Adult Volunteering Policy

Draft 1

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Part I. Policy System and Common Foundations

This part establishes the common principles, terminology, governance, and implementation expectations that apply across a World Scouting Policy System. Read it as the shared foundation for the Youth Programme Policy, Youth Engagement Policy, Adults in Scouting Policy, and Safe from Harm Policy.

a. Background

World Scouting has developed several global policies to support and guide National Scout Organizations (NSOs) in delivering safe, relevant, high-quality Scouting experiences. Over time, these policies have evolved independently, reflecting different priorities, mandates, and stages in the Movement's development.

The 2021-2024 World Scout Committee, having in mind the approval dates of the existing 4 policies* took the decision that an articulated and harmonised review process should be initiated right after the adoption of a new Strategy for Scouting so that to ensure strategic alignment. That adoption took place in the 43rd World Scout Conference held in 2024.

The review also responds to resolutions and decisions adopted by the World Scout Conference and the World Scout Committee, including commitments related to Safe from Harm, Health and Well-being, Youth Engagement, educational quality, inclusion, and organizational effectiveness.

The new policies build on the strengths and content of the previous policies, updating key principles and introducing new concepts where needed to ensure relevance to emerging trends and needs.

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b. What Policies Are

In World Scouting, a policy is a purpose-driven, values-based set of principles that defines the Movement's shared aims and directions in a specific area. It serves as an institutional tool for long-term change - providing stability, guiding innovation, and remaining adaptable to evolving contexts.

World Scouting policies establish the principles, commitments, and expectations that guide decision-making and implementation across the Movement. Policies provide direction on what World Scouting seeks to achieve and the conditions required for success.

Guiding Principles

All World Scouting policies are guided by common principles:

- Mission-driven and values-based.
- Youth-centred and educational.
- Safe, inclusive, and accessible.
- Evidence-informed and future-oriented.
- Adaptable to different contexts.
- Based on shared responsibility and accountability.
- Committed to participation, partnership, and continuous improvement.

Policies as a System

The World Scouting policy framework has been developed as an interconnected system between:

- Youth Programme Policy,
- Youth Leadership Policy,
- Adult Volunteering Policy (previous name - Adults in Scouting Policy),
- Safe from Harm Policy

This policy system aims to achieve its outcomes through the interactions among these four policy areas. It defines the relationships among 4 autonomous but interconnected policies,

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creates a common policy architecture, improves coherence between policies, strengthens implementation support, and clarifies how the policies work together as a system.

Each policy has a distinct purpose but cannot achieve its objectives on its own. The policies reinforce and depend on one another.

Quality Youth Programmes require capable, supported Adults and Volunteers; meaningful Youth Leadership requires safe, inclusive environments; Safe from Harm depends on responsible Adults, Volunteers, and active participation by young people; and Adults in Scouting supports the volunteers who make all other aspects of Scouting possible.

Delivery Settings

Scouting is delivered in a variety of contexts around the world, typically identified through:

- **Community-Based Scouting** - Scouting delivered primarily through community-based Scout Groups and local volunteer structures.
- **Faith-Based Scouting** – Scouting delivered within Faith based venues that deliver the Scouting Programme within a faith setting.
- **School-Based Scouting** - Scouting delivered within educational institutions where schools play a significant role in facilitating participation, leadership, organization, or programme delivery.

While implementation contexts and delivery methods may differ, the Mission of Scouting, Scout Method, educational purpose, and values remain consistent across all delivery settings. The policy system supports implementation across both community-based and school-based Scouting while allowing contextual adaptation.

c. Target Audience

The primary audience for the World Scouting policy system is National Scout Organizations and National Scout Associations.

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NSOs and NSAs are responsible for contextualizing, implementing, monitoring, and continuously improving the application of these policies within their own realities at the national level.

Adult Volunteers also share responsibility for upholding and applying these guiding principles within their respective contexts, thereby contributing to their effective implementation across all levels of the Movement.

The policies support governance bodies, professional staff, volunteers, trainers, commissioners, teaching scouters, educational leaders, and other individuals responsible for creating the conditions necessary for quality Scouting.

World Scouting supports NSOs through policy guidance, services, implementation resources, capacity development, and opportunities for shared learning.

d. Beneficiaries of the Policy System

The World Scouting policy system is built around beneficiaries' needs.

> **Young People -** Young people are Scouting's primary beneficiaries. Through Scouting, they access educational opportunities, personal development, participation, leadership experiences, and opportunities to become active citizens who contribute positively to their communities.
>
> **Adults -** Individuals who support young people and carry out their roles while also benefiting from the Movement. They benefit from meaningful volunteering experiences, learning opportunities, support, recognition, personal growth, and opportunities to contribute to young people's development and the wider Movement.

As a system, these policies create an integrated experience for young people and adults in all contexts worldwide.

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e. Implementation of the Policy System

The policies' effectiveness as a system depends on coordinated implementation.

Policies alone do not create change. Their impact depends on NSOs' ability to build the structures, culture, leadership, resources, and support systems needed to implement them.

Implementation should therefore be approached as a system rather than through isolated policy actions. NSOs should consider how Youth Programme, Adult Volunteering Policy, Safe from Harm, and Youth Leadership interact and reinforce one another within their governance, educational, safeguarding, and volunteer management systems. This should consider that implementation should be proportional to NSO relations and capacities.

Successful implementation requires enabling environments that support learning, participation, leadership, safety, inclusion, accountability, and continuous improvement.

f. Common Definitions

Definitions

- **Adult Volunteering** - A systematic approach to supporting adults to improve the effectiveness, commitment, and motivation of adult leadership, so that better programmes are delivered by and for young people. It also enhances the organization's overall effectiveness and efficiency.
- **Adults** - An individual who has reached the *age of majority,* typically 18 in most jurisdictions - the legal age at which a person is recognised as an adult and granted full legal rights and responsibilities, as defined by national law.

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- **Young adults - Members** in the range of 18 and *30*, who either take part in the Youth Programme or take on leadership roles within Scouting by delivering the Youth Programme (YP) to other *young people*, supporting adults in their functions, or participating in organizational structures.

- **Volunteers** - are people involved in various activities without monetary remuneration (although expense reimbursement may be allowed). This involvement is undertaken entirely of the individual's own free will. The benefit of this involvement is to support Scouting in achieving its Mission rather than the volunteer (although the volunteer should also gain and develop from their involvement).

- **Professional staff** - are people recruited to serve Scouting in a specific role or function in a paid, and often full-time or part-time employed, capacity. They may or may not have taken the Scout Promise, but they are committed to the Mission and values of Scouting, and the priorities of the Scout organization they work for. In addition to carrying out their paid role or function, professional staff may support Scouting in volunteer roles or functions that do not conflict with their professional roles or functions.

- **National Scout Organizations (NSOs)** - are responsible for managing, developing and supporting Scouting in each country. An NSO may have several member associations, known as National Scout Associations (NSAs). For the purpose of this document, we will use the terms 'NSO' or 'organization'. In any given country, the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM) will offer membership to one NSO only, to provide Scouting to young people in the country.

- **Volunteer Experience** - A scouting volunteer experience refers to the unpaid, free-will commitment of time and skills by adults to support the Scout

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Movement's educational mission and covers they way the volunteer feels

- **Adult Volunteer Journey** - a structured framework and process that guides volunteers from initial joining through active service, review and transitions

Other definitions can be consulted in the World Scouting Definitions Resource [FUTURE LINK HERE]

- Adult Scout member- Adult that is registered within the NSO membership system and over 18 years old. Could be performing roles as leader, manager, trustee, supporter, Excluding non-members that provide occasional support and not attend overnight events or regulated activities
- Adult volunteer
- Safe from Harm
- Scout Educator (paid teacher)

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Part II. World Adult Volunteering Policy

Chapter 1: Introduction

Why Adults and Volunteers in Scouting Matter

Scouting exists because of millions of adults who contribute their time, skills, experience, and commitment in a wide variety of roles, enabling the Movement to deliver quality educational experiences and fulfill its Mission in communities around the world.

Volunteering is also a mutually beneficial experience: it supports adults' personal and professional development while creating positive outcomes for young people, communities, and society.

Adults thrive in supportive, safe, healthy, inclusive, and respectful environments. Their wellbeing is a shared responsibility and a condition for sustainable volunteering. Safeguarding is part of this. When adults know that clear safeguards protect both young people and themselves, they trust the organization more. This trust helps them volunteer with confidence and enjoy a positive experience.

Finally, continuous learning, recognition, and personal growth enable adults to develop the competencies they need throughout their volunteer journey.

The **Adult Volunteering** Policy supports this Mission by strengthening how adults experience their volunteer journey and improving leadership and support at all levels. It responds to a changing context, in which people increasingly seek flexible, meaningful, and inclusive ways to contribute. Scouting itself continues to evolve with societal change, digital transformation, and young people's expectations. In this context, the policy

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promotes a modern, values-based approach to adult volunteering, while preserving the Movement's educational purpose and volunteer-led nature.

This policy sets out what World Scouting and National Scout Organizations are expected to do to create the conditions for effective adult volunteering, and what adults can expect throughout their journey, in any role they undertake. It establishes a common framework for all Member Organizations. NSOs must comply with applicable national legislation. Within this limit, the policy allows flexibility for adaptation to national structures and to cultural and local realities.

The implementation of this policy contributes to stronger Youth Programme delivery and better outcomes for young people. It leads to more effective, motivated, and better-supported volunteers and leaders. It also strengthens the sustainability and governance of Scout organizations. Ultimately, it increases Scouting's impact for communities and society.

Together, these elements set the foundation for the requirements and guidance detailed in the sections that follow.

Chapter 2: The Adult Volunteering Framework

2.1 The Adult Experience

For the purposes of this policy, the term “Adult Experience” refers to how volunteers feel during their participation in the Scout Movement, in relation to a specific role, regardless of the duration of their involvement.

NSOs should create an environment in which every adult feels welcomed, respected, supported, recognized, included, and able to contribute meaningfully while remaining connected to a

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shared purpose and global community. This results in a sense of belonging that enables the volunteer to participate in an integrated manner in the organization's guidelines and mission.

2.2. Core Elements of the Adult Experience

NSOs must ensure that a human centric approach is taken in designing and implementing the NSO Volunteering Policy. A positive Adult Experience is built on six interconnected elements that should guide how adults are engaged, supported, and valued throughout their involvement in Scouting.

a. Mutual Expectations

Adults and NSOs must have clear, realistic mutual expectations about their roles, responsibilities, availability and commitments.

b. Learning and Development

Adults must have access to continuous, accessible, and competency-based development opportunities that support both personal growth and effective performance in their roles.

c. Support, Wellbeing, and Safeguarding

Adults must receive appropriate support, resources, and guidance to carry out their roles effectively. NSOs should promote a culture of care that supports adults' wellbeing and creates safe, healthy conditions for involvement, Safeguarding principles protect both young people and adults. They also build trust and psychological safety and so contribute directly to a positive Adult Experience. Consider the impact of multiple roles and tasks.

d. Flexible and Accessible Volunteering

Adults must have opportunities to contribute through different roles and levels of commitment and to transition between roles as their circumstances, motivations, and availability of change.

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NSOs are encouraged to draw on the modalities of flexible volunteering described in Annex ___.

e. Inclusion, Diversity, Representation and Belonging

NSOs must actively remove barriers to participation, promote equity, value and celebrate diversity, work towards reflecting the communities they serve, and foster a genuine sense of belonging at every level of the Movement.

f. Recognition and Appreciation

Adults' contributions must be consistently acknowledged and appreciated through appropriate formal and informal recognition.

2.3. Integrated Approach

The Adult Experience should be embedded across all aspects of Adult Volunteering and reflected in policies, systems, leadership, organizational culture, and practices. These core elements should guide the design and delivery of the Adult Experience while allowing NSOs to adapt their approach to their legal and cultural contexts and needs.

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Chapter 3: **The Adult Volunteer Journey**

3.1 The Adult Journey

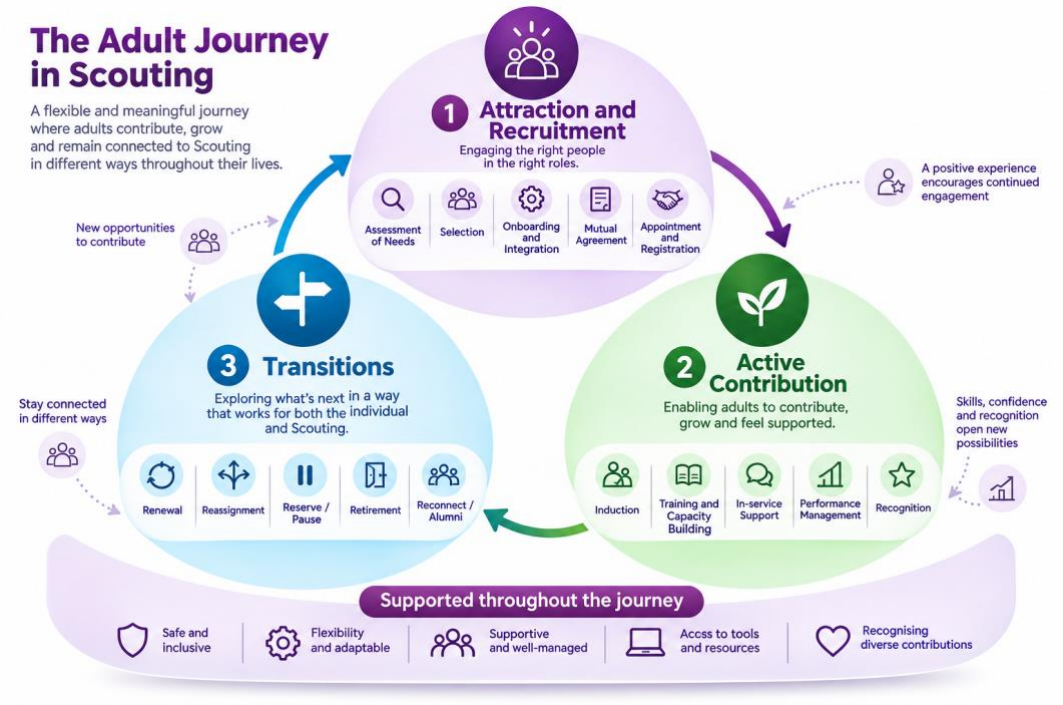
The Adult Journey describes how adults experience their involvement in Scouting, from their first contact with the Movement through different forms of contribution, learning, transition, and continued connection.

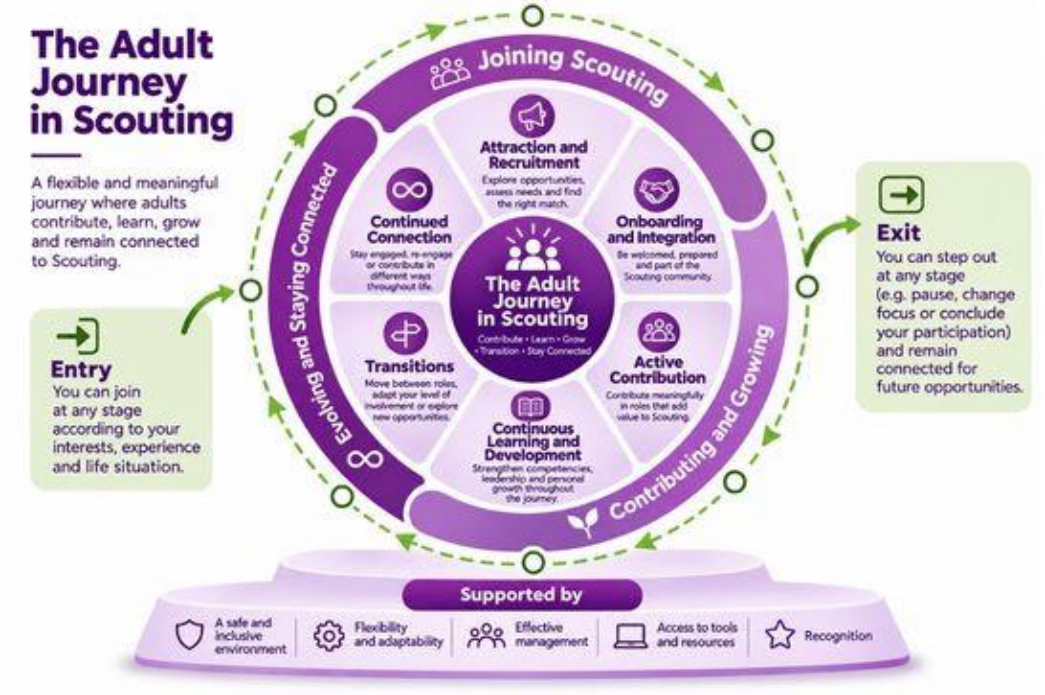
Adults may have multiple roles and in different stages of the journey per role

These stages form a continuous journey rather than a sequence of isolated processes. Adults may move between stages, change roles, adjust their level of involvement, temporarily pause their participation, or re-engage at different points throughout their time in Scouting.

*[**Note**: Alternative design to represent the Adult Volunteer Journey are being considered, some examples below:]*

The following information presents each of these stages and their operational processes.





JOURNEY STAGES

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3.2 Attraction and Recruitment

NSOs are strongly encouraged to adopt a proactive attitude and undertak systematic adult recruitment. Recruitment should take place in accordance with specific functions based on role descriptions that clearly define the tasks and functions to be performed within a specific team of adults. It is important that organisations recruit those with an appropriate attitude and approach, as the skills and knowledge required for the role or function can be learned.

During the recruitment process, it must be made clear to the adult what the organisation's expectations are, and in return given the opportunity to express their own personal expectations of the organisation. There must be an interrelationship between the Mission of Scouting and the beliefs and values of the adult to be recruited. The recruitment procedures and strategies need to take into consideration the diversity of adults within each community, and a special effort needs to be made to develop specific approaches and tools to attract and recruit members from specific segments of society (e.g. groups that are under-represented in membership) and also to respond to the expectations and interest of other adults. It is the intention of WOSM to help young people to achieve their full potential through the Scout Method by providing an environment within which Scout activities can be implemented in a safe, non-discriminatory and respectful manner. A key function of the adult recruitment process in all organisations is to ensure that only suitable adults are recruited

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NSOs also need to recognise the rights of adults. It is of great importance that adults, who are in relatively close contact with children and young people, are appropriately screened and given relevant and timely training so that they do not put themselves in situations which could lead to accusations of inappropriate behaviour. It is the responsibility of each organisation to create the best and most appropriate conditions for adults to be able to play their role as educators, either as volunteers or professional staff. It is strongly recommended that NSOs develop procedures for recruiting and selecting adults. This will require that data, some of which will be confidential, is collected and stored appropriately. Adults who wish to volunteer in Scouting must be asked to provide references from respected members of the community, one of whom should be a community leader from outside Scouting, and those references must be considered during the appointment process of the adult.

Every NSO must develop tools and methods to keep the adult recruitment processes consistent with and aligned with their national Safe from Harm policy and other child and youth protection guidelines.

- **Assessment of Needs**

NSOs should, in alignment with their strategic plan, review their operations and structure regularly by performing an assessment of needs, and establishing a complete list of roles or functions to be filled with required competencies, recognising that volunteers who may be supported by some professional staff, will fill the majority of the roles or functions. This assessment must identify permanent roles or functions as well as short term or temporary functions.

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This list will then be compared to the actual leadership situation (newly- identified roles and functions, vacancies, transfers or resignations), and taking into consideration the growth of the organisation, the short and medium term requirements for adult involvement.

Short term, temporary or 'job-share' roles or functions should be offered to all adults who want to support Scouting in specific tasks or activities. This will allow adults who may not have time, to volunteer. It may also help to recruit adults who would not traditionally be volunteers in Scouting.

The management of adults in Scouting is based on a 'team approach' and therefore, there may be a need to allow some flexibility in terms of recruitment. Wherever they may operate – with young people at unit level or with other adults – adults work in teams and it should not be expected that any individual will personally display all of the competencies required. These, however, should be collectively available from the entire team in which members complement each other.

- **Selection**

Selection must be fair, transparent, and appropriate to the responsibilities and level of accountability associated with each role. It should align the adult's competencies, experience, aspirations, availability, and motivation with the role's requirements.

National Scout Organizations must implement safeguarding measures appropriate to each role, including verification, screening, reference checks where appropriate, They must comply with applicable legislation and with Safe from Harm requirements.

- **Onboarding and Integration**

Onboarding and integration must give adults the knowledge, relationships, and support needed to become confident and

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effective contributors to Scouting, while establishing the foundations for a positive Adult Experience. Onboarding must enable adults to experience the practical realities of their role by engaging with their team, local Scout Group, and, where appropriate, the wider community.

Onboarding should recognize the knowledge, experience, competencies, and perspectives adults bring to Scouting and help them feel welcomed and valued from the beginning of their involvement.

- ## Mutual Agreement

Adult involvement in Scouting should be founded on a shared understanding and mutual commitment between the individual and the National Scout Organization.

National Scout Organizations should establish appropriate arrangements that define mutual expectations, responsibilities, rights, support, learning commitments, and review mechanisms. NSOs must comply with applicable national legislation on volunteering when establishing these arrangements.

> ***The mutual agreement clearly documents expectations and is signed after the expectations of both parties have been agreed on.***

The agreement should recognize the need to balance the role in Scouting with personal, family, professional, and academic responsibilities while promoting flexibility, wellbeing, and sustainable volunteer engagement.

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- **Appointment and Registration**

Adults must receive clear confirmation of their role, responsibilities, expectations and appropriate support arrangements. Appointment and registration formally recognize an adult's role within the organization and establish the basis for accountability, support, safeguarding, and continued development throughout the Adult Journey. Inductions and handovers should be provided, if appropriate.

Keep accurate, appropriate records of adult appointments, ideally in a secure, maintained, backed-up system.

3.2 Active Contribution – (Performance and Development)

In this stage Adults participate meaningfully in Scouting through educational, leadership, governance, organizational support, or other roles. Adults should be enabled to contribute in ways that are meaningful, purposeful, and aligned with their competencies, motivations, responsibilities, and circumstances.

- **Induction**

  The World Adults in Scouting Policy requires a systematic induction period, during which adults will understand the responsibilities of their role or function and the need for training. This implies that all those supporting other adults are trained in the techniques essential for the implementation of the policy.
  During this induction period, the adult will be introduced to the role. Training, support, assistance, and guidance will be provided as the individual is integrated into the team. The needs, expectations and challenges require that guidance and support are provided to every adult. This guidance and support

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should be primarily provided by a personal adviser who is appointed from as early as the induction phase. The person who held the role previously should also be involved in this process.
A settling period is helpful in providing an opportunity to assess the suitability and progress of the placement and allowing any problems to be resolved at an early stage. A policy statement should help ensure consistent implementation of the procedure and reassure new adults as to the reasons for such a measure.

- ## Training and Capacity Building

National Scout Organizations must adopt competency-based approaches to learning and development that support adults in acquiring, applying, and continuously strengthening the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours required for their roles. Learning systems should support adults throughout their Adult Journey and contribute to both personal development and the quality of Scouting.

Learning and development are continuous throughout the Adult Journey and should enable adults to strengthen the competencies required for their current and future contributions while supporting personal growth, leadership development, and lifelong learning.

- ## Training System

Each NSO must develop and regularly review a training system for all adult roles and functions. This will include all the competencies required for these functions and must include the personal development of these adults. The training system must be used as a strategic tool – NSOs Should involve all their adults within all the structures in the training processes to improve the Collective competencies.

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Finally, building on the principles of learning organisations, the training system needs to be not only focused on internal needs but also be able to recognise and respond to trends in the Community and in wider society. This approach will help NSOs to develop a real growth strategy.

The system must be flexible and ensure easy access to training opportunities in terms of their frequency, proximity and conditions for registration. This may require the decentralisation of training, and will need the participation of many people, including young people, in sharing their competencies with others.

The Wood Badge

The Wood Badge is used as recognition of training completion as prescribed by each NSO. The use of the Wood Badge symbols is recommended as a sign of Unity of the Movement.

- **In-service support**

  National Scout Organizations must ensure that adults receive appropriate educational, organizational, technical, and personal support throughout their Adult Journey during their service. Adult wellbeing must be recognized as a shared responsibility, taking account of adults' diverse needs and circumstances, covering safety, physical and mental health, inclusion and emotional wellbeing.

- **Performance management**

Adults must be able to balance their Scouting responsibilities with other areas of their lives and, where appropriate, adjust their level or form of involvement as their motivations, availability, competencies, and circumstances change, while responsibly communicating in advance their commitment to

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facilitate a smooth transition for the continuous delivery of essential functions. NSOs may offer different volunteering modalities and combine them to fit their needs and context (see Annex __).

Adults should have regular opportunities for constructive dialogue, reflection, and feedback that recognize achievements, address challenges, and identify support and development needs. Adults should be encouraged to take ownership of their contribution and growth while receiving appropriate support throughout their involvement.

National Scout Organizations (NSOs) should establish performance review and development processes that are transparent, supportive, and aligned with the Mission and values of Scouting. The skills developed can simultaneously be translated professionally to fuel growth transcending Scouting while also channeling external learnings for growth within the movement.

- **Recognition**
  Adults must receive regular, meaningful recognition and appreciation throughout their active contribution. Recognition should value diverse forms of contribution and reinforce adults' sense of belonging and connection to Scouting's Mission and values. Volunteers must be thanked the way the volunteers prefers. Recognition can be formal and informal.

3.3 Transitions – (Decisions for the future)

Transitions are a natural and valuable part of the Adult Journey. Adults' motivations, interests, competencies, responsibilities, availability, and life circumstances change over time, and their involvement in Scouting should evolve accordingly.

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National Scout Organizations must support adults to move between different forms and stages of involvement in ways that respect their dignity, wellbeing, aspirations, previous contributions, and changing circumstances, while developing and integrating a pathway that enables young people to pursue suitable adult roles as they approach the relevant age.

- National Scout Organizations must establish clear and consistent transition pathways as follow below~~:~~

- **Renewal**

  The renewal of an adult's role or function happens after a satisfactory appraisal and a discussion with the person or team responsible for making their appointment (often their team leader). In this process, the adult will receive constructive feedback and advice about their future within Scouting.
  It is highly recommended that NSOs support and train the people in charge of the appraisal process to help them to avoid mistakes and difficulties. It is also suggested to extend the scope of this appraisal to the teams and other people supporting the personal development process.

- **Reassignment**

Reassignment of one or more Individuals to another role or function within Scouting is used as a mean of refreshing the team, a developmental opportunity for the individual or an attempt to find a role or function better suited to the individuals' skills, talents or commitment level.
The reassignment of an adult to a new position or function happens after a satisfactory appraisal, as a personal decision or in case the appraisal was not satisfactory. None of the reasons for a reassignment should be based on major non-conformities. As part of the process, the adult submits candidacy for another position or function and is selected.

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- **Reserve/Pause**

  Due to a wide variety of circumstances—whether related to professional or family matters, health, or any other reason specific to the individual—a person participating in the Scout Movement may need to take a leave of absence or a break from their duties.

  National Scout Organizations (NSOs) should look after the well-being of their volunteers during such times, seeking to understand the reasons for the break and providing whatever support is possible. This ensures that the temporary pause is managed appropriately, minimizing any negative impact on the tasks assigned to the volunteer.

  NSOs should establish procedures for understanding the reasons behind such a break, as well as for maintaining periodic contact with the volunteer during their leave.

- **Retirement**

In some circumstances, retirement may be the best option for an adult. The retirement of an adult from the organisation may happen because

- The adult took this decision voluntarily (e.g. they wish to do other things or they don't consider themselves suitable for a role in Scouting)
- the organisation and the adult responsible for follow-up and appraisal determine that there are major non-conformities
- the position or function ceased to exist

The person or structure managing the appointment should update the oficial records appropriately. They should also make appropriate arrangements to mark the completion of the

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individual’s period of service, possibly considering recognition for the adult’s contribution to Scouting.

- **Reconnect/Alumni**

NSOs should establish procedures to allow volunteers to rejoin their ranks following the completion of a specific role or after a period of absence. This policy encourages practices focused on maintaining contact with former members, highlighting opportunities for them to contribute actively to the NSO.

Support transitions through clear communication, constructive dialogue, appropriate guidance, and recognition of previous contributions.

Retention and Organizational Sustainability

Adult retention supports Scouting's long-term sustainability by strengthening leadership continuity, organizational capacity, and institutional knowledge.

Adult retention can result from a positive Adult Experience. It reflects the extent to which adults feel trusted, supported, valued, recognized, included, and connected to Scouting's Mission and values throughout their Adult Journey. Flexible participation enables adults to remain connected to Scouting as their personal and professional circumstances change.

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Chapter 4: **Implementing the Policy at National Level**

4.1 How NSOs apply, govern, monitor, and evolve the policy

Implementing the policy is not simply about adopting procedures or administrative systems. It requires organizational commitment to creating the conditions in which adults can contribute effectively to the Mission of Scouting and experience a positive Adult Journey.

- **Adult Volunteering Management System**

The **Adult Volunteering Management System** provides the organizational framework through which National Scout Organizations (NSOs) recruit, support, develop, recognize adults throughout their involvement in Scouting. It translates the principles of this policy into an integrated approach that enables adults to contribute effectively to the Mission of Scouting.

The adult management system must encompass processes to address the three stages of the adult journey.

Shared Organizational Responsibility

National Scout Organizations should establish clear responsibilities for implementing the Adults in Scouting Policy across relevant organizational levels and functions.

Coordinate responsibilities across areas including Youth Programme, Adults in Scouting, Organizational Development, Safe from Harm, governance, and other relevant functions.

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Adults in Scouting should be integrated into strategic planning, organizational decision-making, resource allocation, and the overall development of the National Scout Organization.

Professional staff, where they exist, share this responsibility with governance bodies, volunteer leaders, and those responsible for Adults in Scouting.

Volunteers and Professional Staff Working Together

Scouting is volunteer-led and, in many NSOs, professionally supported. A positive relationship between volunteers and professional staff benefits young people and the whole organization.

NSOs should define clearly the roles, responsibilities, and decision-making limits of volunteers and professional staff. Clarity prevents overlap and helps each group value the contribution of the other. Volunteers hold leadership and governance responsibilities. Professional staff implement decisions, provide expertise, and support continuity.

NSOs should promote mutual respect and open communication between volunteers and professional staff. They should offer both groups opportunities for joint learning, regular dialogue, and recognition. Staff who support volunteers should receive the learning and guidance they need for this role.

Professional staff may also volunteer in Scouting, as long as this does not conflict with their professional role. NSOs should set clear arrangements for these situations.

The employment of professional staff must comply with applicable labour legislation and with the organization's own human resources requirements. Safe from Harm requirements apply to professional staff in the same way as to volunteers.

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Wellbeing and Safe Volunteering

Volunteer wellbeing is fundamental to a positive Volunteer Experience and Scouting's long-term sustainability.

National Scout Organizations should foster organizational cultures where adults feel physically, emotionally, psychologically, and socially safe while carrying out their roles.

Wellbeing extends beyond preventing harm. It includes promoting healthy volunteering practices that encourage balance between Scouting, family, education, work, and personal wellbeing.

NSO must recognize that sustainable adult service depends on organizational conditions such as role clarity, realistic workload, supportive leadership, recognition, psychological safety, inclusion, participation and access to appropriate support, these must be setup by NSOs.

Implementation should include:

1. Systematic integration of Safe from Harm across the adult lifecycle.

2. Explicit recognition of adult wellbeing as an organizational responsibility.

3. Sustainable role design and flexible volunteering.

4. Training, competencies and support for safe and wellbeing-oriented leadership.

5. Recognition, adult voice and psychologically safe feedback.

6. Light monitoring, exit learning and continuous improvement.

Safeguarding and a positive volunteer experience reinforce each other. Clear and proportionate safeguards give adults confidence in their team and in the organization. In turn, adults who feel safe and supported are more likely to speak up, seek help, and stay involved.

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Youth-Adult Partnership and Intergenerational Leadership

Scouting is strengthened when young people and adults learn, lead, and make decisions together.

Implementation should promote meaningful collaboration across generations by creating opportunities for young people and adults to share responsibility, exchange perspectives, and contribute according to their experience and competencies.

Intergenerational leadership strengthens organizational continuity and ensures Scouting remains relevant, innovative, and responsive to future generations.

Flexible and Accessible Adult Involvement

National Scout Organizations should enable different forms and levels of adult involvement that respond to changing motivations, competencies, availability, and life circumstances.

Organizational structures and practices should avoid unnecessary barriers to participation and, where appropriate, enable adults to move between different roles, levels of responsibility, and forms of contribution.

Flexible involvement should maintain appropriate expectations for quality, safeguarding, accountability, and support while enabling more people to contribute meaningfully to Scouting.

- ## Digital Transformation

Digital technologies provide opportunities to improve how adults are recruited, supported, developed, recognized, and connected throughout their volunteer journey. NSOs should use digital

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solutions to enhance—not replace—the human relationships that define Scouting.

Digital transformation should improve accessibility, flexibility, efficiency, and inclusion while ensuring appropriate data protection, ethical use of technology, and equal access for volunteers.

- **Implementing Across Different Contexts**

The World Adults in Scouting Policy establishes common principles and expectations while recognizing that Scouting operates in diverse legal, cultural, educational, geographic, social, and organizational contexts.

National Scout Organizations should adapt implementation to their context while aligning with the principles of this policy and ensuring a consistent quality of Adult Experience.

- **Adaptation to National Contexts**

National Scout Organizations should consider relevant national and local factors when implementing this policy, including legislation, cultural norms, organizational structures, volunteering traditions, geography, available resources, and the needs of the communities they serve.

Adaptation should enable effective implementation without weakening the principles, safeguarding expectations, educational purpose, or values established by this policy.

National requirements may influence eligibility, safeguarding, appointment, registration, employment, volunteering arrangements, data protection, and organizational responsibilities. National Scout Organizations must ensure that their policies and practices comply with applicable legislation while remaining consistent with World Scouting requirements.

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Where national legislation and this policy differ, national legislation prevails, and the NSO should seek guidance on how to keep the policy's principles as far as possible.

NEW → Most NSOs already have policies, structures, and practices for adults. This policy does not require starting from zero. It invites NSOs to review what they have and to align it with the policy where needed.

To do this, NSO leadership should consider the following steps:

- **Review** existing national policies, procedures, and practices on adults and volunteering, and compare them with this policy.
- **Identify** where they already align, where they overlap, and where there are gaps.
- **Decide** what to keep, what to adapt, and what to introduce, taking into account national legislation, culture, resources, and organizational priorities.
- **Consult** volunteers, professional staff, young people, and other relevant stakeholders in this process.
- **Document** the decisions and the reasons for them, so that they can be reviewed and shared.
- **Plan** implementation in phases that are realistic for the capacity of the NSO.
- **Review** the results regularly and adjust the approach when needed.

Where an existing national approach already serves the purpose of this policy, NSOs do not need to duplicate it. They should make sure that it is consistent with the principles and requirements of this policy.

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Adaptation allows NSOs to choose how they implement the policy. It does not allow them to set aside its principles. Compliance with applicable legislation and Safe from Harm requirements is mandatory. Other provisions can be adapted to context, as long as the intent of the policy is preserved.

- ## Implementing Across Different Models of Scouting

Scouting operates in diverse legal, cultural, educational, geographic, and organizational environments.

National Scout Organizations should adapt implementation to reflect their local context while remaining aligned with the principles of this policy.

Implementation approaches may differ across:

- community-based Scouting;
- school-based Scouting;
- hybrid delivery models;
- urban and rural communities;
- faith-based partnerships;
- humanitarian or emergency settings; and
- different organizational structures and volunteer models.

Recognizing these differences enables implementation strategies that are realistic, sustainable, and responsive to local needs while maintaining the shared educational identity of the Scout Movement.

Annexes

A. Key Principles of the World Adult Volunteering Policy

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- **Congruence:** The systems in place complement the organization's main principles (Promise and Law, values) and align with other policies (e.g. Reaching out, Safe from Harm, etc.) and strategies.
- **Youth involvement:** Promoting and encouraging young people who fulfil the requirements and who have the necessary competencies, giving them access to roles or functions.
- **Gender equity: Distribute roles and functions based on competence,** not gender. This principle addresses any imbalances in the allocation of resources, programmes and learning and development opportunities based on gender. Consequently, it aims to change organizational practices that hinder women's participation or access to any role or function. Equally, age should not be a restriction.
- **Sustainable leadership:** Developing succession practices supports the organization's overall stability and sustainability. Organizational structures should become matrix rather than hierarchical, and adults should be encouraged to take 'lateral moves' instead of vertical ones. Organizational structures and roles or functions should be designed to enable mentoring of young leaders and the implementation of personal advisory processes.
- **Proximity in decision-making:** Decision-making processes must take place at the nearest level to the adult, meaning the local level should take as many decisions as possible before referring 'up the line' for someone else to make the decision for them. Proximity in decision-making (e.g. management and training) helps build trust across all levels of the organization.
- **Learning organization:** Individual and organizational learning are part of a cycle; when people learn and develop, the organization itself also learns and develops. The learning process of adults is enhanced by the day-to-day interaction with other members of the

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organization, strengthening the individual, group and the organizations learning capacity.

- **Meaningful learning:** Training and development opportunities should focus on the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for practical action within a variety of roles or functions (particularly for those supporting young people in meeting their needs and aspirations). Ensure every adult is closely accompanied and supported in their personal learning and development process throughout their life cycle.
- **Accessibility and flexibility:** The system must respond to the needs of the individual and the organization at all levels, and encompass different learning models and strategies. All adults must be able to access a variety of learning and development opportunities, internal and external to the organization, and be encouraged to do so. A variety of methods to develop competencies should be available.
- **Competency-based:** Roles and functions are distributed based on demonstrated competence (knowledge, skills, and attitudes). All adults should be provided with equal opportunities to acquire, develop, update, and renew competencies on a continuous basis.
- **Personalization:** Management and training must adjust to each individual's profile, equally considering personal development needs and functional performance. Recognizing (prior) individual attainment, experience and competencies that meet role descriptions and organizational needs.
- **Participation:** Involving and encouraging active participation of every adult in their own learning and development as well as in management processes throughout the life cycle. Shared decision-making processes will increase mutual understanding, trust and transparency throughout the organization.

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- **Technology-oriented:** Technology provides great opportunities for good management practice in Scouting. Developing online recruitment strategies, delivering training, using membership data systems for adult management (e.g. profile storage or training logs), accessing distance learning and development opportunities, and coaching and team management – are just a few examples.

B. Policy Implementation

Promoting the World Adult Volunteering Policy to all stakeholders and at all levels is a shared responsibility. This will make it possible to raise awareness of its importance and ensure effective implementation.

Open and clear communication throughout the process is essential. Developing strategies to inform members of any changes coming into effect, and developing mechanisms for participation and feedback on policy implementation, will improve change management in the organization.

C. Policy Review and Update

To remain faithful to the principles on which it is based, the World Adult Volunteering Policy will be reviewed regularly and updated where necessary.

The lifespan (the full period) for reviewing, implementing, evaluating, and revisiting the policy is three triennia. This aligns with the World Scout Youth Programme Policy and is divided as follows:

- The first triennium is for review and promotion (including updating the policy support resources) by NSOs and necessary adjustments to other WOSM institutional documents and policies.

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- The second triennium is for actual implementation by NSOs.

- The third triennium is for continual implementation, full evaluation, and review by WOSM structures.

The National Adult Volunteering Policy should be scheduled for regular review and update. National policies shall undergo continuous monitoring, with a formal review of its operational procedures every triennium to ensure rapid adaptation to social and technological changes.

The World Scout Conference and NSOs will be kept informed on the implementation of the World Adults in Scouting Policy through a triennial progress report.

D. Youth Programme and Adult Volunteering

The Youth Programme is implemented through a partnership between young people and adults, based on young people's interests, needs, and abilities. An effective Youth Programme, one which appeals to young people and is perceived to be relevant to the social reality in which it is offered, will also attract adults committed to support its implementation.

From an organizational perspective, the area of Adult Volunteering therefore supports the implementation of the Youth Programme by:

1. identifying the needs of the organization in relation to the Youth Programme

2. clearly setting out the tasks required to support the area of Youth Programme

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3. establishing specifications for the different roles that are required; recognizing that adults working with the different age groups require different profiles

4. promoting the recruitment of adults who represent different groups within each local community

5. actively training adults to recruit and to fill the roles, looking as widely as possible towards different segments of societies

6. from the role description, identifying the competencies that are required to undertake the tasks in relation to the Youth Programme

7. assessing the current competencies of adults and then exploring learning

opportunities, internal and external, to help them to improve their competencies

8. providing flexible learning opportunities by delivering training that meets the specific needs of the Youth Programme

9. providing adults with appropriate and continuous support

10. undertaking regular appraisals with adults to identify potential issues and ways to overcome them

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Therefore, adults involved in developing, facilitating, and delivering the Youth Programme must work closely with those responsible for managing and supporting adults in the NSO. If the Youth Programme is developed in isolation, it cannot be adequately supported.

Likewise, adults involved in managing and supporting other adults in the organization must work closely with those supporting the Youth Programme to ensure Scouting remains an educational Movement for young people.

F. Flexible volunteering

The World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM) recognizes that the growth, vibrant diversity, and resilience of our Movement rely on the passion and energy of adult volunteers.

Traditional, role-based commitments remain a wonderful pillar of our stability and institutional memory. However, to thrive in a rapidly changing world where time is a precious commodity, Scouting must also look forward.

To bridge the gap between what National Scout Organizations (NSOs) need and the limited time modern volunteers have, this policy encourages a shift toward a flexible volunteer model. By offering and combining different ways to volunteer, NSOs can lower barriers to entry, welcome a wider demographic, and build a more inclusive, dynamic community.

Integrating Flexibility into the Adults' Journey

Adopting flexible volunteering is an opportunity to refresh and align how we support adults across the Movement:

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Agile Safe from Harm Approaches

To keep everyone safe while keeping doors open, *Safe from Harm* (SfH) training, assessment, and compliance should be adapted to the risk level, duration, and nature of the volunteer's role. Micro, digital, and one-off volunteers should be guided through welcoming, streamlined safeguarding pathways that protect children without creating overwhelming paperwork.

Enhancing the Life Cycle

The classic phases of the Adults in Scouting Life Cycle (Recruitment, Performance, and Recognition) can be expanded to welcome short-term and non-linear journeys. Peer mentorship and creative micro-credentials or certificates should be used to celebrate and validate the precise impact of short-term, task, and project-based contributions.

Enriching the Youth Programme

Flexible volunteering is a powerful tool to directly enrich the Youth Programme. By lowering barriers, NSOs can easily invite passionate, diverse, and specialized talents into local groups, boosting the quality, modern relevance, and excitement of the scouting experience for our young people.

G. Structures - Roles and Responsibilities

At all levels of WOSM – National, Regional and World – the management of adults in Scouting requires the establishment of specific structures covering three dimensions, which will allow a global and coordinated approach:

- development of tools and providing training which are inclusive to all areas and levels of organizations in the recruitment and retention of adults, through short- and long-term approaches, targeting all segments of society

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- training and supporting adults according to the organization's needs as well as personal development expectations

- the continuous management of adults, including decisions for the future

In accordance with the Mission of Scouting, these structures should include young people at all levels. A special effort must be made

to ensure gender and age balance. People with special needs or belonging to different segments of society must be empowered to join NSOs and share responsibilities.

Active approaches must be taken to involve all groups of young people and adults who are in each community. Scouting's membership must reflect the composition of all societies and each local community. As Scouting is a Movement open to all, different segments of societies must be empowered to join NSOs.

NATIONAL LEVEL

- Each NSO must define the most appropriate structure for managing its adults in Scouting, taking into account its particular situation, needs, and available resources. This structure should coordinate the recruitment,
- training, support for adults in Scouting, their personal development, and managing decisions about the future of these adults, and reporting to the organization's overall management team.
- It should have a formal link to those responsible for developing and implementing the Youth Programme (e.g. a representative of the Youth Programme Committee is

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an ex-officio member of the Adults in Scouting Committee and vice versa).

- This is achieved by creating a National Adults in Scouting Committee that reports to the National Executive Committee, or its equivalent.
- The National Adults in Scouting Committee should also be linked to a network covering the organization's entire territory and composed of those involved in the Adults in Scouting management process. Those
- coordinating National Youth Programme and training activities should belong to a network, together with those having recruitment or management roles or functions.

REGIONAL LEVEL

- It is up to each Region of WOSM to define the most appropriate structure,
- taking into account its situation, resources and needs.

- However, the World Adult Volunteering Policy recommends establishing a network as the basic element of the Regional structure. To ensure that this network is stimulated, questioned and informed, a number of actions must be envisaged, for example:

    - A Regional Adult Volunteering network coordinator is appointed by the Regional Scout Committee.

    - A Regional Adult Volunteering Subcommittee is established along the same lines as the National committees.

    - A Regional Conference entrusts the World Scout Bureau with the coordination of the task.

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- It is also recommended to encourage common work and activities between this network and the Youth Programme network.

- Whatever the Regional approach, it is important to develop a strong relationship between the Regional structure(s) and NSOs and between the different Regions and the World level.

WORLD LEVEL

- This policy is part of the terms of reference for the World Scout Committee (WSC) and any appointed subcommittees.
- The WSC is responsible for establishing networks, working groups, and other operational structures that support Adult Volunteering (in accordance with Resolution 10/2005).
- The Adult Volunteering Global Team is a World Scout Bureau (WSB) staff support network responsible for proposing guidelines, developing tools and materials, and supporting NSOs on all matters related to the strategic area of Adult Volunteering . The WSC will continuously update the terms of reference for this structure.
- The WSC and the WSB are encouraged to work with the Regional structures as a network. This will provide a large network for the exchange and circulation of information, mutual assistance in managing adults, exchange of ideas and new initiatives, and advice and guidance on cultural and Regional sensitivities.

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G. Related Publications

Relevant Conference Resolutions

Conference Resolution 2024-8 (mental health)

Jurgen Willems - The Volunteer Satisfaction Model: A Practical Framework to Improve Volunteer Management Practices

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