



SCOUTS[®]
Creating a Better World



Youth for Change

Youth for change – position paper

Unlocking our potential

"Young people are a tremendous source of energy, creativity and values that can shape a better future, both inside Scouting and in the local communities in which they live."

As individuals, each and every young person has his/her own talent, capacity, creativity, expertise and opinion. These are necessarily different from the ones of the adults because they are shaped through different life experiences, in different times, in different types of spaces (not only geographic).

Young people account for a quarter of the world's population. This numerous part of the human race is a powerful force and is giving making a significant contribution in facing both local and global challenges by taking action in their communities: providing for their families, implementing development projects, advocating for human rights, participating in decision-making, providing solutions for collective problems... they are not just "adults in-the-making" but can also be active members of their communities. Now.

Scouting is a Movement of young people, supported by adults. Of the total WOSM membership - over 40 million members - more than 82% are young people. They are in their formative years; acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes that make them more capable to perform positively in society. Not only in the future, but also today. The fact that, while in Scouting, young people are in a learning process, doesn't mean that they can't make an active contribution, within and outside the Movement. If we want that to happen, some avenues can be explored at the different levels of the Organization (WOSM).

Within **Scouting**, two issues need to be high on the agenda:

- **Youth in decision-making**
After 12 years of having "youth involvement in decision making" as a strategic priority in WOSM, some progress has been achieved but there is still much room for improvement. This goes both for the educational side (having young people, in the Units, using all the opportunities provided by the Scout Method) but mainly for the institutional aspect (at national and international level).
NSOs and the World and Regional structures need to explore and try out new ways to have the unique contribution of young people in the decisions that affect us all. This may imply innovative methods but also to adapt the ones we're using now, in order to be more youth-friendly. These new methods may include: extending rights of voting and/or representation to young people, advisory bodies, job-shadowing, shared leadership, mentoring programs, active methods in institutional gatherings (like General Assemblies), succession planning, limitation of terms of office... and others.
- **Intergenerational dialogue**
By focusing so intensively on Youth Involvement, many people feel threatened because they think that those not considered as "young people" will be excluded. This should not be the case. The Mission of Scouting is better achieved when there is a healthy partnership between young people and adults, which ends up being mutually beneficial. In Scouting, adult leaders have an enabling role; if they want to do it well, they need to engage in constructive dialogue and collaboration with young people.

By "young people" in Scouting, we mean all those who benefit from the learning opportunities that Scouting provides (being children, adolescents or young adults).

By "adults" in Scouting, we mean all those whose main responsibility is to ensure that Scouting remains a learning environment, be it by playing educational roles or support ones.



NSOs and the World and Regional structures need to provide opportunities for generations to work together and learn from each other. This may imply mixed youth-adult teams working on different projects, mentoring and coaching opportunities, training opportunities aimed at knowledge and skills sharing, etc. On the other hand, Scouting can maximize the impact of youth in **Society** (and thus, its own impact as a Movement) by taking action in the following domains.

- **Youth changing communities**
Young people can be a powerful force in changing their communities for the better. By having Scouts engaged in these types of initiatives, Scouting is not only increasing its immediate social impact but also providing opportunities for young people to develop community awareness and citizenship skills. Scouts need to be change-makers and peace-builders in their own communities and in the world, at large.
NSOs and the World and Regional structures need to provide opportunities for young people to be exposed to and lead meaningful projects and initiatives that contribute to change that creates “a better world”. This may be achieved through service projects, community development initiatives, partnerships with other organisations, advocacy, peer education, social accountability environment protection and preservation, disaster preparedness and relief ...
- **Skills for Life**
Scouting provides “Education for Life”. However, “life” today (and moreover, in the future) has new demands and requires a new set of skills if one wants have a real impact in Society. ILO statistics show that, currently, about 73.8 million young people are unemployed globally. Part of the reason for this is a mismatch between the skills young people are taught in schools and the skills employers seek. In order to stand out, to be attractive to employers, but also to inspire change in their communities, today’s young people need to be flexible and adaptive, team workers and leaders, creative problem solvers, efficient organizers. Scouting needs to offer an environment that enables and encourages the awareness and acquisition of these important life skills.
NSOs and the World and Regional structures need to ensure that our programmes include opportunities for gaining the relevant skills for the 21st Century. Those should enable leadership development, the development of organizational skills, project management skills, the enhancement of creative thinking, as well as to learn how to translate skills gained in Scouting into the job market language.

The World Scout Committee believes that more needs to be done, at all levels of the organisation, to unlock our human potential and increase our social impact.

The tremendous potential of our Movement lies in the energy, eagerness and creativity of our youth as well as in the experience and knowledge of our adults. In order to truly unlock this potential, we need to create the right environment, which includes making room for young people to take responsibilities and lead, with the support of adults. By broadening the opportunities for young people to gain experience and confidence, Scouting will be increasing its capacity to make a change and create a better world.

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