

Global Alliance for Social Pedagogy and Social Education

Agreed Principles and Structure

This document is the result of a collaborative co-design process undertaken by the Global Alliance in early 2022. We have tried to honour the suggestions and perspectives shared by those who participated in previous online sessions.

Links to previous meeting notes:

- [Developing a Global Alliance in Social Pedagogy and Social Education](#)
- [Global Alliance - working group discussions](#)
- [Global Alliance - proposal for discussion](#)

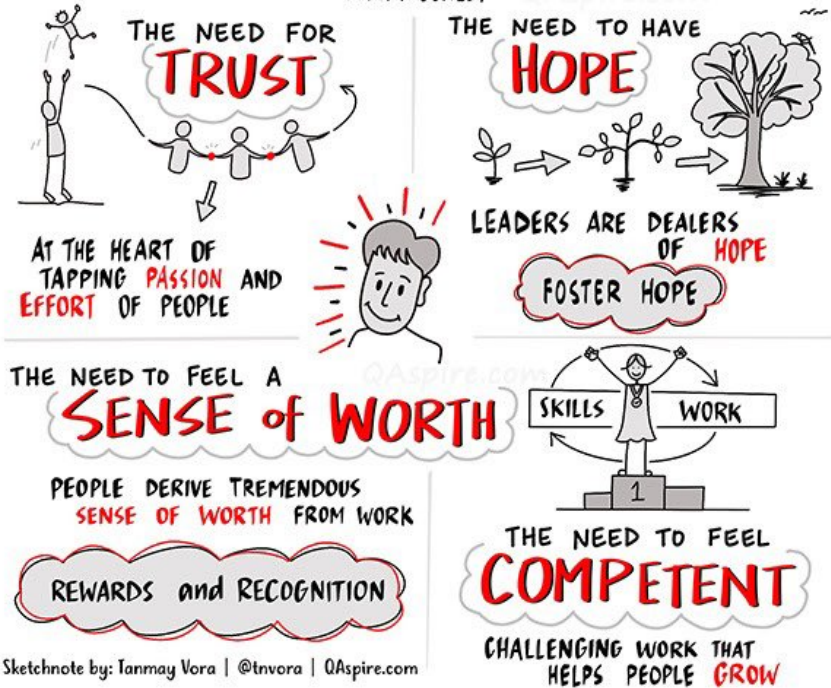
Guiding Considerations:

The overarching aim is to build a dynamic community of people across the globe who are interested in social pedagogy and social education. We want this movement to be as open and inclusive as possible, and we have therefore designed the Global Alliance's structure in ways that enable each person to contribute in whichever form they wish to. This means we use liberating structures that are very different from more traditional formal associations. Our commitment to something leaner, fresher, non-hierarchical is based both on recognition that a lot of formal associations and federations are already in existence (and we'd like to engage with them rather than be in competition with them) and that we want to build on the current momentum to connect and realise ideas. Rather than structures being designed to limit and formalise this energy, we want to enable it. Being an organically growing Global Alliance does not necessarily preclude formal constitution at a later stage but rather suggests that what we want to focus on at this point is to build a movement, not an institution.

To bring the Global Alliance to life, it's important that we nurture engagement. Here's a nice illustration of what basic human needs are particularly important in this context. These should inform how we engage with each other and help new members engage, so the question in everything we do is how this helps meet these needs.

4 BASIC HUMAN NEEDS FOR ENGAGEMENT

~ RANDY CONLEY ~



Our Principles:

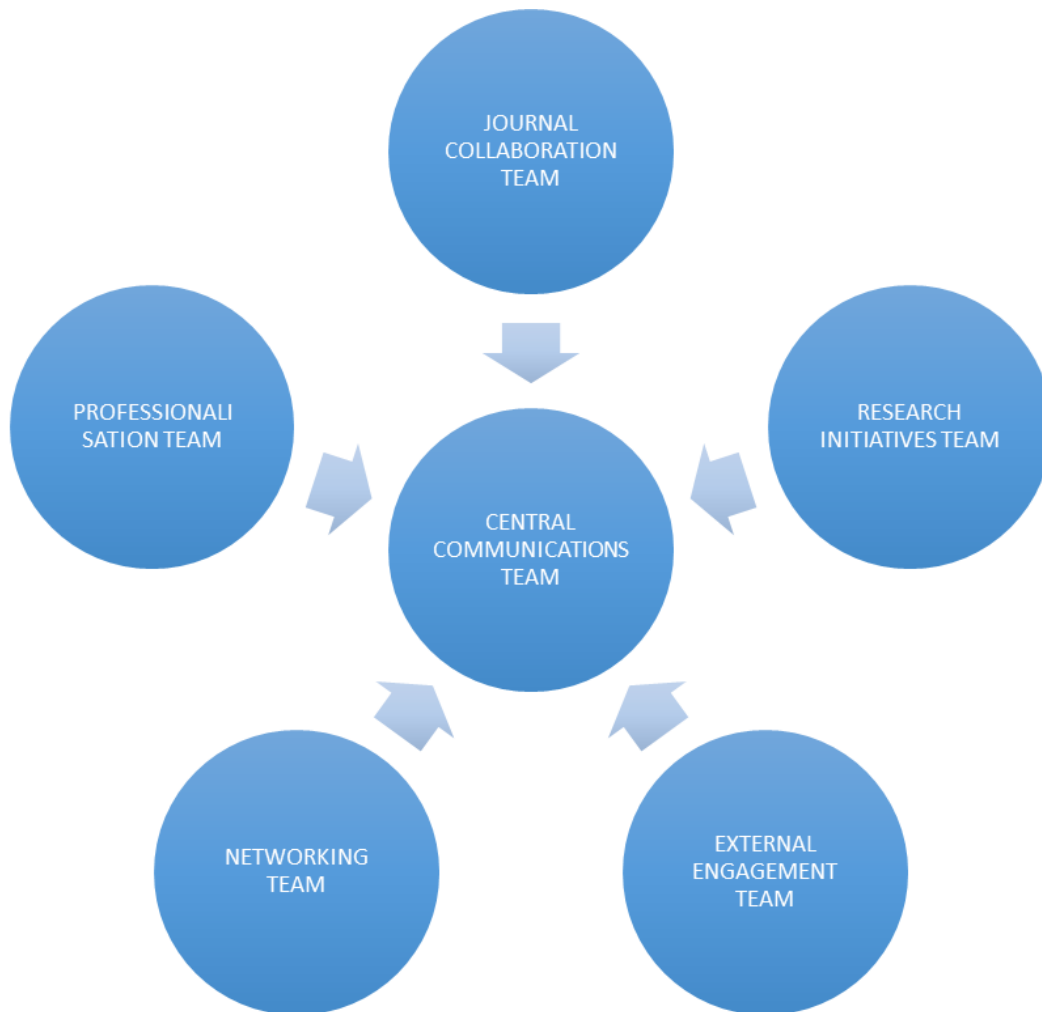
To guide each member's engagement in the Global Alliance and help hold each other accountable, we commit to upholding the following principles to the greatest extent possible:

- **Ambition to develop social pedagogy and social education** both locally in our respective contexts and across the globe.
- **Curiosity:** Engaging with an interest in learning and connecting.
- **Empathy and togetherness:** By collaborating with each other, we can offer support for each other and the wider ambition of the Global Alliance.
- **Inclusivity, equality and equity:** Everyone should be given the same possibilities to join, be heard, to share information, to contribute and shape the work of the Global Alliance.
- **Respect for different views** and opinions based on regard for human rights: This requires recognition of our different understandings of social pedagogy and social education.

Our principles are brought to life in our Haltung and through our actions, and we all fall short at times of how we might want to live them - or have different understandings of how these principles are expressed. We rely on others to help us in this process. Where conflicts occur, we can rely on a conflict resolution process that is based on these principles too.

Our Structure:

We see the Global Alliance as a movement, a community of people interested in social pedagogy and social education as perspectives supporting a more eco-socially just world. We therefore use a non-hierarchical structure centred around activities organised in small teams. Each team takes on shared responsibility for undertaking specific activities within the Global Alliance. Each team is self-organised and self-managed and thus free to do what it sees fit, provided it does so in the spirit of the [Global Alliance principles](#). To communicate with others in the team, each team can decide to use whichever platform makes most sense - provided the platform allows free access to anyone. To ensure that there is some level of co-ordination and coherence across different teams, we suggest that each team offers the opportunity to its team members to nominate themselves to also be part of the central communications team. Others may also join the central communications team if they wish to. We suggest that we do not limit the number of team members in the central communications team at the start.



The **Central Communications Team** keeps an overview of what's happening in each team and identifies any implications for the entire Global Alliance. It is best placed to initiate advice processes to make decisions, but is by no means the only team with the right to make decisions through the [advice process](#). The Central Communications Team also has the task of ensuring that the structure and systems of the Global Alliance enables every person to access relevant information and feel included.

Until the other teams have had an opportunity to form and put forward one or two people who will form the Central Communications Team, the interim members of the Central Communications Team are:

The **Research Initiatives Team** enables research collaborations between Global Alliance members. It is responsible for organising ways to share information about funding opportunities and enabling individuals to connect with others who may be interested.

The current members of the Research Initiatives Team are:

The External Engagement Team looks for opportunities to promote social pedagogy and social education as perspectives for related professions and engages with potential allies.

The current members of the External Engagement Team are:

The **Networking Team** creates opportunities for Global Alliance members to connect with each other and feel engaged, energised and informed about what's happening across the globe. It may do so through both informal virtual events and by supporting interested organisations in hosting a Global Alliance annual conference as the international 'flagship event' for social pedagogy and social education

The current members of the Networking Team are:

The **Professionalisation Team** brings together people and organisations working on standardisation and regulation of social pedagogical and social educational practice to enable them to collaborate across national boundaries, learn from each other and share resources.

The current members of the Professionalisation Team are:

The **Journals Collaboration Team** supports greater collaboration between the various social pedagogy journals - both national and international journals - to increase opportunities for learning across language barriers and for publication in high impact journals.

The current members of the Journals Collaboration Team are:

Our Decision-making Process:

The structure outlined above is inspired by Frederic Laloux's research on how organisations can transcend hierarchical structures and why doing so is highly beneficial. If you're not yet familiar with self-management and the advice process, please watch this short video with Frederic Laloux:

📺 4.1.16 Five key processes of self-management (Mis/understanding self-management)

Advice Process:

The Advice Process is our key process for decision-making. It has been adopted by many self-managing organisations and consists of the following steps (adapted from [Reinventing Organizations Wiki](#)): **Any person can make any decision after seeking advice from 1) everyone who will be meaningfully affected, and 2) people with expertise in the matter.**

Advice received must be taken into consideration. The point is not to create a watered-down compromise that accommodates everybody's wishes. It is about accessing collective wisdom in pursuit of a sound decision. With all the advice and perspectives the decision maker has received, they choose what they believe to be the best course of action.

Advice is simply advice. No colleague, whatever their importance, can tell a decision-maker what to decide. Usually, the decision-maker is the person who first noticed the issue, or the person most affected by it.

In practice, this process proves remarkably effective. It allows anybody to seize the initiative. Power is no longer a zero-sum game. Everyone is powerful via the advice process.

It's not consensus

We often imagine decisions can be made in only two ways: either by the person with authority (someone calls the shots; some people might be frustrated; but at least things get done), or by unanimous agreement (everyone gets a say, but it can be frustratingly slow).

It is a misunderstanding that self-management decisions are made by getting everyone to agree, or even involving everyone in the decision. The advice seeker must take all relevant advice into consideration, but can still make the decision.

Consensus may sound appealing, but it's not always most effective to give everybody veto power. In the advice process, power and responsibility rest with the decision-maker. Ergo, there is no power to block.

Ownership of the issue stays clearly with one person: the decision maker. Convinced she made the best possible decision, she can see things through with enthusiasm, and she can accept responsibility for any mistakes.

The advice process, then, transcends both top-down *and* consensus-based decision making.

Benefits of the advice process

The advice process allows self-management to flourish. Dennis Bakke, who introduced the practice at AES (and who wrote two books about it), highlights some important benefits: creating community, humility, learning, better decisions, and fun.

- **Community:** it draws people, whose advice is sought into the question at hand. They learn about the issue. The sharing of information reinforces the feeling of community. The person whose advice is sought feels honored and needed.
- **Humility:** asking for advice is an act of humility, which is one of the most important characteristics of a fun workplace. The act alone says, "I need you". The decision maker and the adviser are pushed into a closer relationship. This makes it nearly impossible for the decision-maker to ignore the advice.
- **Learning:** making decisions is on-the-job education. Advice comes from people who have an understanding of the situation and care about the outcome. No other form of education or training can match this real-time experience.
- **Better decisions:** chances of reaching the best decision are greater than under conventional top-down approaches. The decision maker has the advantage of being closer to the issue and has to live with responsibility for the consequences of the decision. Advice provides diverse input, uncovering important issues and new perspectives.
- **Fun:** the process is just plain fun for the decision-maker, because it mirrors the joy found in playing team sports. The advice process stimulates initiative and creativity, which are enhanced by the wisdom from knowledgeable people elsewhere in the organization.

Steps in the advice process

There are a number of steps in the advice process:

- Someone notices a problem or opportunity and takes the initiative, or alerts someone better placed to do so.
- Prior to a proposal, the decision-maker may seek input to sound out perspectives before proposing action.
- The initiator makes a proposal and seeks advice from those affected or those with expertise.
- Taking this advice into account, the decision-maker decides on an action and informs those who have given advice.

Questions to explore over time:

Below are some of the questions we have started exploring as part of our discussion, with a few preliminary responses. These are works in progress, and the structure we're proposing should enable the Global Alliance to find meaningful responses to these questions as we grow. Any answers are preliminary and valid until they might no longer make sense. Where applicable we have added suggestions of how these questions might be explored further. Please feel free to add comments or suggest edits!

Vision:

- How can we co-produce a vision statement?
 - Starting off with a discussion around social pedagogical/educational principles could be interesting, using LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.
- To be developed by the Central Communication Team based on the above principles, now that these have been agreed

External communication / visibility:

- How do people hear about the Global Alliance?
 - Central webpage that has key links and map (like a virtual business card, landing page)
- How do we communicate with the wider world?
 - Popularise the #SocialPedagogy #SocialEducation #HeadHeartHands
- To be further developed by the External Engagement Team

Membership:

- Who can be a member? Individuals or organisations?
 - It's not like that:) Point of connection of social pedagogues / educators - a movement, so anyone who would like to join can become part of the Global Alliance
- How do people join the Global Alliance?
 - Agree with the principles of the Global Alliance
 - Add yourself to the Global Alliance map
 - Secure access, GDPR compliance?
- How do we allow for people to gradually engage?
 - Sign up without further obligations, observe, know how you can get involved as and when you want in each respective team
- How can we encourage members to be actively engaged in the Global Alliance?

- Create a sense of belonging that's around principles and content, with each team outlining what their respective purpose is
- The process of integrating new members needs further exploration by the External Engagement Team and the Central Communications Team, and we suggest that we use short video clips about how the Global Alliance works, its principles and each team

Activities:

- What are the essential activities we need to undertake to keep the Global Alliance 'alive'?
 - These are identified and actioned through the Advice Process by the Central Communications Team
- How will we determine the order in which activities are to be undertaken?
 - Each team to determine their respective activities for as long as there are members who want to undertake these
- What will be the process for prioritizing?
 - Advice Process

Resources:

- How can we harness members' resources, e.g. time, networks, IT?
 - Through Central Communications Team?
- Do we need external funding, e.g. through membership fees, donations, philanthropic grants, income-generating activities?
 - Not for now in order to do the above activities.

Conflict resolution:

- How can we structure an effective conflict resolution process?
- Our suggested model is based on resolving conflict at the smallest possible level, i.e. by the individuals engaging in dialogue using Nonviolent Communication as a first step. If this does not lead to a resolution, they can ask a team member to mediate. If this does not resolve their conflict either, they can ask the Central Communications Team for help, which might provide an experienced mediator from its team or approach an external mediator to help resolve the conflict.