WORLD SCOUTING

Discussion Kit: The State of Scouting Education 2026

1. Purpose of the Kit

This kit supports National Scout Organizations, regions and other Scouting bodies in holding their own reflection sessions on the State of Scouting Education 2026 report. It is designed to turn the report from a document to be read into a conversation to be had, so that each organisation can examine what the findings mean for its own context, programme, adults and young people. It consists of this facilitator's note, a bank of guiding questions, and an accompanying slide set that follows the same running order. The report is offered as a baseline and an invitation to dialogue, and the session should be conducted in that spirit.

2. Facilitator's Note

Who should take part?

The session works best with a mixed group of between eight and thirty participants, for example members of the national board or committee, those responsible for the Youth Programme, adult support and training, safeguarding, communications and partnerships, regional or local commissioners, and a meaningful proportion of young people, ideally chosen by their peers rather than appointed. The report's own findings on youth participation in governance make the presence of young people integral rather than optional, and they should be asked to contribute as equal participants.

Format and timing

The suggested format is a ninety-minute session, which may be held in person or online. It opens with a ten-minute welcome and framing, followed by a fifteen-minute plenary overview of the report's main findings using the slide set. Participants then spend thirty-five minutes in small groups of four to six, each working on one theme from the bank of questions below. A twenty-minute plenary allows groups to report back and to identify common patterns, and the session closes with ten minutes devoted to priorities and next steps. For a longer workshop, each theme can be expanded into a session of its own, and for a shorter one, groups can be limited to two or three questions each.

Preparation

Facilitators should read at least the executive summary, the ten reflections and the section on the ten trails, and should make the full report available in advance, together with the executive brief. It is helpful to bring a short set of national data, such as membership figures, the youth-to-adult ratio, and the most recent results of the Global Support Assessment Tool if available, so that discussions are anchored in the organisation's own reality rather than in general impressions. Groups should be assigned in advance so that each theme is covered, with a note-taker and a spokesperson identified in each.

Facilitation principles

The report is explicit about gaps between policy and practice, and it is important that the session treats these as shared work rather than as criticism. Facilitators are encouraged to invite concrete examples before general opinions, to ask what evidence supports a claim, and to give particular attention to whose voices are missing from the room. Because the report finds that youth voice in governance is less developed than youth participation in programmes, facilitators should check regularly that young people are being heard and that their contributions are reflected in the notes. Differences of view are expected and valuable, given that the report itself stresses that Scouting education takes different forms in different contexts. Where a discussion touches on safeguarding, facilitators should remind participants of the organisation's reporting procedures and ensure that no individual case is discussed in the session.

Capturing outcomes

Each group should record its main observations, the one or two issues it considers most urgent, and at least one concrete action that the organisation could take within the next twelve months. These notes should be gathered into a short summary, ideally shared with participants within two weeks, and used to inform the organisation's planning. Organisations that wish to do so may share the outcomes or national examples with their regional office, so that experiences can be learned from across the Movement.

3. Guiding Questions

The questions are grouped into seven themes, which correspond to the dimensions of the report, its main findings and the eight operational domains it identifies for National Scout Organizations. Facilitators may assign one theme to each small group or select a smaller number of questions from across the themes.

Theme A. Context and Institution

Q1. How would we describe the national context in which we operate, in terms of demographics, inequality, the capacity of the education system and civil society, and what role does Scouting play in it, whether expanding access to learning or complementing formal education?

Q2. How do our governance and management systems influence the reach, quality and sustainability of the education we offer, and where are our greatest strengths and constraints?

Q3. Does our delivery model, whether community-based, school-linked or hybrid, give the Youth Programme and the Scout Method the conditions they need to be implemented with quality?

Theme B. Adults and Volunteering

Q4. What is our youth-to-adult ratio, and what does it mean for the quality and consistency of the experience offered to young people in our Groups?

Q5. How well does our adult volunteer lifecycle work, from recruitment and onboarding to training, support, recognition and offboarding, and where do adults tell us that the experience falls short?

Q6. What would flexible, modular or short-term volunteering roles look like in our organisation, and who might we reach who is not currently able to volunteer?

Theme C. Youth Programme and Learning Experiences

Q7. How often is our Youth Programme reviewed against the actual needs and interests of young people, and how quickly can it absorb new content such as wellbeing, digital citizenship or environmental learning?

Q8. How do we balance the use of technology as a learning tool with the protection of first-hand, face-to-face and outdoor experience, and how do we bring meaningful experience of nature to Groups in urban settings?

Q9. How do our global initiatives, events and partnerships enrich what happens in local Groups, and how could Group leaders make better use of them?

Theme D. Safeguarding and Wellbeing

Q10. Beyond having policies in place, how do we know that safeguarding is working in practice at the level of local Groups, including in adult training, reporting and response mechanisms?

Q11. How are wellbeing and resilience addressed as educational outcomes in our programme, and how prepared are our adult leaders to support the mental health of young people?

Theme E. Youth Voice and Governance

Q12. In which decisions do young people in our organisation hold real authority, and in which are they merely consulted?

Q13. Do our Patrol System, youth forums and other youth structures feed directly into national programme and policy decisions, and how would we know if they did not?

Q14. What would need to change for young people to hold voting seats and budget responsibility within our governance?

Theme F. Evidence, Recognition and Partnerships

Q15. What data do we collect on participation, retention, dropout and educational outcomes, and what decisions do these data currently inform?

Q16. How could the badges, awards and competencies that young people earn in Scouting be recognised by schools, employers or national qualification frameworks?

Q17. Which relationships with ministries, education authorities, employers and civil society organisations are most important to us, and do we have a dedicated function and agreements that would survive a change of leadership?

Theme G. Inclusion and the Road Ahead

Q18. Who is not in our Groups, whether because of cost, geography, disability or marginalisation, and what structural changes, rather than one-off projects, would help us reach them?

Q19. Of the ten trails proposed in the report, which three do we consider most important for our organisation over the next five years, and which one do we feel least prepared for?

Q20. The report identifies intergenerational and diverse adult engagement as new territory not yet addressed in the Strategy for Scouting or the Roadmap for Education in Scouting. What might it mean in our context?

4. Closing Questions for the Plenary

To conclude, facilitators may invite the whole group to respond to the four questions with which the report looks towards the post-2030 horizon. How can we strengthen our organisation as an educational institution capable of delivering high-quality, safe and inclusive learning at scale while remaining responsive to local realities? How can we demonstrate our educational contribution through evidence that reflects the complexity of non-formal learning? How can we innovate while preserving the educational coherence that has kept Scouting relevant for more than a century? And how can we deepen our collaboration with governments, education systems, civil society and international organisations?

Participants should leave the session able to name the priorities their organisation will take forward, the person or body responsible for each, and the first step that will be taken.