

Code of Conduct

1. Introduction

The general objective of the Network is to bring together and foster the European cooperation of adult education providers of informal and non-formal educational activities with the aim to contribute positively to the social inclusion process and empowerment of vulnerable groups.

The Network will facilitate the cooperation and exchange of experiences among its members, and promote the role of culture and arts, in the context of adult education, in facilitating the social inclusion of vulnerable groups. The establishment of the Network will result in the accumulation and dissemination of relevant experience, which derives from the implementation of relevant projects and initiatives, and in the production of recommendations for the implementation of relevant activities at the local, regional, national and European level.

In order to succeed our objectives, we create this Code of Conduct. The document does not cover every issue and challenge which might arise but provides the basic principles to guide staff, members, governing bodies, and partners.

2. Personal and Professional Integrity

All staff, members of the Steering Committee and any other representative of the Network's members, will act with honesty, integrity and openness in their work. The Network promotes a working environment that values respect, fairness, dignity, and integrity.

3. Vision and Mission

Culture has proven to be a cost-effective and flexible tool for promoting social inclusion and development objectives. The Agenda for Sustainable Development of 2030 clearly supports the increasing contribution of cultural activities to sustainable development.

Art is a tremendously positive force in bringing people together, promoting a more inclusive and peaceful world through its universal values and principles. Regular participation in cultural activities provides various social and health benefits. Not only does it have a direct impact on social skills, but it also creates a new perspective in life. In order to achieve its ambitions, the founding members of the Network have set the following mission:

- To inform and raise awareness about the positive impact of cultural and artistic activities in the social inclusion process of various vulnerable groups;
- To promote and enhance the effectiveness of cultural and artistic activities, as a tool for the promotion of social inclusion of vulnerable groups (i.e. women, minorities, immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees, and other disadvantaged groups such as elderly, people with disabilities, unemployed, homeless, etc);
- To advocate for the adoption of cultural and artistic activities in the programmes and projects aiming at the social inclusion of vulnerable groups;
- To empower the people who are socially excluded.



The Vision of the network is the empowerment of vulnerable groups through their participation in cultural and artistic activities. The Network aims at strengthening social inclusion, empowering vulnerable groups and promoting equal access to cultural activities, while providing innovative cultural solutions and implementing initiatives and activities that help vulnerable groups overcome barriers to participation in socio-economic life.

The Network is committed to a strong and inclusive European Union, where the right to live, work, study, is guaranteed to all citizens in the Union, and where vulnerable groups enjoy these rights on an equal basis with others. The Network sees the EU as a crucial actor to promote the rights and well-being of all people in every Member State, including vulnerable groups such as homeless, PwD, persons with mental health problems, Roma, minorities, etc.

This also means that the Network will safeguard/protect from discrimination all persons regardless of age, sex, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, disability, racial heritage, ethnicity, nationality, legal status, political views or affiliation, personal convictions, religious belief, sexual orientation, appearance or cultural background, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy, maternity family structure or a combination of these.

The Network is convinced that the EU can/should also play a key role in promoting human rights in the European region and globally, in particular under its neighborhood, enlargement, development and international cooperation policies and engagement at the UN level.

By acting collectively, the Network aim to advocate together for a strong social and human rights-based Europe, where democratic and active civil participation is continuously practiced and improved. We are committed to diversity and ensuring within its own work that no one is left behind.

4. Value

The Step Up Network's values are built on the following general principles:

- Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons;
- Non-discrimination;
- Full and effective participation and inclusion in society;
- Equal opportunities;
- Equality between men and women.

5. Governance

The structure of the Network is presented below:

- The Steering Committee, which will be the Governing Body of the Network.
- The administration of the Network, which will provide support to the Steering Committee and the members of the Network
- The members of the Network – General Assembly

The Steering Committee



The Steering Committee shall operate and decide in a transparent and open way, providing all the necessary information to the members of the Network. Its work shall serve the mission and objectives of the Network and will be accountable for its decisions to the members of the Network.

Administration of the Network

The administrative staff shall strive to be as open and transparent as possible. This means proactively sharing timely, accessible, relevant, and clear information about the organisation and its activities, as well as answering requests for information.

Members of the Network – General Assembly

All members of the Network shall contribute to the highest possible degree to the operation and development of the Network, ensuring the excellence in its work and the activities undertaken on behalf of the Network.

6. Resolve any disputes

Any dispute will be discussed in the monthly meetings (virtual or face-to-face meetings) of the Steering Committee. For any urgent issue, additional meetings may also be held.

7. Legal Compliance

The staff, the members of the Network and the Steering Committee are expected to comply with the European and national legislation with regard to the operation of the Network and its work.

Beyond that, any dispute arising out of or in connection with the administration, scope, etc of the Network shall be fully discussed in the meetings of the Steering Committee. Any member concerned must inform in writing by email all the other parties of the Network about the issue/issues to be discussed. The issues are discussed in the first meeting that will take place. The Steering Committee discusses the issue(s) and decides on a unanimous basis.

Each member of the Network shall immediately inform the Steering Committee of any cases of suspected or actual fraud, corruption or other illegal activity that come to its attention, at any level or any stage of the operation of the Network.

8. Evaluation

The Network is committed to continuous improvement and uses a range of methods to monitor and evaluate its work.

The core monitoring of the Network takes place:

- At the monthly coordination meetings of the Steering Committee which provide detailed oversight into progress on the work plan, activities, and results.



- At the yearly meeting of the General Assembly where progress on the work plan and its activities are reported to the members of the Network with a presentation of a detailed activity report.

The methodology of evaluation, the tools that will be applied for evaluating the Network's Activities and the respective processes and guidelines will be included in the Network's Strategy and updated every two years.

9. Inclusiveness and Diversity

The Step Up Network does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations. The Network is committed to provide an inclusive and welcoming environment for all its members, staff, collaborators and for the participants in its activities.

Equality and non-discrimination constitute a basic and general principle relating to the protection of human rights of all persons. It is an indivisible part of international human rights law, binding on all Member States of the European Union and the European Union itself, founded on the principles of democracy, respect of human rights, and the rule of law.

10. Reporting

Staff is encouraged to seek guidance from the Steering Committee concerning the interpretation or application of this Code. Members of the Network are also encouraged to approach the Steering Committee with concerns or questions. Any breaches of this Code should be disclosed to the Steering Committee. Reports of possible breaches should follow the procedures outlined in "Formal agreement for the establishment of the Network".