

WAGGGS EUROPE REGION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

At WAGGGS Europe we want to be sustainable - maximising positive impact whilst minimising the negative impact we have on our world, whether this is social, economic or environmental.

In practice, sustainability is about how people work and make decisions. We have developed this framework to be used externally with our Member Organisations and partners and internally for all our activities.

This paper will explain what sustainability is and its importance to us, define our scope in this area and guide our actions.

DEFINITION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

It is widely known that sustainable development means developing in a way that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

In order to achieve this, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015.

It provides a shared framework for all countries until 2030 - that is 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 169 targets that need to be acted upon in order to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

Guided by the Global Goals, it is up to governments, businesses, civil society and all citizens to work together on sustainable development.

Therefore, as part of a global movement of 10 million girls and young women, WAGGGS Europe Region strives to ensure sustainable development, with a focus on climate action and gender equality.

We also want our 1.1 million young people in the Europe Region of WAGGGS to be able to take action and ultimately change the world by helping to achieve the SDGs.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IS AT THE HEART OF WHAT WAGGGS TRIES TO ACHIEVE



It is relevant for:

OUR MEMBERS AND THEIR MEMBER ORGANISATIONS

who are the basis of what we do.

Therefore, our research and work focus on girls' rights and opportunities, so that:

Every Girl

- Is healthy and thriving;
- Is safe and respected;
- Can develop skills and have opportunities;
- Can enjoy and inherit a liveable planet;
- Can raise her voice and be heard.



OUR ORGANISATION

that has particular areas of expertise and priorities.

As the world's largest voluntary organisation for girls and young women, we are the girl experts and have strong expertise in leadership development and non-formal education. The 2030 Agenda opens up new spaces for young people and youth organisations to engage in.

To reflect this, we have adapted our organisational priorities so that they cover all the SDGs, but we are focusing on those most relevant to our work so that all our energy, programming and advocacy at a global and regional level can help create the world we want to see for girls.

Furthermore, the EU is prioritising sustainable development, thus more funding opportunities to help to sustain our organisation will be accessible to us if we align our priorities as such.

OUR WIDER INFLUENCE

that offers the opportunity for us to have an impact beyond our organisation and members.

The 2030 Agenda is a tool to hold governments accountable for their commitments. We can make an impact by campaigning, speaking out and acting for change through partnerships with both intergovernmental bodies and charity organisations such as the United Nations, European Youth Forum (YFJ), European Women's Lobby and Women's Economic Forum.

HOW DOES SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FIT INTO THE WORK OF WAGGGS EUROPE REGION?

In this part of the concept paper, the different ways in which WAGGGS Europe Region works with, and on sustainable development are explained in relation to:

Programme
Organisational structure

External relations
Expertise

PROGRAMME

EDUCATION:

In this world, we face environmental, social, cultural and economic challenges which drive us to take the lead and make the change as Scouts and Guides. The world needs active citizens now more than ever; young people who are ready to take action, to change the way we live and make a better future.

Guiding and Scouting can offer something to the educational field that other youth organisations don't have. Young people need tools, skills and values to build a better world.

Our educational programme offers a concrete approach to reach our mission and vision. Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting's educational programme consist of the following aspects:



THE PURPOSE (WHY WE DO IT)

WAGGGS' mission is

To enable girls and young women to develop their fullest potential as responsible citizens of the world.

Our vision is

All girls are valued and take action to change the world.

THE GIRL GUIDING AND GIRL SCOUTING EDUCATIONAL METHOD (HOW WE DO IT)

The non-formal WAGGGS educational method increases action and leadership via five different elements:

Learning in small groups

Working effectively with others through supporting each other, negotiating and making democratic decisions, asserting our needs and opinions, and solving problems.

Connecting with others

Young people are encouraged to connect with people of different ages, genders, cultural and social backgrounds.

My path, my pace

The personal development of every individual is valued through providing a variety of activities; chosen and led by young people who have a brave space to take risks, make mistakes, and be celebrated.

Learning by doing

Through real experiences young people learn in a hands-on way, actively engaging with learning through challenges that connect to their own lives.

Connecting with my world

Young people reflect on what it means to be a global citizen and are empowered to nurture the communities and environments they care about.

THE ACTIVITIES (WHAT WE DO)

At all levels of WAGGGS Europe Region and their Member Organisations, activities facilitate an increased awareness of the world and develop active citizenship.

By raising leadership skills, the sense of self-responsibility and empowerment, we can develop active individuals and groups to tackle climate change, inequality and all aspects of sustainability.

How does this happen?

At a local level

This takes place through weekly meetings and camps.

At regional, national and Europe Region level

Organisations offer lots of other opportunities to grow as a leader and gain new experiences.

These include:
training, international Guiding and Scouting, and other kinds of events to take part in.

At global level

WAGGGS delivers programmes for Member Organisations to help them bring alive the core values of WAGGGS (integrity, citizenship and spirituality), such as:

- Free Being Me;
- Stop the Violence;
- YUNGA challenge badges

In creating a more sustainable future, values, skills and knowledge acquired in Guiding and Scouting can play a key role when young people grow up.

The educational method enhances skills such as democratic decision making, problem-solving, understanding diversity, connecting with other cultures and supporting communities and the environment, which are all essential skills in a changing world.



EVENTS:

As a region, we strive not only to host events that are in themselves sustainable, but also to take advantage of events such as Roverway, The Academy, etc. to work with our Member Organisations and young members to develop knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development.

One of the WAGGGS *For Her World* Tool-kits is directed at 'Greener Events' and offers a useful framework.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

CONFERENCE:

We are directed by the motions proposed at our triennial conferences, working on what matters most to our Member Organisations (MOs). Particular focus is put on action for climate change, gender and diversity, and youth participation which are all key in achieving sustainable development.

COMMITTEE:

We are governed by the Europe Region Committee who consider all of our regional activities through a sustainable development lens to ensure that we lead by example.

REGIONAL VOLUNTEERS:

We empower our volunteers to be advocates for change in line with WAGGGS' position statements and policy papers, providing the platform from which sustainable development can be incorporated in all that we do.

STAFF AND OFFICE:

All actions in the Europe Region are supported by our small staff team. Sustainable development is always taken into consideration in their work including programming, finances, and MO support.

When in the office the team commits to sustainable behaviours and whilst working from home find ways to be more sustainable.

MEMBER ORGANISATIONS:

We support our Member Organisations to enable young people to develop as responsible citizens of the world. Furthermore, we have the capacity to support them when considering how to integrate sustainable development into further actions and initiatives in their organisations.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

COMMUNICATION:

We use our social media platforms to promote the work that is being done in the Region on sustainable development and encourage/inspire our youth members to take action on sustainable development..

PARTNERSHIPS:

We work with our partner organisations to ensure a combined effort, exemplifying how sustainable development works best in unity.



ADVOCACY:

We speak out on important issues relating to sustainable development, in particular gender equality and environmental sustainability as this is where our expertise lies, at forums such as membership assemblies of the European Youth Forum, European Women Lobby meetings, Council of Europe meetings, and the European Week of Action for Girls. Here we influence the outcome of policy papers/statements and help to strive for sustainable development.

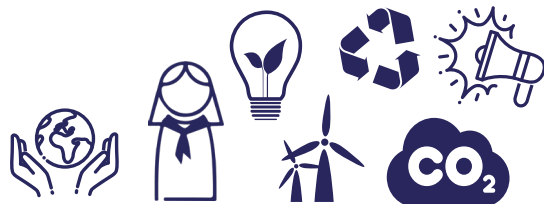
WAGGGS Europe Region is in a position to advocate for:

- Accountability, transparency and the need for implementation of the SDGs and other pledges e.g. the UNFCCC.
- Governments to form partnerships with the private sector and civil society, including NGOs in the youth sector to strengthen capacity building and data collection.
- Support for non-formal education that develops young people's skills needed to promote sustainable development (see target 4.7: <https://indicators.report/targets/4-7/>).
- Empowering marginalised groups, especially girls and young women, to adapt to climate change and respond to natural disasters - including financial support.
- Including women in decision-making roles, environmental planning, budgeting, policy-making processes, and enhancing their skills.

EXPERTISE

We have great initiatives and knowledge on the topics of:

- Gender equality and the environment,
- Youth engagement (quality education - young people speak out - youth population),
- Refugees and migrants (through our joint working group with European Region WOSM),
- key topics such as health & wellbeing, climate change, reduced inequalities, partnerships for the goals, sustainable cities and communities, and
- Education of our members and the sharing of good practice from our members to all Europe MOs.



Written by WAGGGS Europe Region volunteers, 2021



EUROPE REGION
WORLD ASSOCIATION
OF GIRL GUIDES
AND GIRL SCOUTS

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