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Youth Engagement Strategy

Support Document for Draft Resolution 2021-E and 2021-G

by World Scout Committee



**World Scout
Conference**
**42nd Conférence Mondiale
du Scoutisme
2021**



SCOUTS
Creating a Better World

Youth Engagement Strategy

by World Scout Committee

This Conference Document provides detailed information on the main findings of youth engagement over the last period and current challenges faced for youth engagement in the Scout Movement, and presents the main goals and key objectives of WOSM’s proposed Youth Engagement Strategy.

Conference proposal:	Draft Resolution 2021-E Draft Resolution 2021-G
Related document:	Conference Document 4A
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The development and implementation of a Youth Engagement Strategy which is taken to the Conference for decision is critical to ensure a ‘big picture’ approach to tackling the cultural and attitudinal changes needed for youth engagement in the Scout Movement.

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Languages

The official languages of the World Organization are English and French. The World Scout Bureau will make all Conference Documents available in both languages. When possible, it endeavours to make them available also in Arabic, Russian and Spanish - the three additional working languages of WOSM. In the event of a conflict arising out of the interpretation of this Conference Document or any other official document of the World Organization, the English text shall prevail.

Terminology

This Conference Document uses the following WOSM terminology in the framework of the Strategy for Scouting and youth engagement. Descriptions are provided to ensure consistent understanding of the terms being used.

- A **Strategic Framework** sets the direction for the Scout Movement and ensures that we have a clear idea of where we are going and how to get there.
- The **Strategy for Scouting** includes the Mission, Vision and Strategic Priorities collectively. Vision 2023 is Scouting's current Strategic Framework.
- Within the Strategy for Scouting, the **Strategic Priorities** are the focus areas on how to achieve the Vision. Within Vision 2023 they are: Youth Engagement, Educational Methods, Diversity & Inclusion, Social Impact, Communication & Relations and Governance.
- A **World Scout Policy** is a set of principles and common elements that WOSM and its member organizations should implement worldwide.
- **The World Scout Youth Involvement Policy** (2014) provides direction with the aim of strengthening and ensuring youth involvement at all levels in the Scout Movement. At the same time, it serves as a reference for National Scout Organizations in the development of their national policies, as well as for Regions for improving their youth involvement practices.
- **Youth involvement** is a capacity-building process, based on enabling young people to actively share responsibility with adults for making decisions that affect their lives, and the lives of others in their community.
- **Youth engagement** is the meaningful participation and sustained involvement of young people in an action in which they use their time, intelligence, talents, skills and abilities for making a positive change in their own lives and the lives of others, which results from strong connections to a particular idea, person, activity, place or outcome.
- The **Youth Engagement Strategy** (2021) aims to lay the foundations for enhancing the development and engagement of young people, both in the programmes and structures at National, Regional and World levels.

1. Introduction

This Conference Document presents the case for the need to develop a Youth Engagement Strategy (YES) to strengthen youth engagement at all levels of Scouting. It explores the history of youth involvement in the decision-making of WOSM, presents findings gathered over the last triennium and outlines the main goals and objectives of the YES.

It has been identified by online and in-person consultation, that structural changes alone will not be enough to bring about the systemic changes required to further progress youth engagement in the Scout Movement. Broader attitudinal changes will be required which are everyone's responsibility, coupled with a revitalised approach to ensure all young people who engage in Scouting, both its programme and its structures, are offered a wider range of educational and capacity-building opportunities.

2. Background

Since its beginning in 1907, Scouting's mission has always been about supporting the growth and personal development of young people, which implies having them involved in decision-making. This has always been the basis of the Youth Programme. Here is a brief background of youth involvement milestones in WOSM.

1969	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conference Resolution 1969-13 was the first institutional push for greater youth involvement, calling for more youth participation in World Scout Conferences.
1971	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The first World Scout Youth Forum was held in Japan.
1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A large number of Conference Resolutions have been built upon steadily in the last thirty years to ensure that more young people are actively involved within and external to Scouting (1993-02, 1999-10, 1999-11, 1999-12, 1999-13, 2002-06, 2005-11, 2008-14).
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The first six Youth Advisors to the World Scout Committee were elected at the 9th World Scout Youth Forum in Tunisia.
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Framework for a Strategy on Youth Involvement was set to help NSOs to improve the educational opportunities available to young people in Scouting, at the unit, community and institutional levels.
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two WOSM policies regarding the Youth Programme and Youth Involvement were adopted by the World Scout Conference, outlining clear and detailed expectations regarding the involvement of young people in WOSM's decision-making processes at all levels and dimensions.
2017-2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two separate Task Forces conducted independent consultations – the World Scout Committee Size and Effectiveness and the Evolution of the World Scout Youth Forum and World Scout Conference (Conference Resolutions 2017-11, 2017-12 and 2017-07).

Furthermore, some other mechanisms were developed at World level, such as having youth membership in the Operational Framework. Overtime, some of these practices have been replicated or adapted by some Regions and NSOs.

3. Main findings

This section provides a summary of the main findings of research conducted over the last triennium by both Task Forces of the World Scout Committee (the WSC Size and Effectiveness and the Evolution of the World Scout Youth Forum and World Scout Conference) and the Youth Engagement Unit 2017-2020, related to some of the mechanisms which have been put in place to advance the topic of youth involvement in the Scout Movement.

3.1. Youth Involvement Strategy

There has been progress in the implementation of the Youth Involvement Strategy as shown by the success indicators between 2011 and 2017. These indicators covered policies and structures, programme support, communications and attitudes. The full report covering the success indicators between 2017 and 2020 will be available closer to the 42nd World Scout Conference.

- The percentage of young people in the top decision-making bodies of WOSM has been increasing over the past two triennia. However, some Regions are still not achieving the target of young people being present in conferences and executive committees.
- All six Regions have structures that support youth involvement in decision-making and have allocated human resources and budget to support this work.
- A number of tools, procedures and training course have been developed to enhance and support youth involvement in decision-making. However, this is yet to be implemented in all Regions.
- All six Regions are providing internal youth-friendly channels of communication, as well as open forum opportunities for specific interests.
- The majority of Regions does not yet have a system in place to promote young people as external representatives of Scouting.
- All six Regions have a mentoring system for young people, as well as project teams that include members of different generations.
- The target of having a minimum of 30% of young people applying for positions on Regional Committees has not yet been achieved.
- At World level, a Youth Engagement Unit has existed since 2011 and several workshops, training courses and resources have been developed to support NSOs in implementing the World Scout Youth Involvement Policy.
- A quota system was implemented during the appointment of members to working groups of the World level Operational Framework in 2014-2017, 2017-2020 and 2020-2021.

3.2. World Scout Youth Forum

The first World Scout Youth Forum was held in 1971. The Youth Forum was established as an educational opportunity for young people in the oldest age sections of Scouting. The purpose was to enable young people to: share their ideas and experiences on current issues affecting young people in different parts of the world, suggest ways of strengthening national youth policies and training young people for world citizenship, contribute new ideas to the Movement on how to enrich educational programmes for young people over 16 years of age and prepare young people for decision-making process at all levels of Scouting, and provide young people with a unique international, educational and empowering experience and opportunity for networking.

- In 1999 it was agreed that, in due course, the need for the World Scout Youth Forum would disappear due to the full and active involvement of young people in partnership with adults at the World Scout Conference and at all levels of decision-making of WOSM (Conference Resolution 1999-11).
- The last eight editions of the World Scout Youth Forum have been held immediately prior to World Scout Conferences, which has also allowed young people to be better prepared for the Conference.
- Conference Resolution 2017-07 called for further developments for the World Scout Conference in 2021 "with the aim of merging the World Scout Conference and World Scout Youth Forum into a new event in 2024". Consultations conducted in the last triennium found that there is wide support for this evolution to a 'new event'.
- Conference participants under 26 years of age increased from 6% in 2002 to 21.3% in 2014 and 24% in 2017.
- The number of young people who attend the World Scout Conference, without having attended the World Scout Youth Forum, is increasing: 0 in 2011, 23 in 2014, and 45 in 2017.

3.3. Youth Advisors to the World Scout Committee

In its current context, the Youth Advisor system was identified as "a temporary and transitory means in the decision-making process" of WOSM (Conference Resolution 2008-14). The first Youth Advisors to the World Scout Committee were elected at the 9th World Scout Youth Forum in Tunisia (Conference Resolution 2005-11). The term for Youth Advisors to the World Scout Committee is for three years, with six young people being elected by the World Scout Youth Forum.

- Some World and Regional Scout Committee members have been elected following time served as Youth Advisors. This may show that the Youth Advisor system has helped to empower young people to develop decision-making competencies and give them the confidence needed to be successful in their future roles.
- The involvement of Youth Advisors in the World Scout Committee meetings has increased over time, becoming more inclusive than it was when the role was first established.
- Over half of the NSOs interviewed in 2019 reported having a Youth Advisor-like structure in their NSO, but only 44.4% of these NSOs believed that the current World Youth Advisor system

remains fit for purpose. The main concerns of these NSOs included disappointment that the World Youth Advisor system was still required/in place and belief that it is no longer relevant/required.

- The Youth Advisor system, considering [Hart's ladder of youth engagement](#) (in [WSYI Policy, pag.27/28](#)), does not live up to the expectations of youth involvement within the Scout Movement.
- The Youth Advisor system is a limited opportunity available to few young people.
- Additionally, 63.64% of former Youth Advisors who responded to a consultation in 2019 agreed that the Youth Advisor system is not the best way to achieve youth engagement in World or Regional Scout Committees.
- The need for NSOs to consider nominating younger candidates for the World Scout Committee has been highlighted consistently since 1993 (Conference Resolutions 1993-25, 2002-06, 2005-11, 2008-14).
- An analysis of the last three World Scout Committee elections indicates a clear increase in applicants under the age of 35. There has been an increase from two candidates aged under 35 (one aged under 30) in 2011 and 2014, both of whom were successfully elected, to six candidates aged under 35 (three aged under 30) in 2017, five of whom were successfully elected.
- 46 NSOs identified profiles of individuals aged 26 or under to serve as Youth Advisors to the World Scout Committee in the past four triennia (10 NSOs have nominated more than one young person).
- Candidates aged 30 or under have a high success rate, compared to older candidates, in World Scout Committee elections (80% for candidates aged 30 or under since 2008).
- 1/3 of the World Scout Committee members from the term 2017-2021 (not considering individuals seeking re-election), were 30 years of age or under at the time of election.
- The average age of the newly elected members has consistently decreased from 54 in 2002 to 36 in 2017.

Future of the World Youth Advisor system

Further noting,

- the transitional nature of the Youth Advisor system,
- the significant progress made in increasing youth participation in the World Scout Committee's membership,
- the goal to ensure and further strengthen youth participation amongst the voting members of the World Scout Committee,
- Conference Resolution 2017-07 and the work done in the past triennium towards evolving the format of the World Scout Conference and World Scout Youth Forum into an enhanced and youth empowering experience.

With the above taken into account, the World Scout Committee is of the view that the World Youth Advisor system, while it has been a positive step for youth involvement in World Scouting, may not be the ideal approach for holistic youth engagement in the World Scout Committee. In view of this, and subject to satisfactory progress in the next triennium, the World Scout Committee considers to discontinue the World Youth Advisor system at the end of the 2021-2024 Triennium.

Measures to ensure youth engagement in the World Scout Committee

In addition to the measures outlined in Draft Resolution 2021-G, the progress in monitoring youth involvement in decision-making, and considering the anticipated Report by December 2022 on identifying the structural barriers hindering youth involvement in World Scouting, the World Scout Committee should consider the following additional measures, amongst others, if results are unsatisfactory:

- Propose amended Rules of Procedure for future World Scout Conferences, allowing the election of the World Scout Committee to be conducted in two rounds of six, providing an opportunity for Member Organizations to ensure diversity of the Committee.
- Propose a Constitutional Amendment on the composition of the World Scout Committee to ensure the presence of young people as voting members.
- Propose a Constitutional Amendment on the composition of delegations to the World Scout Conference.

In advance of the formal consideration of Draft Resolution 2021-G, workshops will be organised during the upcoming World Scout Youth Forum and World Scout Conference to allow for Member Organizations to share their inputs and views to enrich the above proposals.

3.4. Opportunities to empower young people

In the past fifty years, opportunities for young people to share their ideas and experiences have substantially increased, by contributing to national policies, undertaking training for world citizenship, and contributing new ideas for Scouting.

An increasing number of National, Regional and World events have been providing opportunities for empowering more young people, such as Young Spokesperson Training, International Leadership Training, Regional and National Youth Forums and others.

Solidarity programmes have also been extended to enable wider participation of young people in events, particularly for those who previously would not have had access to these opportunities.

4. Current challenges in youth engagement

Despite the progress achieved, remaining challenges to ensure that young people are actively engaged at all levels were identified through research through a focus group conducted by the Youth Engagement project team 2020-2021.

Challenges at unit level

- There is cultural and generational resistance to empowering young people, due to fear of losing control and power.
- Lack of adult training and national policies that support youth engagement across all age sections.
- Lack of opportunities and safe spaces for young people to be engaged within NSOs' youth programme.
- Youth involvement in decision-making as a relevant and priority topic is not adopted by NSOs in their training courses.
- There is a gap between what is settled in several policies (World, Regional or National) and the effective implementation of the youth programme (specifically the Scout Method) at unit level.

Challenges at institutional level

- The perception that decision-making is only for adults sustains the uneven level of youth engagement across National and Regional structures.
- Less than 40% of NSO National Boards have young people under the age of 30.
- Some Regions have not met the target of at least 30% of delegates to Regional Scout Conferences being under 30 years of age.
- Despite the development and adoption of youth involvement policies at World level over the last decade, their implementation has been slow or ineffective in some Regions and NSOs.
- Systems that were created to ensure youth involvement in the decision-making of Scouting have remained relatively the same over the last decade.
- Not all NSOs can participate in the National Youth Councils or equivalent bodies within their countries.
- The educational and personal development opportunities offered by the Youth Advisor system are limited to only a few individuals every three years on Regional and World level.
- For some NSOs, the Youth Advisor system reduces the incentive to put forward young candidates to the World Scout Committee, as they are nominated instead for the role of Youth Advisor.
- Lack of clarity on how to implement youth engagement in the structures and systems without being merely about tokenism.
- An institutional culture that reinforces the status quo and perpetuates the lack of equal opportunities for young people's engagement.

Challenges at community level

- Lack of a youth engagement culture in society as a barrier for young people to advocate for their rights or take part in decision-making.
- Scouting is not perceived or recognised as a credible actor in the community, when it comes to involving young people in decision-making or leadership roles.
- Lack of a clear understanding of what it means to have young people involved in the community, as part of the decision-making processes or assuming leadership roles.
- Lack of community partnerships that could lead to a greater youth engagement and ownership of projects and decisions.

5. Youth Engagement Strategy

Based on current findings and identified challenges, a 'big picture' approach is needed to tackle the cultural and attitudinal changes needed for youth engagement to realise the full potential of Scouting as a movement for young people by young people, supported by adults.

To achieve sustainable youth engagement, broader attitudinal changes will be required, coupled with a revitalised approach to increasing the holistic development of young people. This can be done by ensuring that all young people engaged in Scouting are offered a wide range of educational and capacity building opportunities. The aim being a situation where young people are among those best suited and qualified to be involved in all roles within the Scout Movement.

The Youth Engagement Strategy provides the means to create the urgent structural and attitudinal 'push' for ensuring that effective youth engagement practices are developed and become every person's and every NSO's priority. Based on the Youth Engagement Strategy a framework can be established to ensure that all aspects of youth engagement are monitored, implemented and evaluated effectively.

5.1. Main goals and key objectives

The Youth Engagement Strategy's main goals and key objectives build on the Strategy for Scouting's strategic priority on youth engagement. They provide concrete guidance to all levels of the Scout Movement, as a leading educational youth movement, on the action to take to strengthen this important area of work.

Main goals	Key objectives
1. To recognise youth engagement as a key educational component of the Scout Movement, deeply rooted in the Scout Method, and reinforce its implementation in every aspect of Scouting at all levels.	1.1 To enhance training, leadership, and capacity development opportunities across all aspects of WOSM, incorporating the competencies that are recognised as crucial to becoming active citizens in the 21 st century, and tackling emerging issues and challenges.
	1.2 To support the content review and design of National Youth Programmes, so as to strengthen the application of all elements of the Scout Method and youth engagement through its implementation.
	1.3 To support NSOs to ensure they provide similar opportunities for young people, both in terms of fostering new skills and providing opportunities for young people to apply, and further develop, their existing skills.
	1.4 To incorporate, strengthen and use the core principles of youth engagement and associated transferable skills wherever possible in all events, projects, and working groups.
	1.5 To develop strategic alliances to demonstrate Scouting's added value to society, through the development and leadership of young people.
	1.6 To create instruments and mechanisms to support young people's capacity building through community service and entrepreneurship projects, as a valuable set of skills for life.
2. To reinforce the basic principle of youth engagement in Scouting, as a key element for adults and young people working together and promote intergenerational dialogue and collaborative environments, through appropriate training and	2.1 To support the content review and improvement of training systems for Adults in Scouting, in order to reinforce the role of the adult leader as the main facilitator and advocate for youth engagement, through the implementation of the youth programme.
	2.2 To create processes and methods to engage young people in the reviewing and development of the youth programme, to ensure that it responds to their needs, while staying relevant and meaningful.
	2.3 To develop learning opportunities and instruments, for both young people and adults, to embrace the concepts of youth engagement and intergenerational dialogue in safe spaces.
	2.4 To develop mechanisms for mentoring programmes and leadership training to support successful collaboration and transition between roles at all levels.
	2.5 To ensure the development of opportunities and mechanisms to engage with partners, to enable youth engagement and intergenerational dialogue.

capacity-building opportunities for Adults in Scouting.	2.6 To establish a systemic culture of youth engagement at all levels to enhance attitudinal changes and improve Scouting as a youth-led movement.
3. To increase youth engagement by including more young people in decision-making bodies at all levels of Scouting.	3.1 To review all existing structures, mechanisms and systems at all levels with the aim of strengthening their potential contribution to increasing youth engagement in decision-making within Scout Movement and outside of Scouting.
	3.2 To increase the number of National Policies on Youth Engagement, in line with the World Scout Youth Involvement Policy, that include clear structures, tools, processes, objectives, and indicators for all age sections and decision-making bodies.
	3.3 To develop instruments and mechanisms to communicate and promote available institutional opportunities at all levels of the Scout Movement and outside of Scouting.
	3.4 To increase the benchmark for ensuring a representation of at least 40% of young people in the different decision-making bodies at National, Regional and World levels of WOSM and operational frameworks and support their full engagement.
	3.5 To develop mechanisms for mentoring programmes and leadership training to support young people to develop their skills within peer teams and decision-making bodies at all levels.
	3.6 To strengthen the educational aspect of all events that focus on the empowerment of young people and their progression in decision-making.