



SCOUTS[®]
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PLANNING FOR GROWTH REFLECTION TOOL





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PLANNING FOR GROWTH

REFLECTION TOOL

This document is designed to help your NSO/NSA reflect and prepare in planning for growth to ensure that consideration is given on both the internal and external surroundings as well as thinking about how to structure and focus your growth strategy.

How do you define membership?

In order to gather information about membership, the first thing is to determine how you define

“membership”. For example:

Is a member anyone who has made the Scout Promise?

Is a member anyone who has paid the membership fee?

Is a member anyone who took part in an activity during the year?

Is a member anyone who has taken part in a specific number of activities during the year?

Is a member anyone who was registered in a local group when the annual census figures were gathered?

You will either need to agree on a single definition or establish a way of clearly identifying various categories.

For the purpose of this toolkit, members include the youth members that Scouting serves, as well as adult volunteers in an active capacity (serving as unit leaders or fulfilling broader administrative or management functions).

Monitoring membership trends

The process of analysing trends in membership growth needs to start with questions such as:

What age groups do you serve and in what proportion?

What are the characteristics of your youth members and adult volunteers (age, gender, socio- economic background, geographical distribution, special needs or situation, etc.)?

At what age do they join?

At what age do they leave?

How long do they stay?

By examining the answers to these questions, your association may, for example, discover an increase/decrease in:

- a particular age section in a certain geographical area;
- in one of the older age sections;
- the average length of stay for a youth member (overall or in a particular age section) and/or for an adult;
- adults completing training since the training system had been improved;
- youth membership since the last revision of some aspect of the youth programme;
- membership in a particular ethnic group;
- female members compared to male members in a particular age section;
- recruitment following a change of image, a media campaign, a large event, etc.

Understanding your current and potential market share

Your youth market share, also known as “penetration rate”, is your current membership expressed as a proportion of the available youth population in your country. By comparing your membership in different age categories to the available youth population in those same categories, you can establish which age groups are most, or least, attracted to your NSO/NSA.

Doing so can also establish whether your growth rate is increasing or decreasing in relative terms. For example, if your membership in a certain age group has decreased by 5%, but the available youth population in that same age group has decreased by 10%, in relative terms, your market share has, in fact, increased. Conversely, if your membership has increased by 5%, but the available youth population has increased by 10%, then your market share has decreased.

Using demographics to establish a more detailed picture of your market

By making use of demographic statistics and trends to gain more information on the characteristics of your current membership, e.g., your membership of different ages in different geographical areas, gender, socio-economic groups, ethnic / religious groups, you can compare that information to national statistics, and establish a clearer picture of who you are (or are not) reaching.

This information can assist your association in determining your strategic options in terms of your target market. This includes age groups, gender, expanding within your traditional market, reaching out to new communities, all helping to establish and monitor a realistic growth target.

To take an example: your association may have a high market share at specific ages, and a much lower one at specific other ages.

Questions to consider might include:

Why is our association successful in attracting young people of this age?

Are they simply easier to market to?

Do parents see more benefit/ convenience in encouraging their children to join at this age?

Is the youth programme particularly appropriate for this age range?

Are more volunteers enthusiastic about working with this age range?

Do young people have more free time/fewer commitments at this age?

Why is our association **not** successful in attracting young people of this age?

Are they more difficult to market to?

Are we communicating what Scouting is about in a way that makes it sound less exciting and worthwhile?

Do parents see less benefit in encouraging their children to join at this age?

Is the youth programme inappropriate for this age range?

Are there age section transition issues involved?

Is the popularity of Scouting with a much lower age range giving the wrong image of Scouting to young people of greater maturity?

Does it correspond to developmental changes in young people at this age? If so, is the structure of current age sections inappropriate?

Does it correspond to the age at which young people change schools (with different social circles, or less proximity to the Scout group they belonged to)?

Do we have old-fashioned traditions that appear meaningless?

Are there fewer volunteers enthusiastic about working with this age range?

Do young people have less free time/more commitments at this age?

Any growth strategy will require an increase in the number of adult volunteers to lead units and support other adults, gathering similar kinds of information about your current and potential volunteers is therefore a necessary component of your strategy as well.

For example, a range of age-related questions could also be asked of adult volunteers:

Why does the association tend to attract volunteers in a certain age bracket?

Is this due to time/employment/family constraints?

Do the perceived benefits of volunteering change with age?

Political issues

Many governments have developed or are strengthening **youth policies**.

Is this the case in your country?

If so, what can your association do to take full advantage of the opportunities that this offers to young people?

If not, what can your association do to actively promote the development of such a policy?

More and more governments consider **volunteerism as a national priority**. Is this the case in your country?

If so, how is your government supporting volunteering?

How can your association benefit from this support?

If not, what can you do to change this attitude?

Economic issues

In some parts of the world, **young people have to work all day**, in what can be unhealthy conditions, doing repetitive tasks, in order to support their families.

What solutions can your association offer?

In many parts of the world, young people do not have access to Scouting due to economic barriers. The cost of transport, uniforms, camps, etc., is beyond the financial means of families.

What can your association do to reduce costs or find public or private funding?

Economic pressures, such as **poverty or unemployment**, are real obstacles that prevent many people from volunteering.

What can your association do to overcome these obstacles?

Some employers (private and public sectors) encourage volunteering as part of their **corporate social responsibility** programme. Do employers in your country have such programmes?

If so what could you do to benefit from them?

If not, how could you promote the concept?

Social issues

Young people, particularly adolescents, often seek **greater involvement** in matters that affect them, their peers and the society in which they live. The youth programme of many associations includes active involvement in a number of areas such as the Rights of the Child, the Sustainable Development Goals, peace and conflict resolution, action for the environment, etc.

In what ways can you increase youth involvement in such issues?

In some countries **war or civil unrest** and **natural disasters** have created vast quantities of refugees or internally displaced persons. Is this a situation in your country?

If so, how could your association reach out to them?

Young people in **orphanages, residential care, boarding schools, prisons, hospitals**, etc., generally do not have access to Scouting.

What can your association do to reach out to these young people and how would the traditional way of offering Scouting need to be adapted?

Many young people with **disabilities who live at home** do not have access to Scouting.

What can your association do to help these young people to benefit from Scouting?

In some countries, there is a **negative public perception** concerning Scouting (militaristic, a children's movement, etc.). In some cases, the image may correspond to reality or a past reality;

In other cases, the association has simply not addressed the issue of how Scouting is perceived. Is this the case in your country?

If so what does your association need to do about it?

In many countries, there has been a major trend in the **rural poor moving to urban areas**. Is this an issue in your country?

If so what implications can you foresee and what can you do to reach these young people?

Many associations are open to girls and young women, but they are often a minority. In some cases, it is because the association has done little to address their needs, expectations and interests; in others, parents may be wary of the risk of inappropriate behaviour.

What can your association do about this?

In many societies, young people are becoming increasingly **socially mobile**, or at least are seeking opportunities to discover the world and other cultures. Many might enjoy taking part in community development projects abroad.

To what extent has your association taken this into account?

Many societies have undergone a substantial **increase in migrant populations**.

What particular needs or expectations might they have?

What can your association do to reach out to these young people?

Would the creation of special units be appropriate or would integration into regular units be more appropriate?

The development of **new types of communication** is huge in many countries.

Has your association reorganised its information technology (IT) to take advantage of networking with volunteers?

Has your association developed new ways of volunteering through the use of IT?

In many countries, the work of voluntary organisations, and thus of volunteers, is becoming more **valued** by society. As a result, more people are choosing to volunteer. Is this the case in your country?

If so how can your association benefit from this trend?

If not what can your association do to enhance the concept of volunteering as a socially meaningful and personally enriching activity?

Some associations are noticing that a growing number of adults are **no longer prepared to make a commitment to volunteer on a regular basis**, but would be willing to help out on an occasional basis. Is this an issue in your association?

If so how could you make use of occasional help?

As voluntary organisations become more professional in the services offered and many adults are willing to spend less time volunteering, **volunteers expect a high quality of support**. When they

receive it, there is a greater likelihood that they, in turn, will fulfil their own function more professionally.

What does your association need to do to support volunteers more efficiently and effectively?

In some societies, the **length of time** that young people stay in youth organisations has diminished.

What factors influence this and what can your association do to increase retention?

Legal issues

What new or forthcoming **legislation** regarding youth organisations is likely to come into force?

How is this likely to affect your association and how can you prepare to deal with it?

Many countries have adopted laws related to **child protection and safety**. In some cases, the rules, regulations, paperwork, insurance issues, etc., are complex and time-consuming. This can deter people from volunteering to work with young people. Is this the case in your country?

If so what can your association do?

In some countries, laws governing youth organisations involve **age- related criteria** for adult leaders, which affect public funding. Sometimes, however, the age of potential volunteers does not correspond to this criteria. Is this the case in your country?

If so what can you do about it?

Environmental issues

The majority of young people who are likely to be attracted to Scouting find adventure and challenge in life in nature. Many adolescents, in particular, feel **concern about the environment and an ecological lifestyle**.

In what ways are nature the environment ecology and sustainability integrated into the youth programme?

To what extent is this concern reflected by your association as a whole and especially by adults who should be serving as role models?

Technological issues

In many societies there has been a phenomenal increase in the time young people spend on social networks and internet.

What can your association do to promote a more active lifestyle and encourage these young people to join Scouting?

Follow-up

Now that you have gone through these questions and thought about the context in which your NSO/NSA operates it's time to think about what those answers mean for your growth strategy. Some areas may be discussed with your teams, some may become directions where you will put your focus and finally maybe can be considered when designing actions in your growth strategy.

Make sure you make track of the outcomes by placing them in table as the following example:

Area: Technological issues (What can your association do to promote a more active lifestyle and encourage these young people to join Scouting?)		
Answer to the question	Potential actions	Responsible
Engage young people that are spending time on the social media	On-line campaign to join the adventure	Communication team

Support

Consider reaching out to the WSB Regional Support Centre for support and advice. Having reflected on these questions may have inspired you with ideas of a request for support via WOSM services where NSO/NSAs can ask for personalised support. You can submit a service request through the WOSM Service Platform at services.scout.org.

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