N-Learn Ltd.

Live-N-Learn design and deliver innovative and inspiring training for organisations throughout the UK. This cornerstone encourages delegates to reflect on what motivates them and how to motivate the volunteers that we work with. There were opportunities to participate throughout the session using interactive voting handsets, fun activities and inspiring video clips.

4. Alternative Sources of Income - Torben Stenstrup, professional fundraising consultant – ex-Centre Manager

You need money to develop scouting through attractive activities, facilities and enthusiastic volunteers. This cornerstone inspired us in the work of strategic project development and gave us techniques, advice and show cased how to fundraise money and create partnerships.

5. Programme - Sally Thornton, World Centre Manager Our Chalet

The focus of this cornerstone was on assessing the current situation of a centre, exploring opportunities and setting future programme directions. Asking and posing answers to the question - how is my centre different to others and what programme can and should we offer?

6. Reaching out to young People - Penelope Cooper, Regional Director WAGGGS

In this Cornerstone we discovered what is happening in the world for young people and also some ways to connect with them.

7. Marketing - Conny van Zuijlen, KISC Marketing Manager

This Cornerstone ran on two different levels. The first time it was aiming at new participants. We learnt how to make a PR Plan for your Centre or for a big activity. It was a systematic approach where we discussed how to set targets, target groups, PR media, planning and budget. The 2nd "advanced" session went more into Marketing. It shows you how you can make your Centre attractive for your target groups.

8. Management of Staff - Una Daly, Volunteering Ireland

Building an effective team of volunteers and paid staff is crucial to an organisations success. Therefore volunteer management policies and procedures are just as important as those of paid staff. Issues such as Recruitment, Selection, Support, Supervision and Recognition of volunteers and the relationship between paid staff and volunteers was examined to ensure an effective team and provision of a best quality service.

9. European Volunteer Services - Nicolo Pranzini, WOSM European Region Office

The European Voluntary Service (EVS) is one opportunity offered by the Youth in Action Programme of the European Commission. EVS enables young people to carry out a voluntary service for up to 12 months in a country other than their country of residence. We looked into the possible themes of this volunteering programme. We also discussed the development of solidarity, promotion of active citizenship and mutual understanding among young people, therefore could it be a useful opportunity for the volunteers of S&G Centres?

10. Funding international events with European Funds - Nicolo Pranzini, WOSM European Region Office

This Cornerstone presented what kinds of opportunities are available at European Level with the Youth in Action Programme and European Youth Foundation for international events taking place in G&S Centres. There are many opportunities to get funds for typical scouting activities, but securing funding requires time, planning and knowledge.



Time to Connect

The participants were divided into two groups for these sessions. Each group completed two different sessions during the Conference.

One of these was to get the participants familiar with the CMC homepage so there could be some exchange of ideas and information after the Conference. They had to complete a list of challenges relating to the homepage to win a prize from the centre. The internet connection at the centre gave us some extra challenges!

The second activity was a game where the participants made a subject of their own choice and were organised so that they got feedback on their topic from ten different participants.

Speakers Corner

The aim of this last session of the Conference was to bring the final thoughts together and give everyone an open forum with the possibility to bring up subjects they would like discussed. During the session, the following topics were brought up:

Items including:

- An update on the Irish camp site building project.
- A request for teambuilding games, participants can upload these suggestions to the homepage.
- A proposal to connect one centre to another centre for the coming two years.
- A proposal of thinking about a European Quality Badge for European scout and guide centres.
- A proposal to have an extended centre tour of the host centre at future conferences.
- The question if the European Green Key (Worldwide Eco Label) is known by the Centres.
www.green-key.org.

Celebrating successes

Just before the Closing Ceremony, we gave everyone the opportunity to share their successes from the past two years with the rest of the Conference. People who wanted to share, just stood up and announced what things had been successful at their Centres. Everyone applauded after each success was declared and this was a good way to finish the sessions of the Conference as we look forward to our successes for the next two years. We then celebrated these with some cake!

As a token of remembrance and in line with the Conference theme all the participants gather in the rain opposite the reception/office building to plant a small oak tree and add a plaque. We hope the tree will grow and will be a living memory of the 11th CMC in the years to come.



Conference Closing

We started with a photo presentation from the past few days. Thanks to Derek Prescott, photographer at Lochgoilhead. Jim Duffy, Chief Executive of Scouts Scotland, thanked everyone for coming to Lochgoilhead and was glad that everybody had had a good time. He wished us all well for the future. Following this Mark and Grace closed the 11th European Centre Managers' Conference. Then we went out into the heavy rain to plant an oak tree at the entrance of the centre as a reminder that we 'grew' as managers at Lochgoilhead.

Cultural Evening

The final evening at Lochgoilhead started with a fine meal of Haggis, 'neeps and tatties' and other nice things. There was a good atmosphere with nicely decorated tables. After that we returned to the Village Hall to participate in a traditional Scottish Céilidh. There was live music and a caller who led us through the Scottish dances. Everybody had a great time!



Evaluation

Participants of workshops and cornerstones evaluated the effectiveness of these at the end of each session. The results of these were then gathered by the facilitators and are published on the CMC website.

We then had a final online evaluation that could be completed via the homepage. Most participants completed this on the final day.

The full evaluation can be viewed using this link;

http://www.surveymonkey.com/sr.aspx?sm=oXVyOJw3uEptxmhTM6tj6lp_2byHqGn7GquTBQ4Dy_2f7zA_3d
and the password: CmC2009. At the end of the report you will find a small summary of this evaluation.

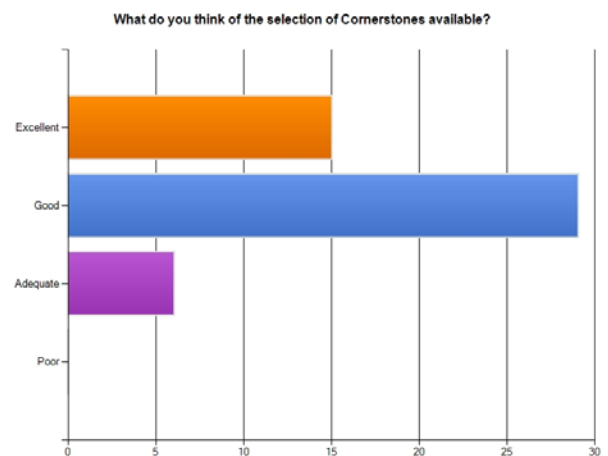
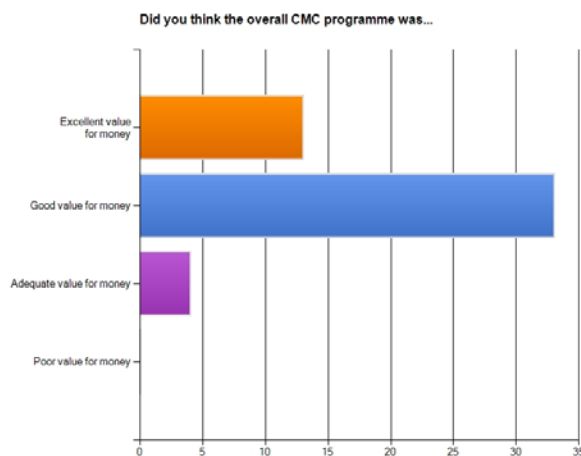
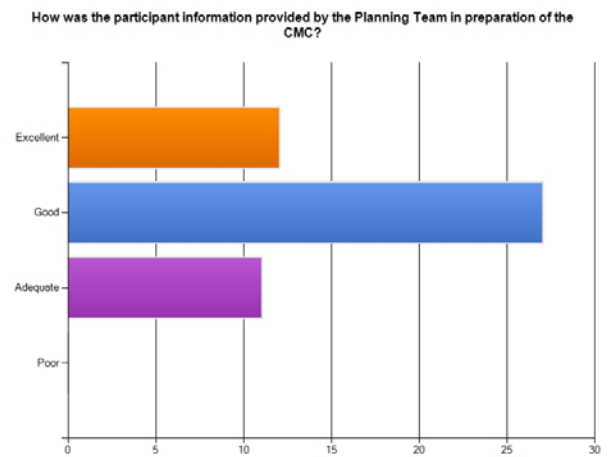
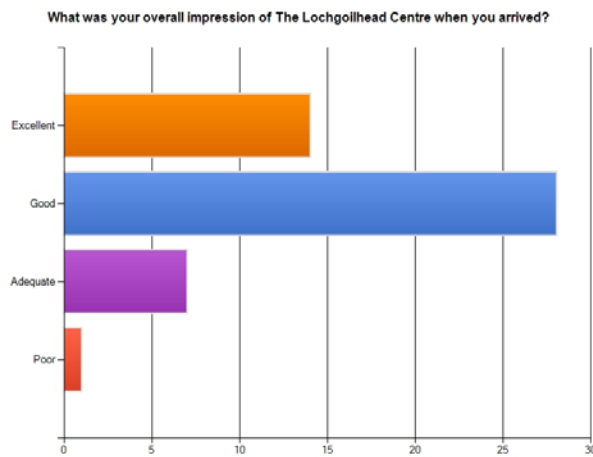
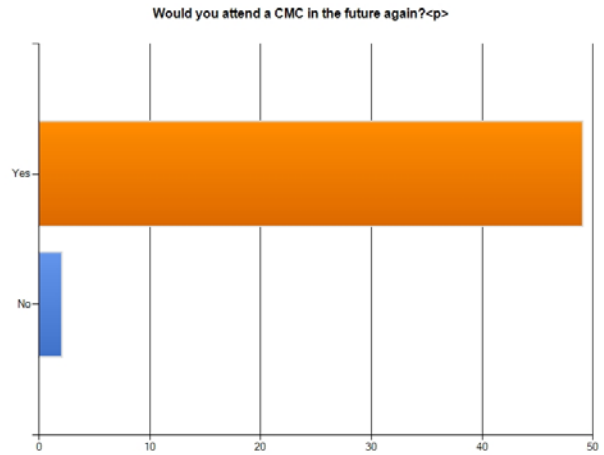
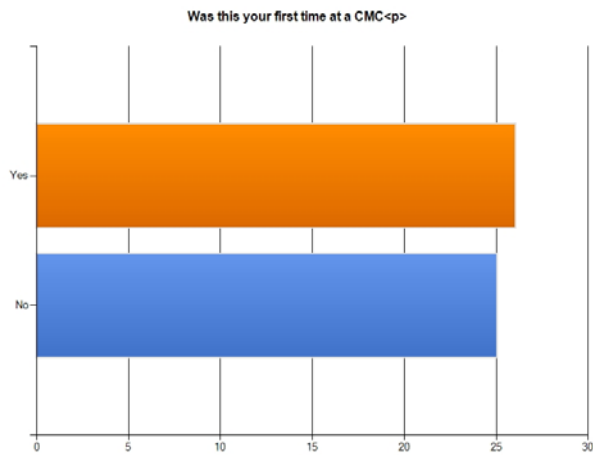
Thanks to our supporters

The European Guide & Scout Centre Managers' Conference could not take place without the support of several different organisations. In particular, we would like to thank:

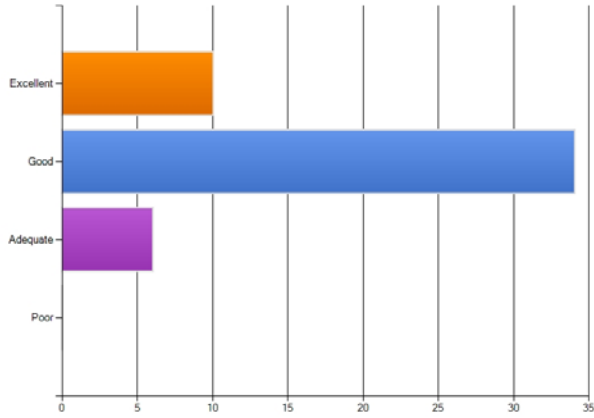
- The WOSM European Scout Region and the Europe Region WAGGGS;
- Scouts Scotland;
- The participants who gave lots of good feedback and worked hard during the event;
- All those who took part and helped to create such a great event in Lochgoilhead



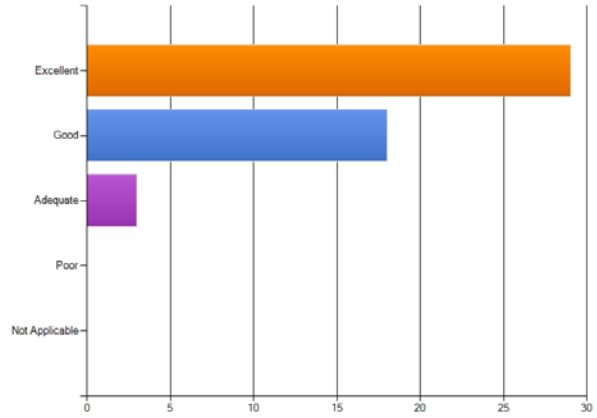
Summary of the CMC 2009 Evaluation



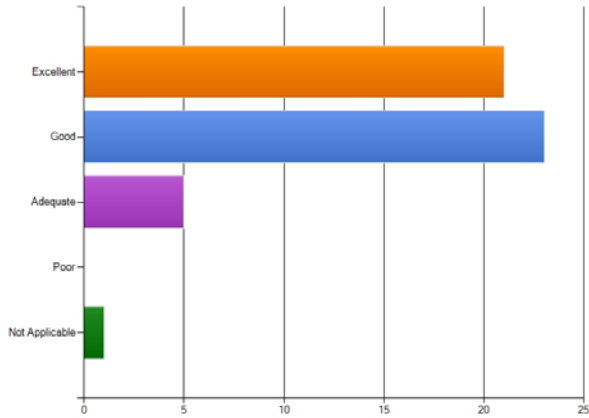
What do you think of the selection of Workshops available?



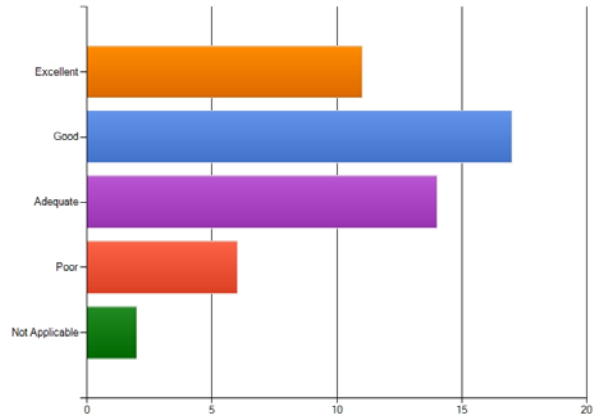
How did you like the "My Centre - My Country" session?



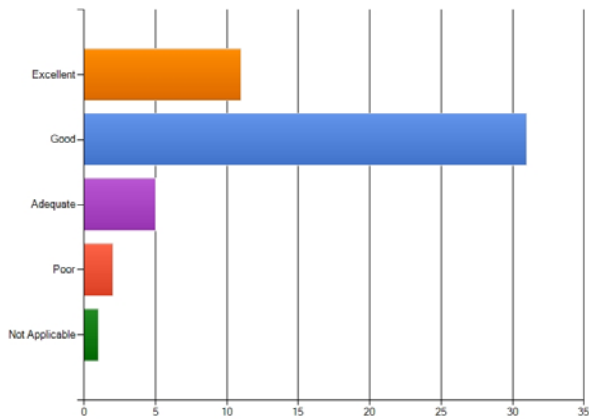
How did you like the "Group Work" session?



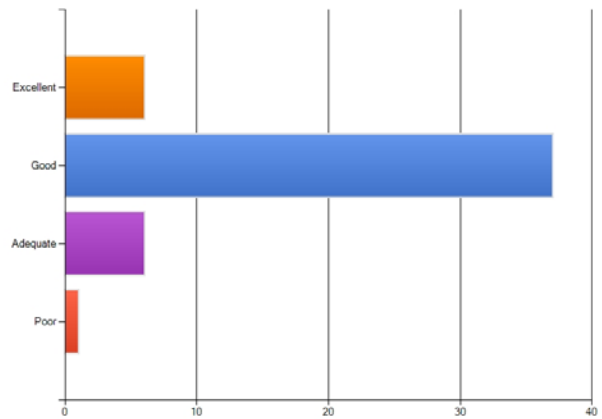
How did you like the "Time to Connect" session?



How did you like the "Speakers Corner" session?



The information provided on the CMC website was:



World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts
Association Mondiale des Guides et Eclaireuses



World Organization of the Scout Movement
Organisation Mondiale du Mouvement Scout