

»VOLUNTEERING IS THE CORE APPROACH IN SCOUTS MOVEMENT, HOWEVER, AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, IT FEELS SIMILAR TO DOING SPORTS PROFESSIONALLY: VOLUNTEERING, DAILY DEDICATION TO IT AND SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT BECOME A LIFESTYLE.« **HEAD OF QUALITY IN PRODUCTION AT HELLA SATURNUS SLOVENIA, CHIEF COMMISSIONER AT THE SLOVENIAN NATIONAL SCOUT ASSOCIATION, YMP 2023, SLOVENIA**



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Interviewed by Vera Pasyukova, photos provided by Rok Pandel

Tell us a little bit about yourself, what do you do, and where do you come from?

Hello! I am a 32-year-old mechanical engineer, currently employed as a Head of Quality in the production at Hella Saturnus Slovenia (HSS), located in Ljubljana. I have been employed at Hella for more than 6 years by now, starting my career back then as a Quality engineer for small lamps and emblems.

In my free time, I am the Chief Commissioner at the National Scout Association (NSA) of Slovenia, which is a volunteer position. This is currently the most important role in my life.

When you applied for the Young Managers Program last summer, we couldn't help noticing from your profile picture that scouts movement plays a big role in your life indeed:) How did you join the scouts movement, what do you do

in the scouts organisation and why do you love it so much and how much time do you devote to it?

Haha, yes. I like to introduce myself to the new coworkers using such a profile photo and, in fact, it tells a lot about who I am. With all the opportunities and experiences that the scouting provides, it molded me into a positive, responsible and engaged person that I am. I have more than 18 years of active volunteering experience,

starting with leading small groups and small projects, I moved on to leading a local scout group, becoming a leader of a group for bushcraft training, later on, becoming a chief commissioner for the entire program in the Scout Association of Ljubljana Municipality. I've been also involved in a lot of different projects since then and until now. For the last 3 years, I'm holding the position of the Chief Commissioner of the NSA.

Volunteering is the core approach in scouts movement, however, after all these years, it feels similar to doing sports professionally: volunteering, daily dedication to it and social engagement become a lifestyle. I believe I devote to volunteering approximately 1.200 hours per year.

How did you find out about the IEDC and the YMP program? Why did you decide to apply? How much was your employer involved in the decision-making regarding your participation?

When I decided to change my role in the HSS, I asked my superiors, for some kind of training to help me progress in my career. So our HR Director

Ms. Manca Bašelj, suggested the YMP program at IEDC, as she is a graduate herself. Firstly, I had no idea what the YMP program is about, but I heard about the IEDC from a good friend of mine, also a scout, Matic Vogrič, who has completed the Executive MBA, and who is now in the board of the IEDC Alumni Club Slovenia. So, talking about scouts - we are everywhere :D.

Was Young Managers Program what you had expected? What were the best takeaways? Do you keep in touch with your group mates?



My expectations were high, however, in the beginning, I didn't exactly know what would it look like. But in the end, this learning through case studies and working in small groups is one of the best approaches that I really enjoyed it. There are a number of takeaways from the program for me, but the most important is just how to solve the case study ... put together all the facts and the numbers, keep in mind the overall goal and then think about the solutions, consequences and how the results will be monitored, then

take the decision, take the responsibility for it and just do it.

I'm still in touch with a few of my group mates, some I meet in person, but on LinkedIn, our network is growing, so we keep being connected online with the rest of our group.

You mentioned that you work as a Head of Quality in Production in Hella Saturnus Slovenia. What does your usual day look like? Would you say your experience with YMP program at IEDC helped you take a different look

at what you do? In which way if any? What are your career aspirations?

The YMP has for sure helped me realize how to better manage my daily obligations, including work at the HSS, my free time and the NSA activities. My day starts at 5:00 in the morning and already at that time, I usually deal with some urgent topics for the scouts, then I start in the HSS, where the schedule is very routine as it is linked to the production processes (I must say, that daily routines



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or routines within the working hours are an interesting topic for me from the efficiency perspective).

Afternoons and weekends are mostly devoted to the scouting schedule, as this is actually the time for volunteering. That's why I mentioned that scouting for me is a lifestyle, and not just a role or a function.

My aspirations for the future career are fluid, as circumstances change all the time, and new opportunities appear, or, I better say, we create them ourselves. I just realized it now, that I will only be satisfied in the long run if I can work for an organization with a clear mission, be it my own organisation or run by someone else - currently, it's not important. However, for now, scouting is the organization with the mission that I fully share.

Having a degree in mechanical engineering, would you say an engineer looks at a business dilemma differently than somebody with a background in social sciences or, say, law?

Ugh, I wouldn't say that. There are always active and positive people around me. I think it's much more connected with the personality and attitude rather than with the educational background.

Also, why did you decide to study mechanical engineering?

I am a technical and visual type of person, so I was already thinking about studying



mechanics or electricity in primary school. That's the reason I graduated from a mechanical engineering high school and then continued with a Bachelor degree in the same field. Though, had I decided on another field of science, I'm sure I would have still enjoyed my job as much.

How much travelling do you do either for your regular job or the Scouts? How many countries did you visit so far? Any favourite place/destination and why?

Now when my job is directly related to the production at the HSS, I don't have much traveling to do. However, in my previous role as a Quality Engineer for the BMW and the VOLVO projects, I had a few trips done to the European car manufacturers sites, to have meetings and trainings at their factories.

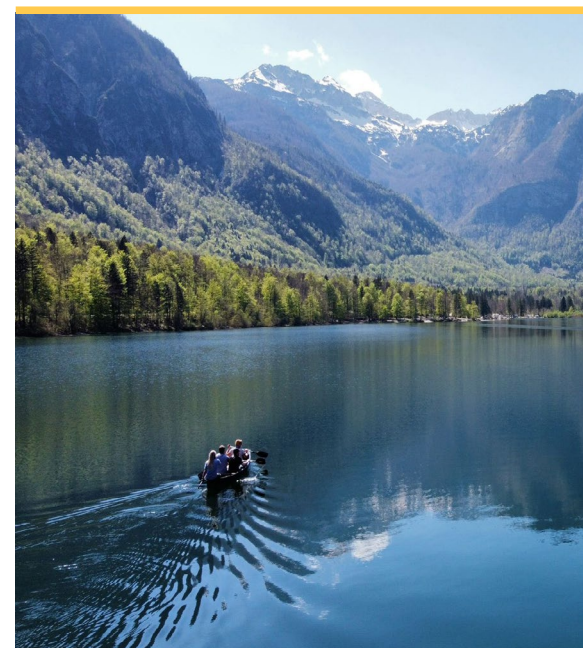
As a scout, I travel at least twice per year, either for some training in Europe or for the worldwide scout camps (so-called, Jamborees) with 45.000 scouts participating. The last time I was at a Jamboree in the USA in 2019. This summer I am going to the Roverway (the European scout camp for approx 6.000 scouts) in Norway and the World Scout Conference in Egypt.

Are your kids destined to join the scout movement?:)

I don't have a family yet - volunteering takes up a lot of my time, but I'm working on finding more time to spend at home and have it for the family eventually. When the children come, for sure they will have the opportunity to become scouts! ;)

Any other hobbies apart from scouts?

No specific hobbies, but I like trying new things. Currently, I'm renovating my newly bought apartment and that's my hobby for the moment. Otherwise, I like cooking, hiking, helping at my parents' holiday house, etc ... Whatever I do, it has to be something active, fun and preferably outdoors :D





YMP 2021

Rok Pandel
Head of Quality,
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What kind of music usually plays in your car or what do you like to listen to while driving?

It's mixed. I like Slovenian traditional music, country, Croatia Dalmation music for the sunny days, acoustic for the mornings etc. ... I use Spotify, so I'm shuffling all the time. Quite often, my pre-selected type of music sets the tone for the day.

How many legos you have at home?

As I mentioned I moved to new apartment, so no LEGOs currently, but I have a lot of boxes ... half of my stuff is still in the boxes :D

The most popular song among the Slovenian scouts to sing around the fire?

Each evening, when we sit around the fire, we start with the traditional one - "["Tam ob ognju našem"](#)" (translates to: »There, by the fire of ours«).

How many Jamborees have you been to yet?

I was just at only one Jamboree till now, in the USA in 2019 (West Virginia), because so much was going on ... In all those year before that, I spent all my summer holidays outside with scouts, I didn't even go to the seaside.

Your favourite Slovenian »comfort« food and why?

*I like eating in general, so it's difficult to choose :D ... I would say "Savinjski želodec" (*a type of a traditional Slovenian cold cut meat) with some fresh home baked bread and good red wine. I can't stop eating it until the serving plate is completely empty. I really like cold cuts.*

Is there something that everyone always gets wrong about you?

A difficult question, because I'm quite an open person and people can get a feeling about me very quickly. But it is true that the most of people think or they secretly believes that I am paid to do scouting. People can't understand why I would put so much effort and energy in it and all of this just voluntarily ...