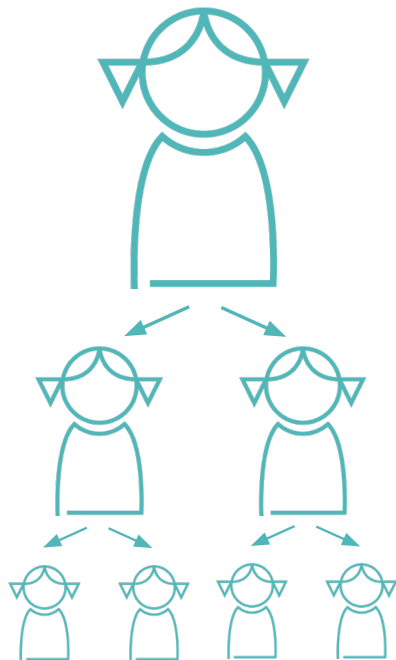


# AFTER COVID-19: TOP TIPS FOR RETURNING TO GIRL GUIDING AND GIRL SCOUTING

We interviewed five MOs from European countries who were at different stages of re-opening following the COVID-19 pandemic. Each country's government also had different approaches and restrictions.

Despite these differences, several common themes emerged from the discussions. Here are their top tips and some examples of best practice.



## PROVIDE CLEAR LEADERSHIP IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

Plan for future and don't be afraid to be strict in your guidance to members.

Send out a clear message as early as possible to allow members to plan ahead - this will give them certainty.

Make sure to keep communicating, even if the message is that there is 'no news'.

*Junák prepared strict rules and guidance on how activities can re-open. They are based on the government ones, but they are not a copycat because the government does not include youth activities in its guidelines. They also considered guidelines from other youth working institutions.*

## PLAN AHEAD

All of the MOs interviewed devised different possible scenarios and prepared contingency plans. Although they were aware that they might never use some of these plans, this kind of preparation was essential to provide leadership and good communication. It also constituted a good learning experience.

*Scouter's General Assembly is due to take place in November with 1,000 people. They have planned for three scenarios: keep 100% normal, mix of online-live, or all online. A decision on which scenario to go ahead with will be taken in early September.*

## TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER!

It can be difficult to lobby the government, regional authorities etc. alone. All MOs interviewed were part of umbrella civil society organisations (either exclusively for youth or not) and/or of Youth Councils.

If you do not have such organisations in place in your country yet, this might be a good time to push for something to be put in place.

*Scouting in Sweden is suffering financially at this time. They are not seen as an organisation that needs resources. They are working with other youth organisations networks and the national youth board to get the collective voice for youth heard and secure financial support.*

## KEEP ON YOUR TOES

Agile communication and decision-making can be useful in a crisis and one way to do this is to put together a "crisis team."

To ensure a smooth transition, keep this agile team working throughout the re-opening process.

*In Poland, ZHP established a task force to coordinate activities and provide the Board with the necessary knowledge to make decisions. They devised different scenarios and did risk assessments.*

## CREATE GUIDELINES THAT WORK FOR YOUR MO

Refer to government guidelines, but translate them into your own Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting context. Use authorities/specialists in order to shape your guidelines.

*NSF's approach was to follow government guidelines but take into account local factors as well. Leaders have to feel comfortable with implementing measures.*

## EMBRACE NEW WAYS OF WORKING

These months have been a challenging moment for our Movement, but they have also created momentum to make change happen.

Think about the lessons learned and how to make solutions permanent. This is an opportunity to move forward with new, adapted ways of doing things, rather than looking at going back to how it was before.

*Scouterna have found that they can be more flexible and faster. Their Board meetings are much better digitally. It has made it much easier for staff based in different locations to attend, reducing time and cost of travel.*

## KEEP THE GIRL GUIDING/ GIRL SCOUTING FLAME BURNING

It is essential that all levels of your organisation (e.g. staff, volunteers, members) continue to feel part of Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting in your country.

Consider which communications channels work best. It is OK to use unconventional and less formal means if the result is that everyone is kept informed and involved.

*ZHP's approach was to first support their group leaders and unit leaders. "Internal support is as important as external support to society."*

*A Facebook page for NSF leaders in Norway kept members united. It also helped leaders see that it was safe to keep going/re-open, showing others what they were doing.*

*Some MOs created resources to inspire young members whilst at home.*

*"#razemalezdalnie" (Eng. "#togetherbutremotely") was launched by ZHP.*

*"#lkscoutthuis" was put together in 24h by Scouting Nederland to share information and activities.*

## PROMOTE THE GIRL GUIDING AND GIRL SCOUTING METHOD

Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, the activities you offer need to be in line with the purpose of Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting. This should guide your choices.

Going online is not the only option if this is not relevant for your members or not possible for the type of activities you had planned. Create alternatives that reflect your purpose.

Promote activities that can be done with the limitations you currently face or make new ones.

*Members aged 18+ in the Czech Republic were encouraged to undertake community service through organisations such as the Red Cross. Within days they had dozens of teams set up.*

*After taking legal advice, Junák also provided guidance on which types of volunteer activities would be suitable, such as sewing face masks, making alcohol gel, shopping for the elderly and using 3D printers to make plastic face shields.*

Thank you to  
Junák - český skaut, z. s. - Czech Republic, Scouting Nederland - The Netherlands, Norges Speiderforbund (NSF) - Norway, Związek Harcerstwa Polskiego (ZHP) - Poland, and Scouterna - Sweden for sharing their experiences.

