



Understanding WOSM's environmental impact

Baseline study and
recommendations for improvement





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This report explains the current situation regarding WOSM's environmental impact and the progress that has been achieved in the area to date. It is a response to **Conference Resolution 2017-10** adopted at the 41st World Scout Conference in Azerbaijan in 2017.

The information collected and presented in this report is indicative of the situation and supports the recommendations listed herein.



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1. Executive summary

For more than a century, Scouting has kept environmental protection and sustainability at its very core; living in harmony with nature is an integral part of the Scout Method. In a world facing more environmental crises than ever before, this report comes as a timely response to questions about Scouting's environmental impact. Determining this impact for the Movement as a whole would require not only qualifying and quantifying the negative impact of all Scouting events and operations, but also the positive impact of environmental protection projects Scouts complete on a daily basis in their local communities. The scope of this initial report is focused only on the impact of WOSM as an organisation, its events, and its operations.

An analysis of more than 30 international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) has shown mixed results in the extent to which they analyse their impact (ranging from non-existent to detailed assessments, carbon footprint calculations, and offsetting plans). For most INGOs, this process has only recently started. Many are still beginning to recognise the importance of doing such work. In this regard, WOSM's efforts with commissioning this report and its immediate follow-up and emphasising the environment as one of the core future focus points in Scouting education are leading the organisation in the right direction.

Over the years, Scouting has continuously developed and refined its educational offer in the area of environment and sustainability. A 2018 survey showed that more than 70% of National Scout Organizations (NSOs) have integrated or implemented the World Scout Environment Programme. Scouting's environmental education offer underwent a review, which resulted in the launch of the Earth Tribe Initiative in June 2020 during the celebration of the World Environment Day. This overarching initiative offers various educational opportunities to youth worldwide in four key areas of environmental education: Better Choices, Nature and Biodiversity, Clean Energy, and Healthy Planet.

An analysis of nine world and regional Scout events of varying sizes, across five WOSM regions, held between 2015 and 2019 has shown that following sustainability practices is dependent on local regulations and limitations. It further showed a great need for guiding hosts and future bidders on how to organise sustainable events, while keeping a balanced budget and adapting to the local context. In addition, a need for educating and sensitising event participants to implementing personal sustainability measures has also been recognised.

An analysis of the operations of the World Scout Bureau (including World Scout Committee meetings, Operational Framework structures meetings, and staff operations) has shown that there is a significant negative impact caused by air travel, which can be mitigated by implementing sustainability measures for meetings, including a stricter revision of the need for in-person meetings/missions versus online engagements. In addition, further education and training on implementing sustainability practices in daily operations have been recognised, as necessary.

Finally, it is recommended that WOSM conducts a more in-depth analysis of its carbon footprint and based on this analysis develops plans for offsetting to gradually become a carbon-neutral or carbon-positive organisation.

This report forms the basis of a much broader effort that WOSM has embarked on to measure its environmental impact and mitigate any negative effects over the coming years.

2. Definitions

Throughout this report, the following key terms have been used:

- **Carbon footprint** – the amount of climate active gases (e.g. carbon dioxide, methane, or water vapour) emitted to the atmosphere as a result of human-induced activities over a given period. It is usually expressed in carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e). In this report, reference is made to the carbon footprint of various meetings and individual staff travel.
- **Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e)** – a standard unit in measuring carbon footprint, expressing the impact of each climate active gas in terms of the amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) that would create the same amount of warming. This way, although the carbon footprint is a combination of various gases, it can be expressed in a single measure.
- **Carbon offset** – a way to compensate for the CO₂e emissions of an individual/group/organisation by supporting a CO₂e saving elsewhere. In this report, the planting and growing of tree seedlings for 10 years has been used as an example of offsetting carbon footprint; but is not the only method (others include investment in renewable energy or energy efficiency projects, etc.).
- **Climate change** (also Global Warming) – long-term changes to temperature on and around the Earth's surface, which causes long-term shifts in weather patterns.
- **Earth Tribe Initiative** – a global community of young people who are passionate about the environment and are actively engaged as global citizens to preserve and protect our planet. As this report specifies, the Earth Tribe Initiative encompasses various educational challenges within Scouting's environmental education.
- **Environment** – used in this report to refer to the natural world as a whole or in a particular geographical area, especially as affected by human activity.
- **Environmental impact** – any change to the environment, whether adverse or beneficial, wholly or partially resulting from an organisation's activities, products, or services.
- **Scout event** – any event organised at national, regional and world levels in Scouting, regardless of its size, location, or target audience. In this report, analysis and recommendations have focused mainly on world and regional level events.
- **Scouting's environmental education** – the totality of Scouting's educational offer in the area of environment and sustainability and includes the Youth Programme (nature as an integral element of the Scout Method) and various programmes and initiatives organised on world, regional, and national levels to complement the learning experience of young people in this area.
- **World Scout Bureau** – the WOSM Secretariat. In this report, the majority of analyses conducted refer to the Global Support Centre in Kuala Lumpur; however, the recommendations refer to the One World Scout Bureau (WSB) with all regional Support Centres included.

3. Introduction: measuring Scouting's environmental impact

Never before has the world faced so many environmental crises as it does today. Escalating climate change, mass species extinction, massive-scale pollution of the air and oceans, and destruction of large swathes of rainforests are all issues that deeply affect the whole world, including millions of local communities where Scouting exists and conducts its activities.

The COVID-19 pandemic offers an opportunity to reflect even further on the impact humans are having on nature. We have witnessed the radical changes in some places caused by the absence of regular human activity (cleaner air, rivers, and seas; the return of species to some natural areas they had previously abandoned; and much more). Yet, even through this massive slowing of human activity, with a reduction in visible pollutants, CO₂e emissions are only reducing fractionally, and not enough to change the trajectory of climate change. This crisis has emphasised the need to implement stronger sustainability practices that will enable the Earth to continue recovering from the negative impact humans have had over the past centuries.

Living in harmony with nature is enshrined in Scouting's educational offer.¹ Scouts worldwide recognise the importance of protecting nature in their local communities and, as instructed by Lord Baden-Powell, "try and leave this world a little better than [they] found it". Scouting's Youth Programme offers significant opportunities for education in environmental protection, either through existing elements in national programmes or through global initiatives integrated into the Youth Programme, such as the World Scout Environment Programme or numerous other partnership programmes.

Yet, it is important to recognise that some of Scouting's activities such as big institutional or educational events (conferences, youth forums, jamborees, moots) at national, regional and world levels have a negative impact on the environment. In addition, regular operations of Support Centres of the One WSB, as well as offices of NSOs and NSAs and Scout Centres, also produce an impact that needs to be taken into account. Finally, local-level activities such as camps or even weekly Scout meetings may have an impact as well, depending on a variety of factors (types of materials used in activities, distance and mode of transport to get to the meeting/camp location, etc.). Recent experiences like the extraordinary Jamboree on the Internet (JOTI) Special Edition of April 2020, organised in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, showcase that Scouting is flexible and capable of reinventing ways of connecting even in challenging times like these, and with a minimal negative impact on the environment (compared to large-scale, international face-to-face events).

Determining the impact of any one of these events/activities is not a black-and-white exercise. Today, it is possible to measure their carbon footprint by looking into energy sourcing and consumption, waste management procedures, travel methods, and even the choice of food during the events/activities. However, determining the exact impact on the environment not only takes these metrics into account it also needs to look at the environmental protection activities – such as the many environmental clean-up operations and afforestation Scouts do on a daily basis. In addition to these obvious and practical activities, Scouting has a more long-term positive impact by developing environmentally conscious young people who understand the impact their actions have and work every day towards making more sustainable choices to protect the environment and champion environmental action in their communities.

Therefore, establishing the true environmental impact of Scouting as a whole is a balancing act: it consists not only of understanding the direct impact of its activities and events on all levels but also the sustainability and environmental protection measures that exist in the Youth Programme of NSOs worldwide. Naturally, measuring impact of this scope is challenging at a global level. However, World Scouting recognises the importance of conducting such work. The World Scout Bureau has therefore commissioned a first baseline report to better

¹ Essential Characteristics of Scouting (revised edition 2019).

understand the extent of the impact Scouting has on the environment while focusing only on regional and world levels.

Importantly, this report considers the impact of WOSM, its events, its Secretariat (WSB), and a limited number of world-level volunteers. It does not look into the impact of NSOs or local groups, where most of the positive short- and long-term impact mentioned occurs, with significant support from WOSM (evident in Chapter 6).

This report provides a general overview and initial assessment of the situation. It examines current efforts in environmental education and event management, as well as the operations of the One WSB. It also provides a series of recommendations for achieving more sustainability across each of these. Although some of the data points necessary for conducting a more thorough investigation are currently not available (e.g. data on energy consumption during events, or quantities of waste and how it is managed), with future iterations of such investigations, it is expected that a more thorough picture of Scouting's impact on the environment will become available.

This report supports a conversation about Scouting's role (at world and regional levels) in protecting the environment and organising more sustainable activities and events. As outlined in the recommendations, work on investigating Scouting's environmental impact on a large scale needs to continue in the future, as does strengthening Scouting's activities for reducing and offsetting any negative impact identified and sharing these practices within the Scouting community and further afield.

3.1. Scope and methodology of the report

This report provides insight into four areas: best practices outside of Scouting, Scouting's environmental education, the environmental impact of world and regional events, and the environmental impact of the One WSB's regular operations. For each of these, an appropriate methodology has been developed to produce baseline insights:

- Best practices in reporting on environmental impact outside of Scouting:
 - Desk research of existing regulations for NGOs measuring environmental impact.
 - Best practices from NGOs similar to WOSM in measuring and reporting their environmental impact.
- Scouting's environmental education:
 - Historic brief on the development of Scouting's environmental education.
 - A review of existing world programmes and initiatives in environmental education and corresponding partnerships.
 - Interviews with relevant staff.
 - Review of plans for environmental education in Scouting.
- Environmental impact of world and regional events:
 - Reviews of detailed reports of past events.
 - Interviews with hosts of past events.
- Environmental impact of the One WSB's operations:
 - Interviews with relevant staff.
 - Review of existing practices and policies.
 - Review of travel data for all WSB staff in 2019, WSC meetings in the 2017-2020 triennium and six Operational Framework structures meetings in the 2017-2020 triennium.

Based on this information, we make a series of recommendations at the end of the report to take the work further. These steps include investigating Scouting's environmental impact and concrete steps to mitigate any negative impact Scouting activities/events might have on the environment.

4. Review of past resolutions on environmental issues

Several World Scout Conference resolutions have reflected on the need to protect the environment and increase WOSM's scrutiny of its impact, especially concerning its events. The following is a summary of the requests outlined in 10 relevant resolutions from past conferences, grouped into five key topics:

- **Regarding environmental education:**
 - Conference resolutions have stressed the importance of providing environmental education to young people through Scouting's Youth Programmes: 1988-06 (Environmental Education), 1990-13 (Environment), 1990-14 (World Scout Environment Year), 1993-11 (Scouting for Nature and Environment), 2005-18 (Scouting and the Environment), and 2008-22 (Environmental Education in Scouting).
 - Conference resolutions have called on strengthening existing components of national Youth Programmes related to the environment: 1988-06 (Environmental Education), 1990-13 (Environment), and 2005-18 (Scouting and the Environment); as well as promoting the implementation of global environmental initiatives: 1990-14 (World Scout Environment Year), 1993-11 (Scouting for Nature and Environment), and 2008-22 (Environmental Education in Scouting).
 - Conference resolutions have called on WOSM to support NSOs by producing additional resources and initiatives on environmental education for embedding into national programmes: 1990-13 (Environment), 2005-18 (Scouting and the Environment), and 2008-22 (Environmental Education in Scouting).
- **Regarding calls for action for nature conservation and the implementation of sustainability measures:**
 - Conference resolutions have issued calls for continued efforts on both national and world levels in the area of nature conservation: 1971-12 (Ecology), 1993-12 (Action for Environment), and 2005-20 (Sustainable Development).
 - Conference resolutions have emphasised the importance of taking action at all levels in Scouting, and in some cases promote specific requests: 1993-12 (increase the use of recyclable materials), 2005-20 (promote responsible consumption), and 1990-13, 1993-12 and 2017-10 (implement environmental policies and practices in NSOs).
- **Regarding partnerships related to environmental protection:**
 - Conference resolutions have recognised the importance of partnerships in the area of environmental education: 1988-06 (Environmental Education), 1990-14 (World Scout Environment Year), 2005-18 (Scouting and the Environment), and 2008-22 (Environmental Education in Scouting).
 - The resolutions mainly welcomed the signing of memoranda of understanding with partners such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).
- **Regarding World Scouting events:**
 - Conference resolutions have referred to the need to organise more sustainable events: 2005-20 (Sustainable Development), 2008-25 (Bidding for World Scout Events), and 2017-10 (Environmental Sustainability Impact).
 - These resolutions have called on WOSM to provide a set of standards or guidelines for organising more sustainable events, as well as recommending that bidders for future world and regional events present an environmental impact plan.
- **Regarding Scouting's environmental impact:**
 - The latest conference resolution 2017-10 (Environmental Sustainability Impact) requested that a report be presented to the next conference identifying key areas of focus on reducing WOSM's negative environmental impact.

5. Existing regulations for international non-governmental organisations and best practices in environmental impact measurement and reporting

Measuring progress towards achieving environmentally sustainable operations in companies, governments, and civil society organisations has seen strong development in recent years. More and more industries are opting into voluntary schemes for measuring the environmental impact of their activities and reducing/offsetting negative impacts. UNEP has recently reported that “good progress” has been achieved on 23% of the 93 global environment-related indicators [of the 231 in total for all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)].² However, it also emphasises that for the rest of the indicators there is either insufficient data to assess progress or that the targets most likely will not be met if stronger action is not taken. The report illustrates the complexity of measuring progress towards achieving environmental sustainability on a large scale, which, in turn, can be reflected in the challenges INGOs face in identifying appropriate metrics for determining their impact on the environment.

One attempt at bringing more accountability and transparency among INGOs in the area of environmental impact is the sector supplement for NGOs in the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)³ Standards. The GRI Standards are used not only by NGOs but also by businesses: “[a] recent KPMG survey of corporate responsibility reporting shows that more than 90% of the G250, the world largest companies, publish a sustainability report. GRI guidelines are used by nearly three quarters of them.”⁴

The NGO sector supplement was developed to keep NGOs accountable across a wide range of criteria – from programme effectiveness and labour practices to environmental performance. The INGO Accountability Charter (later renamed Accountability Now) played a significant role in developing the NGO sector supplement. The Charter currently consists of 27 member organisations,⁵ which report periodically on their own compliance with the criteria. However, research conducted in 2018 has shown that “most of the INGO Charter members are far away from a comprehensive reporting practice”.⁶ The big difference in compliance in reporting between businesses and INGOs can be explained by the fact that businesses are held more accountable and are under stronger legal scrutiny than many INGOs in terms of their sustainability practices.

The environmental portion of the INGO sector supplement has a total of 34 indicators, ranging from energy and water consumption, emissions and waste management, to biodiversity, transport, and product and service-related impacts.⁷ Research has shown that very few INGOs (Charter members) report on these indicators, with many covering just one or two.⁸

² Measuring Progress Towards Achieving the Environmental Dimension of the SDGs, United Nations Environment Programme, 2019. Available at <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/27627/MeaProg2019.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

³ More information at <https://www.globalreporting.org/Pages/default.aspx>.

⁴ Traxler, A.A., Greiling, D. & Hebesberger, H. (2018). GRI Sustainability Reporting by INGOs: A Way Forward for Improving Accountability? *Voluntas*. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-018-9976-z>

⁵ More information at <https://accountablenow.org/about-us/our-members/>.

⁶ Traxler, A.A., Greiling, D. & Hebesberger, H. (2018). GRI Sustainability Reporting by INGOs: A Way Forward for Improving Accountability? *Voluntas*. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-018-9976-z>

⁷ Global Reporting Initiative: G4 Sustainability Reporting Guidelines Implementation Manual (last revised in 2015). Available at <https://www.globalreporting.org/resourcelibrary/GRIG4-Part2-Implementation-Manual.pdf>

⁸ Traxler, A.A., Greiling, D. & Hebesberger, H. (2018). GRI Sustainability Reporting by INGOs: A Way Forward for Improving Accountability? *Voluntas*. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-018-9976-z>

Further analysis of the reporting of a selected group of INGOs (published on the Accountability Now website as part of their compliance and accountability processes) resulted in the following findings:

- **Amnesty International:** The organisation's annual report for 2017⁹ reports on three of the 34 GRI indicators:
 - EN16: An analysis of greenhouse gas emissions (based only on the consumption of electricity and heating for their London office).
 - EN18: A narrative description of their efforts to reduce emissions (noting that they currently do not have targets for reducing emissions set and that they are seeking support in the form of an environmental consultancy).
 - EN26: A narrative description of their initiatives to educate staff and raise awareness about the environmental impacts of activities and services. It further notes that they are currently developing their position and strategy on climate change concerning its impact on human rights.
- **CARE International:** The annual report for 2017¹⁰ provides a narrative report, describing the organisation's commitment to protecting the environment in its programming and organisational stewardship. It emphasises its work on the CARE Climate Change and Resilience Platform and Climate Smart flight travel policy. None of the GRI indicators was addressed in the report.
- **Greenpeace:** The 2018 report¹¹ provides a comparative analysis of emissions and the organisation's carbon footprint from 2014 to 2018, divided into the three emissions scopes: 1) direct emissions from sources owned or controlled by the organisation (e.g. helicopter emissions, marine transportation emissions), 2) indirect emissions from sources owned or controlled by the organisation (e.g. office and server electricity emissions), and 3) emissions from sources not owned or controlled by the organisation but relating to their activities (e.g. business travel and paper consumption). This reporting is in line with GRI indicators EN15, EN16, and EN17.
- **Oxfam International:** In its 2017/2018 Accountability Report,¹² the organisation noted three key initiatives it has undertaken to contribute to tackling climate change: 1) *A Climate in Crisis*, a report "showing clear evidence of the impact of climate change in East Africa", 2) The Financing Women Farmers initiative, 3) *Uprooted by Climate Change*, a report "highlighting the growing threat of displacement as a result of climate-related disasters". The report further notes that the organisation continues to strengthen its digital engagement and virtual meetings to reduce its carbon footprint. None of the GRI indicators was addressed in the report.
- **Plan International:** In its 2016/2018 Accountability Report,¹³ the organisation notes that "it is vital that we get better at holding ourselves accountable for our environmental impact and take measures to reduce our carbon footprint." The report also notes that the organisation sees this as an area of improvement. None of the GRI indicators was addressed in the report.
- **World YWCA:** Its annual report for 2016¹⁴ notes that greenhouse gas emissions are not recorded (EN16), and that there has been no progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions or initiatives to mitigate the environmental impact of products and services.

⁹ Report available at <https://accountablenow.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/2018-AI-Report-to-Accountable-Now-FINAL.pdf>

¹⁰ Report available at https://accountablenow.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/CARE-International_AccountableNowReport_May2018_Final.pdf

¹¹ Report available at <https://accountablenow.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Greenpeace-International-2018-Annual-Report.pdf>

¹² Report available at https://accountablenow.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Oxfam-Accountability-Report_2019-05-03.pdf

¹³ Report available at <https://accountablenow.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Accountable-Now-Report-FY17-18-FINAL-FOR-SUBMISSION-with-CEO-Statement.pdf>

¹⁴ Report available at <https://accountablenow.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/World-YWCA-Accountability-Report-2016-FINAL-reduced-size.pdf>

In addition to this analysis, a review of the latest annual reports of the Big 6 youth INGOs was conducted, even though none of these organisations other than the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) is a member of the INGO Accountability Charter. The findings are as follows:

- **The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC):** The annual report for 2018¹⁵ indicates that the organisation is implementing an initiative titled "Green Response" to strengthen accountability and the promotion of environmentally beneficial solutions when responding to the needs of local communities. The report further states that the organisation has conducted a case study on the environmental impact of its supply chain and a limited environmental impact assessment to identify areas of improvement in the short and long run.
- **The Duke of Edinburgh International Award:** The report for the year ended 31 March 2019¹⁶ does not reference the organisation's environmental impact.
- **World Alliance of YMCAs:** The 2018 report¹⁷ mentions the YMCA's efforts in advocacy regarding climate change (YMCA Camp Climate at COP24).
- **World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS):** The 2018 report¹⁸ does not reference the organisation's environmental impact.

This brief analysis shows that there is a clear gap in reporting by INGOs on their environmental impact. Yet, efforts in this area should be recognised as well, given the complexity of conducting environmental impact assessments, as well as shifting organisational cultures towards more sustainable thinking, including raising awareness among staff and volunteers.



¹⁵ Report available at <https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2019/08/IFRC-2018-Annual-Report.pdf>

¹⁶ Report available at <https://intaward.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/The-Award-Annual-Report-Digital-concise-spreads.pdf>

¹⁷ Report available at https://www.ymca.int/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018_Annual-Report.pdf

¹⁸ Report available at <https://duz92c7qaoni3.cloudfront.net/documents/Annual-Review-2018.pdf>

6. Scouting's environmental education

"Leave this world a little better than you found it."

Lord Baden-Powell

6.1. Background

Since its inception, Scouting has dedicated substantial attention to environmental education as part of the Scout Method. Scouts are taught to live in harmony with nature, care for it, and protect it. For more than 110 years, Scouting has not only been offering activities in nature, but also environmental education, based on the responsibility of each individual to protect their natural environment and think and act sustainably. As part of Scouting's educational offer in this area, several programmes, initiatives, and partnerships have been developed over the years.

The **World Conservation Programme** was created in 1975 in collaboration with the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF), in response to the emerging trend of rising environmental awareness and concerns about pollution. The popular "Panda Badge" was implemented in NSOs across the world with great success.

During the 1990s, the **Scout Centres of Excellence for Nature and Environment** (SCENES) concept was launched. SCENES are committed to protecting their natural environment, minimising their environmental impact and enabling all who are connected with the centres to engage with nature and become empowered to make their own personal commitment to the environment. SCENES lead by example and act as positive role models to other Scout and non-Scout centres, to their guests, and their local communities. As of 1 May 2020, there were 34 registered SCENES around the world.

The **Global Development Village** (GDV) was first introduced as a component of the Jamboree programme at the 17th World Scout Jamboree (WSJ) in 1991 (Republic of Korea). Since then, it has offered participants the opportunity to learn and discuss global development issues and engage in interactive educational opportunities. Among them, environmental issues have featured prominently across all Jamborees. A large proportion of the GDV programme at the 24th WSJ (2019) focused on environmental sustainability since the SDGs were the main topic.

In 2008, the **World Scout Environment Programme** (WSEP)¹⁹ was created to provide an updated framework for environmental education within the Scout Movement. This was an evolution of the World Conservation Programme, aimed at strengthening the educational offer and inspiring more NSOs to incorporate additional environmental education activities in their Youth Programme. In parallel, the **Scouts of the World Award** (SWA) started, also offering environmental education opportunities to young people as part of its activities. Finally, with the **Messengers of Peace** (MoP) initiative beginning in 2011, Scouting offered another opportunity for NSOs to implement environmental activities and projects (both funded and non-funded initiatives).

By 2016, the World Scout Committee had agreed to integrate MoP, WSEP, and SWA under the **Better World Framework** (BWF), to provide a structure and support system to develop NSO capacities, streamline resources, and align shared goals. Statistics of registered community projects on scout.org show that more than 11,000 of them are environment related. These projects come from various BWF components (including, but not limited to the WSEP).

¹⁹ Conference Resolution 2008-22 Environmental Education in Scouting.

In 2018, the WSB started a review of the WSEP to address gaps in the programme identified in previous years. In the same year, with the creation of the Scouts for SDGs mobilisation,²⁰ all initiatives under the BWF started the process of aligning their educational purposes with the 17 SDGs and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).²¹ To ensure consistency with the alignment of SDGs, but also aiming to incorporate the final-user perspective (NSOs), the World Scout Bureau carried out consultations at a global level and an NSO level to identify content needs, a symbolic framework approach, connectivity with partners, and impact.

The mid-term evaluation survey (for the 2017–2020 triennium) conducted in 2018 with 93 NSOs showed that 67 had implemented the WSEP (72%), where the average grade (on a scale of 1 to 10) on how much the programme met the needs of NSOs was seven. In addition, of the NSOs that had implemented the programme, more than 30% stated that there had been up to 200 young people implementing the programme in their NSO, about 10% indicated that number was between 200 and 500 in their NSO, and 10% indicated that in their case it was over 1000 young people. More than 60% of NSOs noted that they linked the WSEP with their Youth Programme, and more than 75% linked it with the SDGs. Finally, a survey among young people who had participated in the WSEP showed that they overwhelmingly agreed that the WSEP should be updated to reflect a stronger link with the SDGs. It is important to note here that many NSOs have elaborate environmental programmes/projects/initiatives of their own that also contribute greatly to the environmental education provided to young people in their respective countries.

Early in 2020, WOSM organised a workshop on the Future of Scouting Education, which established four thematic areas of focus for the upcoming period:

- Environment and Sustainability
- Peace and Community Engagement
- Health and Wellbeing
- Skills for Life

The workshop highlighted the importance of providing adequate environmental and sustainability education to young people through Scouting on four key topics:

- Better Choices: Developing sustainable habits towards eco-friendly and healthy lifestyles
- Nature and Biodiversity: Connecting with nature and protecting it towards sustainability
- Clean Energy: Exploring and adopting sustainable energy options
- Healthy Planet: Preventing and recovering water and land ecosystems from pollution

The topics identified in the workshop are directly related to the SDGs and are reflected in some existing initiatives and programmes Scouting has developed either on its own or with partners (Champions For Nature Challenge, Scouts Go Solar Challenge, Tide Turners Plastic Challenge, Scouts of the World Award, Trees for the World, Clothe the World).

²⁰ More information at <https://sdgs.scout.org/>

²¹ More information at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000247444>

6.2. Earth Tribe Initiative

Based on the review of the WSEP, as well as the Future of Scouting Education workshop, WOSM is currently reviewing the BWF, to design key initiatives corresponding to main themes and trends affecting the world. For the area of Environment and Sustainability, this is the Earth Tribe Initiative, **a global community of young people who are passionate about the environment and actively engaged as global citizens to preserve and protect our planet.** The Earth Tribe replaces the existing WSEP and acts as an overarching initiative for all existing ones related to the environment in World Scouting. The Earth Tribe Initiative is currently being reviewed to ensure that the activities (tools and programmes) offered under it correspond to the four topics identified under the Environment and Sustainability area. It covers existing programmes and initiatives and will also provide additional ones to fill gaps for topics that are not well addressed currently.



The Earth Tribe Initiative will guide young people (open to both Scouts and non-Scouts) on an educational journey to develop the awareness, competencies, and leadership skills necessary to create environmental change in their communities. It will be fully aligned with Scouting's mobilisation for SDGs (Scouts for SDGs) and will draw on existing partnerships (with WWF, UNEP, and others) to maximise the quality of the educational offering in this area.

Importantly, the Earth Tribe Initiative will have a monitoring and evaluation framework fully developed and incorporated from its onset, enabling World Scouting to monitor the implementation of the Initiative through a set of key indicators, and ensure that the Initiative is flexible and adaptable based on feedback received from users. NSOs will be able to update their information about the use of the Initiative through the NSO Data Portal and information gathered here will support the effort to measure Scouting's contribution to achieving the SDGs.



6.2.1. Partners supporting the Earth Tribe Initiative

Scouting has developed a series of partnerships in the past that have supported its efforts in environmental education. These partnerships continue to remain relevant for the Earth Tribe Initiative as well, including:

- **WWF**, which has supported the development of the *Champions for Nature Challenge*, and the development of the Earth Tribe Initiative. WWF and WOSM have also collaborated on Earth Hour annual campaigns.
- **UNEP**, which has supported the review of the WSEP and its replacement by the Earth Tribe Initiative, as well as the adaptation of the *Tide Turners Plastic Challenge* to the Scout context, *BWF Guiding Principles*, and the *Earth Tribe Initiative*.
- **SOLAFRICA**, which has supported the updating of the *Scouts Go Solar Challenge* in alignment with the BWF and WOSM brands.

In addition, projects/initiatives that resulted from these past partnerships can also be beneficial for the Earth Tribe Initiative:

- **Food for Life**, developed in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), is currently being implemented by several NSOs in Africa Region.
- **The Youth and United Nations Global Alliance (YUNGA) Challenge** badges, of which several have been implemented by Scouts in various NSOs and can potentially be incorporated into some Earth Tribe Initiative activities. WOSM is an active partner in the content development of YUNGA badges with FAO and other partners.

WOSM aims to ensure that existing partnerships in this area further enable Scouting to strengthen its educational offer in the area of environment and sustainability and remains committed to establishing new partnerships where necessary to respond to the identified gaps in the current offering. In addition to these efforts on world and regional levels, many NSOs have strong partnerships at the national level with various organisations aiming at nature conservation and environmental protection.

In addition to partnership activities, Scouting has been intensifying its advocacy efforts in the area of environmental sustainability, notably with its active participation at UN Climate Change Conferences (COPs). Scouts regularly advocate for sustainability and environmental education for young people at various events/gatherings/meetings where Scouting is represented at global and regional levels through the network of WOSM Youth Representatives.



7. WOSM global and regional events

For this report, nine world and regional WOSM events were analysed through interviews with hosts as well as event report analysis. The analysis focused on three key components:

- **Pre-event** – understanding how the event was planned and whether the environmental impact was taken into account.
- **During the event** – understanding the procedures in place for managing:
 - Transport
 - Food
 - Energy and water
 - Waste
- **Post-event** – reviewing event evaluations and understanding the key learning points relating to environmental impact.

Importantly, this analysis should not be considered as a comparative one, given three specific variables:

- **Event type:** Three of the analysed events were institutional (e.g. Conferences), while the other six were educational (e.g. Jamborees, Moots, Youth Forums, training for adults), and as such were organised in different venues. Because of this, they are difficult to compare given the different opportunities and restrictions these venues present.
- **Event size:** This analysis captures events ranging in size from 50 to 40,000 participants; the sustainability measures that can (and should) be implemented for each vary significantly.
- **Event location:** Given that each event took place in a different country, under different local regulations, it would be unfair to apply the same filter to all events. For example, whereas under some local regulations there are excellent recycling opportunities, in others there may only exist the basic possibilities, for example recycling glass or paper/cardboard (or in some cases nothing at all).

Therefore, this analysis should be considered as a collection of practices and challenges identified, as well as ideas for improvement for future WOSM events.

The events included in the analysis (in chronological order) are as follows:

- The 23rd WSJ, Japan, 2015
- The 15th World Scout Moot, Iceland, 2017
- The 13th World Scout Youth Forum, Azerbaijan, 2017
- The 41st World Scout Conference, Azerbaijan, 2017
- The 26th Asia-Pacific Regional Scout Conference, Philippines, 2018
- The 24th WSJ, Canada-USA-Mexico, 2019
- The Arab Scout Youth Forum, Egypt, 2019
- The Interamerican WOSM Services Consultants Training, Panama, 2019
- The World Non-Formal Education Forum, Brazil, 2019



7.1. Practices used at past events

7.1.1. Before the event

The analysed events showed a variety of approaches to planning for mitigating environmental impact. A direct correlation between the size of the event and the extent of the planning and assessment of potential environmental impacts was noticeable. For example, for the two Jamborees and the Moot, as well as the World Scout Conference and Youth Forum, event planning included identifying the potential environmental impact and establishing a plan for mitigating negative impacts. On the other hand, smaller events (especially if held in conference venues/hotels) devoted less attention to this topic in the event planning phase.

None of the events analysed solicited external support for identifying the environmental impact of the event, but in some cases, such as the Moot, the hosts had the advantage of having a volunteer on the team who also had professional experience with offsetting the environmental impact of events. In the case of Japan, the hosts were directed by local government authorities to their existing guidelines for organising eco-friendly events, which they subsequently used in their preparations to comply with local regulations. In addition, the hosts followed the ISO 20121 Event Sustainability Management Systems standard. Other than this, hosts did not note any external practices in particular as a reference point but noted that the collective experience of their teams (within and without Scouting) helped identify areas where improvements could be made. In addition, past experiences (either with hosting big Scouting events or as was the case of Azerbaijan – the 2015 European Games) helped build a greater understanding within the teams of the various aspects of event planning that required an environmental perspective review.

In the case of smaller events and events principally organised by the WSB Support Centres, it was noted that hosts had already established policies for minimising plastic and paper use during events. For example, in the cases of the Asia-Pacific Regional Conference and the Interamerican Consultants Training, the respective WSB Support Centres already had in place policies for reducing paper use by only printing the absolute minimum necessary, as well as avoiding the use of bottled water during events (opting rather for either providing each participant with a water bottle or serving water in jugs with glasses at the venue).

One significant aspect of camping events' impact on the environment is the changes they cause to the location where they are taking place (including soil degradation, loss of vegetation, damage to biodiversity, etc.). In many cases, hosts are required by local regulations to present plans for site recovery after the event takes place. In the case of the WSJ in Japan, the hosts had developed a plan in collaboration with local authorities and implemented it successfully after the event.

For almost all events, any measures taken to reduce the environmental impact were worked into the existing event budget lines, and not regarded as stand-alone costs (except for Japan, where 2 million Japanese Yen, or over 18,000 USD was budgeted for site recovery, half of which was used, and with additional support provided from the local government). Therefore, it was not possible to estimate the exact impact on event budgets for implementing sustainability measures. Hosts noted that the implementation of these measures was often a "trade-off situation", given the possibilities each faced with local regulations (e.g. when it came to waste management or energy supply), where the cost of implementing one sustainability measure may come at the expense of not affording certain activities as part of the event programme.

7.1.2. During the event

Transport

The analysis in this area consisted of understanding the arrangements set in place for local/ground transport, as well as on-site transport (if the venue was in a different location to the accommodation). Air travel was not taken into account in this analysis, due to the limited scope of this research. Nevertheless, the report still offers valid insights into the practices hosts have used in organising ground transportation – another important factor in assessing environmental impact. Future studies of an event’s carbon footprint should include air travel in the analysis, given its importance and the large contribution it makes to the overall carbon footprint of any event.

The research looked into transport arrangements from airports to the venue, where, in the case of all events, transport was arranged with private companies (bus/car rental), with no public transport being used. In the example of the 41st World Scout Conference, the hosts arranged a system with the provider based on the arrival and departure times of participants (to avoid having shuttles circulating all day). Although noting that this was a more complex arrangement (due to the number of participants and flight details changing before the event or flight delays), the hosts recognised that it was a more environmentally friendly option, as well as a more cost-effective solution.

Hosts of big events stressed the importance of the venue’s location and accommodation to minimising the environmental impact. Events situated in venues close (and well-connected) to airports enabled a shorter travel time (and thus less use of buses/cars). In addition, when venues were close to the accommodation, such as the case of the World Non-Formal Education Forum, the need for additional transportation during the event was completely cut out, further minimising the environmental impact.

Transportation on-site (or to programme activities off-site) in the case of big events is also factored in when assessing an event’s carbon footprint. In the case of the 24th WSJ, the hosts aspired to minimising the use of buses/cars/ATVs and encouraged participants and adults to explore the site as much as possible on foot. The hosts only offered one-fifth of the total private transport requested from different teams (e.g. of the 500 UTVs and ATVs requested, only approximately 160 were available on site). In the case of the 23rd WSJ in Japan, there were several off-site programme modules, where participants had to take shuttle buses to attend activities. One such activity was the Hiroshima Peace Programme (a core part of the Peace Module), where participants had to take a bus to the activity venue. The hosts estimated that “4,700 people were transported by 100 buses per day with an average seat occupancy exceeding 90%.”²² It is clear that the hosts aimed at minimising the impact by either reducing the use of vehicles or using the capacity of hired vehicles to the maximum extent possible.

²² 23rd World Scout Jamboree Final Report, 2016.

Food management

Information about food management was mainly available for larger events. In the cases of smaller events, it was mainly left to the venue's existing arrangements and providers. This was also one of the areas of operations where hosts noted that local conditions had a very significant impact on the extent to which environmentally friendly measures could be undertaken (dependence on food imports for specific diets, or difficulty with providing reusable cutlery and plates due to high costs).

In the case of Azerbaijan, the hosts sourced as much of the food as possible locally, which was largely achieved, except for the import of food for some particular diets (e.g. gluten-free products). In addition, the hosts noted that although red meat was widely available in all meals offered, it was sourced from free-range farms (which is generally the case in Azerbaijan). In the case of the Moot in Iceland, hosts noted that the ambition was to source all food locally, but due to the isolated geographical character of the country and the lack of availability of foods for certain diets (e.g. kosher), imports had to be made via air transfer, which resulted in a higher carbon footprint.

The 23rd WSJ hosts provided a breakdown of the total quantities of meat used in meals as follows: 56% pork (11,301.5kg), 33% beef (6,731.5kg) and 11% poultry (2,316kg). Research has consistently proven that beef is the least environmentally friendly meat (in terms of land land, irrigation water, greenhouse gas emissions, and reactive nitrogen),²³ requiring 28 times more land to produce compared to pork, which ultimately results in a five-times more greenhouse gas emissions. It is commendable that the consumption of beef was less than that of pork and poultry during the Jamboree. However, this does raise further questions about the menus provided during events and the possibilities for providing a more environmentally friendly choice of meals (e.g. more vegetarian options for all).

In smaller events organised in hotels/conference venues, the meal offer was mainly provided as a buffet. Organisers of the Interamerican Consultants Training stressed the importance of accurately estimating the number of people attending the event and communicating it well in advance to the providers to avoid large quantities of leftovers.

At the 24th WSJ, participants used a "grocery store" system where they could choose the products they wanted to cook in their units. The hosts stressed that this system puts an additional burden on them, given the wide variety of products that have to be offered in the stores. Additionally, providing for some special dietary requirements that were not necessarily covered in the standard special menu on offer (in the case of International Service Team (IST)) also presented a challenge. Finally, the hosts noted that although the stores were well stocked until the end of the Jamboree, some participants started to hoard groceries in the last few days and ended up leaving them behind in their tents. Most of the unopened food left like this was donated to food banks in West Virginia. Similarly, in the case of the 23rd WSJ in Japan, unopened and uncooked food was donated to food banks via the Council of Social Welfare.

²³ Eshel, G., Shepon, A., Makov, T., & Milo, R. (2014). Land, irrigation water, greenhouse gas, and reactive nitrogen burdens of meat, eggs, and dairy production in the United States. *PNAS* 111(33):11996–12001. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1402183111>

Energy and water management

Energy and water management depends largely on conditions available onsite or at the event venue. In the case of permanent sites (such as the Summit Bechtel Reserve, the site of the 24th WSJ), the hosts had already implemented some environmentally friendly measures when the site was constructed. For example, the water used for flushing toilets was recycled shower and handwashing water. In addition, the site has its own black water management system with the largest drainage field in West Virginia, where the water is naturally processed/cleaned and then used to irrigate surrounding forest areas. All trees cut at the site during construction were used as lumber in building the permanent showers and toilets onsite. The Sustainability Tree House produces a limited quantity of solar and wind energy, which is plugged into the site's electricity grid. Even though ten times more generators were requested than what was provided onsite, the hosts purposefully limited the amount available, based on their previous experience and with an intent to save energy insofar as possible.

In the case of Japan, where the Jamboree site was not permanent, the hosts did careful calculations of the amount of water necessary and ensured the proper management of wastewater as part of the local community's grid. In contrast to the permanent site in the USA, in Japan the hosts opted for providing power for most of the site using 161 diesel power generators (due to the restrictions on using the local grid), using 113,811 litres of diesel during the Jamboree, which is equivalent to the CO₂e emissions from 57 passenger vehicles driven for one year (222 tons of CO₂e).²⁴ It is important to note here that sustainability measures can be applied to both the sourcing and the use of energy (i.e., not only the choice of energy source but also the smart management of energy onsite).

In Iceland, fresh water was sourced from a sustainable source and sewage water was treated safely, following local environmental regulations. The Moot used hydroelectricity (eco-friendly in Iceland) and cut down on the use of fuel-burning vehicles by replacing them with bicycles and electric vehicles insofar as possible. The hosts also conducted a carbon footprint study based on energy consumption, fresh and wastewater management, and waste recycling data among other, and showed that the Moot had a total carbon footprint of 4,378 tonnes of CO₂ and that offsetting would require the planting of 40,724 trees.

In smaller events, hosts – such as the case of the World Non-Formal Education Forum – noted that the type of energy used was limited to what was offered by the venue. In this case, the Forum venue used solar energy, and the hosts arranged for a generator solely as backup in case it was needed during the event (which did not occur). Similarly, up to 15% of the daily power supply at the Conference venue in Azerbaijan was provided by solar energy.

In all events analysed, hosts wanted to avoid the use of bottled water as much as possible. This proved to be challenging in some cases where providers were unable to provide the quantity of water necessary in a sustainable form (e.g. in Azerbaijan, the provider noted shortly before the event that they were unable to provide the water in gallons and would have to opt for plastic bottles; it was too late and too expensive for the host to make alternative arrangements).

²⁴ United States Environmental Protection Agency's Greenhouse gas equivalencies calculator. Available at <https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator>

Waste management

The events analysed showed a variety of approaches to waste management, mainly dependent on local regulations and availability of recycling and composting. Hosts noted that in cases where events were held at conference centres/hotels, they had little influence over waste management, as it followed procedures established in each venue.

In the case of the 23rd WSJ in Japan, participants were required to classify waste in 16 categories, per local regulations of the waste treatment and recycling facilities of Yamaguchi City. The hosts calculated that the total waste collected during the WSJ was 343,525 kg, of which more than 80% was burnable garbage,²⁵; the rest was recycled. In addition, the hosts were guided by a “reuse and recycle” policy from the onset. All bamboo used by units during the WSJ was used to make bamboo charcoal and all kitchen utensils from units were distributed for further use by local Scout groups.

At the 24th WSJ, the hosts stressed the challenges the faced when enabling a more comprehensive recycling process, given that the local conditions in West Virginia did not allow for recycling more than cardboard and glass. They further noted that they were unable to organise composting of food leftovers onsite (or anywhere in the state of West Virginia) due to local regulations, and therefore it went to general waste rather than being transported for composting across state borders (which also may have caused some negative environmental impact from transport).

In the case of the 13th World Scout Youth Forum, food leftovers were used to feed animals at local farms in and around Gabala, and at the Azeri evening at the 41st World Scout Conference, the leftover (unused) food was shared with restaurant workers (as is general practice in restaurants in Azerbaijan). All waste produced during the Conference was brought to a central waste management facility in Baku (per the venue’s regulations), which recycles. Similarly, at the World Non-Formal Education Forum in Brazil, the hosts noted that the venue had a recycling system in place.

Notably, several hosts remarked that the excessive use of promotional material, the exchange of event souvenirs/gifts, and certificates/diplomas, can result in a large amount of waste; it is not uncommon that the souvenirs are thrown away, rather than brought home and the promotional material such as banners and posters are only used once and then discarded (since they have event-specific information on them). Similarly, at camping events, several contingents decided to leave tents and sleeping bags at the site, which, if not properly dealt with to ensure reuse, can result in more waste.

²⁵ 23rd World Scout Jamboree Final Report, 2016.

7.1.3. After the event

The input received from hosts regarding post-event evaluations and learning indicated a list of challenges and recommendations. Notably, few events included questions in their participants' evaluation about the sustainability measures implemented, and for smaller events, it was not uncommon that this topic was not discussed in the team evaluation either. However, in bigger events, significant attention was paid to reviewing the successes and areas of improvement for future events.



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7.2. Challenges and limitations in implementing sustainability measures at events

Throughout the conversations with the event hosts, several key challenges emerged in terms of implementing sustainability measures when organising events. The following were identified as cross-cutting:

- **Need for clear guidance and support in identifying the most suitable sustainability measures.** Event hosts noted that even though their teams had in some cases extensive experience with organising sustainable events, they would have appreciated having clearer guidance from WOSM on expectations for implementing sustainability measures.
- **Need for a collection of best practices from past events.** Hosts noted that in preparing for the event (and even in the bidding process) it would be useful to review the experiences of past event hosts when it comes to sustainability measures implemented and to understand better the challenges they faced, as well as the learning drawn from them.
- **Need for detailed information from past events.** Hosts of bigger events noted that it would be useful in their preparations to have detailed data about the specifics of organising events (e.g. water and energy consumption, amount of food and different menus used, waste management data, wastewater management data). This would enable them to better prepare their assumptions for the event they are hosting and also better estimate the impact of implementing sustainability measures on their budgets and overall event planning.
- **Adapting to local context and regulations.** The sustainability measures each host can undertake depend greatly on local context and regulations, from the availability of local food and the avoidance of imports to waste management. These can limit the hosts' possibilities; support in finding alternative solutions for these would be greatly appreciated.
- **Little possibility to influence existing practices in venues.** Hosts noted that in cases of events being held in venues unless attention was paid before choosing the venue, adapting to implement sustainability measures may be difficult or impossible to achieve. They, therefore, stressed the need for event bidders to be aware of all the necessary sustainability measures they need to consider well in advance of choosing the proposed event venue.
- **Planning for post-event site recovery.** For hosts of bigger events, it is especially important to pay attention not only to the environmental impact in planning and delivering the event but also leaving the site used as well-preserved as possible. Support in ensuring this in terms of planning and partnerships with local actors would enable hosts to further minimise the event's impact.
- **Budgeting impact and balancing between different sustainability measures.** Some hosts noted that implementing some sustainability measures may come at a high price, and at the expense of implementing other measures that could potentially have better results (i.e., reduce the negative environmental impact more significantly). They stressed how the decisions on which measures to implement are not as "black-and-white" and need to be considered in totality during the budget planning process, rather than as add-on measures with separate budget lines.
- **Changing cultures and adjusting expectations of participants.** Hosts noted that in order for events to succeed in implementing sustainability measures participants need to be sensitised and informed about them before attending the event. They need to partake in the responsibility of ensuring the event is sustainable by adapting their own behaviour.
- **Having a clear picture of expectations from WOSM before, during, and after the event regarding the environmental impact.** Some hosts noted the need for clearer input from WOSM on its team's needs in terms of resources, to avoid ordering too many office supplies and workshop materials which are then left unused after the event. Besides, it was noted that having a clear set of WOSM expectations from each event host (as a minimum, must-have) in terms of sustainability measures would be greatly appreciated.

- **Ensuring clear messaging to participants about the event’s environmental impact and the hosts’ sustainability measures.** Communication has been stressed as key to ensuring that participants are onboard and contributing to the event’s efforts to achieve sustainability. Some hosts noted challenges in providing clear messaging before, during, and after the event about its anticipated and actual environmental impact, as well as all the measures the hosts have put in place to mitigate this impact and the participants’ role in supporting them.

Most importantly, the hosts stressed the importance of understanding that organising an environmentally sustainable event is not clear-cut and simple, but rather a **complex balancing act in finding the best solutions for each event’s local context, limitations, and opportunities.**

7.3. Opportunities for further development

The analysis in this chapter offers a good insight into the areas where further development is needed to strengthen the sustainability of WOSM’s regional and world events, but ultimately also NSO/NSA events, and even local Scouting events. These opportunities are summarised as follows:

- **Establish learning opportunities among past and future event hosts.** WOSM has an opportunity to ensure stronger links between past and future event hosts (or even bidders as part of their learning and preparation for future bids) for exchange and learning. This enables first-hand learning, which can be facilitated and structured, to maximise the outcomes of these exchanges.
- **Ensure a well-documented database of best practices in sustainability.** Having best practices documented in detail gives a good starting point for future event hosts in terms of reviewing their own possibilities (in light of local limitations). As such, best practices would be offered as examples that can (and should) be adapted to local contexts. This would still inspire thinking outside of what the local teams of bidders are normally used to and potentially spark new ideas.
- **Provide guidelines and proactive support for event bidders and hosts.** WOSM has a significant role to play in providing active guidance to hosts and bidders. This means not only providing guidelines but incorporating regular follow-up on sustainability measures in the overall system for monitoring progress in organising events. This would allow for a more active and supportive role, rather than leaving this aspect of event planning to the hosts/bidders to do on their own.
- **Empower event participants to become strong actors in organising environmentally sustainable events.** Currently, participants of Scouting events are more connected than ever well in advance of the events, thanks to social media communication channels. These offer a significant opportunity for preparing the participants and clearly communicating the sustainability measures that will be implemented for the event and sharing expectations of their contribution. This could range from simple acts such as bringing their own notepads and water bottle to arranging travel with the least possible carbon footprint and even considering offsetting travel emissions.
- **Ensure that events contain a component of environmental education for participants.** It is important to note that each event is an opportunity to raise awareness not only about the environmental impact of events, but also the individual responsibility towards protecting nature. It is recommended that events offer a learning opportunity in this regard for all participants while keeping in mind the event type, size, and target audience.

These opportunities have been identified as a starting point for ensuring future WOSM events are more sustainable; it is a non-exhaustive list. There are certainly many more items that would arise from existing practices of NSO/NSA events, as well as external, non-Scouting events that could serve as excellent learning.

8. WOSM operations

The report evaluated current practices within WOSM's operations outside World Events and how they can be further evaluated. Reviews were carried out on the existing practices for meetings and travels of the World Scout Committee, World Scout Bureau and Operational Framework structures, including carbon footprint analysis. In addition, a review was carried out on sustainability practices within the World Scout Bureau daily operations. These insights formed the basis for understanding the environmental impact of WOSM operations, as well as the opportunities for further development.

8.1. Situational analysis

WSC Sustainability Guidelines²⁶ have been put in place since the 2014-2017 triennium which provide an overview of practices from venue selection and reducing waste to food, accommodation and travel arrangements. Interviews with staff organising meetings noted that the majority of established practices are being followed, noting that sometimes challenges arise when meetings are hosted outside World Scout Bureau premises and common meeting places, which sometime limit control over the implementation of sustainability practices. External meeting venues sometimes have their own practices and may not have the capacity to implement WOSM's own sustainability guidelines.

An analysis of the average total carbon footprint of WSC members' travel (and WSB staff when outside of Kuala Lumpur) for a WSC meeting shows an average of 41.8 tonnes of CO₂e²⁷ (for an average of 33 individuals travelling), noting a reduction of around 25% for those meetings held in the European/Arab/African Region. This is due to WSC members being geographically closer to the meeting location and therefore had a shorter distance to travel. The last 3 WSC Meetings (March 2020, September 2020 and March 2021) were held virtual and yielded no travel related carbon footprint, although it needs to be noted that meetings through video conferencing have their own energy, carbon dioxide, time and transmission costs.

An analysis of six meetings with volunteers and staff coming from all WOSM regions, with an average attendance of 7, showed an average carbon footprint of 6.8 tonnes of CO₂e.

An analysis of staff travel extracted from the WSB's Human Resource Management System for the year 2019 has shown that WSB staff (all Support Centres) had a total carbon footprint of 480.41 tonnes of CO₂e. About 85% of travel in 2019 was by air and 15% by car, bus or train. Worthwhile noting here is that distances vary greatly when it comes to trips, and therefore some Centres due to their geographical location and the vastness of their regions (e.g. Africa and Interamerica) automatically have a higher carbon footprint (even though they might have completed fewer trips than other Regions). Comparably, the nature of the work of the Global Support Centre across the world leads to longer distance trips, and hence a higher carbon footprint.

Interviews with staff responsible for organising most logistics for meetings (either staff-only or staff and volunteers) provided insights into the general practices followed in the World Scout Bureau. The WSC sustainability guidelines are being used within the WSB as the main reference point, aiming to reduce waste and save energy through them. It was noted that sensitizing and educating colleagues about the need and rationale behind the measures is an important aspect in getting them fully implemented and ensure a common sense of accountability.

The past year has further seen significant progress in the World Scout Bureau in identifying best practices that can be implemented to reduce the negative environmental impact of WSB operations. These are a set of simple actions including care when ordering food for meetings (fewer individually packaged products), saving energy by switching off lights and air-conditioning in areas that are not occupied, and similar.

²⁶ WSC Sustainability Practices Guidelines, first adopted in October 2015.

²⁷ The carbon footprint calculator used: <https://calculator.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx?tab=3> The calculations took into account a direct return flight for each participant from departure to the meeting destination and did not account for stopovers and categories of flight ticket, as this data was unavailable.

8.2. Challenges and Opportunities

Reviewing the data and input from interviews collected in this chapter demonstrates several challenges and opportunities

- **Minimising the impact of air travel.** Due to the nature of WOSM’s work and its highly international teams, it is challenging to complete work without face-to-face meetings that often span regions. A challenge noted here is to find a way to minimise the negative impact of air travel for both staff and volunteer meetings. Virtual meeting practices established during the global pandemic form a good basis to better assess the needs of in-person meetings going forward. In addition, opportunities for offsetting (either through Scouting activities or partnerships) can be further researched to offer a solution to running a carbon-neutral organisation.
- **Establish guidelines for staff and volunteers and create accountability.** These guidelines could be an active “living” solution aimed at continuously improving and expanding. They would offer a solid basis for educating and sensitising staff and volunteers about the importance of having the measures in place and would thus create more accountability in upholding them.
- **Need for educating and sensitising staff and volunteers to sustainability practices and why they are needed.** There are staff and volunteers across WOSM who work directly on environmental and sustainability issues – their knowledge needs to be shared more with others. There is a need to ensure that all staff and volunteers understand the importance of following sustainability guidelines in their daily work, understand why these measures are important and recognise how they contribute to protecting the environment.
- **Establish policies for green procurement.** The WSB could research opportunities across all Support Centres to set policies for purchasing products and services that cause minimal (or none at all) adverse environmental impact (e.g. energy supplies, recycled paper, low-energy consuming office devices, sustainable caterers).

9. Recommendations

The recommendations outlined here are based on the analyses provided in the previous chapters and relate directly to some of the opportunities for further development outlined at the end of each chapter.

Overall, it is recommended that **WOSM ensures a strong focus on environmental sustainability in the next Strategy for Scouting**. This focus should cover the areas of **education, communication, partnerships and advocacy, event management, and operations**. In addition, it is recommended that WOSM explores further **opportunities for complying with a globally recognised standard for environmental sustainability** (such as the GRI's sector supplement for NGOs).

9.1. Recommended next steps in Scouting's environmental education

The following recommendations are provided based on the current state of Scouting's environmental education:

- **Ensure that the Earth Tribe Initiative is widely promoted and implemented by NSOs and frequently evaluated for feedback and improvements.** Once finalised, the Initiative needs to be strongly promoted among NSOs to ensure their ownership and contribution to its success.
- **Expand the Global Development Village programme at future events to offer more environmental activities.** Although already featured prominently in the GDV programme, environmental activities could be expanded further to move towards empowering young people to take action to make sustainable choices and protect the environment.
- **Further strengthen existing partnerships and explore opportunities for establishing new ones in the area of environmental education.** More partnerships could offer more diversity in the kinds of activities/challenges/campaigns offered. Importantly, not all of these should necessarily be on a global level; Scouting should encourage more such initiatives on regional and national levels as well.
- **Capitalise on the Earth Tribe Initiative as a growth opportunity for the Movement.** Given that the Initiative is open to both Scouts and non-Scouts, it should be seen as an opportunity to grow membership in NSOs by allowing non-Scouting youth to experience Scouting activities and potentially as a consequence join the Movement. Environmental protection is rapidly becoming one of the key issues that young people advocate for today and take action on in their local communities. Offering programmes and initiatives that support these interests would make Scouting attractive to more young people.

9.2. Recommendations for organising world and regional events

The following recommendations are relevant for organising world and regional Scouting events:

- **Develop comprehensive guidelines for event bidders and hosts on environmental sustainability.** The guidelines need to address concerns about balancing different measures for achieving sustainable events (offering a range of options, rather than a checklist). Furthermore, they need to address events of varying types (institutional/educational) and size. Finally, they need to be adaptable to local contexts and regulations.
- **Enable the exchange of information between previous hosts and future ones and bidders, as well as with event organisers outside of Scouting.** WOSM has an opportunity to benefit from the vast experience of past event hosts, but also to reach out to partners and enquire about their best practices in organising events, to enrich the offer of best practices available to future hosts and event bidders.
- **Ensure that environmental sustainability measures are incorporated into the regular event planning, monitoring, and evaluation process.** Environmental sustainability measures should not be considered a stand-alone or even an add-on component of regular event management. Rather, WOSM needs to ensure that all event hosts and bidders consider them from start to finish in planning, monitoring, and evaluating their events and as an integral part of the event management process. This will enable increased accountability towards implementing sustainability measures at events.

- **Promote WOSM guidelines for organising sustainable events as a useful tool for making NSOs events more sustainable.** The guidelines, once established, need to be widely distributed and promoted among NSOs. They should be encouraged to use them in managing their own events. This could form part of a potential WOSM Service in event management.
- **Minimise the production of event promotional material, souvenirs, and certificates.** Although this is a long-standing tradition in many NSOs, it is recommended that production of these is reduced to a minimum and that it focuses on purposeful items that can be reused.
- **Create cultural change among event participants by educating and sensitising them to the importance of minimising the negative environmental impact of events.** WOSM plays a crucial role in preparing participants for world/regional events by educating and sensitising them in advance about the measures undertaken at each event for minimising negative environmental impact. Participants need to be empowered; they need to take responsibility for ensuring the success of these measures. In addition, WOSM events are an opportunity to educate participants more broadly about the consequences of climate change and why undertaking sustainability measures at all levels (starting from the individual) are crucial today.

9.3. Recommendations for World Scout Bureau operations

The following recommendations are relevant for WSB operations:

- **Develop sustainability guidelines for staff and volunteer meetings.** These guidelines would enable a synchronised approach across all Support Centres in organising meetings. Naturally, these guidelines would still have to be adapted to local contexts and should therefore preserve a level of flexibility. Importantly, they should be reviewed and updated regularly with fresh ideas either from within the Movement or from practices captured at external meetings.
- **Develop sustainability guidelines for WSB staff/Support Centres for daily work and green procurement policies.** Apart from meeting guidelines, staff would benefit from having a set of simple house rules to follow when it comes to sustainability in each Support Centre, as well as a reference to environmental sustainability in procurement policies. These may differ depending on local context, but there could be some overarching principles that would guide the practices established in each.
- **Train staff and volunteers on sustainability measures.** To implement any guidelines or policies, staff and volunteers need to be educated about them and their effectiveness in reducing WOSM's environmental impact. This goes beyond just presenting the guidelines, but rather takes the form of regular (short!) training sessions and reminders with clear explanations that can be easily followed.
- **Appoint responsible staff members to ensure accountability and adherence to sustainability guidelines.** Teams could potentially benefit from having "environmental champions" or similar appointed roles, for staff who will be the go-to resource person and be able to help with any questions relating to WOSM's sustainability measures but would also hold colleagues accountable and ensure they follow the measures. This may be considered an interim measure, while the process of improving the culture and raising environmental awareness is ongoing. In addition, it is recommended that Support Centres that are implementing innovative sustainability measures are recognised for their efforts and that best practices are shared.
- **Implement a system for revising the importance of travel.** Although the WSB currently has a system in place for checks and balances in the form of approvals from supervisors for each trip, an added perspective of reviewing each trip's necessity from an environmental standpoint could bring a more rigorous system. It would help ensure no unnecessary travel (with objectives that could be achieved through virtual meetings) takes place.

9.4. Recommendations for further research into WOSM's carbon footprint and opportunities for offsetting it

This report provides a first attempt at identifying part of WOSM's carbon footprint related to air travel. However, calculating the footprint in more detail would require research with a much broader scope, both in terms of types of activities considered (not just air travel) but also in terms of including selected world and regional events in the calculation. Therefore, the following recommendations are presented:

- **Research WOSM's carbon footprint with a wider scope.** WOSM would benefit from wider research into its carbon footprint, including energy consumption in offices, waste production, ground transport, and deeper research into the carbon footprint of its events.
- **Research opportunities for offsetting WOSM's carbon footprint.** Opportunities for offsetting carbon footprints are abundant. Many companies and organisations offer opportunities for investing in projects that would offset the equivalent of CO₂ produced. However, Scouting should first look into possibilities for investing in Scouting environmental projects around the globe that are already offsetting carbon emissions (e.g. tree planting, renewable energy projects) and second explore external options. Importantly, any future investment from global or regional levels to national and local Scouting initiatives needs to be clearly distinguished from existing national/local efforts in this regard (to prevent double-counting of offsetting efforts).
- **Ensure event bidders and hosts consider the potential carbon footprint of their events and explore opportunities for offsetting it.** As part of their proactive role in ensuring more sustainable events, hosts and bidders should be encouraged to do assessments of the expected carbon footprint in advance of events taking place and plan on how to offset it.
- **Encourage NSOs to calculate their own operations and events and look for offsetting opportunities.** Ultimately, the best practices adopted at world and regional levels should trickle down to the national level. Ideally, WOSM would be able to provide support to NSOs wishing to do their own calculations and find adequate offsetting opportunities.

In addition to these recommendations related to WOSM on a regional and world level, in terms of support to NSOs, it is recommended that a dimension and criteria on environmental sustainability are added to the **Global Support Assessment Tool (GSAT)**. This would enable NSOs to have a better insight into their own progress and gaps in achieving sustainability in their operations and programmes.

Furthermore, it is recommended to explore opportunities for providing an Environmental Sustainability Service for NSOs as part of the WOSM Services. The service should provide support to NSOs planning on implementing sustainability measures across their operations, programme activities, and events.

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