

Alliance Guidelines

The formal organization and the working processes are elaborated in the GALE Alliance Guidelines. This document can be seen as the 'law' of GALE. It describes decision procedures and ideal working processes.

Mission and objectives

1. The learning community is called the Global Alliance for LGBT Education. This is abbreviated by the acronym “GALE”.
2. GALE is divided in a Foundation and an Association.
3. The mission statement of the Global Alliance for LGBT Education is: “We promote the full inclusion of people who are disadvantaged because of their sexual orientation or sexual identity and their expression by identifying, enhancing and sharing educational expertise”.
4. The goals of GALE are: to promote the full inclusion of people who are disadvantaged because of their sexual orientation or sexual identity, to combat discrimination of people who are disadvantaged because of their sexual orientation or sexual identity, to promote public education policies which have the aforementioned aims.
5. GALE uses the following methods to achieve the aims: identifying, enhancing and sharing methods for access to general institutions, identifying, enhancing and sharing for training, identifying, enhancing and sharing to integrate LGBT-specific aspects into mainstream organizations, sharing experiences, guiding members and partners to be more effective
6. GALE self defines as a learning community.
7. The learning community consists of individual members.
8. The learning community intends to keep the working arrangements of the learning community transparent and as simple and informal as possible. Formal arrangements, like in these Guidelines will, in practice, mainly serve as a framework to fall back on, in case of procedural conflicts.

Membership

1. GALE starts a virtual learning community, the membership of which is open to every individual who is actively involved in education about LGBT issues. Membership is not open for organizations, but organizations can register as a partner or as a GALE Committee.
2. Registration of membership is done through submission of an application form on the website. The form consists of the necessary information for GALE profile, including a statement of how the applicant is committed to education about LGBT issues and a declaration the applicant agrees with GALE Guidelines.

3. One of the moderators considers the application and either agrees with it or rejects it, based on the information by the applicant and on a judgment whether the applicant is committed to be active in education about LGBT issues. This commitment should be seen in the context of: current work being done by the applicant, plans for future work, and commitment to the mission of GALE.
4. The applicant is informed about the decision and in case of rejection, of the reasons.
5. An applicant can appeal against rejection. The procedure for this is:
 - a. the applicant writes an appeal to the Executive Director of the GALE Foundation;
 - b. the Executive Director makes a decision within a month, based on new or additional information provided by the applicant and informs the applicant;
 - c. if the applicant does not agree, he or she can appeal through the Executive Director to the Alliance Board, which makes a final decision. This decision will be made at the latest at the next meeting of the Alliance Board. The applicant is informed as soon as possible.
6. As soon as new members are accepted, their profile will be published on the website and they will receive the newsletter.
7. Membership is free and can be terminated:
 - a. when the member deletes the profile; or
 - b. when the Alliance Board decides to revoke membership based on an independently verified complaint
8. If a member who's membership has been revoked, wants to renew membership, the applicant has to resubmit a request for membership to the Alliance Board. This cannot be done within one year after the decision to revoke membership.

The Alliance Board

1. The GALE Alliance Board consists of 3-10 members. GALE looks for a diverse Board membership regarding expertise, gender, sexual orientation, regional and cultural diversity and age. There is a strong feeling this should be guarded by a safe and welcoming environment, and good intentions and efforts regarding recruitment, rather than through formal rules concerning positive discrimination.
2. The tasks of the Alliance Board are:
 - a. to develop a four year strategic plans to set priorities for the GALE community and to advise the GALE Foundation
 - b. to provide feedback on the GALE Foundation strategic plans
 - c. to stimulate exchange, discussions and other activities among the members
 - d. to support the GALE platform in its functioning by coordinating working groups
 - e. To keep contact with the members through occasional online and possible live discussions and through internet polls
 - f. to assist the GALE Foundation in fundraising for projects that support the GALE platform and the Alliance
 - g. to represent the GALE Alliance at events
3. The GALE Alliance Board is elected every two years by the members.

- a. The elections takes place online.
 - b. Three months before the elections, the members are called to come forward as candidates or to nominate a candidate. Nominated candidates may decline the nomination.
 - c. Current Board members may be re-elected up to two times (a total of 6 years).
 - d. All candidates are required to write a short introduction of why they want to stand for a Board position and publish it on their profile (under "looking for").
 - e. The election is open for at least one month.
 - f. There is no minimum quorum of number of members who have to vote.
 - g. The Alliance Board members are voted by simple majority.
4. An Alliance Board member can be expelled when the member does not function properly. This decision can be made by the Alliance Board after the Board member has been asked informally to voluntarily give up his or her seat in the Alliance Board.

Working Groups

1. Members may organize themselves in Working Groups. Any three members may start a working group.
2. Three members form a Steering Committee which is composed of a Chair, a Secretary and a Volunteer Manager. The Chair takes initiative to call online meetings, makes the agenda, monitors if and how tasks are carried out, and stimulates members to be active. The chair is the internal and external spokesperson and the liaison with the Alliance Board. The Secretary handles the post, makes meeting, annual and project reports, publishes them on the website and has regular contact with the moderators about publication of information which was collected by the Working Group. The Volunteer Manager handles the membership/ mailing list, recruiting and coaching volunteers and, if necessary, possible financial affairs. Formal delegation of financial responsibility to the Volunteer Manager may be agreed upon by the GALE Foundation Executive Director.
3. The proposal to start a Working Group must be put forward to the Alliance Board and the Executive Director, who responds within a month, and makes the technical arrangements for a working space and a mailing list.
4. Members of a Working Group are appointed and if necessary expelled by the Steering Committee. Members may approach the Volunteer Manager if they want to join a Working Group. The Volunteer Manager agrees with the applicant the terms of participation, including awarding a volunteer contract and a date of evaluation of the participation.
5. When the wish of a member to participate in a Working Group is rejected by the Volunteer Manager, the applicant is informed about the decision and of the reasons.
6. A Working Group membership can be revoked when the member does not function properly any more. This decision can be made by the full Steering Committee and after the Working Group member has been asked informally to leave the Group.
7. A Working Group applicant can appeal against rejection or against membership being revoked. The procedure for this is described in the Appeal Procedure.

8. When a Working Group is defunct for a longer period, the website moderators may delete it, taking care that useful information is kept in the digital archive.
9. There may 4 kinds of working groups: Internal Groups which deal with the internal organization, Development Groups which focus on improving the content of education programs and implementation / effect, Strategy Groups which focus on local strategy and Project Groups which focus on collaboration in projects.
10. The Working Group may meet online at set times. Between these virtual meetings, communication happens by e-mail list.
11. As soon as a Working Group starts, this is communicated to the members through the internal news letter.
12. The first task of the starting group is to formulate a mission statement, objectives for the first year, a draft strategy plan, and volunteer tasks/profiles.
13. When enough members have been recruited and registered, the draft strategy plan is finalized with them and put forward to the Alliance Board and the Executive Director. The group proceeds to divide tasks and to carry out the strategy plan. However, if the Alliance Board or the Executive Director thinks problems might arise from this, he may (with arguments) veto parts of the plan, which then have to be put on hold until they are revised.

Informal Democracy

1. The Alliance Board announces Board discussions and publishes meeting reports on the website, allowing members to put forward ideas and plans. The Alliance Board gives public feedback on these suggestions.
2. The Alliance Board will develop a Four Year Strategy Plan (FYSP). The procedure is as follows:
 - a. the Board publishes a first FYSP Outline on the member's space of the website and offers an opportunity for feedback;
 - b. the Outline is edited into a FYSP Draft;
 - c. this draft is published on the member's space of the website and offers an opportunity for feedback; the Advisory Board may do an opinion poll on key aspects in the FYSP Draft;
 - d. the Draft is edited into a FYSP Decision Paper for the Alliance Board meeting; the Alliance Board may do an opinion poll on key decisions in the FYSP Decision Paper
3. Any 10 members may ask the Alliance Board or the Executive Director to publish an opinion poll among members on a subject at any time. The request for an opinion poll should be in writing and contain the exact question and time slot during which the poll will be open. The Alliance Board or the Executive Director may set a time limit to the execution of the opinion poll.

Members Code of Conduct

1. Differences of opinion are a fact of life and a healthy part of democracy. However, such differences, especially when they relate to our sexual feelings, self identification or processes of emancipation, may create a high level of anxiety, anger or an feeling of being offended. Heterosexuals, homosexuals, bisexuals, transgenders and people who don't want to label

themselves or label themselves in a more nuanced way, are all part of GALE. Religious members will work alongside agnostics. People who hide their sexual or gender identity take part, as well as members who are very open about it and may see this as the most important way to emancipate. The members of GALE commit themselves to respect differences and to try to see them as sources and challenges of diversity.

2. The learning community in principle will deal with differences of opinion, lifestyle and strategy by defining them as learning issues. This will be done by formulating hypotheses, negotiating ways to test these, and developing methods to test effects in the real world. In discussing such strategies, we prefer to reach a working consensus.
3. In contact between members on the website, through e-mail and in real life, members will respect each other with respect and dignity, and if possible, curiosity.
4. If any of us feels offended, mistreated or wronged in any way, the first thing we do is inform the offender of how we feel and how we read her/his comment or behavior. The offender will then have the opportunity to give feedback. Ideally, there will be an exchange to better understand each other or/and to agree on future conduct.

Appeal Procedure

1. The Appeal Procedure is warranted for day to day decisions about granting membership, submission, editing and translating articles and decisions in Working Groups. For more serious complaints about undesirable behavior, intimidation and harassment, the Complaint Procedure (available at http://www.gale.info/doc/GALE_policy/GALE-Complaint-Procedure-2015.pdf) is applicable.
2. The member or applicant who does not agree with the decision taken by a Working Group Steering Committee, Moderator or Volunteer Manager, writes an appeal to the Executive Director. The Executive director informs the Alliance Board. An appeal will be considered only if there is proof that the stakeholders have tried to resolve their difference of opinion before the appeal.
3. The Executive Director makes a decision within a month, based on new or additional information provided by the member/applicant and the Steering Committee of the Working Group, and informs the member/applicant and the Alliance Board.
4. If the member/applicant does not agree, he or she can make a further appeal through the Executive Director to the Alliance Board, which makes a final decision. The member/applicant is informed as soon as possible.
5. If the appeal concerns a decision by the Executive Director, the appeal will be considered by the Supervisory Board of the GALE Foundation.

The Foundation

1. The GALE internet platform and the GALE learning community are financially and technically supported by the GALE Foundation, which is registered in Amsterdam, The Netherlands and is a foundation (stichting) under Dutch law.

2. The GALE Foundation has a Supervisory Board which monitors and checks the work of the Executive Director. The Supervisory Board has 3-6 (Dutch) members.
3. The GALE Foundation has charitable status (Dutch: ANBI status) and annually publishes her essential data (registration and tax data, board members, working plans and reports, accountancy statements) on the website.
4. The recruitment of new members for the Supervisory Board is be done by drafting a profile and open application procedures.
5. An Advisory Board member can be expelled when the member does not function properly. This decision can be made in the meeting of the Supervisory Board and after the Board member has been asked informally to voluntarily give up his or her seat in the Advisory Board.
6. The Supervisory Board meets at least 2 times a year.
7. Advice and feedback from the Alliance Board are discussed and answered with feedback.

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