

Göteborg 2020-01-31

Communication on Engagement (COE) to the Global Compact 2018-2020

Medborgarskolan Region Väst has been a Global Compact participant since 2016 and we continue to fully support the UN Global Compact and the ten principles of UN Global Compact regarding human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. This is our second Communication on Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact. We welcome feedback on its contents.

Medborgarskolan is a study association with humanistic values that provides lifelong learning, “folkbildning”*, and thereby contributes to societal development and growth. This kind of learning is of great value to the individual but also has an intrinsic value because well-informed and active citizens constitute the core of democracy.

Our humanistic values mean that the individual is the central focus and we take into consideration everyone’s needs, preconditions and wishes. We base the development on interaction with others. Ideas and opinions are developed and formed through communication. We believe that the basis for good relations with other people is mutual respect. Humanism involves an understanding of differences of opinion and of other cultures. We strive to achieve an increased openness for international cooperation and cultural diversity. Our activities are open for everyone on equal terms. Our ambition is to stimulate the search for knowledge, to encourage individual creativity and social involvement.

In this Communication on Engagement, we describe the actions that our organization has taken to continue our support of the UN Global Compact and its Principles. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Sincerely yours,



Birgitta Andrén Åkerblom

Executive director Medborgarskolan Region Väst

* We use the Swedish term “folkbildning” instead of the translation “popular education” in this document since the word “education” is more connected to formal learning in schools. Folkbildning means non-formal adult education and it doesn’t have an equivalent in English. Swedish folkbildning is the collective name for the activities conducted by the Swedish folk high schools and study associations in the form of courses, study circles and cultural activities. Folkbildning is a part of the liberal non-formal educational system. (Sw. Folkbildning: Sw. ‘folk’ means ‘people’, Sw. ‘bildning’ means ‘enlightenment’)

Description of Actions 2018-2020

Medborgarskolan Region Väst has continued to integrate questions about sustainability including the ten principles of Global Compact into our activities. To find a better focus on these issues, Medborgarskolan Region Väst formed in 2018 three fundamental sustainability promises:



We should originate from society's needs (Vi ska utgå från samhällets behov)

This means that we fulfil our mission from the state and municipalities, that we create a long-term dialogue with the municipalities where we work, our outsourcers, collaborators and other actors, and together work to create a better society. We should be responsive to the needs that exist in our environment and use our resources to cater to them.

We should be a “nice” organization (Vi ska vara en schysst organisation)

We have a responsibility to fulfil, and that means that we should be “nice” on all levels. We should be a responsible employer and we should take our environmental responsibility. We should be a transparent organisation and live as we learn, which among other things is shown through the four core values that reflect our humanistic base: The individual in the centre, development in cooperation, equal respect and the intrinsic value of knowledge.

We should inspire our environment (Vi ska inspirera vår omvärld)

To inspire our environment is about taking our role as folkbildare, to offer places where people can meet and develop, to spread knowledge and pleasurable learning, to encourage de-alienation and to meet all humans with respect.

- We inform our stakeholders about our commitment to Global Compact, for example through our annual report and promote the 10 principles.
- As an organization working with folkbildning, we also meet and have the possibility to influence many persons participating in our activities. For example, all our course leaders get basic training, including an introduction to the methods of folkbildning, our core values (listed below) and our commitment to sustainability (UN Global Compact and Environmental certificates). Our core values:
 - Focus on the individual
 - Interactive development
 - Mutual respect
 - Intrinsic value of knowledge
- We actively promote sustainability issues on our website: <https://www.medborgarskolan.se/om-medborgarskolan/hallbarhet/>
- Through actively using and referring to our core values (listed above), especially in our labour political projects and activities where we cooperate with businesses to help unemployed participants establish themselves on the labour market, we continually show our commitment to principles of the UN Global Compact (especially the principles on human and labour rights).
- Medborgarskolan arranges cultural activities and courses in the Swedish language and about Sweden for asylum seekers during their waiting for the application to be granted or not. The study material we use includes a section about human rights.
- Participated in local Global Compact network meeting May 2019.
- We continue, through internal communication to all employees within Medborgarskolan Region Väst, to inform about UN Global Compact and our commitment to actively apply its ten principles in our activities. Information about Global Compact and the ten principles is included in the introduction of new employees.

Measurement of Outcomes 2018-01-01 – 2019-12-31

- **All employees (2019-12-31: 196)** have been informed about UN Global Compact and our commitment to apply the ten principles in all our activities.
- **315 course leaders** have, through our basic leader training program, been introduced to our core values and commitment to sustainability (UN Global Compact and Environmental certificates).
- **1962 asylum seekers** in our refugee program have, through our study material and course leaders, been informed of our stand on human rights.