

Youth Empowerment Framework

As approved by the European Scout Committee
in November 2024.

Content

Fundamentals	3
Recommendations for the next Triennium	3
Terminology	4
Understanding Youth Empowerment in the European Scout Region	5
Recent Developments and Good Practices in Youth Empowerment	6
European Scout Region and Member Organizations	6
Other Scout Regions	6
Intergovernmental Organisations	6
Non-Governmental Organisations	7
World Scouting	8
Implementation of the Youth Engagement Strategy in the European Scout Region	9
Vision	10
Outcomes	11



Fundamentals

The Youth Empowerment Team of the European Scout Region was established to work between 15 November 2022 and 15 June 2025, following the conference resolution 24ESC-02, with a primary goal of ensuring that young people and youth empowerment are held at the centre of all aspects of what we do in Scouting.

This document presents the work of the European Scout Region's Youth Empowerment Team, which focused on:

- Identifying and developing best practices in Youth Empowerment within and external to Scouting, considering perspectives from Member Organizations of the European Scout Region, other Scout Regions, partner organisations and developments at the World Level of World Scouting.
- Developing a framework for implementing WOSM's Youth Engagement Strategy (Document 10, World Scout Conference 2021) within the Region.
- Developing a Regional Youth Empowerment Action Plan, including a focus on Youth Empowerment in decision-making, guided by the outcomes of the World Scout Committee's Youth Engagement in Decision-Making Task Force 2021-2024.
- Supporting and strengthening Member Organizations' capacity to put young candidates forward to the European Scout Committee.

Recommendations for the next Triennium

The final version of this document was presented to the European Scout Committee with the following recommendations as approved.

- Establish a Youth Empowerment team to work on the topics throughout the Triennium 2025-2028.
- Engage more in-depth with the Member Organizations to put forward young leaders.
- Engage more with the other Scout Regions and the world level to align regarding what has been decided.
- Explore European-level leadership training programmes/opportunities and funding for those.



Terminology

Several different terms have been used in the past two decades to reflect World Scouting's ever-evolving attitude towards, understanding of, and approaches to enabling young people to take a more active role in all aspects of their lives and different aspects of the Scout Movement. Youth Participation and Youth Involvement have been referenced in World Scouting policies for several years. Youth Engagement was introduced in World Scouting via Conference Document 10 in 2020. World Scouting introduced Youth Leadership in September 2023, when the World Scout Committee published their Youth Engagement in Decision-Making report. The report notes, "Youth Leadership reflects the vision and mindset that the World Scout Committee has envisioned to create a more inclusive environment where young people can lead decision-making processes and represent their voices in a meaningful and effective way within an intergenerational context."

Youth Empowerment has been used to capture this area of work in the European Scout Region since at least 2010. This report follows the World Scout Committee's lead in transitioning to Youth Leadership terminology, and extensive consultation was conducted with young people from across Europe. Results of consultations indicated that European young people often understand Youth Leadership as a synonym for 'young leaders' or youth members assuming responsibilities of 'leaders'/'adult volunteers' responsible for younger programme sections in their groups. Although this is an important pursuit, it is not the primary or intended focus of the Region's work (24ESC-02 (2022)). Therefore, Youth Empowerment is the term selected for use in this document.



Understanding Youth Empowerment in the European Scout Region

Following extensive consultation with 298 young people from 26 countries at two editions of the WOSM European Agora (2023 and 2024) and Roverway in 2024, the Youth Empowerment Team established a common European understanding of youth empowerment.

In the context of European Scouting, youth empowerment means:

“Ensuring young people are at the forefront of our Movement, are supported to have a growth mindset and have the skills to make an impact in the world.”

From the conversations with young people, it was clear that they felt empowerment must be an internal and external process. Externally to themselves, they expressed frustration with the lack of opportunities to access leadership positions, with many unaware of how they could become part of national or international leadership. Furthermore, they were not necessarily equipped with the appropriate tools to succeed in these roles, or the roles felt too demanding given the realities of contemporary young people. Internally, it was clear that young people felt a responsibility to their community and recognised personal growth as an essential part of being an empowered young person.

The Scouts who took part in the last two editions of the WOSM European Agora in 2023 and 2024 highlighted the importance of youth empowerment for personal growth, leadership and social change. They value having a voice, real responsibilities and a space to express their ideas and lead initiatives. Obstacles mentioned regarding having leadership positions were lack of time, scarcity of opportunities, difficulty networking, lack of experience and knowledge and geographical distance. Improvement ideas centred around more accessible communication, access to support and mentors, training and creating more spaces for participation.

At Roverway 2024 in Norway, young people were consulted during a dedicated path focused on youth empowerment and during the main camp. Participants frequently emphasised the importance of engaging young people in decision-making processes at all levels. They highlighted the need for young individuals to take on responsibilities, which fosters intergenerational cooperation and respect. Additionally, they called for education focused on empowerment and leadership, along with opportunities for skill development. Additionally, topics such as mental health and well-being were also mentioned, along with a strong demand for resources, support and opportunities to help young people become more empowered.



Recent Developments and Good Practices in Youth Empowerment

European Scout Region and Member Organizations

The data from the past three European Scout Conferences (ESC) shows an increase in the percentage of delegates under 30, rising from 39% in 2016 and 2019 to 45% in the most recent European Scout Conference, which took place in 2022. Despite the slight increase in youth representation among delegates, this is not reflected in the candidates for the European Scout Committee, where only 1 out of 8 candidates was under 30 in 2022. Similarly, in both the 2016 and 2019 European Scout Conferences, only 1 out of 10 candidates was under 30. This discrepancy highlights a gap between youth participation and youth leadership, emphasising the need to empower young people to be at the forefront of our Movement in decision-making roles.

At Roverway in 2024, 180 young people from 22 countries shared their views on youth empowerment. They emphasised the importance of empowerment through adult support and access to resources and called for intergenerational dialogue to ensure their voices are heard.

A consultation with Member Organizations revealed that while youth empowerment strategies are often deemed unnecessary due to the belief that young people are at the core of their work, this does not guarantee their presence in decision-making structures.

As of 1 October 2023, the Member Organizations of Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan joined the European Scout Region. Albania became a member of the World Organization of the Scout Movement in the World Scout Conference in 2024 and, therefore, a member of the European Scout Region. While these Member Organizations may have more foundational needs at this stage, it is crucial to consider their needs when implementing this framework.

Other Scout Regions

We are currently consulting with other Scout Regions regarding best practices. Those practices will be added here soon.

Intergovernmental Organisations

The UN Youth Strategy, launched in 2018, is a comprehensive framework designed to enhance the UN's engagement with young people across its activities. Known as Youth 2030: Working With and For Young People, the strategy



aims to support the empowerment, development, and participation of youth in decision-making processes at all levels. It focuses on five key pillars: amplifying youth voices, ensuring access to education and employment, promoting health and well-being, protecting human rights, and supporting youth as active agents of peace, justice, and sustainability. The latest report on the implementation of the strategy highlights that while UN entities and UN Country Teams are making progress toward achieving the strategy's goals, the pace of progress remains slow.

The Council of Europe has put a new focus on youth empowerment following the Reykjavik Declaration, adopted at the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government (16-17 May 2023). The organisation is now integrating the youth perspective across all of its work and continuing to work on young people's participation in political processes. The Council of Europe also has a youth sector strategy, which comprises of four thematic priorities: revitalising pluralistic democracy, access to rights, living together in peaceful and inclusive societies and youth work. The organisation puts a strong focus on youth in leadership, which is demonstrated in its co-management system, where decisions about the work of the youth sector are made jointly between young people and government representatives.

Non-Governmental Organisations

Several youth NGOs were consulted to gather insights on how they address youth empowerment within their organisations. The discussions focused on the involvement of young people in decision-making, the balance between adult support and youth leadership, the presence of youth policies or strategies, the tools used to support youth empowerment, and the challenges they face.

The European Youth Forum (EYF) is the biggest platform of youth organisations in Europe, representing over 100 youth organisations. EYF is a youth-led organisation, and participation in General Assemblies is restricted to individuals under 35, ensuring that young people are at the forefront of decision-making processes. While there is no formal youth engagement strategy, the organisation equips young delegates through various methods, including introductory sessions about their work and comprehensive handbooks detailing essential information for representatives.

The Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU) represents the voice of school students in Europe. OBESSU empowers young people (aged 14–25) by equipping them with the skills to lead and make decisions. The youth-led board is supported by a secretariat that handles operations, ensuring that leadership remains in the hands of young people. Leadership development includes handover meetings, guidance, and training on power dynamics, including a feminist leadership principle. Challenges like communication, funding, and cultural differences are addressed by providing targeted training and coaching and fostering an inclusive environment where youth are empowered to break barriers and take charge.

Youth and Environment Europe is an environmental advocacy youth organisation coordinating national and local member organisations. Its guiding



principles mainstream youth empowerment. All board members, staff, and volunteers must be under 35, and all of their actions are youth-centred and have a youth empowerment focus. While the organisation focuses on the environment, it delivers several non-formal education activities that focus on developing leadership within its membership through European funds.

World Scouting

Youth Engagement in Decision Making World Scout Committee report in September 2023 highlighted the World Scout Committee's efforts to "to promote effective and sustainable youth leadership in decision-making within Scouting" to "centre around advancing the story around youth engagement, improving the qualitative approach to monitoring youth engagement, and fostering intergenerational leadership within WOSM." The following barriers were identified in the report: perception, monitoring, cultural, awareness of opportunities, capacity building and financial support. On a dedicated TreeHouse page, the actions that World Scouting plans to take to address each barrier are outlined. Each barrier includes multiple tasks to champion youth leadership and embrace intergenerational dialogue within Scouting. Additionally, the World Scout Committee has approved additional measures to strengthen youth engagement in the World Scout Committee itself, further intended as alternative measures to Youth Advisors, including training potential candidates, nominating candidates under 30, committee nomination process, mentorship programme, and continuous monitoring.

A number of noteworthy developments regarding Youth Empowerment and Youth Leadership emerged from the 43rd World Scout Conference in Egypt in 2024. "A world shaped by youth" was adopted as one of the three Impact Statements of the new Strategy for Scouting. "Innovative Education" was adopted as one of the Strategic Priorities for the Scout Movement, with a "commitment to youth leadership" highlighted in the "Fit for Purpose Organisation" priority and "a vision to empower children and young people" highlighted in the "Influential Organisation" priority. In addition, through the efforts of young delegates who were in attendance at the Conference, the three Main Goals of the Youth Engagement Strategy (Document 10, World Scout Conference 2021) were included in the adopted Triennial Plan.

1. [The World Scout Committee's Report on Youth Engagement in Decision-Making](#), September 2023.
2. [Summary of the World Scout Committee's efforts](#) to "promote effective and sustainable youth leadership in decision-making within Scouting" to "centre around advancing the story around youth engagement, improving the qualitative approach to monitoring youth engagement, and fostering intergenerational leadership within WOSM." – (summary of September 2023 report).
3. [Enhancing Youth Engagement in Decision-Making Circular](#), October 2023.



Implementation of the Youth Engagement Strategy in the European Scout Region

Although the work of the Youth Engagement in Decision-Making Task Force at the World Level focuses specifically on decision-making spaces, the Youth Engagement Strategy outlined in Conference Document 10 from the World Scout Conference 2021 emphasises the need for 'holistic youth engagement'. To fully embrace this approach, it is necessary to look beyond decision-making spaces and examine the Movement as a whole.

The Youth Engagement Strategy document (Document 10, World Scout Conference 2021) states: *"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."

The Youth Engagement Strategy (Document 10, World Scout Conference 2021) was not finalised as such in the Triennium following the 42nd World Scout Conference in 2021. However, as briefed above (see World Level), the three Main Goals of the Youth Engagement Strategy were included in the adopted Triennial Plan at the 43rd World Scout Conference in 2024.



Vision

By the 26th European Scout Conference 2028, young people in Europe supported by the Member Organizations will feel empowered to be active citizens in their communities, be supported to develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes through the Scout Method, and feel more confident in engaging in any role at any level in a Movement led by young people in partnership with adults.

Outcomes

- 1. Youth Empowerment is embraced as a guiding principle of Scouting, deeply rooted in the Scout Method, and is implemented in every aspect of Scouting at all levels.**
 - 1.1. 75% of Member Organizations have conducted a review of their national programme with a Youth Empowerment lens or are in the process of doing so.
 - 1.2. 100% of European Scout Region events are planned with a Youth Empowerment lens.
- 2. Young people have access to educational opportunities, enabling them to develop into empowered, active citizens.**
 - 2.1. 60% of Member Organizations have a plan to improve Youth Empowerment.
 - 2.2. 100% of European Scout Region educational events have a Youth Empowerment programme element.
- 3. Young people take the lead in the decision-making spaces of our Movement, at all levels, supported by adults.**
 - 3.1. 40% of candidates for the European Scout Committee are aged under 30 years.
 - 3.2. 80% of national boards have two or more people aged under 30 years.



Synergy with the World Strategy

Document 10, World Scout Conference 2021 - Youth Engagement Strategy, Main Goals	Relevant points from the World Triennial Plan 2024-2027	European Scout Region - Youth Empowerment Strategy, Key Outcomes
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. d. The Scout Movement will be the world's leading provider of youth leadership development, ensuring its implementation at all levels inside and outside of Scouting.	1. Youth Empowerment is embraced as a guiding principle of Scouting, deeply rooted in the Scout Method, and is implemented in every aspect of Scouting at all levels.
1. 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 capacity-building opportunities for Adults in Scouting.	2. a. The Scout Movement has identified and actively reduced barriers, supporting co-creating content, structures, and processes through intergenerational dialogue and learning, allowing more young people and adults to experience Scouting and participate at all levels.	2. Young people have access to educational opportunities, enabling them to develop into empowered, active citizens.
3. Increase youth engagement by including more young people in decision-making bodies at all levels of Scouting.	5. e. The Scout Movement continues to strengthen youth engagement and leadership by including more young people in decision-making bodies at all levels of Scouting.	1. Young people take the lead in decision-making spaces in our Movement at all levels, supported by adults.



Working priorities by Outcomes

To reach the vision outlined above, the European Scout Region must undertake specific activities that contribute to the three key outcomes. These activities are divided into understanding, capacity building, and action.

Outcome 1

Youth Empowerment is embraced as a guiding principle of Scouting, deeply rooted in the Scout Method, and is implemented in every aspect of Scouting at all levels.

1. 75% of Member Organisations have conducted a review of their national programme with a Youth Empowerment lens.
2. 100% of European Scout Region events are planned with a Youth Empowerment lens.

Working Priorities

1. Understanding
 - Development of a Europe-wide agreed understanding of Youth Empowerment in Scouting.
2. Capacity building
 - Development of a toolkit for reviewing national programme with a youth empowerment lens.
 - Development of a toolkit for event planning with a youth empowerment lens.
3. Action
 - Engage with Member Organizations to raise awareness of new and existing tools and support for youth empowerment, including youth engagement as WOSM service.
 - Deliver a communications campaign in partnership with young people, engaging the local, national, and international Scout community on youth empowerment topics.



Synergy with the World Strategy Outcome 1

1.1 To support the content review and design of National Youth Programmes to strengthen the application of all elements of the Scout Method and youth engagement through its implementation.

1.2 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.

1.3 To incorporate, strengthen and use the core principles of youth engagement and associated transferable skills wherever possible in all events, projects, and working groups.

1.4 To develop strategic alliances to demonstrate Scouting's added value to society through the development and leadership of young people.



Outcome 2

Young people have access to educational opportunities, enabling them to develop into empowered, active citizens.

1. 60% of Member Organizations have a plan to improve Youth Empowerment.
2. 100% of European Scout Region educational events have a Youth Empowerment programme element.

Working Priorities

1. Understanding
 - Map the current status of youth empowerment plans amongst European Scout Region Member Organizations.
2. Capacity building
 - Develop a toolkit for creating a youth empowerment plan for Member Organizations.
3. Action
 - Engage with Member Organizations to raise awareness of the newly developed tool and provide support for its utilisation.
 - Support European Scout Region event planning teams directly to include youth empowerment in event programmes.
 - Draft a Conference Resolution to mandate the inclusion of youth empowerment in European Scout Region events moving forward.



Synergy with the World Strategy Outcome 2

2.1 Enhance training, leadership, and capacity development opportunities across all aspects of World Scouting, incorporating the competencies that are recognised as crucial to becoming active citizens in the 21st century and tackling emerging issues and challenges.

2.2 Create instruments and mechanisms to support young people's capacity-building through community service.

2.3 Support the content review and improvement of training systems for Adults in Scouting to reinforce the role of the adult leader as the main facilitator and advocate for youth engagement through implementing the youth programme.

2.4 Create processes and methods to engage young people in reviewing and developing the youth programme to ensure it responds to their needs while staying relevant and meaningful.

2.5 Develop learning opportunities and instruments for young people and adults to embrace the concepts of youth engagement and intergenerational dialogue in safe spaces.

2.6 Develop mechanisms for mentoring programmes and leadership training to support successful collaboration and transition between roles at all levels.

2.7 Ensure the development of opportunities and mechanisms to engage with partners, enabling youth engagement and intergenerational dialogue.

2.7 Establish a systemic culture of youth engagement at all levels to enhance attitudinal changes and improve Scouting as a youth-led Movement.



Outcome 3

Young people, supported by adults, take the lead in decision-making spaces at all levels of the Scout Movement.

1. 40% of candidates for the European Scout Committee are under 30 years old.
2. 80% of national boards have two or more people aged under 30 years.

Working Priorities

1. Understanding
 - Map the current state of young people in decision-making spaces in European National Scout Organizations and National Scout Associations.
 - Engage with Member Organizations to understand barriers to nominating young candidates for the European Scout Committee (ESC).
 - Engage with young people to understand barriers to participation in decision-making functions.
2. Capacity building
 - Develop a resource showcasing good practices on organisational structures that support young people in decision-making.
 - Develop a framework for the capacity building of young people to support them in leadership.
3. Action
 - To align with the World Level:
 - Amend Conference Rules of Procedure to allow an extended window for nominating ESC candidates if not enough young candidates are nominated by the original deadline.
 - Train potential European Scout Committee candidates (in conjunction with the Candidate Journey Team).
 - Ensure financial support/discounts for young people attending the European Scout Conference.
 - Evaluate the support needs of the elected European Scout Committee members.
 - Provide financial support to young people to develop their leadership competencies.
 - Deliver targeted communications to young people, making decision-making roles attractive.



Synergy with the World Strategy Outcome 3

3.1 Review all existing structures, mechanisms and systems at all levels to strengthen their potential contribution to increasing youth engagement in decision-making within and outside of Scouting.

3.2 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 Develop instruments and mechanisms to communicate and promote available institutional opportunities at all levels of the Scout Movement and outside of Scouting.

3.4 Increase the benchmark to ensure the representation of at least 40% of young people in the different decision-making bodies at the national, regional, and world levels of the Scout Movement and operational frameworks and support their full engagement.

3.5 Develop mechanisms for mentoring programmes and leadership training to support young people's skill development within peer teams and decision-making bodies at all levels.





© World Scout Bureau Inc.
Management
October 2024

World Scout Bureau
Europe Support Centres
Geneva, Switzerland
Brussels, Belgium

GENEVA
P.O.Box 327,
Rue Henri-Christiné 5
CH-1211 Geneva 4
Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 705 1100

BRUSSELS
rue de l'Industrie 10
B-1000 Brussels
Belgium
Phone: +32 2 893 24 35

Reproduction is authorised to
National Scout Organizations and
Associations which are members of
the World Organization of the Scout
Movement.