Infosheet for Buddy Communities/Networks & Aspiring Members

Background

GEN Europe has defined criteria for member communities & networks as well as guiding & living principles that we ask our members to subscribe to. This serves to uphold our values and as a testimony to the culture we want to live and create in GEN Europe and the way we want to relate to each other and live in kinship with all beings and the Earth. They also support us in our clear profile as ecovillages, communities and housing and living projects with a model character for society as a whole.

In order to take them seriously, it is necessary to examine and communicate them to the new member communities & networks and to support them in striving for and ultimately realising them. The acceptance of new full members is decided by the GEN Europe General Assembly and we are aware that not all representatives of all member communities can immerse themselves in a deeper mutual familiarisation at the time of deciding on the acceptance of a new full member community/network.

That is why there are representatives, the so-called "buddies", who next to the Council and Membership Manager support and reassure the members of the General Assembly in their decision-making process and who also act as mentors and role models for new members in order to facilitate easier access to the full membership.

Role & Responsibilities of Buddy Communities

The Membership Manager and the Buddy Communities work closely together to facilitate a supportive access for new members to initially become aspiring and eventually full members. As part of their application process, they contact their Buddy Community directly or are put in touch with each other by the Membership Manager. The Membership Manager is available to support both the new/aspiring member as well as the buddy throughout the whole process, but there are some specific tasks that are part of the role of the buddy, see listed below:

In the application for the aspiring membership their tasks are:

- Checking on the basis of the statutes, the aspiring membership criteria and whether the new community fulfils the criteria and is in line with GEN Europe and its guiding & living principles
- Hold at least one mentorship call with the new member to:
    - Exchange about GEN Europe's vision & mission and its Statement of Tolerance, and discuss if necessary
    - Introduce the new community to the structure of GEN Europe and engagement opportunities
    - Give advice and offer support so that information about GEN Europe is passed on within the new community
- Provide a written endorsement on the result of the mentorship call to the Membership Manager
- Depending on the needs of the new community & availability of the buddy community, continued exchange and mentoring

In the application for the full membership their tasks are:

- Checking on the basis of the statutes, whether the aspiring member fulfils GEN Europe's full membership criteria and is still in line with the Statement of Tolerance, and discuss if necessary
- At least one visit to the community of the aspiring member
- Provide a renewed written endorsement on the result of the visit to GEN Europe Council and General Assembly at least six weeks before the General Assembly
- Depending on needs of the aspiring member & availability of the buddy community, continued exchange and mentoring

Role & Responsibilities of Buddy Networks

The Membership Manager and the Buddy Network work closely together to facilitate access for new network members to enter the year-long aspiring/trial period to then become full National- and Transnational Network members. As part of their application process, they contact their Buddy Network directly or are put in touch with each other by the Membership Manager. The Membership Manager is available to support both the new member as well as the buddy throughout the whole process, but there are some specific tasks that are part of the role of the buddy, see listed below:

In the application for the aspiring/trial period to then become full National- and Transnational Network members their tasks are:

- Checking on the basis of the statutes, the full membership criteria and whether the new network fulfils the criteria and is in line with GEN Europe and its guiding & living principles
- Hold at least one mentorship call with the new member to:
    - Exchange about GEN Europe's vision & mission and its Statement of Tolerance, and discuss if necessary
    - Introduce the new community to the structure of GEN Europe and engagement opportunities
    - Giving advice and offering support so that information about GEN Europe is passed on within the new network
- Provide a written endorsement on the result of the mentorship call to the Membership Manager
- Depending on needs of the new community & availability of the buddy community, continued exchange and mentoring

Guidelines for the written endorsement

The written endorsement should be at least ½ page long and cover the following aspects:

- **Your Contact information**
- **Information about the relationship to your buddy:** This can include how long you've known them, whether you're friends or collaborating in a projects and the capacity in which you've engaged with the Buddy Scheme
- **Your reasoning for giving the endorsement:** Specifying the reason for the endorsement e.g how they meet the aspiring/full membership criteria & align with GEN Europe's vision & mission

Eligibility for the role

In principle, all full members of GEN Europe can serve as Buddies. Though full network members are only eligible to serve in this role for new nation- and transnational network members.

This role will be executed by one person who is a full member of their community/network, closely connected to GEN and mandated by their community/network to do so.

Reward for the role

This is a voluntary role and seen as a contribution to the thriving and growing of the network by our full members. However, we honour the time they invest in supporting the new members and encourage those to give back to their buddies in their own and creative way (e.g. by giving their Buddies free access to some services/goods offered by their community...)

Term of the role

The role begins with the application process to become an aspiring member and ends with the aspiring member's acceptance as a full member of GEN Europe.
In the event of a rejection, the Buddy and the applicant can discuss whether to end their relationship, depending on whether the applicant wishes to reapply.