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INCLUSION POLICY



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INDEX

Purpose and Scope.....	2
Foundational Principles.....	2
Respect for Human Dignity	2
Equity and Non-Discrimination.....	2
Active Inclusion	2
Zero Tolerance for Harassment	2
Accessibility and Sustainable Design of the SELF Platform.....	3
Adaptation of the Platform to WCAG Requirements.....	3
Accessibility Features Implemented	3
Readability Enhancements	3
Assistive Interaction Tools	3
Consistent Visual Design.....	4
Feedback Mechanisms.....	4
Inclusive Deliverables	4
Inclusivity Officer (Quality Assurance Board).....	5
Responsibilities of the Inclusivity Officer	5
Inclusive Communication	5
Gender-Inclusive Language.....	5
Avoiding Ageism	5
Avoiding Ableism	5
Avoiding Cultural or Racial Bias.....	6
Accessible Communication	6
Participation & Representation.....	6
Training and Capacity Building.....	6
Responsibilities.....	6
Reporting and Handling Violations	7
Approval and Publication.....	7
Bibliography	7
Primary Institutional Documents.....	7
Web Resources.....	7
European Reference Frameworks (Conceptual Alignment)	7
Accessibility and Inclusive Communication Standards.....	8



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PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The SELF Project is committed to fostering an inclusive, equitable, and respectful environment for all individuals involved in our initiatives—entrepreneurs, trainers, students, partners, collaborators, and stakeholders.

This Inclusion Policy establishes the principles, responsibilities, and practices that guide our work and ensure that no form of discrimination, exclusion, or bias—explicit or implicit—occurs within our community.

Our approach is inspired by:

- **Università Cattolica Code of Ethics** on dignity, respect, integrity, fairness, inclusion, and non-discrimination
- **EDUCatt Mission Report** principles of people-centred service, sustainability, equity of access, training, and care for community wellbeing
- **Vademecum for Inclusive Language** on preventing sexism, ageism, ableism and racism in communication and behaviour
- SELF Platform values (solobiz.eu), especially accessibility, equal opportunities, and ethical entrepreneurship support.

This policy applies to all SELF Project activities including training, events, mentoring, digital environments, communication, deliverable creation, and resource development.

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

RESPECT FOR HUMAN DIGNITY

Every person must be treated with understanding, respect, and consideration, in line with the Code of Ethics principles on dignity and human value

EQUITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

SELF Consortium prohibits discrimination based on gender, gender identity, age, disability, ethnicity, cultural background, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or migration status—consistent with the Code of Ethics

ACTIVE INCLUSION

Inclusion requires active effort to enable participation and representation, aligned with EDUCatt's principle "persone al servizio delle persone" (people serving people)

ZERO TOLERANCE FOR HARASSMENT

SELF fully adheres to the Code of Ethics' zero-tolerance stance toward psychological abuse,



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sexual harassment, and abuse of power

ACCESSIBILITY AND SUSTAINABLE DESIGN OF THE SELF PLATFORM

ADAPTATION OF THE PLATFORM TO WCAG REQUIREMENTS

SELF Project ensures accessibility by removing physical, cultural, linguistic, or digital barriers and by adopting inclusive design methods aligned with the SELF/solobiz.eu approach.

The SELF Platform is adapted to meet **WCAG 2.1 AA** accessibility criteria, ensuring that all training materials, resources, and core platform functionalities are usable by individuals with diverse abilities. Accessibility is integrated into the design, development, and evaluation of all platform components.

All training content (text, images, videos, OERs, downloadable files) is created following accessibility-first principles, ensuring equal access for all learners.

ACCESSIBILITY FEATURES IMPLEMENTED

The current version of the SELF Platform includes a set of accessibility options that support users with different needs:

- **Text-to-speech functionality** for all training content.
- **Scalable font size**, allowing users to increase or decrease text size.
- **High-contrast mode, dark mode, and light mode** to support visibility.
- **Keyboard-friendly navigation** (tab, focus, and skip-to-content).
- **Responsive layout** ensuring usability on different devices and screen sizes.
- **Clear colour contrast ratios** following WCAG 2.1 guidelines.
- **Descriptive alternative text (alt-text)** on relevant images and icons.

To further enhance accessibility and support an inclusive learning ecosystem, the following features are added:

READABILITY ENHANCEMENTS

- **Increased letter, word, and line spacing** toggle for users with visual processing needs.
- **Dyslexia-friendly fonts**, improving readability and reducing typographical confusion.
- **Highlight links** for better navigation clarity.
- **Highlight headings** to support visual scanning.

ASSISTIVE INTERACTION TOOLS

- **"Stop Animations"** function for users sensitive to motion or cognitive overload.
- **Reading guide** (horizontal line guide following cursor position).

- **Big cursor / enlarged pointer**, improving visibility for users with low vision.

These tools will ensure that the platform remains aligned with best practices in inclusive digital education and accessible UX design.

CONSISTENT VISUAL DESIGN

The SELF Platform follows a **consistent visual design language**, reinforcing usability and brand clarity:

- unified **typography system** across pages and modules
- coherent **colour palette** respecting contrast requirements and identity design
- uniform **button styles, spacing, and interaction states**
- consistent **iconography and navigation patterns**
- clean, minimalist layouts aligned with sustainability principles
- predictable user experience to support cognitive accessibility

This design consistency strengthens inclusivity, trust, usability, and readability across all user journeys.

FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

To improve user experience continuously and maintain accessibility compliance, the platform integrates:

- **embedded feedback forms** on key pages
- **anonymous reporting** for accessibility issues
- **qualitative feedback fields** on training modules
- **periodic satisfaction surveys**

These mechanisms allow users to share input easily and help the development team identify accessibility barriers, usability problems, or improvement opportunities.

INCLUSIVE DELIVERABLES

All SELF Project **deliverables, outputs, materials, and communications** are designed, produced, and reviewed using inclusive principles. This includes:

- **Gender-inclusive language**, following the Vademecum (e.g., double forms, neutral expressions, symmetrical usage)
- **Accessibility standards** for layout, readability, web content, alternative formats, and usability
- **Non-discriminatory visual communication**, avoiding stereotypes and ensuring representation
- **Bias-aware content creation**, especially regarding gender, age, disability, and cultural

background

- **Clear and inclusive terminology**, especially when referring to migrants, people with disabilities, or diverse identities
- **Compliance with ethical principles** of fairness, accuracy, objectivity, transparency, and respect for dignity, as defined in the Code of Ethics

Every document, module, toolkit, training resource, digital interface, and communication undergoes an inclusivity-conformity check as part of the Quality Assurance process.

INCLUSIVITY OFFICER (QUALITY ASSURANCE BOARD)

To ensure the implementation and monitoring of inclusion-related standards, the SELF Project includes a **dedicated Inclusivity Officer** within the **Quality Assurance Board**.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE INCLUSIVITY OFFICER

- Ensuring all deliverables adopt inclusive language and communication strategies
- Monitoring compliance with non-discrimination principles
- Advising project partners on inclusive design and communication approaches
- Reviewing materials for potential bias (gender, cultural, age, disability-related, etc.)
- Ensuring accessibility (digital, linguistic, graphic, content-based)
- Supporting training activities on inclusivity for staff and partners
- Coordinating with the QA Board to integrate inclusivity into evaluation criteria

This role reflects the Code of Ethics' emphasis on responsibility, fairness, and safeguarding of dignity, as well as the Consortium commitment to continuous improvement and training for sustainable, inclusive service delivery

INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION

SELF follows the Inclusive Language Vademecum's guidelines on avoiding bias and stereotypes in communication:

GENDER-INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

Use of feminine and masculine forms, neutral alternatives, and strategies like duplication or collective nouns to avoid masculine-as-generic

AVOIDING AGEISM

Avoid assumptions linking age with competence, innovation, or dependency, consistent with Vademecum recommendations

AVOIDING ABLEISM

Focus on the person rather than the condition, use neutral formulations and avoid language implying deficiency or abnormality

AVOIDING CULTURAL OR RACIAL BIAS

Use precise terminology without stereotypes or generic labels; differentiate between ethnicity, nationality, immigration status, and religious identity

ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION

Provide materials in plain, clear language; ensure readability, subtitles, alt text, and compatibility with assistive technologies.

PARTICIPATION & REPRESENTATION

SELF ensures:

- inclusive and transparent selection of participants, trainers, and mentors
- diverse representation across sessions, panels, and materials
- equal access to entrepreneurship opportunities
- respect for merit and fairness as outlined in the Code of Ethics' principles on impartiality and merit recognition

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

SELF provides regular training to project partners on:

- inclusive communication
- bias prevention
- accessibility
- intercultural awareness
- anti-harassment measures

RESPONSIBILITIES

All Project Members Must:

- uphold non-discrimination principles
- use inclusive communication
- avoid bias or exclusionary behaviour
- report any incident or breach

Project Management Must:

- ensure implementation of this policy
- provide resources and training
- monitor compliance via the QA Board and Inclusivity Officer

- ensure transparency in all procedures

REPORTING AND HANDLING VIOLATIONS

SELF ensures:

- confidential reporting channels
- protection from retaliation
- independent review by the QA Board and Inclusivity Officer
- corrective measures and follow-up

APPROVAL AND PUBLICATION

The Inclusion Policy is approved by the SELF Project Governance and published on the **CSR / Policies** page of the SELF platform. It is made available to all partners, stakeholders, and participants.

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