The Academy 2012

26 - 30 October 2012 | WAGGGS & WOSM Europe
Kandersteg International Scout Centre | Switzerland

Final Report

Summary

In 2012, the Academy specifically focused on **Embracing Change**, one of the three joint areas of work, as well as on development issues, including management of associations and personal development. Therefore the event was designed as a focused and integrated solution to the needs of youth organisations in changing environments in Europe and worldwide. It mainly aimed at encouraging the youth leaders and youth workers to launch and/or improve as well as adapt current programmes, projects and structures in order to reflect the changes in the diverse societies in Europe today and in institutions on a European level.

Mouvement Scout de Suisse (MSdS) was the host organisation of the event. While hosting the Academy, MSdS wanted to enable as many as possible interested NSO/NSA and MO/MA to participate. In fact, before the end of the registration process, we had to refuse applications as the maximum number of 45 promoters was reached. With the support of WOSM, MSdS applied for the first time and successfully to the Youth in Action Programme.

The whole registration process was done online. Lists of registered participants were sent to their respective International Commissioners on the basis of being accepted. IC had to reply only when a participant was not accepted or recognised.

Aim

In addition to the overall aim to provide an integrated solution to training and sharing experiences in many aspects of Scouting and Guiding, and to give a holistic approach to development, concentrating on key aspects of the Regional Plans, two more specific dimensions were developed to fulfil Youth in Action requirements:

a) *Intercultural Dimension*

The objective was to increase the participants' positive awareness of other cultures by having the opportunity to share their experiences and work together on common topics, experiencing the richness of cultural diversity and different approaches to youth work and external representation. The participants had the opportunity, during the sessions and open

forum, to present their national situation in terms of youth representation and youth programme as well as best practices.

b) *Europian dimension*

The Academy reflected a common concern for European Society in particular because many of the sessions during the Academy were dealing with topics that are really living matters like diversity in youth programmes, better reach out to socially excluded young people, youth empowerment, volunteering, active citizenship etc.

Participants

Scouts and Guides with the following profile were encouraged to apply:
- Members of national boards or national strategy teams
- Those involved with management, representation, development
- Professional staff, individual experts and commissioners
- There was no age limit
- Multiple entries from associations were actively encouraged

134 participants from 37 different countries (58 associations) attended the event of which 44 were under Youth in Action

Academy participants	**Number**		
	Male	Female	Total
Participants	67	67	134
Facilitators	10	15	25
Planning Team + Hosting Team	3	4	7
Support Team	3	1	4
Guests	4	2	6
TOTAL	**87**	**89**	**176**

List of participants is provided in Annex 1

Finances

The finances of the event are tied into the Youth in Action application made to the Swiss National Agency to whom the final report of the Academy has been made and who are in the process of finalising the assessment and final grant.

Additional grants were made by the Mercator Foundation, Federal Department of Social Affairs (Swiss) and the Swiss Scout Foundation. Both Regional Offices contributed – WOSM €10,000 and WAGGGS €2000.

It is anticipated that the budget will be balanced.

Programme

We designed 28 workshops (Annex 2) focusing on different aspects of embracing change and the sessions were tackling specific issues related to:

(a)   Non-formal education as a fundamental tool to educate young people;

(b)   Support of volunteers;
(c)   Strategic development of Youth NGOs; and
(d)   Youth NGOs communication.

The Programme of the Academy 2012 consisted of the following sessions:

(1)   Innovative Training Methods
(2)   Succession planning
(3)   Tackling diversity from different angles
(4)   Change management: How to work in difficult circumstances
(5)   Quality standards for youth programme and training
(6)   Recruitment & Retention of Adult Volunteers
(7)   Strategic Planning for Growth
(8)   Monitoring & Evaluation for Growth
(9)   Strategic Partnership for Growth
(10)   Growth toolkit
(11)   Recruitment & Retention of Young people
(12)   Making programme relevant to Society
(13)   Co-education and Growth
(14)   How to transfer ideas from one MO/NSO to another
(15)   Communication and Growth
(16)   Mentoring and coaching
(17)   Youth Empowerment: Starting Up!
(18)   Inter-regional partnership: Unguvu tools
(19)   The International dimension in the Rover programme
(20)   Organisational Development
(21)   Project management – Putting Strategy into Action
(22)   Who we are – Scout DNA & the challenge of our times
(23)   Advocacy tools: be heard
(24)   Youth Rights
(25)   Social rights: reaching out & diversity
(26)   From E-Learning to Training
(27)   The international dimension in Youth Programme
(28)   Encourage NSO / MO to look outside of Scouting/Guiding for network opportunities

In addition to the sessions, the host team and KISC offered various social and sportive activities, including one official KISC activity per day.

Information dissemination

The information dissemination was organised at the earliest stage possible for the event but also for the programme and the sessions' content. The Academy was mainly promoted using the website www.academy.europak-online.net as well as the network of Scout and Guide organizations in Europe. The website was open to the public and the preparation and implementation of the event were equally visible to everyone. The same was for the events on the social media (Twitter and Facebook) as well as on the channel of Flickr where photographs were shared. During the event, information and news were also posted on the websites of the associations involved in the event. MSdS sent a press release to Swiss media. A local radio station aired an interview with one of the planning team members and a local newspaper published a report about the event. Furthermore, the event was highly visible in the village of Kandersteg, involving local groups to perform at the Swiss evening.

Planning Team

The Academy planning team consisted of:

1. Eri Papadopoulou, Europe Committee WAGGGS
2. Fabian Koch, Representative of hosting committee
3. Matthias Gerth, Volunteer, European Scout Region, Liaison Officer
4. Rose-Marie Henny, European Regional Office
5. Sabine Zorn, Volunteer, Europe Region WAGGS
6. Tom Rombouts, Volunteer, European Scout Region

At a later stage, Mary Vaxevanopoulou (Staff member Europe office WAGGGS, Brussels) joined the Planning Team.

Support for media, communication and coordination was provided by:

1. Dominik Büeler (Member of the MSdS-host-team, Switzerland);
2. Jordan Bajraktarov (Staff member European Scout Office)
3. Mihajlo Atanackovic (Staff member European Scout Office WOSM);
4. Myriam Heidelberger-Kaufmann (General Director KISC).

Preparation of the event

At the beginning of 2012, the planning team was formed. A first "restricted" planning team meeting took place on March 13, 2012 in Bern, including KISC representatives. The financial and topical framework for the event was discussed. Based on this, the host team started to develop the programme of the event while WOSM and WAGGGS started to collect the propositions for the training sessions. In April 2012, invitations were sent out and fundraising started in Switzerland. To consolidate the results of all actions in spring and early summer 2012, the planning team met again in Winterthur (Switzerland) in August (24-26). At the meeting, the sessions and the other activities were built together into an overall event programme. Furthermore, logistical details, communication strategy, briefing of workshop for facilitators and participants information letters have been prepared.

From July 2012, every two weeks the current issues in the planning were discussed in a one-hour Skype call. In the last month of the preparation, the calls took place every week. To prepare the calls, an agenda and task-list were sent out 3-4 days before the calls. To share all documents for preparation, the planning team used Dropbox as an online library. Throughout the preparation, existing online platform and the events own website have been used to inform the participants.

Logistic (transport and accommodation)

The participants organised their journey to and from Kandersteg individually but were supported by the host team with general information, the opportunity to order a domestic train ticket in advance for half price and a welcoming desk at Zurich Airport.

KISC provided a very professional service and a well-adapted infrastructure (e.g. plenty of equipped rooms and big enough for workshops with up to 30 people). The collaboration with KISC as host centre was good.

Involvement of participants

The Participants were involved at each stage of the project.

Before the Academy: The participants communicated with each other and with the planning team via social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter and via the Academy website or email. Concerning the interaction between the participants and the planning team at this stage of the project, they could give inputs for basically every aspect that mattered to them about the preparation of the Academy. Most importantly, they could comment on the continuously unfolding programme and raise their expectations, wishes, recommendations, etc. Concerning the interaction among the participants, they could get to know each other and exchange ideas via social media even before the Academy which provided the basis for the easy collaboration during the event.

During the Academy: The targeted learning effect of the Academy essentially builds on the active participation and exchange of the participants themselves. Especially during the workshops, their inputs and their active participation were crucial. Apart from the workshops, the participants had the opportunity to show their projects during the open forum (a space where participants could share and present their own ideas and best practices).

After the Academy: participants were strongly encouraged to stay in touch and keep on working on the ideas whose seeds were laid during the Academy. In order to sustain the learning experience of the Academy, social media was, as before the Academy, a key tool.

Evaluations

In general, the feedback on working methods was very good. However, it is not always easy to establish a good overall variety and provide single workshops at the same time. At this point, a better coordination between facilitators prior to the event could help. It was very helpful to have a daily debriefing with all facilitators to ensure feedback from participants were immediately implemented and facilitators could coordinate between themselves.

All the workshops were scheduled twice in the programme. Two former facilitators and members of the planning team carefully prepared the debriefings; they visited the sessions and brought back their own impressions and feedback from participants.

Three types of evaluation were used during and after the Academy 2012

1. Short evaluation of each session by participants

At the end of each session, a short evaluation by participants was undertaken. These short sessions' evaluations were used to provide feedback from participants on the impact of the session (its content, structure, and methods) to facilitators in order to improve he provision of the next sessions during the Academy. As these session evaluations were carried out by the facilitators, who were free in selecting the most appropriate methods of evaluation, as well as methods of recording and sharing the results of evaluation. The feedback was then shared with other facilitators at the facilitators debriefing meeting and immediately implemented for further sessions.

2. Written formal evaluation by Academy participants (Annex 3)

Written evaluation forms for participant were developed by the planning team and were individually distributed to all Academy participants. The forms were available online, with an

individual link for each participant to fill it in.

The evaluation form was divided in three parts: (i) programme, (ii) communication, and (iii) logistics. For each of the parts, participants were able to select one or more of predefined answers or to write their own comments.

82 participants provided feedback, i.e. filled in the online questionnaire.

Some of the results are summarized here.

(i)   Programme:

- ❖ More than 70 % of the participants have the feeling that they achieved what they expected during the Academy.

- According to participant opinion, the most useful sessions for their future work in their organisations were:

  (a) Organisational development (16,25%);
  (b) Recruitment & retention of adult volunteers (10%);
  (c) Co-education and growth (7.5%);
  (d) Change management: how to work in difficult circumstances (7.5%);
  (e) Who we are – Scout DNA & the challenge of our times (7,5%).

On the other side, the least useful sessions for future work were:

  (f) Mentoring and coaching (17,5%),
  (g) Innovative training methods (16,25%)
  (h) Quality standards in programme and training (15%).

- ❖ Almost 80% of participants have evaluated the Academy as very useful.

- ❖ 79% of participants providing feedback evaluated the Academy as well conducted and organised.

- ❖ More than 86% of participants stated that they would promote next year's Academy to their fellow organisation members.

Some of the comments by the participants:

- "The Academy changed me, made me feel different. And I learned so much from it."

- "You are the best. You've changed my life..."

- "Maybe plan a bit more time in each session so that the participants can exchange their experiences (planned in most sessions but not enough time unfortunately). Some sessions were also very intense and maybe it would be best to split them into 2 sessions so that we'd have more time to discuss about everything".

- "Really well organised and a great choice of sessions to attend. A better description of some of the sessions would have been useful; some were not as I expected, others that I did not attend actually sounded really interesting. An afternoon off to relax and/or explore the surroundings would have been nice as the week was very intense."

(ii)   Communication:

❖ 76% of participants that provided feedback used the Academy website. About 50% of participants evaluated that the content provided on the website was useful before the event.

❖ Almost one third (32,91%) found that the website and its content was not relevant and not useful during the course of the Academy. 25% found it relevant.

❖ 58,75% of participants used social media, Twitter and Facebook. The opinions about their usefulness also differ, as some of participant apparently thought they were not relevant and useful before the event (32,91%) and during the event (21,52%).

Some of the comments:

• "I didn't have the feeling that there was a lack of anything. I got my information if demanded."

• "Materials for sessions should be available before or immediately after sessions."

• "I don't know if there's one already but a forum around each session so that people can continue exchanging ideas would be nice."

• "During the Academy, the website could be more updated and the slides for each session should be on the site before that session starts."

• "More information about the goals and topics of the sessions provided beforehand by the facilitators."

(iii)   Logistics

❖ 77,5% of participants found it very helpful that someone was welcoming them at the airports' convention desks.

❖ 65% of the participants evaluated accommodation as very good

❖ 45% of the participants evaluated the food as very good. 18,75% evaluated it as not so good (scoring 2 or 1 on a five-point-Likert-scale)

Some of the comments:

• "My compliments to the kitchen staff for the amount of food that was prepared, it was practically always enough - which isn't easy with such a large group of people around."

• "Absolutely great!"

• "Pinkies [KISC staff] and host team have done a great job, but there was too much participants in one room (7 in my room)."

• "Don't understand why we have been accommodated in separate rooms with unknown people - we have never seen all in our room! And many of my friends had the same experience. We went to our rooms just for sleeping - and it was quite disturbing being there with many foreign people, cause everyone went to bed in different time."

3. **Evaluation by facilitators** (Annex 4)

Facilitators were able to provide feedback in two ways, (a) by providing oral feedback every evening, during the facilitators debriefings and (b) in written by completing written facilitators evaluation form.

Evaluations were filled and returned by 9 facilitators out of 24.

Preparation of the Academy

How would you rate the information and the support provided by the offices?

• All the support materials were distributed in advanced. The "information packages" were released in a very organised way and in accordance to the timeframe of preparation of the event.

How would you describe the preparation with your co-facilitator? Is there any room for improvement and how?

• I already knew my WOSM counterpart so preparation was not a problem. However my WAGGGS counter-part for the joint work on embracing change (Change Management) was changed three times… preparation was frustrating so I ended up preparing most of the material myself. This makes things harder, especially when you have never met the person before. Having said this I have to say the person was great and we worked very well together.

• I believe that the Academy is the top training event in Europe. However I feel that the manner in which some facilitators prepare for the Academy is far from ideal. To make matters worse, there seems to be nobody within the structure to ensure that the material is prepared before the academy (not the day before), that the material prepared is of an acceptable standard, and that the material within the topics blends with each other. At least I never received any form of feedback about the sessions I prepared. The net effect is that we have participants who notice that sometimes sessions are just discussions based without any real learning or knowledge transfer taking place, and that sometimes facilitators are not really prepared for the session. I believe we can do better.

Are there other ways the Planning team, the Offices, the Working Groups and the Committee Members can support you in your preparation?

• Providing more information about how the topic covered by the session can be addressed in accordance to the different WG/CG objectives. Actively contributing to support the facilitators in the preparation of the session.

During the Academy

Did you experience support by the Planning Team? If so, how and how can it be improved?

• Yes – by constantly asking how is it, by daily evaluation, short meetings in-between, etc. Also the logistical support (the info, the material) was good.

Rate the following elements: a) Induction session and b) Daily evaluation
Are they useful? Should they be improved? If so, how?

- The induction session was structured and clear. The evaluation moments and processes should be understood as the starting point of work to improve the quality of the event itself. Therefore it seems important to move on to clear evaluation procedures (individually and in group) with concrete goals and outcomes.

<u>What did you learn from the cooperation with your co-facilitators?</u>
<u>Please refer to content and method, training style, other.</u>

- We had good cooperation with both co-facilitators; we complemented each other.
  Maybe it was not much learning as such, but more confirmation that we are on the same "line". We also have similar style of working. But still I learned some other perspectives on the target group, got some small ideas, like energiser, or approach to the topic.

- A better understanding of the public present at the Academy and of their expectations regarding the event.

<u>What do you take back home as a facilitator?</u>

- The motivation I usually get at Guiding and Scouting international events.

- How good it is to work together with people from various organisations without looking for the differences but looking for similarities.

- More ideas, motivation and more experience.

After the Academy

<u>What would you recommend to the next generation of facilitators?</u>

- The need to have structured and clear session programmes in advance so that the people attending exactly know what will be the structure and focus of the session.

- Start working together early enough.

- Prepare your sessions well – some participants thought that some facilitators were not well prepared.

<u>What is your feedback to the Work groups?</u>
<u>Please refer to the relevance of the topics according to the audience</u>

- *How to transfer ideas to MO/NSO* – I think it is good to integrate in every event some time at the end to start planning the future steps and have last moments to discuss, ask, etc with participants. I think it's one of the weakest points of such events that you have to do all that in little free time and you don't have plan when coming home. At home you usually don't take time for planning and some great ideas are gone because of hat.

- *Recruitment and retention of young people* – Constant input and time for sharing is important. It was good to hear some experience from the "outside" world – it was inspiring, as always. I think it is always good to have time to look at some other practices but we didn't have enough time to go deeper. I was thinking of maybe having two separate sessions on both topics, although they are connected, in order to have time to go deeper, discover more, and see some more details that matter.

- *E-Learning* - The flexibility in terms of tasks and assignments, as well as the objectives of

the session, enabled to address the different expectations and backgrounds of the participants. The majority of the participants attending my sessions are involved in Training, although there were a significant number of people from the Programme area as well from Administration. Therefore the educational approach to e-learning particularly addressed the participants with more expertise in pedagogy and stronger background in terms of programme design.

- To also reach the participants having administration and management roles one objective was added to the session "…". This way it was also possible to slightly tackle the implementation of an e-Learning strategy and discuss aspects some issues related to the structures of the NSOs.

- Many participants comment that some sessions lack the learning value, which would be expected (i.e. a participant leaves the session none the wiser than before). Work groups could ensure that the topics they pick should have that educational value to make attending the session worthwhile. The targeted audience should also be published well in advance so people know what to expect.

Do you think a follow-up in whatever way of the participants is useful?
If so, how?

- Can be, but it takes time. If we do the follow-up we need to take time at the beginning of the event to create learning goals (pax should do it for themselves), to support their process during the event (10 min at the end of session or daily evaluation, etc.) and then it would make much more sense to follow-up. But such kind of events are more for sharing, discovering, don't go that much in depth; I see the follow-up much more for the event as Pick'n'Mix.

- Participants (as well as those who were not physically attending the academy) should have access to the structure of the sessions as well as to a good part of the content and outcomes of each session.

Main Recommendations

Online registration
The whole process of online registration, including travel information and pre-registration to the sessions should be connected as by example using a personal ID link right from the beginning – one file for one person for the whole process.

Programme
To make available in advance a clear session programme, including description, objectives, session plan, target groups so that participants attending exactly know what will be the structure and focus of the session.

To ensure the learning value of the sessions (quality control); working and core groups could ensure that the topics they propose have that educational value to make attending the session worthwhile.

To provide access to participants (and others) to the structure of the sessions as well as to a good part of the content and outcomes of each session.

Preparation of the programme
To avoid too many emails with multiple attachments, which tend to confusion and hassling searches, suggestion was made to create a simple webpage (part of the academy site or

whatever) where all the latest version of the documents can be found.

<u>Annexes:</u>

1. List of participants
2. Programme
3. Evaluation by participants
4. Evaluation by facilitators