



Trend Report on Membership Issues in the Europe Region WAGGGS in 2001

and

A Look at Trends Concerning Youth in Europe



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Note: All photos are from the official eurolife.01 collection available from the Swiss Guide and Scout Association.

Introduction

As you will read later in this paper, the decline of membership in the Europe Region WAGGGS is not a new phenomenon. For many Associations it has been a reality for a number of years now. However, it is only in recent years that we have seen it become the norm in Europe – it is the exception now if an Association is not losing membership. The Europe Region WAGGGS saw this clearly following the first Internal Study carried out by the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in 1999/2000. Following this study the Europe Region WAGGGS adopted a strategy to start to investigate why membership was decreasing in Europe and to start to find ways to assist Associations in dealing with this problem. Part of this strategy was the holding of the WAGGGS Forum 3 on Recruitment and Retention of Membership (Cyprus 23 – 25 November 2001). However, although we knew that the general issue of membership was a problem we didn't know exactly where the critical points were, where there differences between types of Association and what influence did other Youth organisations have on us as well as other leisure pursuits.

Dieter De Court approached the Europe Region WAGGGS in early 2001 about undertaking a period of placement practice for his Masters Degree in Social, Cultural and Leisure Studies. A proposal of a piece of research focussing on the cause and effect of declining membership in the Europe Region WAGGGS was submitted to the University of Gent, Belgium and was accepted. This document is the outcome of that practice placement.

The results have in some way confirmed what we had already suspected, that the average age for a young person to leave our movement is in the early teenage years. What has been surprising is the relative youth of our leaders.

Dieter has not only given the results of the questionnaire but also developed some critical questions which I would encourage you to use in your Association to reflect on particular aspects of your membership – it may help you to think differently or to clarify why you have a certain situation.

There is no major conclusion, we cannot provide a magic recipe... however what we can do is start with a basic knowledge of the dynamics of our movement in Europe and start to investigate why. At a European level, we can take these specific points and, along with the Internal Study that has just been carried out, use it to develop tailored and specific actions in the Europe Region Strategic Plan.

This piece of research does of course have its limitations. It was carried out over an 11-week period and did not have full participation by all in the Region. However, it gives us a knowledge base we did not have before and gives us a starting point from which to build. It is clear that the Europe Region needs such research and we are very grateful to have had the opportunity of Dieter joining us to carry out this first step. Dieter has also included a comprehensive bibliography, including Websites, which he used during his research. I would encourage Associations to explore some of these and consider if they can assist your work in this area as well.

It should be mentioned that the statements that are in this report are not necessarily the viewpoint of WAGGGS. This is an educational assignment that will be graded as part of a University Degree. It is therefore the case that the Europe Region WAGGGS has not edited this document in anyway except where there are needs for clarification or to use particular terminology.

The Europe Region WAGGGS has benefited greatly from having the opportunity to work with the University of Gent through Dieter and get such valuable information. We are sure that it will be an essential tool in our continuing work on the crucial issue of Recruitment and Retention of membership.

Heather Roy
Executive for the Europe Region WAGGGS
March 2002

PART ONE

Trend Report on Membership Issues in the Europe Region WAGGGS in 2001

General information concerning the questionnaires

The questionnaires were sent out to all participants of the WAGGGS Forum III organised by the Europe Region WAGGGS.

The main goal of the questionnaire was to start the thinking process of the participants on the theme of the forum, membership issues, with an extra focus on the youth trends.

The second goal was to gather figures, opinions and general information to enable us to deduct some trends within the European associations.

Basic principles of statistics

To understand the report better it might be useful to read first this very brief summary of statistics with the computer. The explanations are short and not always complete, but they should be more than enough to understand the compilation of the questionnaires.

To generalise all the answers that were given by the returned questionnaires, they needed to be put together. Doing this the old fashioned way by paper and handwriting would take very long and offers a lot of chances for making mistakes. That's why it has been done in a more suitable way, by computer. We used the computer programme SPSS. This programme is specific for statistical data and can easily be compared with Excel.

First of all we put in the programme all the questions that were asked, these we call the 'Variables'. Each question has a few possible answers. Each answer is programmed (Valued) in the computer (e.g. no=0; yes=1; don't know=2; not appropriated=99). Each single answer is called a 'Data', all the data of one questionnaire, so all the answers of one questionnaire together we call a 'Case'. All the data in general, we call the 'Data matrix'. If a question is not answered, and there is no data in the computer, the computer counts this as a 'Missing Value'. All the data that he knows are called 'Valid values'.

The next step, once all the data are valued, is making the computer think, by asking questions. For example: What have the associations answered on the question "Does youth association have to compete with them (other Guide and Scout associations)?" so actually we ask the frequency. The computer answers with an output, or what else would you expect? The output below tells us quiet a lot.

Does your association have to compete with them?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	8	24,2	25,8	25,8
	Yes	20	60,6	64,5	90,3
	Don't know	1	3,0	3,2	93,5
	Not Accurate	2	6,1	6,5	100,0
	Total	31	93,9	100,0	
Missing	System	2	6,1		
Total		33	100,0		

The first column separates three parts: 'Valid', 'Missing' and 'Total'. All possible answers are written to the right of 'Valid' (No, Yes, Don't know, Not Accurate and Total) The 'Total' in this column refers to how many valid data there are in total.

The column 'Frequency' shows how many times the computer counted the value '0' for 'No', '1' for 'Yes', ..., how many missing values (next to system) and how many cases there were in total. For this question 33.

In the column next to it these amounts are put into percentages. Here you can see that 60,6% of the filled in questionnaires indicated that their association is in competition with other Guide and Scout associations. To the right of 'Total' you see 33 cases and of course 100%.

In the column to the right of 'Percent' you have the column 'Valid Percent'. In this column the computer deletes the missing values and recalculates the percentages. These are the right percentages to work with, to make conclusions.

In the last column we find the 'Cumulative Percent'. This is the sum of all the percentages at each stage. In this example this column doesn't add any value to the conclusions we can make.

When we ask different questions to the computer he might also give following answers:

Mean: This is the sum of all values, divided by the total of cases that were summarized

Range: For one variable there are several different answers possible. Range is the difference between the lowest and the highest answer given.

Standard deviation: is the average range of all the data and their mean. This means that in the area of the mean minus the standard deviation and the mean plus the standard deviation, most data can be found.

Ideal curve: Generally if we do an investigation, we would like to ask everybody concerned. The subject the population is investigated for is always normally spread. Because it is often not possible to ask everyone, we do the investigation for a small group. When this group has the same spread as the population, we can make, based on the characteristics of this group, an expectation for the whole population. If we want to compare graphs with the ideal spread graph of the population, we can ask the computer to draw the ideal curve for us. Depending on the situation this line can be differently used, but this would lead us to far and is actually boring stuff, so Let's stop here.

Note on Statistics

Not all the statistic charts are published in this report because not all of them are relevant. Also because sometimes the results written in text don't need any illustrations.

Only in the first chart all the information is given like in the computer outputs. There you can see how the conclusions are deducted from the statistical material. Mainly I have tried to give all the information in a 'human' language, no scientific language.

As some respondent wrote down: "We don't do statistics because it doesn't solve any problems". Well, I can only agree with them, but statistics can widen our view, puts issues into question we would never think of, ... It might give us a critical view on a problem, but of course it doesn't solve it.

Pure facts concerning the questionnaires

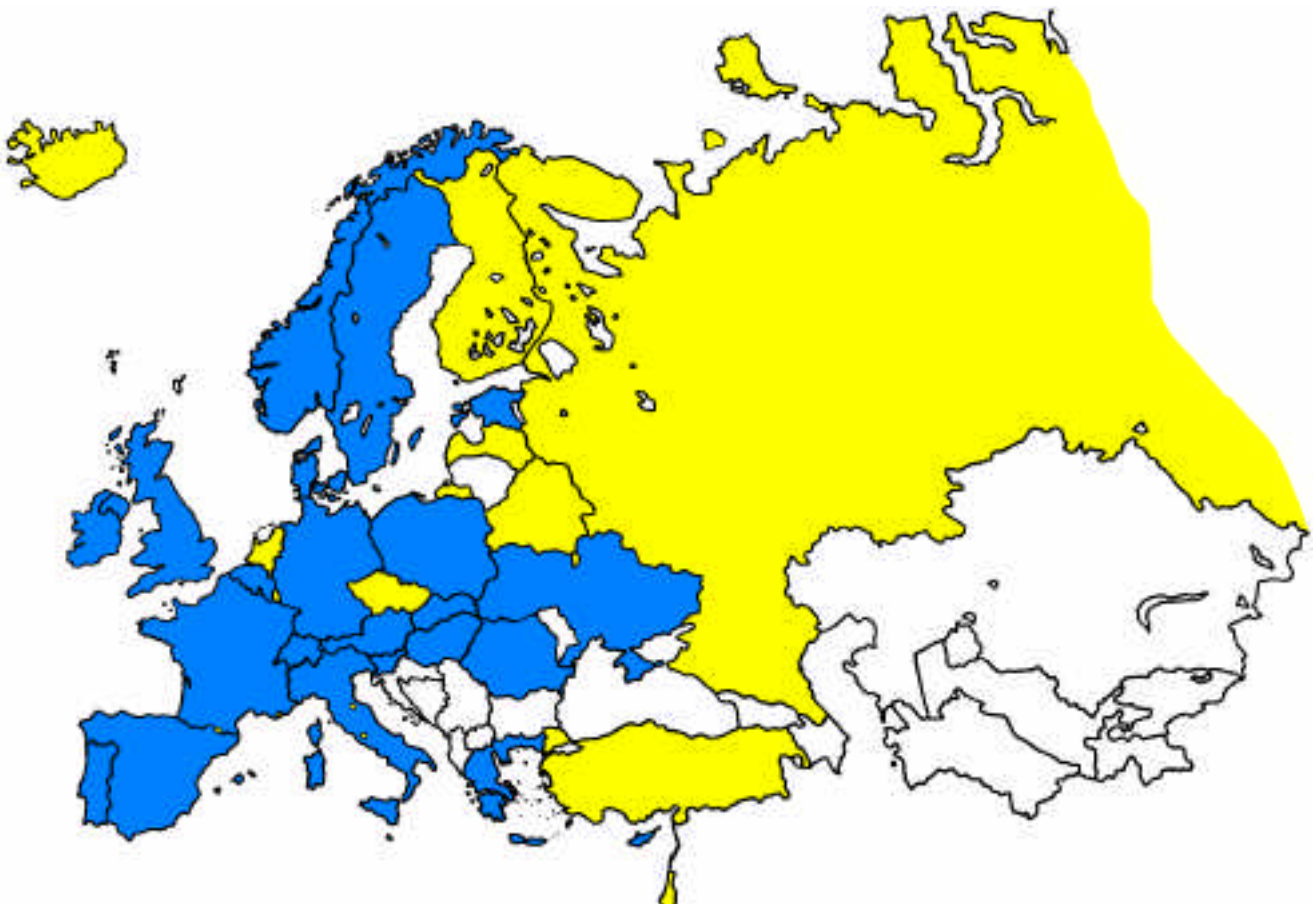
Amount of questionnaires

There were 49 questionnaires sent back to the office, 48 of them were from the Europe Region WAGGGS. Those are used for assimilating the questionnaires. All 48 were received quite readable and were put into SPSS, a software for quantitative research. Concerning qualitative data we drew up a summary by reading all the questionnaires several times. One questionnaire was filled in by one of our guests at the forum from Lebanon, in the Arab Region of WAGGGS. These data were very interesting to compare, and to have a somewhat-widened view. Sometimes it raised questions. It is not used for the quantitative research because it could have some influence on the figures of the Europe Region WAGGGS.

Amount of countries

The questionnaires were sent in by 25 of the 37 member countries of Europe Region WAGGGS. The countries are well spread all over Europe: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Malta, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, United Kingdom

Map of Europe Region WAGGGS by countries



Yellow countries didn't respond, Blue countries filled in the questionnaires in time to be considered in this report!

Representative?

The countries that responded the questionnaires are well spread over the Europe Region WAGGGS. North South is nicely spread. Countries from the East have slightly less filled in the forms than the countries from the West. Maybe this is because the topic of the WAGGGS Forum III was more related to the older associations, situated in the western part of Europe. Although we may conclude that geographically the respondents are representative for the Europe Region WAGGGS.

Amount of associations

The questionnaires were sent in by 33 of the 64 member associations of the Europe Region WAGGGS.

Austria	Boy Scouts and Girl Guides of Austria
Belgium:	Catholic Guides of Belgium, Pluralist Scouts and Guides Belgium, Federation for Open Scouts
Cyprus	Girl Guides Association of Cyprus,
Denmark	The Danish Scout and Guide Association, YWCA Guides in Denmark, Danish Baptist Guide and Scout Association,
Estonia	Estonian Guide Association,
France	Guides of France,
Germany	Girl Guide Association of St. Georg, Association of Girl Guides and Boy Scouts, Christian Girl Guides and Boy Scouts Association,
Greece	The Greek Girl Guides Association,
Hungary	Association of Hungarian Girl Guides,
Ireland	The Irish Girl Guides, The Catholic Guides of Ireland
Liechtenstein	Boy Scouts and Girl Guides of Liechtenstein,
Malta	Malta Girl Guides Association,
Norway	Norwegian Guide and Scout Association, YWCA Guides of Norway,
Poland	The Polish Scouting and Guiding Association,
Portugal	The Guide Association Portugal,
Romania	Romanian Guides Association,
Slovakia	Scouting Slovakia,
Slovenia	The Slovenian Catholic Girl Guides and Boy Scouts Association,
Spain	Spanish Guiding Federation, Catholic Guides and Scouts of Catalonia,
Sweden	The Swedish Guide and Scout Association, The Guide and Scout Organisation of the Mission Covenant Youth of Sweden, Swiss Guide and Scout Movement,
Ukraine	Association of Ukrainian Guides
UK	The Guide Association

Please note that other 3 other Associations did send in the questionnaires but after the deadline for this research to start and so they have not been included in the analysis.

Facts about the associations

17 responding associations are WAGGGS only, 16 are a SAGNO/SAGA's (Scout And Guide National Organisations/ Scout And Guide Associations). Generally in the Europe Region WAGGGS there are 22 WAGGGS only's and 42 SAGNO/SAGA's.

22 responding associations say they work co-educational. In general the Europe Region WAGGGS has 51 associations working with the two sexes. 9 of them are WAGGGS only (more than 5% male members). 11 of the 13 associations that work single sex in the Europe Region WAGGGS have filled in the questionnaires.

Representative?

The WAGGGS only's and especially the WAGGGS only's without male members are over represented. This means that for certain cases we will have to split the table to allow us to draw conclusions that are representative for the region.

The figures used in the report¹

All figures from the questionnaires were put into SPSS. When there were missing values, these were added if they were known by the Europe Office WAGGGS. Also the information WAGGGS knew, before sending the questionnaires were put into the same database. By doing this we formed a chart, with as much accurate information as possible.



¹ When, concerning the age of people, respondents filled in an age group, the relevant age was filled in the database. This was found in the WAGGGS publication 'Trefoil Around the World'. When no answer was given to a question, the missing value was replaced by 'Don't know'. Related to the question if associations are satisfied with their media coverage, the answer 'yes and no' was replaced by 'no'.

General demographic figures for all European countries

In general the population of a European country consists of 51% women and 49% men. The amount of young people between them is 30 to 35% (the more to the west, the closer to 30%). The young people between 15 and 25 are a category in our society where 15 out of the 100 people belong to. The range between the amount of female and male members in the 'young' society is just the opposite of our global society: 49% female and 51% male.

The percentage of unserved youth is not very known by the different associations that answered the questionnaires. Only three questionnaires contained an answer, two of them were from the same country and both figures were very different. The remark, 'What is unserved youth?' has been raised several times on the questionnaire sheets. Indeed these figures are hard to find, but interesting.

The unserved youth is a category, which divides the youth in two groups, the active, participating youth and the so-called unserved youth. The unserved youngsters are people who are not served by the youth work in general, depending on the definition that is used (with or without sport associations and/or religious or parish associations). They are seen as a 'possible' problem of society, because they don't participate in social activities that empower them to be participating responsible civilians. If this statement is true, yes or no, doesn't matter. For us this is an indicator that shows us if there are still possible members out there. Specific characteristics of this group might show us possible new target groups (e.g. young immigrants, children of yuppies, disabled young people, key-kids, ...).

Table: percentages of 15-24 year olds participating/belonging to an association²

	A	B	D	DK	E	GR	F	FIN	I	IRL	L	NL	P	S	UK
Any association	60	47	58	77	38	36	49	67	54	61	66	77	40	82	50
Sport association	27	24	36	44	12	15	28	27	23	44	40	50	21	51	28
Relig. or parish ass.	12	2	7	5	6	2	3	12	18	7	6	18	8	13	7
Youth associations	9	13	6	18	8	3	7	11	7	12	26	8	5	9	8

In the table above, the unserved youth can be found when we look at the last row. This row indicates how many young people (between 15 and 24 years of age) in a country are members of a youth association. To find the percentages of unserved youth we have to subtract this from 100 (e.g. Finland: 89% unserved youth).

² IARD s.c.r.l. (2001), *Executive summary and comparative reports (Part II)*, p46, Table 6, Milano

Intermezzo: Youth trends in Europe

In some cases the associations didn't know the answers about some basic topics concerning youth. The youth, the ones for whom we do Guiding! Therefore a brief summary!

Most popular TV programmes are mainly US soaps, Big Brother, The Simpsons, TV games, ... One of the in general famous TV channels is already for a long time MTV. This TV channel brings us to another topic that is important for young people, and that is music. The most famous music for the moment should be divided into two main groups, the commercial music and the alternative music. The first one groups all easy beat music, pop and R&B. The second group is for the moment the most important one for the moment; it groups Rap, Hip Hop, Underground, drum and base, ...

When do youngsters do what most of us adults do regularly? Most questionnaires indicated for smoking and drinking alcohol a higher age than what investigations tell. Between the age of 11 and 15 years old, almost all boy and girls have tried an alcoholic drink or smoking a cigarette. Even the age of first use of Cannabis is getting lower and lower. The estimated age is for their first contact with soft drugs is for the moment 14. Of course this doesn't mean that they are regular users of alcohol and tobacco, not even mentioning the stuff. The age of the first sexual act was well estimated by the respondents of the questionnaires. It is between the age of 14 and 17 that the youth experiments for the first time their sexual preferences.

A lot of young people, especially in Western Europe have a mobile phone when they reach the age of 16. Most youngsters have also used the wonders of the WWW by that age and use it regularly to keep in contact with friend.

Concerning sports, there is not so much news to tell. The most famous sports, especially for boys are football, basketball, volleyball, water sports and athletics. For girls and young women not so many sports were mentioned separately from the ones mentioned before.

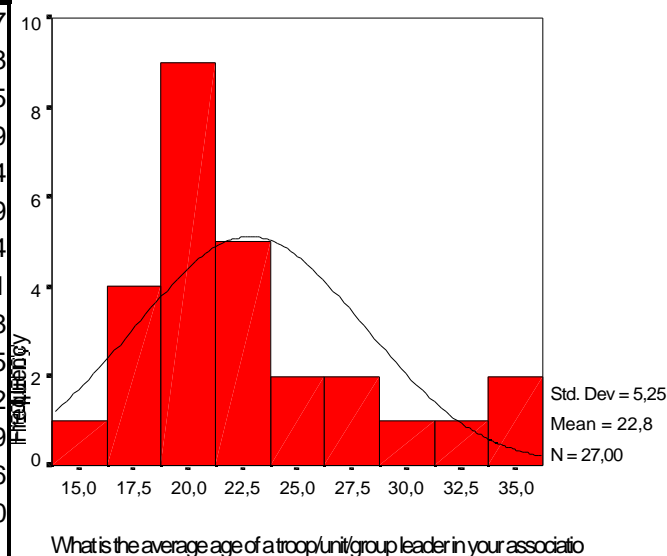
More structured information can be read in the speech given at WAGGGS FORUM III in Cyprus: [A Look at Trends Concerning Youth in Europe](#) (p.34).

Characteristics of our members

What is the average age of a troop/unit/group leader in your association?

Only 27 of the 33 associations had an idea about the average age of their leaders, according to the questionnaires. All the leaders are between 16 and 35 years old, this means a range (a difference of) of 19 years, indirectly indicating a big diversity in age, activities, social habitat, ... between them. The average age of a leader in the Europe Region WAGGGS is 22,8 years old with a standard deviation of 5,3 years. Thus 80% of the leaders are between 17,5 ($22,8y - 5,3y$) and 28,1 ($22,8y + 5,3y$) years old. Generally this means that our leaders are students or young employees, just starting their career. They live still at home, or single, or are starting their own family.

	Freq	Perc	Valid Perc	Cum Perc
Valid				
16,00	1	3,0	3,7	3,7
18,00	3	9,1	11,1	14,8
18,50	1	3,0	3,7	18,5
19,00	2	6,1	7,4	25,9
20,00	5	15,2	18,5	44,4
21,00	2	6,1	7,4	51,9
22,00	5	15,2	18,5	70,4
24,70	1	3,0	3,7	74,1
25,50	1	3,0	3,7	77,8
27,00	1	3,0	3,7	81,5
28,00	1	3,0	3,7	85,2
29,00	1	3,0	3,7	88,9
33,50	1	3,0	3,7	92,6
35,00	2	6,1	7,4	100,0
Total	27	81,8	100,0	
Missing	unknown	6	18,2	
Total	33	100,0		

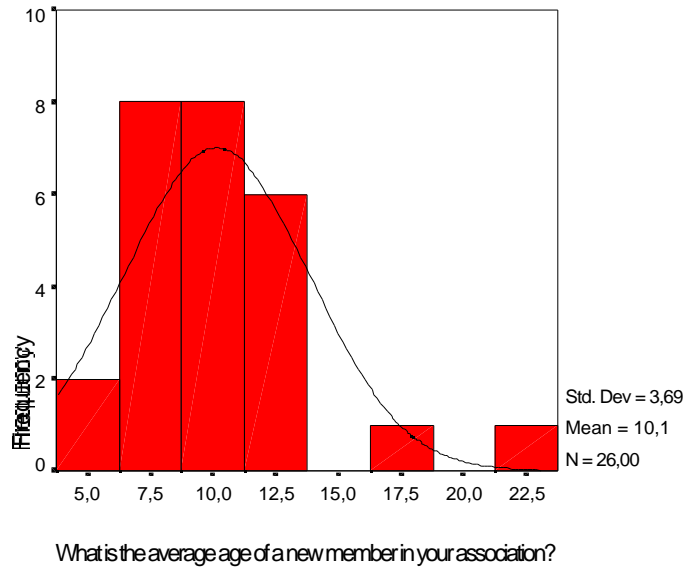


With the help of the frequency table above we can conclude that more than 50% of our leaders are younger than 21 years old, and 75% of all the leaders are younger than 25 years old.

The curve in the graph shows the ideal spread of a group of leaders with the same average age. Our statistics (the histogram) compared with this, shows that we have a very big group of young leaders and a lack of older ones 24-31 years old. Based on pure statistical theory we should increase the group of 24 till 30-year-old leaders, to have an ideal spread group of leaders with the same average age of 22,8 years old. When we would have the ideal spread group of leaders, there would be a more natural flow in the lifetime of an average leader, meaning that there would be time to grow, to learn, time to do it all by yourself and in the end there would be time to pass on the experience. Now there are just a few experienced leaders for a big group of young leaders, whom disappear very fast. Sometimes this might be felt as a generation gap.

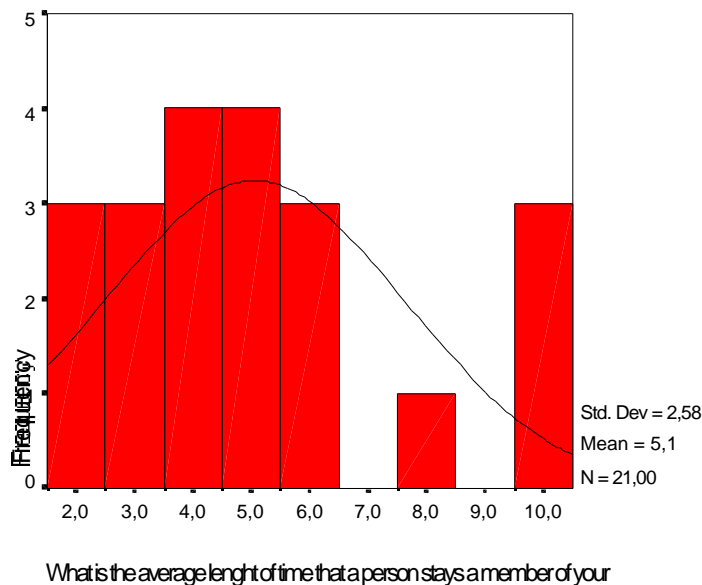
What is the average age of a new member?

As we can deduce from the graph, the youngest recruits are 5 years old, the oldest ones 22 years old. More than 90% of the new members join our associations before the age of 13, only 8% is recruited at an 'adult' age, 18plus. Our youngest age section recruits about 23% of the new members, the next age section 46% and the 'Guide section' 23%. The average age of a new member is 10,1 years old (Std deviation 3,7y)

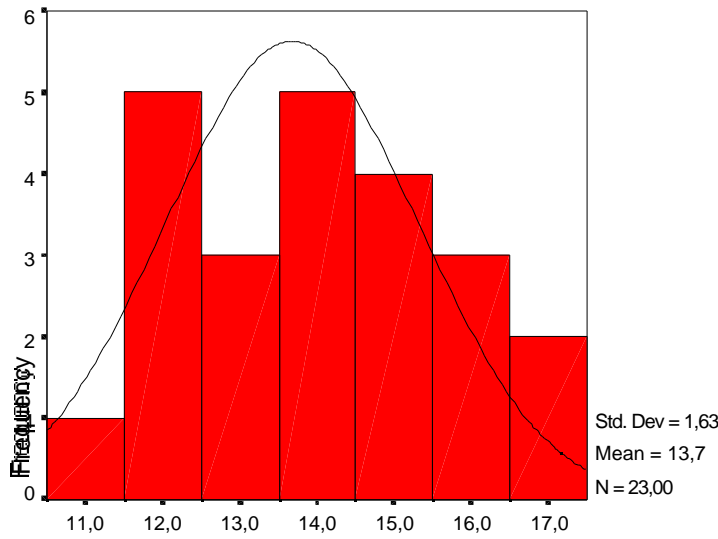


What is the average length of time that a person stays a member of your association?

Only 21 of the 33 associations had any clue about this topic. Because of this we can't say that this is significant for the Europe Region WAGGGS, but it is surely a strong indicator. The minimum average length that a member stays in our associations is 2 years, the maximum average is 10 years. The average length that a person is a member of our associations is 5,1 year (Std. deviation 2,6y). Almost 50% of the members don't stay any longer than 4 years, less than 20% stays longer than 6 years.

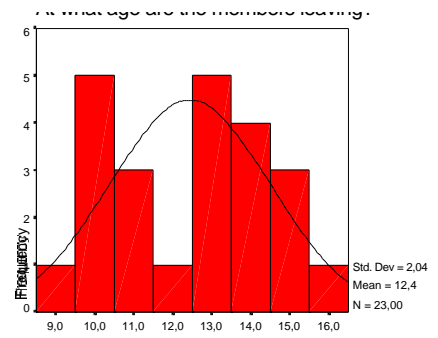


At what age are they leaving?



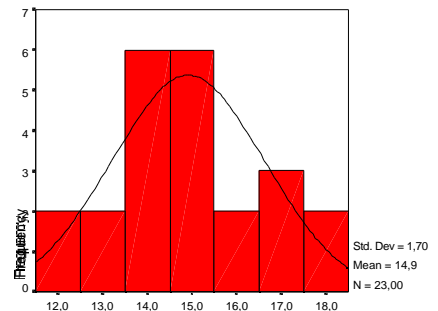
The average age of leaving the association

Average age



At what age are the members leaving?

Youngest age



At what age are the members leaving?

Oldest age

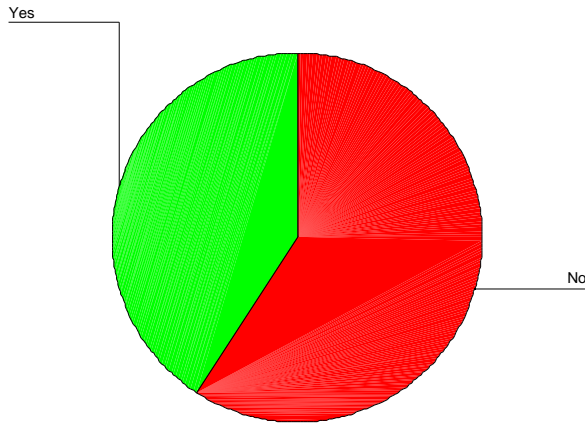
Because most of the associations answered with two different ages (between youngest age and oldest age) the data were put in the query the same way. To make a general prediction both data were combined. The average age members are leaving our associations is 13,7 years old. The standard deviation is only 1,63 this means that between 12,1 and 15,3 years old, 80% of the members are leaving! This is during the early 'Guide-section'. When observing the youngest age of leaving and the oldest one we need to mention that the youngest one mentioned is at the age of 9, (with an average of 12,4). The oldest age given of members that leaving is 18, (with an average of 14,9). This indicates that the range when young people leave is quiet big (big variety), but the range most of them are leaving is very small (very similar group), only during a period of 2,5 year (14,9y-12,4y). Regarding the frequency table we can add, that over 50% leaves before the age of 14, 75% before the age of 15.

	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
11,00	4,3	4,3
11,50	8,7	13,0
12,00	13,0	26,1
12,50	8,7	34,8
13,00	4,3	39,1
13,50	13,0	52,2
14,00	8,7	60,9
14,50	13,0	73,9
15,00	4,3	78,3
15,50	13,0	91,3
16,50	8,7	100,0
Total	100,0	

The results of these data are very similar to the combined data of the age of recruiting and length of stay. We deduced the recruitment age at 10,1 years old and the length of stay at 5,1 years. Very statistically this means that an average (of an average) member joins at the age of 10 and leaves when they are 15 years old. The overlap between these two statistics prove that both data are reliable. The reality will be somewhere in the middle of both!

These figures indirectly indicate that we are very good in the two youngest age sections, less in the older sections. Recent years there has been a focus on the 16+ age group, because this has been identified as a problem. For the age group 11-16 this has not been the case. The statistics show quiet clearly that this is an age group with a lot of dropouts.

If your association is co-educational: Is there a difference between sexes?



About 60% of the 22 associations working with both sexes don't see any difference between both sexes, 40% do see a difference. There is no reasonable difference between SAGNO/SAGA's and WAGGGS only's with male members. There is also no reasonable difference between associations with or without membership loss.

Funny note: Someone answered: "Yes we are co-educational but don't appreciate differences!"

Let's Take a Critical Look

- How do we keep the experience in our troops/units/groups? Can a person of 21 years old lead the oldest section? Why do a lot of leaders quit when they are almost 22 years old?
- Combining the statistical information of the average age of the leaders, new members and the average stay of a member, creates some critical thoughts.
- If a members joins our associations at the average age of 10,1 years old, and stays for 5,1 year, the drop out of our members is at 15,2 years old. This means that most members don't finish the 'Guide section'-programme.
- Although the average age of a new member is 10,1 years old, the majority joins earlier; this mainly says that most of them drop out sooner, mostly before or during the 'Guide section'.
- What is our main target group for Guiding? Children or young people?
- Where do the leaders of those groups come from?
- Why is the main group of our leaders younger than 21 years old?
- Can a leader of 21, be a leader of the 16+ section?
- Why do they quit?
- Is the programme challenging enough?
- Is the method still progressive (enough)?
- Do leaders grow into the association, or do they have to be recruited?
- Why do our members don't look forward being a Guide?
- What is the age line between the age of a group leader and a member?
- What influences a 23 year old? (to quit being a leader?)
- How can leaders between 25 and 30 be attracted?
- Is there something wrong with our age groups?
- Don't we have to reconsider the age groups?
- The new groups in marketing are the preteens and the 13 to 16 year olds, should we bother?

Why are the youngsters leaving your association?

School

- Heavy volume of school work, Exam pressure, the school takes more time, the school pressure is very high at the age of 15-18, because of the university exams
- Leaving homes for university and go thus far away from their units
- Lack of free time, due to educational curriculum

Image

- Public image
- Peer pressure
- Guiding is not attractive any more as it used to be
- Guiding perceived old-fashioned by their peers
- Image problems (not attractive to be Guide or Scout)
- It is not cool enough
- Volunteering and out-door activities are not in fashion
- It is unpopular to work on values, on team based activities
- Lack of attraction
- It's not cool to stay permanently in a group

Leaders

- Quality of local leadership in units
- Unskilled leaders
- They "burn out"
- They feel they are "too old"
- Membership is often limited by lack of leaders at local level, not necessary lack of young people who would like to join
- No new ideas

Activities

- Quality of local programme offered in units
- Because they don't get enough Guiding
- Loss of interest because of boring programme
- Boring programmes
- Don't want weekly activities
- Our programme is not enough relevant or competitive for them
- At a certain age the attraction of activities together with boys is too big

External

- Huge variety of alternative activities, Too many extra curricular activities on offer, there are other things to do like football
- There are many churches
- There are many Guides/Scouts (associations), Competition between associations
- They choose to do other things
- They like to try different things, but when they quit Guiding they often don't come back to be a leader
- Lack of time because of parental pressure
- Not enough time
- Dramatic change in their ways of life
- There are other opportunities that don't ask for any compromise
- Sports are fun and easy
- Birth rate has dropped
- Negative images caused by a very few instances of abuse in youth organisations
- Family issues eg separation/divorce



Why do youngsters stay a member of your association?

Activities

- Probably they can find their needs
- Activities
- They have an opportunity to participate in national and regional events
- Varied and fun qualitative activities
- International experience
- We make festivities for them
- Because of the programme
- Adventure
- Doing things they can't do or are not allowed to do at home

Method

- They like to make their own decisions
- We involve them in projects on local level
- We give them responsibilities
- Responsibility
- Challenges
- The game of Guiding

Leaders

- Inspiring leaders
- We motivate them

The Guiding family

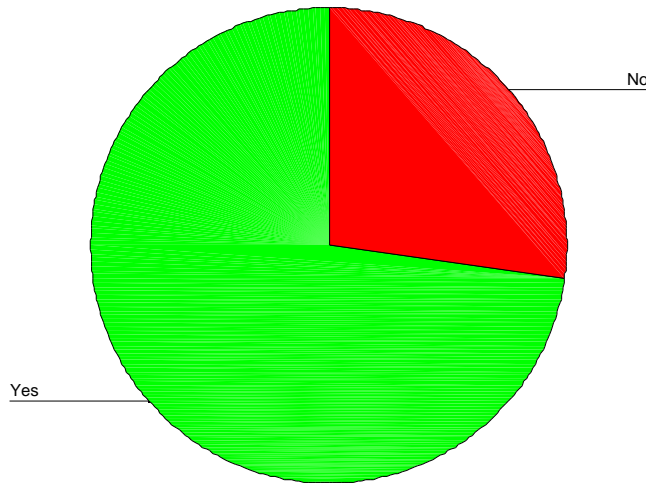
- Friendship
- Sense of belonging
- They enjoy being a Guide
- Fun
- Friendship

External

- There are very few opportunities for young people (like e.g. youth houses)
- On request of parents

Characteristics of the associations

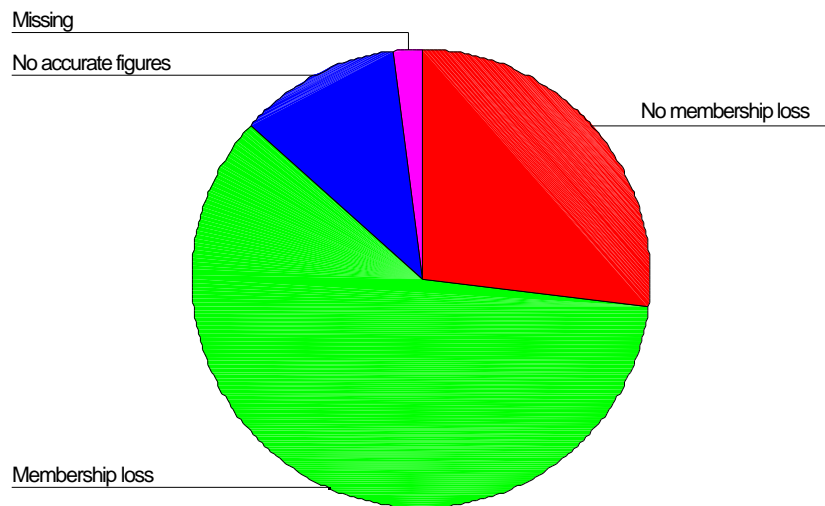
Does your association have membership loss?



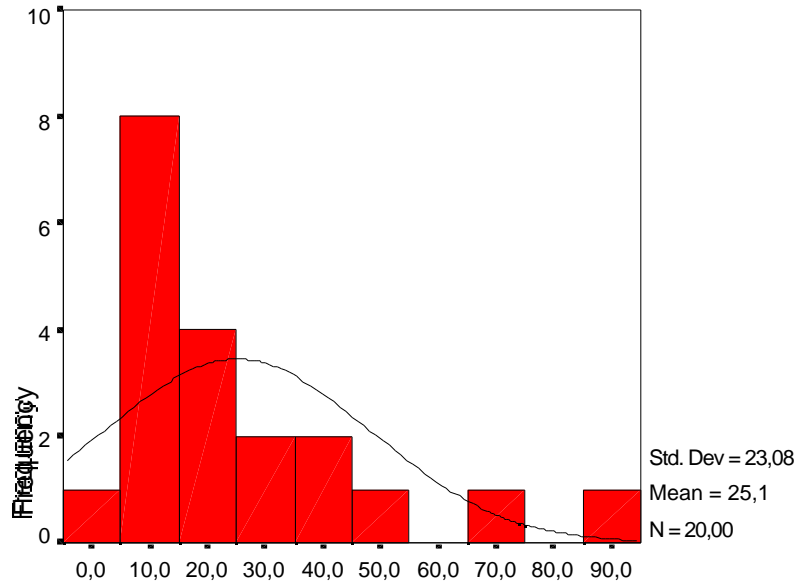
Only 27,3% of the responding questionnaires mentions no membership loss. This means that 72,7% of the member associations (that filled in the questionnaire) loses members.

If the questionnaires are compared with the real figures, we notice that 4 associations mention membership loss in the questionnaires and that in the figures given to WAGGGS they have grow in the last 3 years (1998-2001). But so far the good news. Of the 11 associations mentioning a healthy membership evolution, 3 of them have lost members in the last 3 years.

In the Europe Region WAGGGS in general, 60,8% of the associations have membership loss, 27,5% don't have membership loss. 11,8% of the associations hasn't got any figures about their membership (1 association is not taken into account, because all figures are missing). When we focus on the countries we notice that 33,3% of the countries have a growing membership, 58,3% lose members (and 8,3% of the countries don't have any accurate figures). Knowing this we have to conclude that membership-issues are very close related on a country-basis, maybe we should say that most issues related to membership are country-issues.



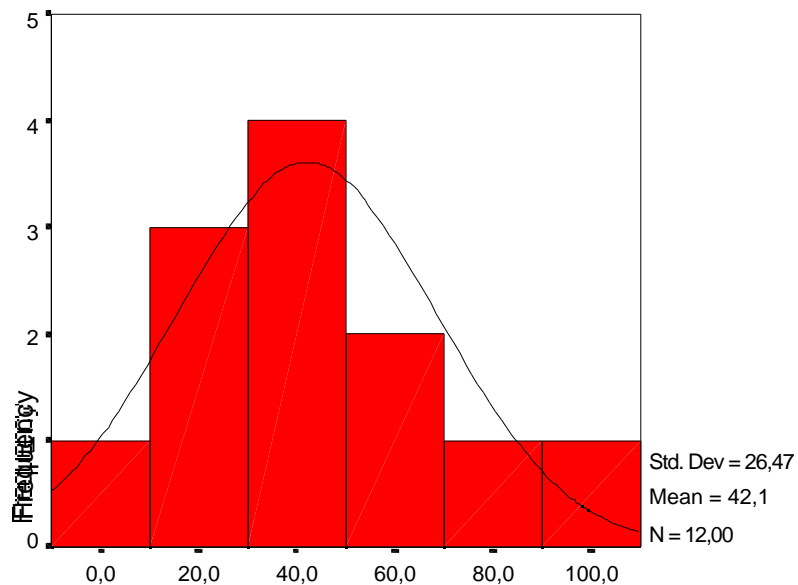
Membership loss and Human Development Index (HDI) (source UNDP 1999)



When countries are compared based on the Human Development Index and membership loss, there is a strong correlation between a low HDI (the lower the better) and membership loss. This means that the lower the HDI, the more chance an association has to lose members. The correlation the other way round is less, mainly because there are three dominating associations with a low human index an 'enormous' loss of members.

The chart above shows that there are more countries with decreasing membership, that have a low HDI. 50% of all the countries that lose members have a HDI lower than 15, 75% lower than 27. (read the graph roughly: 4 associations that lose members are situated in a country with a HDI of 20)

On the chart below we can see that all the associations that gain members have an average HDI of 42,1%. The frequency chart tells us that 75% of the countries with gaining membership have an HDI higher than 28.



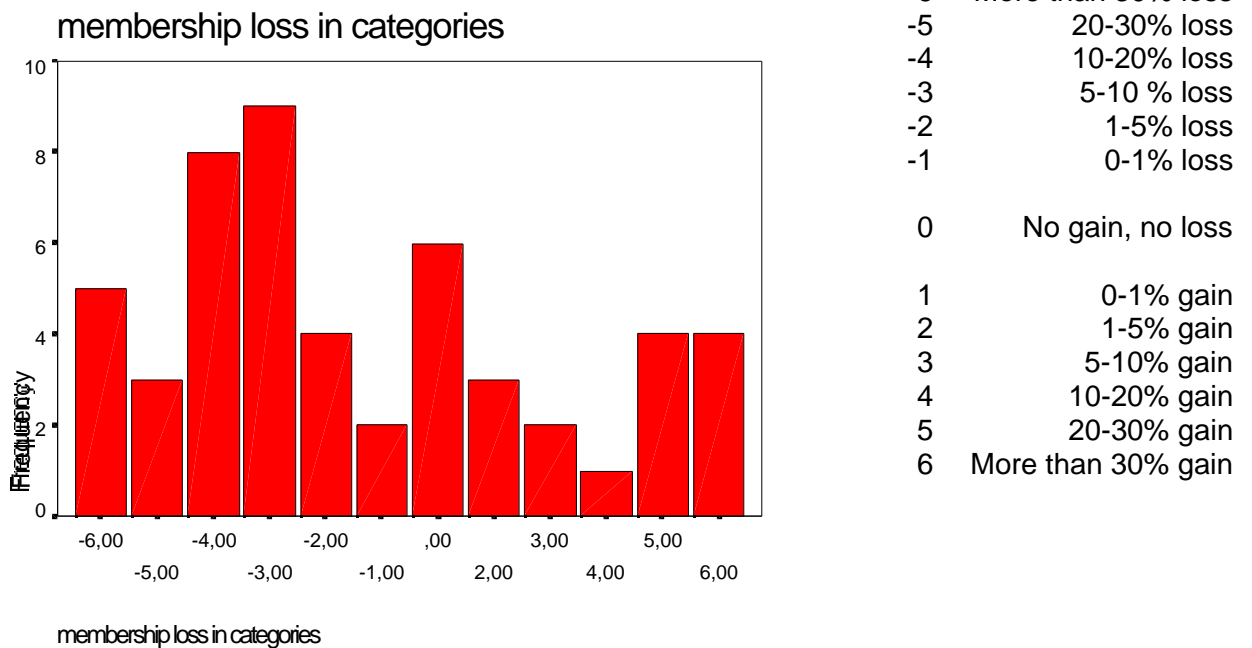
Membership between 1998 and 2001

To make the spreadsheet, the data are divided into categories

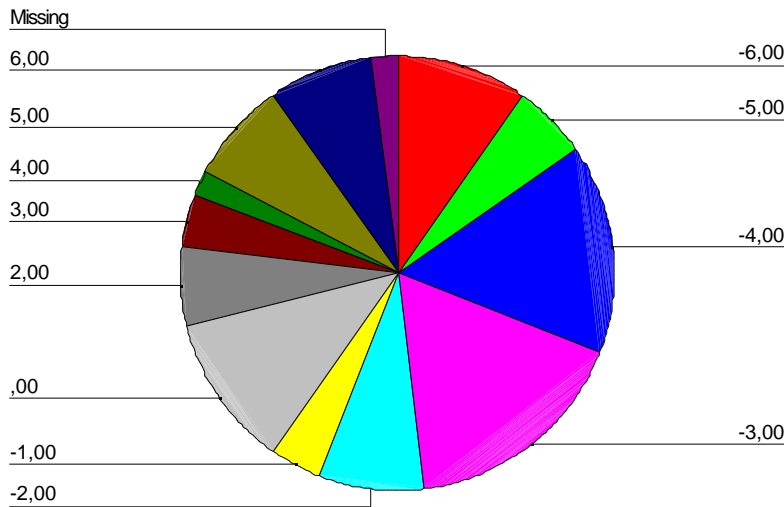
			Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	-6,00	More than 30% loss	9,8	9,8
	-5,00	20-30% loss	5,9	15,7
	-4,00	10-20% loss	15,7	31,4
	-3,00	5-10 % loss	17,6	49,0
	-2,00	1-5% loss	7,8	56,9
	-1,00	0-1% loss	3,9	60,8
	,00	No gain, no loss	11,8	72,5
	1,00	0-1% gain	0	72,5
	2,00	1-5% gain	5,9	78,4
	3,00	5-10% gain	3,9	82,4
	4,00	10-20% gain	2,0	84,3
	5,00	20-30% gain	7,8	92,2
	6,00	More than 30% gain	7,8	100,0
Missing Total	Total System		100,0	

This statistic clearly shows hard facts. 10% of the associations, member of the Europe Region WAGGGS, have lost more than 30% of their members during the last 3 years. 50% of the associations have lost more than 10% of their members in the last triennium.

As we have seen in the pie chart mentioned before 27,5% of the associations gain members. Half of them are growing steadily, half of them had a real boom between 1998 and 2001.

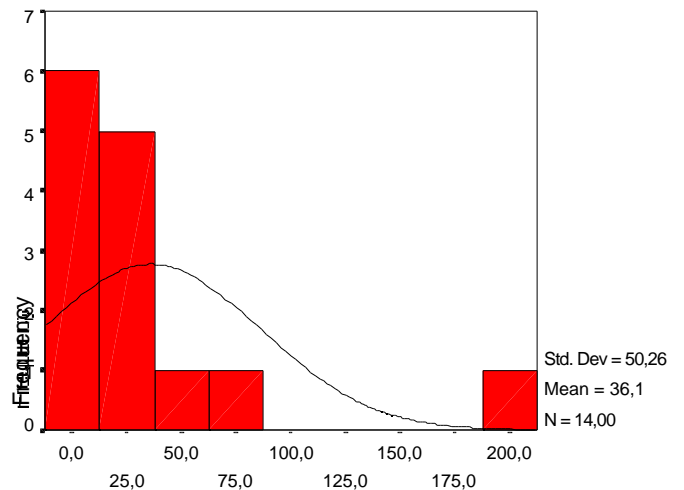
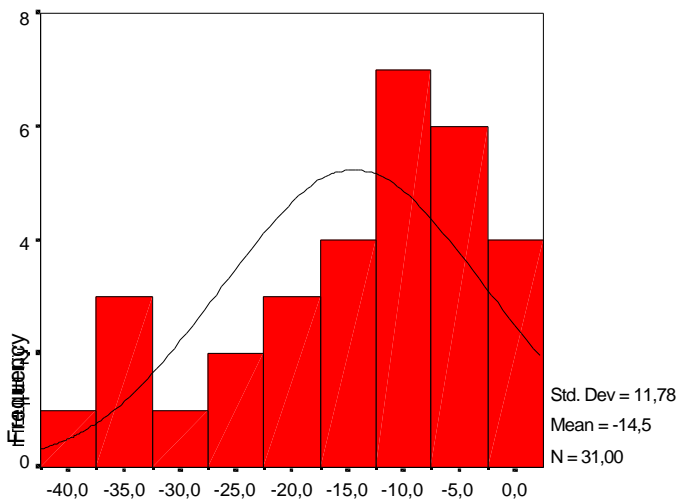


membership loss in categories

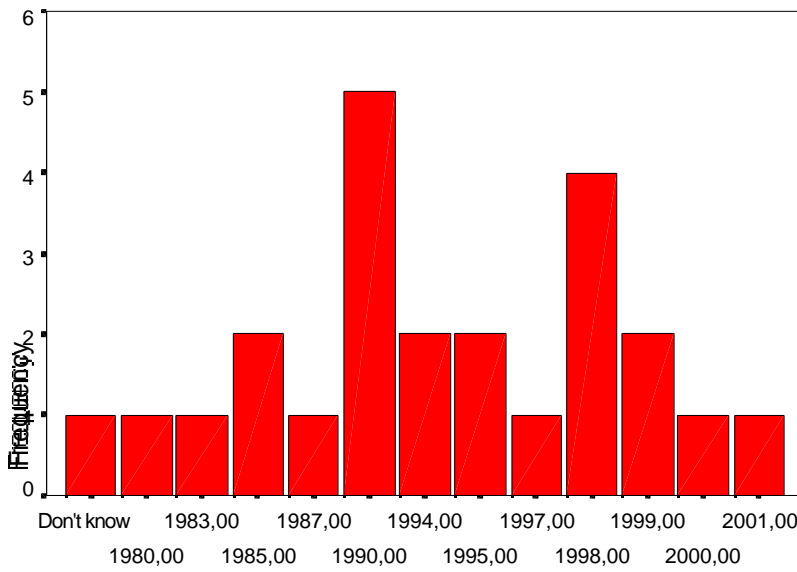


- 6 More than 30% loss
- 5 20-30% loss
- 4 10-20% loss
- 3 5-10 % loss
- 2 1-5% loss
- 1 0-1% loss
- 0 No gain, no loss
- 1 0-1% gain
- 2 1-5% gain
- 3 5-10% gain
- 4 10-20% gain
- 5 20-30% gain
- 6 More than 30% gain

Looking more into detail for the associations that are losing members (right graph), we notice that the average loss is 14,5%. The chart is almost perfectly (compared with the line) spread. This indicates that the group of associations that lose members is quiet homogene. We can't really divide them into sub-groups, which might indicate different characteristics between the associations. Associations (left) that are gaining members have an average growth of 36,1% related to statistics. This is a very high figure because of the few, new associations that are getting started, thus have an enormous growth and impact on the average. Compared with the ideal line, we notice that there are 2 sub-groups, one of them is the one mentioned above. Associations from Eastern European countries mainly form the other one.



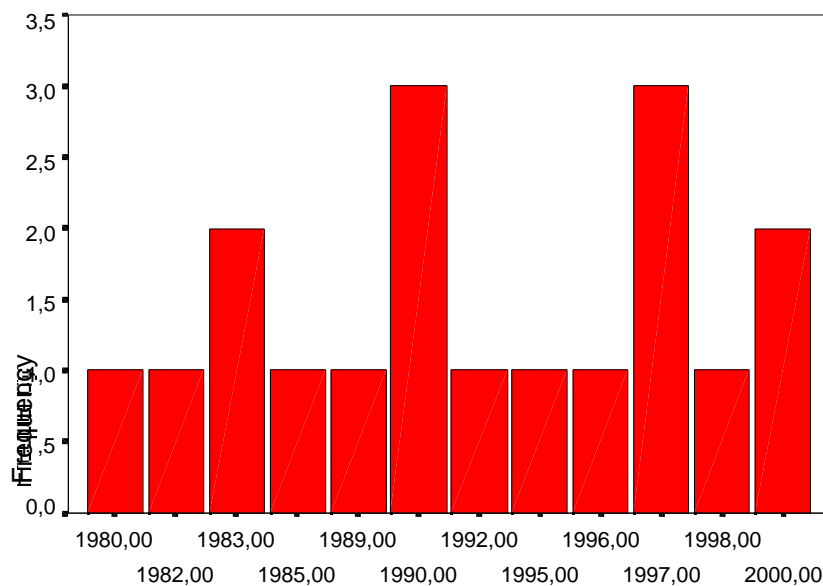
When did the decrease became a problem?



When did your association discover this was a problem?

	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Don't know	4,2	4,2
1980,00	4,2	8,3
1983,00	4,2	12,5
1985,00	8,3	20,8
1987,00	4,2	25,0
1990,00	20,8	45,8
1994,00	8,3	54,2
1995,00	8,3	62,5
1997,00	4,2	66,7
1998,00	16,7	83,3
1999,00	8,3	91,7
2000,00	4,2	95,8
2001,00	4,2	100,0
Total	100,0	

Deriving from the frequency tables we notice that (without the associations that don't know) already 1/5th of the associations had membership loss and recognised it as a problem in 1987, this is more than 15 years ago! The year before the European Conference in Salzburg, more than 50% of the associations defined membership loss as a problem. In 1995 at the European Conference this was already more than 60%. The figures are even more frightening if we know that the average year (whatever this means in reality) is 1991! All the percentages given, are based on the actual amount of associations, the Europe Region WAGGGS has now. This makes the determinations above even worse! Knowing that most eastern European associations joined after 1991!



When did your association decrease for the first time?

Comparing the dates of recognising membership loss as a problem and really losing members, shows clearly that there is an average difference of $-1,5$ years. This means that one and a half year after the real membership loss it is really identified as a problem. We notice with happiness that some associations (15,9%) discovered it as a problem at least 2 years before really losing members. Sadly we have to mention as well that this hasn't protected them from losing members several years later. Only one quarter of the associations noticed the membership loss in the same year as it appeared, this means that 60% of the associations recognised it more than one year later, even 15% discovered it more than 5 years later.

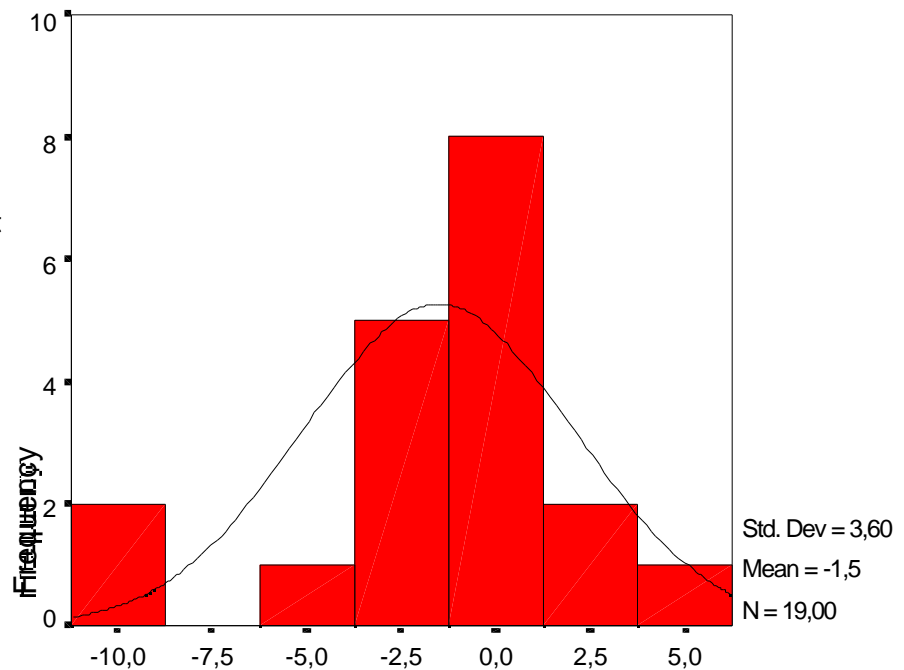
25% of the associations were not able to give any dates about their first membership loss, they were not taken into account in the figures above.

Of all the associations mentioned above, thus all associations that recognised membership loss since quiet some years, only 3 of them have gained members during the last 3 years, all the 15 other associations are still losing members.

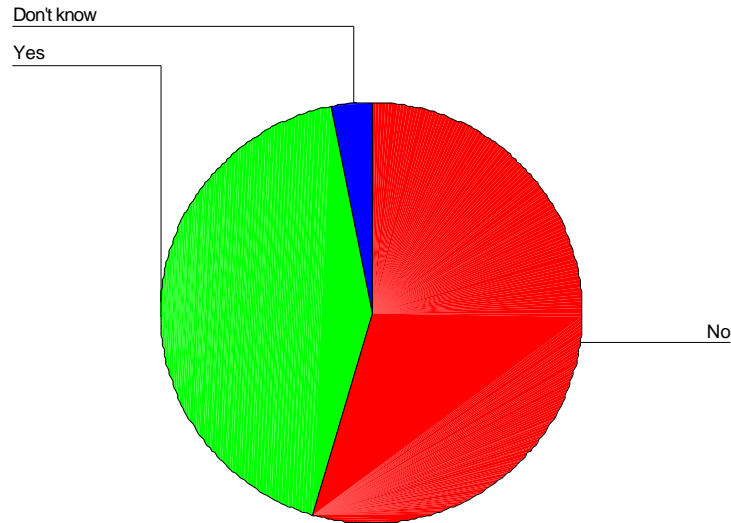
How to read this!

2 associations have noticed their membership decrease, 10 years after their real membership loss

1 association had foreseen it 5 years in advance

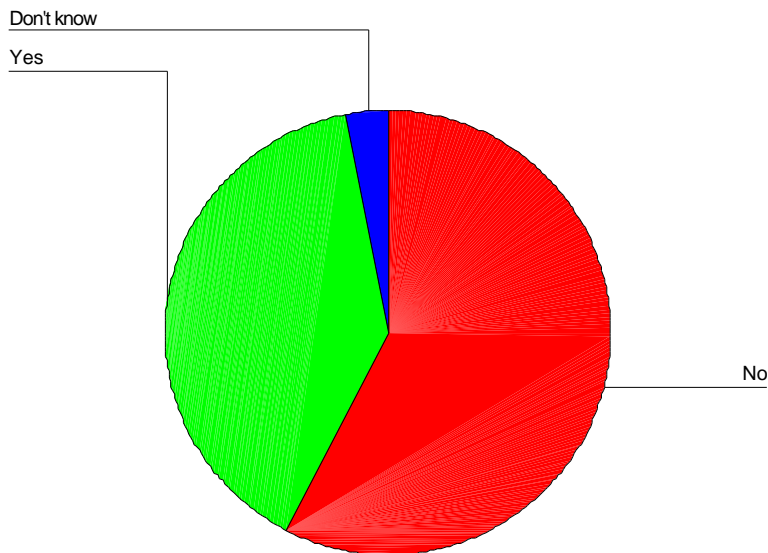


Are there particular geographic areas where membership is in- or decreasing?



Also about this question we can't say a lot. 55% of the associations 33 mention no differences, less than 45% says there is a difference. Through reading the written explanations in the questionnaires we can specify this topic a little bit more. Some of the associations that replied positively are new associations. The difference they indicate is mainly because new groups appear in new regions. The majority though are associations with decreasing membership. They indicate the countryside (see next item), areas without university.

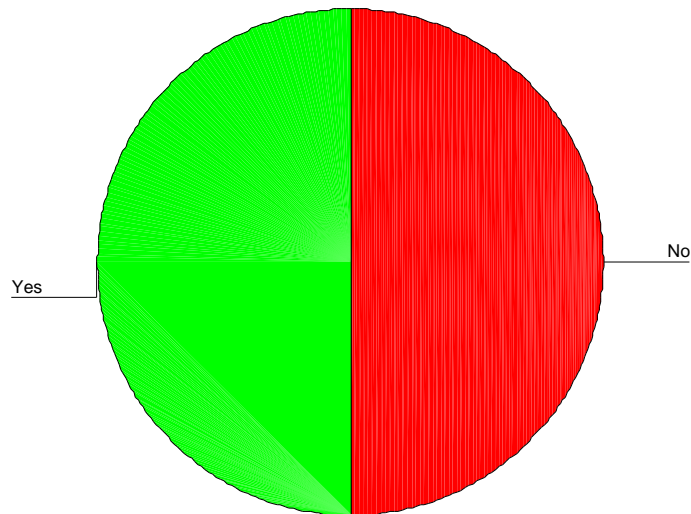
Is there a difference between cities and countryside?



About 40% of the associations say yes, about 60% say there is no difference between the cities and the countryside. As mentioned in the previous item, most of the associations with membership loss, observed a difference. They lose members at the countryside more than in the cities. Other associations (mainly Eastern European countries) say it's hard to find new members on the countryside because of the lack of free time youngsters have at the countryside.

Are there specific troops/units/groups disappearing? Why?

About the statistics we can't say very much, 50/50! When troops, units or groups disappear it is sometimes because there is a lack of leaders. The other main reason is because local groups united because they are too small.



Why is loss of membership a problem for your association?

Many associations did not answer this question

Related to quality

- Because it shows a decreased interest
- It is the only way to check the quality
- It could be a indication of low quality
- Less members mean difficulties in maintaining the quality of the work towards remaining members

Image of association

- Not longer a national organisation
- Loss of credibility
- Loss of 'political' pressure
- Lost of image

Mission

- Our purpose is important (we want to influent many young people)
- Fewer young people get the opportunity to experience the benefits of Guiding
- Our mission will not reach girls
- Because we would like to make a good programme for as many kids and young adults as possible

Leaders

- The loss in membership has a great effect on the leaders' spirit, loss of self-esteem
- Leaders measure their success by the number of girls in their unit
- We feel weak and it is difficult to face new projects
- Because we can't cover our tasks any more
- Loss of motivation

Money

- Many reasons
- Less members is less resources
- Less money
- Financial problems
- Loss of money and support

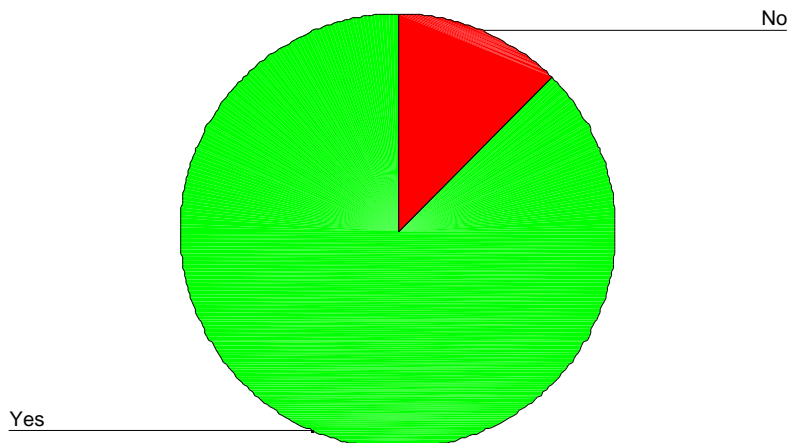
The existence of the association

- It threatens the existence of the association
- Surviving of the association
- Growing membership is basic element for development
- It makes an association (even) smaller and it makes it even more difficult to organise

Let's Take a Critical Look.....

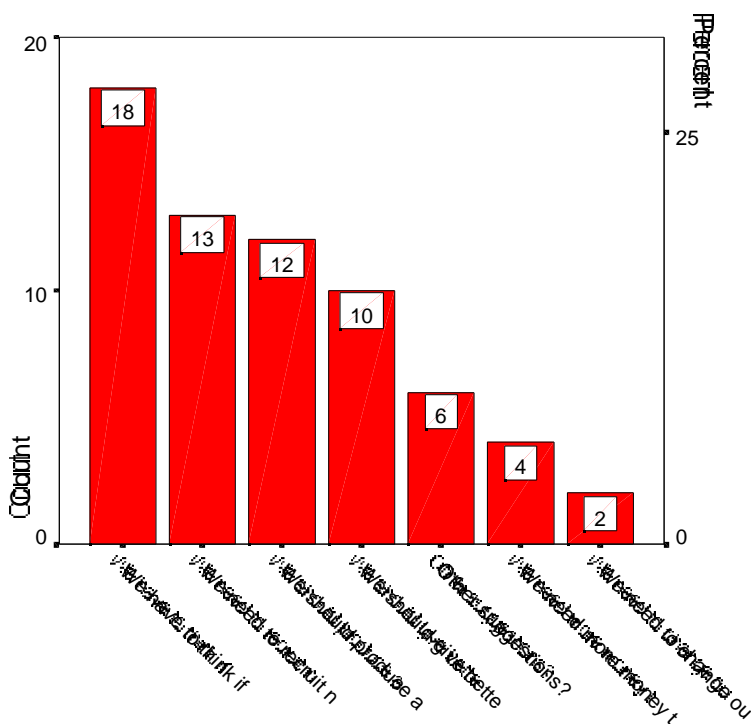
- Why did it take the members of the region so long before they recognised this problem as a common problem?
- Are we too proud to admit that we have a problem?
- Is Guiding over the edge of its success?
- Is it possible to know in advance that you are going to lose members?
- Why are our actions not working?
- Are all the actions undertaken with a long term perspective
- Could membership loss be a natural evolution in the lifetime of an association?
- Can associations be prevented from membership loss?
- Does membership loss divide our associations into categories of quality?
- Why is the problem stronger in the older associations?

How to counter membership loss



24 of the respondents of the questionnaires identified their membership loss as a problem. 21 of them (87,5%) have done something to retain and regain members. The other associations have only lost members during the last year (2000). They made plans, but haven't undertaken any action yet. Of the 21 associations that countered the problem already we notice that only 1/5th of them have booked results in the last 3 years. The majority, 80%, is still losing members. What the success of the actions is, we don't know, but the global outcome is still the same. They keep on losing members.

What do you think is the first step to increase members in your association?



- A. We should give better training to all our leaders
- B. We need more money to solve the problem
- C. We need to recruit new members more frequently
- D. We should produce a new youth programme
- E. We need to change our structures to cope with the problem easier
- F. We have to think if we really have a positive image and maybe change our image
- G. Other suggestions?

The first action that should be undertaken is putting our image into question. Half of all the associations marked this as important to regain or to keep members. The associations with decreasing membership expressed this more (in%) than the associations that are growing.

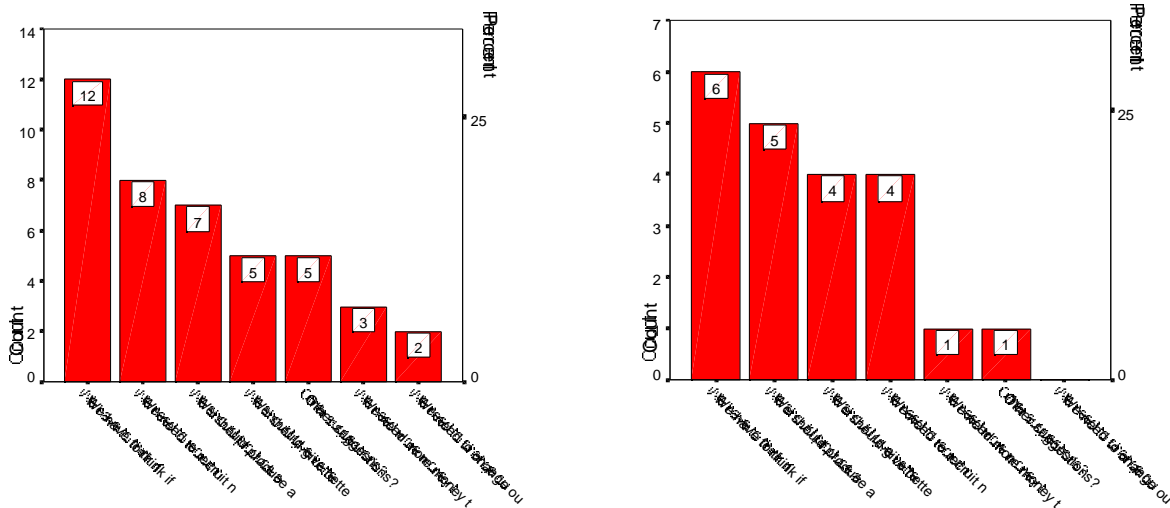
To recruit more new members is the second most important thing to do, to solve the problem. As the third solution the creation of a new youth programme is offered.

When we look at the associations that are losing membership recruiting is clearly their second possible solution and the new youth programme their third. The associations without membership loss think about solving the problem just the other way around, youth programme before better training and as 4th solution they think about recruiting more.

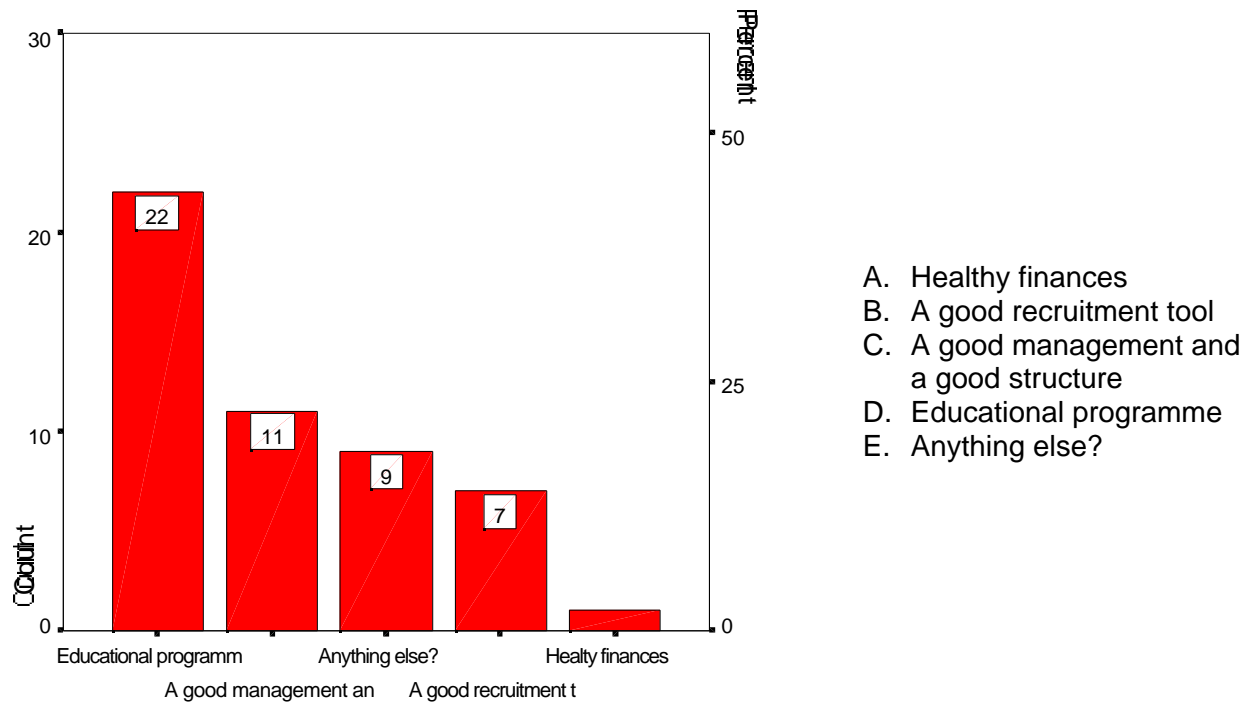
In general the associations think better training is the 4th best solution.

As 5th possible solution the associations offer other suggestions. We need to remark here that other ideas for solving the problem, with the exception of one solution, only offered by associations that are losing members (see 'what done?').

We need more money and we need to change our structures is almost never mentioned as a possible solution to the problem of falling membership, or as the key to retain members.

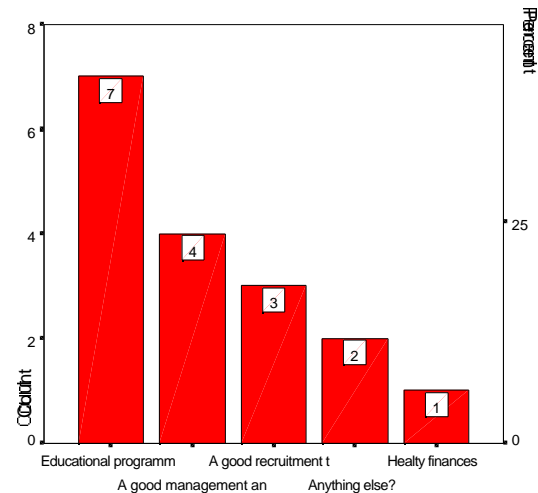
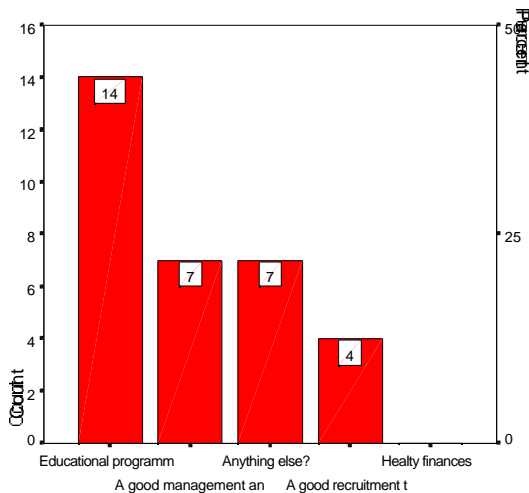


What do you think is the best basis for an association to keep its members in general? (and grow naturally?)



- A. Healthy finances
- B. A good recruitment tool
- C. A good management and a good structure
- D. Educational programme
- E. Anything else?

The main answer was Educational programme, more than 2 third of all the associations recognised this as the key to keep your members in Guiding. The second most important issue to retain your members is a good management and structure. For the associations with loss of membership this is closely followed by 'Anything else!' For the other associations a good recruitment tool is the third best way to keep and regain members. In general only one of the 33 associations thinks healthy finances is the key (to the kingdom)



What has your association done to handle this problem?

- Extra money (but what will they do with it?)
- (Positive) image
- More adventure
- Need more external adults for logistic support
- Change our structure (mostly mentioned was the top structure)
- Recruit more frequent (but how will they retain that membership?)
- Change youth programme
- Give more responsibilities (is this not the Guide Scout method????)
- Highlight the international dimension of Guiding
- Make the leaders (and I assume they mean the local ones) that there is membership loss and that this is a problem
- Dynamism
- Make training for leaders compulsory (but is this training accurate for a local leader, is a leader without training a bad leader?)
- Make training better

Let's Take a Critical Look

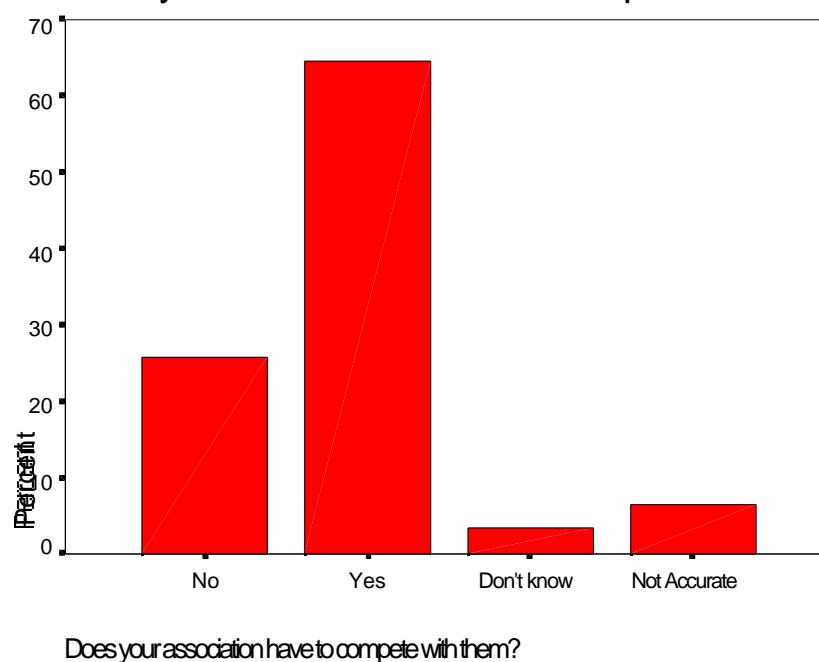
- Has our image always been this negative?
- Why did it change?
- Does a negative image mean that we don't address the needs of the young people?
- What is the most dominating in our mission?
- Is our history too heavy to carry? Uniform? Activities? Relationship to society?
- Why do we notice a difference between the two polls? In the first poll educational programme and structure are less important than in the second.
- Why do associations that still grow and the associations that lose membership have a different opinion about the way forward?
- Is recruiting new members the solution to our problem? Or is it masking the indicators?
- What is the real start to break the inner turning circle?

A look outside our association!

Other Guide and Scout associations

In almost all countries of the Europe Region WAGGGS there are other Guide and Scout associations (except in most small countries, e.g. Liechtenstein, ...). This includes recognised Guide and Scout associations as well as unrecognised ones. Remarkable is that some associations (WAGGGS only's) don't know the existence of e.g. a WOSM only. In general all of them are active in the same geographical area.

65% of the responding associations say they are in competition with other Guide and Scout associations, these 65% include all the WAGGGS only's. About 26% of the associations don't compete with other Guide and Scout associations. In some countries one association mentions that they have to compete with the other, but the other one says they don't? To make the picture complete, 3% doesn't know if they are in competition and for 6% of the associations this question is not relevant because there are no other Guide or Scout associations.

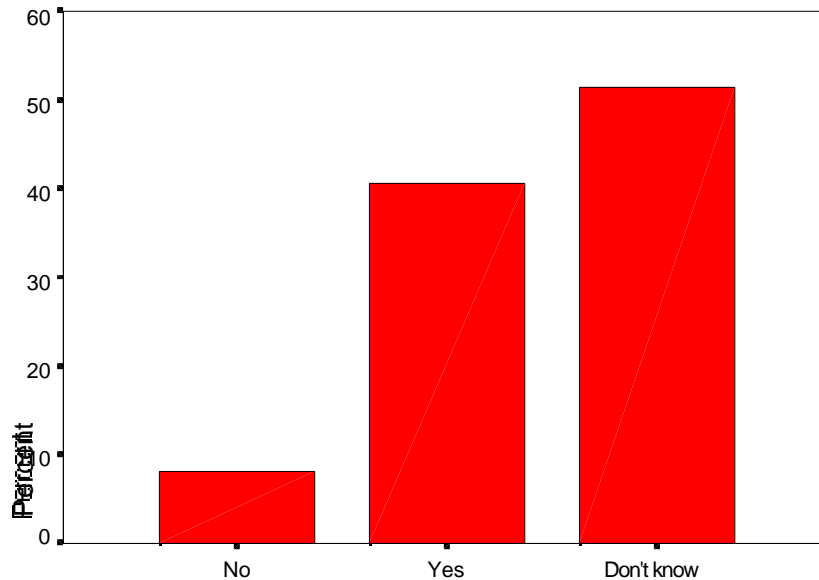


Other Youth Movements

In every country there are other youth movements and more than 90% of the associations (and countries) indicate that they have the same target group as our associations and that because of timescales the young people have to choose between activities. This means that we are in competition with the other youth movements, which was also indicated at the questionnaires by more than 90% of the associations. Again we need to add that some associations do know other youth movements, but don't know their target group, their timescale and because of this don't know if they are in competition with them.

Only 8% of the associations indicate that the membership evolution of the other youth movements (including the other Guide and Scout associations) is similar to their own. The associations mentioning this are only associations that have a rising membership. Of these associations, some of them don't know and only one knows that the others instead of them are losing members.

The majority of the 40% of associations with decreasing membership think the membership of other youth movements is falling as well. More than 50% of the associations don't have a clue if the loss of membership is a general problem yes or no.



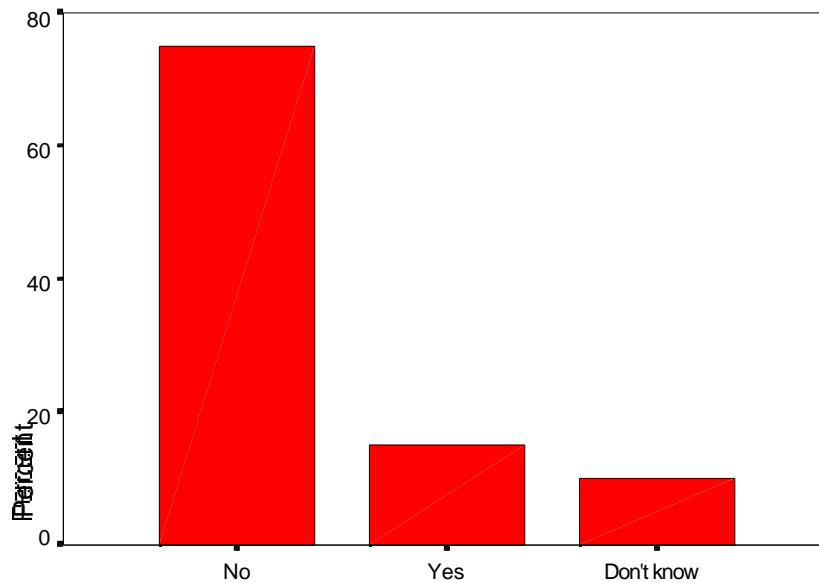
Is there membership evolution similar to yours?

Membership issues and the National Youth Council

In only two countries that answered the questionnaire there is no youth council and one association doesn't know if there is a national youth council.

If there is a national youth council, the problem of membership loss is not on the agenda in 75% of the countries, only in 15% of the countries it is recognised as a 'national problem'.

3 associations don't know if it is a topic on the agenda of the national youth council.



Is membership loss a point on the agenda of the national youth council?

Let's Take a Critical Look.....

- Why are we competing with other Guide and Scout organisations?
- Do we have the same goal as the other Guide and Scout associations?
- Why are we competing with other youth movements?
- Is their mission completely the opposite as ours?
- Do we need to compete with other youth movements (including Guide and Scout associations) to recruit members?
- If yes, does this mean that there is a specific group of people that are addressed by Guiding? Or is the target group so small?
- If timescales force youngsters to choose, why don't we adapt our timescale?
- Why do we know so little about the membership evolution of the other youth movements? Not even about the membership evolutions of other Scout or Guide movements?
- Why is there no association that loses members that thinks the other youth movements gain members? Is it a national problem? Or are we too proud to believe it is only our problem?
- Why is the topic of membership loss not on the agenda of the national youth council? Could it be that it is really only our problem? Or are we the only ones who address membership loss as a problem? Maybe we don't want other youth movements to know that we have such a problem?

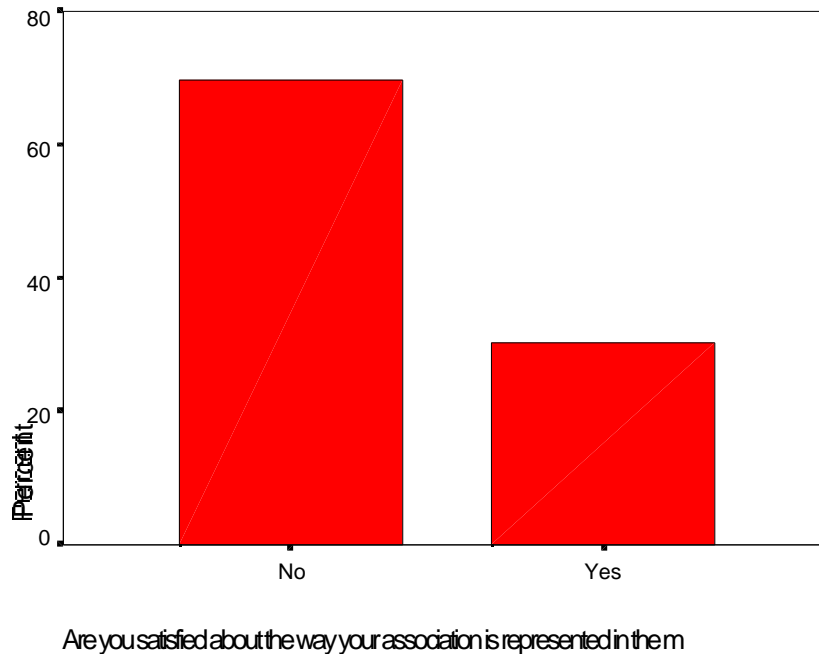


Our relationship with the media

75% of the associations gets media coverage, 25% doesn't.

All the associations that don't get media coverage are not satisfied with this situation. They want to be in the media.

The associations that do get media coverage are in general not satisfied about the way they are represented. Only 30% of the associations are happy with the results of journalist's jobs. Only in some countries the associations have a different opinion about their relation with the media.



Let's Take a Critical Look.....

- Why do we want media coverage?
- Do we want/need to be covered every week/month?
- Which results do we expect from media coverage?
- Are the things we address as big news, interesting for the big public?
- Are we really that important as we think we are?
- What message do we really want to give through the media?
- Does the public know that there are several Guide (and Scout) associations in their country?
- How do they know the difference? Is this not too confusing for non-members?
- Does bad news of one association influence the other associations? And good news?

PART 2

A Look at Trends Concerning Youth in Europe

Results of a research

Introduction

Who am I?

I am Dieter De Court. I am a student at the University Ghent, where I study Educational Sciences. My major focus is on all the education outside schools (official: Bachelor in Educational Sciences (finished), Master in Social, Cultural and Leisure Studies). This year I have done the practise for my studies at the Europe Office WAGGGS for 11 weeks (or 440 hours). My main goal was the WAGGGS Forum III in Cyprus with a focus on youth trends and of course membership issues.

I am also a member of FOS (Belgium). At local level I am actively coaching a bunch of 30 leaders whom organise every week different activities for all the branches. For more than 5 years I am a member of the national board, the last 3 years as International Commissioner.

It is the student in me that has been speaking at the Forum, who has been writing this text and the report of the questionnaires. This has always been the starting point for WAGGGS and me. The reflections I made afterwards as an IC or as a leader are written down in my personal report for Heather. Working this way was especially hard in the beginning and thus a real learning process for me.

What did I do?

I started with browsing the literature available concerning my topic. The internal literature was mainly found in the IC's documentation and in the WAGGGS Office Europe. The external literature was gathered from the European Union, the Council of Europe, the United Nations (UNICEF, ...) and the libraries of Belgian Universities. It took me some time to get through all this input and after a period of no-input my mind was clear to produce some output.

My first output was the questionnaire send to all European Associations and to all the participants of the seminar. The goal of the questionnaires was to gather information concerning membership issues and mainly, to start the thinking process towards the forum.

The second output was the presentation given at the WAGGGS Forum III in Cyprus, resulting finally in this text. Some expressions are now more specified (or slightly changed) compared with the presentation. This is the result of constant refining the outcome.

The final output is the assimilations of the questionnaires into a report.

Goal of my Research?

As said before, the research as a whole is meant as an eye opener or eye widener. I tried to offer a 'theoretical' framework for trends concerning youth, which eventually is related, through programme, image, ... with membership issues. This could be a reference to check all changes in the society concerning youth. Starting with youth trends I had to change the focus towards all trends influencing youth. The cohesion between the two is big, but doesn't get along always. Though we should keep them all in mind when we discuss youth issues.

I made some remarks and critical thoughts. They should be interpreted just like this, nothing more, nothing less! Who am I to jump to conclusions? It is up to all leaders at European or national level to make their own conclusions.

Research remarks

The research I did is not very in-depth because of the lack of time (only 11 weeks). The questionnaires are still OK if we consider the time/budget scale. Though it should be said that a questionnaire is not the best method for qualitative research. A tour of the associations would give more results, would give more quality information for a research, but is of course very expensive in resources (time and money).

To be able to do the research for all trends relating to youth, you don't have to be a scientist. Just with an other way of observing the society you can distillate a lot of trends. Keep in mind that we are talking about trends and trends are not specific themselves. Leave the pure figures for the scientists.

All trends mentioned are general trends for the Europe Region WAGGGS, not for a specific country.

Every country (association) needs to specify and implement these trends, related to the specific social economical status of their citizens.

When reading materials of different origin, you need to keep in mind the nomenclature that is used. E.g. Youth is defined as minus 30 for WAGGGS through minus 25 by the EU till minus 18 in most national laws.

Some historical background

The arising of 'Youth'

Before the +/-1850 the youth didn't exist. You were a child till the age of six, the age when people became economically important. This also indicates that from 6 years old on society regarded you as an adult, with all pro's and contra's. How society was then and how the evolution started is an interesting part in history, but it would lead us too far.

In the middle of the 19th century 'Youth' is born. Mainly because society changes and education becomes more important. We couldn't learn more to be economical important in less than '6 years'. These changes were formalised with the laws on 'child labour', 'duty to learn (school)', 'child protection, ... The extra time that is given is called 'Youth'.

When the 20th century passes on the 'Youth'-period is expanding, especially during the last decades of previous century. Education becomes even more important, youngsters stay longer financially dependent of their parents, ...

Why this evolution?

The evolution of the arising of the youth has started in the upper class and proceeded to the lower classes of society. First the upper class people thought it would be better if their children knew more before they took an active role in society. At that time mostly the women of the upper class organised this for their children in the family, later on they organised this for all the children of the neighbourhood, ... We might say that this is the start of the emancipation of the women. This evolution is also called the 'pedagogy of society' and is based on pure ratio (the Enlightenment). Simply explained: If people (children) would know this and that the world would be better. Thus if we learn them this and that before they really start to live we would build a better world, ...

This evolution itself is not the subject of the Forum itself, but it would be good to keep it in mind reading this text. This evolution is still going on, the ratio is still the engine of the system that is working in all over Europe (and even further), although the pace is different in each country and even within the countries (cities and countryside).

Consequences

Between the arising of the 'Youth' and now, society has adapted itself. Especially for the youth there is a world adapted for them. The youth became isolated from the adults through the institutions that came along with the Enlightenment ideals. Special places for young people are the school, the youth custody centres, youth work, ... Youth became the 'not yet generation', a category of people with a different status.

Through the years, through the ratio, the adults formed an image of youth that became dominating in our thinking about youth. On the one hand youth was/is seen as an ideal. Everybody wants to be beautiful, and beautiful is without wrinkles, with a soft skin, ... We also like everything to be flexible, dynamic, ... everything a young person has and what we lose when we get older. On the other hand youth was/is seen as a problem. This is the main vision society has in Europe concerning the young part of society. Young people are not yet capable to do this and that, they should learn it first is an expression that we hear a lot! Or they should prove they can do this or that, but who is the adult to judge if they do it correctly? This is the pedagogical justification of the 'communal education' society offers the youth. Again this is based on the ratio thinking about the question. How can we (adult society) make the youth ideal? And when the youth is ideal the world is a better place, ...

This is a very important way of looking at youth that we subconsciously have but should be actively aware of, when discussing youth issues!

Development of youth work

Youth work is based on two essential fundamentals. Without youth there would be no youth work in the society. First of all youth should exist, but secondly the youth needs to have leisure time. If both exist in a society, it normally won't take long for young people to gather, human beings are social animals. When these three factors and the 'problem image' are united, it is not so hard to draw the picture what happened next. The youth united themselves into 'gangs' and the adults thought, that if they helped them to organise themselves, they could again 'train' (educate) them better. This is the background of youth work. Guiding (and Scouting) are the first 'real' youth work. The youth movement in general is still the basic method of youth work. This is where Guiding fits in the picture of youth. Guiding is a value based youth movement, that links pleasure, leisure and education (non-formal education). Later on Youth Clubs (France and Germany) developed themselves as a reaction on Youth Movements and also on the increasing individuality of society. The biggest difference they offered the youth, was the fact that membership was for them no longer needed to participate.

What is 'Youth' now?

This is a real hard question for everybody. There is no straight answer, and there probably will never be a straight answer or definition about youth. The only thing that always returns is 'not yet'. Youth is not yet adult, is not yet responsible, is not yet independent, is not yet ... But what is youth? Youth is an essential period to find your place in society, is a waiting room, a moratorium³. Youth is a social construct, a place where young people are spared, saved from the 'real world'.

³ Moratorium: During the presentation I used 'mortuary'. When some of the participants asked me what I really meant with it, my Euro fell. Moratorium is a better word, but I didn't find this translation that suits more my thoughts before the Forum, sorry for that. Germany 'Sandra' Thanks!

4 Ways to look at youth

The outline I used to get a grip on all the different trends that involve youth, are based on the 4 moratoriums of the youth. These are areas wherein young people develop themselves before becoming an adult. The areas are in chronological order of arising in the evolution of youth. Until now we can separate 4 moratoriums, maybe within some years there will be 5.

Remark

Does the age matter? When do young people become adults? All of us know that this is different for each person, but our society is not adapted to this.

Take for example 10-age mothers. First of all we should mention that our society now sees 10-age mothers as a problem, even when the young woman (or do we speak about girl) has chosen for the child it is not really accepted by society. The young woman not only has this problem to tackle, but also the problem of social security. The system is not adapted to them and to their needs; 10-age mothers almost have no rights in our welfare states. Are they no adults? Is a young woman by definition a bad mother? Doesn't she mentally change very fast to adapt to her new situation? Is a new mother of 30 years old better prepared to get a baby? These questions don't need an answer in this text, but it is worth posing those questions to ourselves. Value-research (by Prof. Dr. Elchardus) has proven that 'age' is a marginal discrimination in the discussion about youth and adults.

'Psycho-social' moratorium

The area where youth develops their own identity in many different ways. They talk with each other about what people think about them, they try to find out what they like, they experiment, they actively search the answer on the question 'Who am I?' They do not any longer want to depend on their parents to make decisions, to overcome bad feelings, ... Psychological they need to cope with the maturation of their body.

More and more young people have difficulties with the development of their identity. Because of this there are more depressive youngsters. Some of them try to solve their problem to escape from reality by using tobacco, alcohol, drugs, or they take their backpack and leave for a long time, searching. And, most frightening more young people feel they don't get a grip any more and escape very dramatically by suicide.

A tendency that should be high lightened to keep in mind of this moratorium is the enlargement of the youth period. Because of this enlargement it is important to keep up with the evolutions in psychological theories. Insight in these might open new doors. Are our age groups still accurate? Do we need to create an older age section?

In this moratorium the youth especially needs space to experiment. On the one hand they search for this space themselves, on the other hand it is offered or denied by adults. The adults give selective permission to young people about what they can and what they can't. Mostly the Guidelines given are based on what socially is acceptable. For young women the need to experiment is quiet recent compared with young men. Maybe this is the reason why parents are still less tolerant for a daughter than for a son. Girls have the difficult task to search for balance between the traditional and the new role of the women in society.

When do young people experiment? They are not allowed to do so at school (2nd educational area) and at home (1st educational area) they are not allowed to do everything. This means that they experiment in their leisure time, e.g. Guiding (3rd educational area), time with friends, ... Do we still challenge our members, do we offer them chances to widen their boarders, to discover new things, ...?

What do they experiment? Maybe the question would be easier if we would ask what not.

Of course everything what is forbidden is most challenging and will be experimented. This means tobacco, alcohol and drugs, but also sex. Sex is still a taboo, thus it is a hard topic to talk about. Not knowing leads to 10-age mothers, HIV-AIDS, ... Not knowing that homosexuality is a normal phenomenon could lead to hard personal problems to accept your own identity, as mentioned above.

Spirituality is also something important for young people to experiment with, discovering other spiritual situations, moments. Searching in all different ways why we exist, ...

The last, but certainly not least main topic of experimenting is values. Testing values for yourself by breaking common rules, by assuming other (new) values, ... to end up mostly with almost the same values as their parents or peers.

‘Access to work’ moratorium

The area where young people orientate themselves for an economical (~social) position. The area where they have to choose what to study, so what job they would like. They have to make their own lifeplan, more and more in advance because a good start is now a day very important.

General education is reduced more and more to a minimum by governments. The topics thought at schools become more materialistic. There is no time (money) any more for personal development and subjects like expression, ethic's, philosophy, ... The Bologna agreement of the EU will change more than we think. Within the EU there will be a debate about which education should be guaranteed for all and which not. This means a search for a compromise, in countries education will become more expensive, in other countries it will become less expensive. Also the main vision about learning and teaching is changing very fast. Cognitivism (the world as given) becomes constructivism (the world as constructed). The permanent education (Long Life Learning) becomes more important than before, because we have to more be flexible in our jobs, ...

The aim for a good education (and job) becomes a top priority. The impact of the choices the youth needs to make concerning education is often underestimated.

Our society in general is changing very fast towards a knowledge society. Because we are in the middle of the storm we don't realise it that much, but some people say that these changes will have the same impact as the industrial revolution a century ago. One of the side effects will be that there will be new categories in our society, the 'have's' and the 'have not's' of access to information. Which is again related to Long Life Learning.

Maybe the most general trend is the one of the globalisation, mainly economically. The EU in general gets more and more impact on our lives. It changes the North-South, East-West relationships. Poor countries become rich (and the rich maybe richer) and change from emigration- to an immigration country (e.g.: Greece, Ireland). Immigration in general brings us in contact with different cultures. This means that other cultures influence our cultures. We need to learn or develop respect for being different, to prevent us for racism. It also indicates that the need for multilingual people (~knowledge society) increases. Maybe all this leads us towards a new kind of community, a different society to live in.

New technologies offer us different ways of communicating with each other, new codes how to express ourselves. We need to learn how to live with the mobile telephone. What is it like to be available all the time? But also when we date someone we agree more and more on a short time basis. "I want to go for a drink, do you come with me? OK? I'll meet you in half an hour!" The e-mails have speeded up and informalised the communication process. The internet in general has made the world so much smaller. The personal computer changed our access to information dramatically. If you can't find it on your CD-ROM (some might say I am already to old fashioned) you just browse the WWW. The big distances in the world became smaller through the new technologies. We have the high-speed trains, the airplanes, ... The other side of the world is virtual only a mouse click away, and in reality you can make it in less than 24 hours.

The globalising economy has worldwide impacts. Something that happens at the other side of the world influences our economy and society. It is good to know that it is proven that when the economy is high and dry, there is more individualism, when there is a crisis there is more solidarity between people.

Concerning employment youth is 'the' supply for the labour market. People have to be more flexible, the job mobility should be high. Since when are the interim-labour-offices so important for the access to the market? The youth has a high rate of unemployment, especially young women. This gives the youth, and especially young women a hard time to get their social status, to become independent of the parents. This emphasises that a good start is more vital than ever to get started.

Because young people need to study longer they are financially longer dependent of their parents (family solidarity). On cultural level the youth is more independent of their parents because mostly they have to live separately to study and don't go home that often. This causes tension between the two generations. The language of money doesn't have a word for 'social' independent. To decrease the tension a bit a lot of youngsters do small jobs to have some extra pocket money. Because they work, they have less leisure time and this will force them to choose between activities and long-term engagements.

'Cultural' moratorium

What is 'Culture'? Culture here is used in the broadest sense of the word. From fast food to the authentic cuisine of Cyprus, from Coca Cola to Chateau Neuve du Paepe, from Mozart to Hip Hop, from playing cards, till the 'Iron Man', ...

Groups in our society are defined as a problem as soon as they are different compared with the standard. Often these groups are (children of) ethnic minorities, (children of) people with a low level of education, ... Especially for them programmes are developed (social casework) even if they don't ask for it to develop them 'culturally'. This often leads to constructions of social categories, which cause tension in society. When people are in categories they want to belong to another one or they want to stay one of the happy few who belong to. Who decides who belongs to which category?

Youth culture is described by adults as the MTV generation, the ZAP-culture, ... characterised by: consuming, lazy, lively, confused, individualistic, open minded, always on the run, emancipated, lack of confidence, lack of curiosity, ...

When the youth is asked to define their culture, they say it doesn't really exist, that there is a very big differentiation with subcultures and anti-cultures. They describe youth culture as a temporary culture, a transit zone.

Maybe this indicates that we don't have to follow youth trends, but that we should be aware of them and recognise them. The youth wants freedom. We can offer them possibilities and freedom through reflection about the world youth lives in today and tomorrow, thus reflection about the trends that influence youth.

In this area the youth is very oriented towards their own image. What do they have to wear, which music is hip, which media programs are cool, ...

Again should be mentioned the experimenting with all the cultural aspects of our society. Everything what is forbidden or bad should be tried. To be a rebel is the best thing to be!

'Social structure' moratorium

It has been mentioned some times before. Youth is a social construct, a social phenomenon. If it was not created it wouldn't exist and we would still threat people from the age of six onwards as equals. Lea Dasberg described it in the following way:

Youth does not have to be adult any more

Youth is not allowed to be adult any more

Youth doesn't want to be adult any more

Youth can't be adult any more

The same 'actors' as these of the adults fundamentally define the life circumstances of youth. The environment we live in is the same for everyone. Pollution, vandalism, crime, ... are growing problems in our societies. In most European countries there is a welfare state, or governments are working towards it. This has increased the living conditions through social security, better medicine, ... That is why people live longer, have less children, ... Our society is getting less green and more grey!

Family is one of the main issues that should be kept in mind concerning the social structure moratorium. The household itself has/is changing from commanding to a negotiation atmosphere. This indicates an other method of raising the children; this could also be the answer to the conflict between parents and children as mentioned before (social independent – financially dependent). The position of the woman in a family is no longer what it used to be. Nowadays, due to the emancipation

of the women, they are 'more' equal (hopefully) compared with their husbands. In all European countries the divorce rates are raising. It indicates that divorces nowadays are more accepted, as well as other forms of family situations. Because of these new situations most children have an other problem to tackle. They need to learn to live together with other people, half-sister, half-brother, stepmother, ... and they have from that point on two home sweet homes. This is often an underestimated problem! When are they really at home? What do they do if they don't like their stepmother? Where do they have their friends to play with? How do they get to know certain values, when mother and father have a different vision about raising a child? ... The immigration and the better travelling circumstances also result in mix cultures families. Homosexuals have already in some countries the right to have children and thus form a new kind of family we never had before. What is significant different in the education of a child in such families? Who knows and who has the right to judge what is good and what is bad? The only thing we can be quiet sure about, is that it is different, but that is all!

Since the beginning of the 20th century, there are more and more juridical and sociological provisions for the youth. Is it because of them we say that youth is a social construction, or the other way around. It is hard to say. We do know that the institution 'school', that was developed towards the best ideals for young people are now more a duty than a right. The amount of dropouts raise as well as the amount of truants. Juridically the youth has there own criminal law and penitary institutions, with its advantages and disadvantages. Quiet recently in history (but almost more than 15 years) we have the Convention of the Right of the Child. This declaration gives the children and young people a lot of rights, but it also tells them they are just children and young people. Wouldn't a declaration, which says that children and young people are also human beings and thus have the same Human Rights.

A possible look at the future, my thoughts as a researcher, but who am I to point the way forward?

How to cope with trends? Personally I think we should not fight against trends, but we have do deal with them and use them as opportunities. We can't change trends, but we can try to be the trendsetters! Youth trends are less important for us as a youth movement, than the trends concerning youth.

Strengths

The international dimension and the non-formal education settings we have are our strengths. Because of the changes towards plurality of our societies, learning to respect other cultures becomes more important. Through our international dimension we should be able to offer international and intercultural awareness, multicultural solidarity, ... Our international dimension offers us chances to exchange cultures through our own specific method, known by our members.

Our profile as a provider of non-formal education should make us a player in the field of permanent education (Long Life Learning etc.). Education (a good start) becomes more and more important; it is up to us to let the world know that we offer valuable education, that is recognised by the 'economy' as a benefit (e.g. social skills).

Opportunities

One of the main opportunities Guiding and Scouting have, and especially WAGGGS, is the challenge the women still have in our society. They are still struggling for equal chances on all levels and in all areas of life. There is still a way to go! We know where we would like to go but maybe there are different paths leading towards the fulfilling of our mission.

The Convention of the Rights of the Child offers us opportunities to open up our movement towards immigrants, disabled people, equal chances for women and men, ... It could be our Guideline for the future, to widen our view while we are heading for our mission. A tool towards a better world!

World Citizenship

The themes of the world citizen's programme should be stressed more. We have some fantastic values to sell to the outside world; the themes could be the package of our message.

Through our educational method we offer young people the chance to develop self-esteem, a critical personality, social skills. The themes also tackle the same topics youngsters struggle with. Health, food and nutrition opens up our programme towards issues like eating disorders, sports, drugs, sexual experimenting, ... The framework of Guiding offers them a guidance by peers in these areas and the leaders might be the coaches of these processes or at least the facilitators. The theme of environment could be widened to all topics related to economy and nature, honest globalisation, ... where peace and cultural heritage makes us work towards mutual respect in a multicultural, pluralistic world, if we identify this as the new ideal world.

The World citizenship award can be an answer to the everlasting will of the youth to experiment. We only have to make sure that we don't Guide them too strictly. They should be allowed to experiment about issues of which they think are the mistakes in our society and they should try to find an answer for themselves. And maybe the youth wins in some areas and really makes the world better.

The youth is the future!

A youth movement should not reflect today, but should be the place to experiment the future society, based on our values.

In closing I would like to thank all of you for giving me the opportunity to learn. A special thanks goes to Heather Roy as my Practice mentor during my practice.

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