

[NAME] An Association for Biography Work

OVERVIEW

*When organizations arise, this should come about according to the purpose of the fifth post-Atlantean period, in such a way that the human beings who are united in these organizations are the main thing, with the purpose of achieving what can follow from the dealings of these actual people, with one another. If this is realized, truly individual results will be achieved. But what is usually done today? The first thing is that statutes are drawn up. That may all be very good, it may indeed be necessary, because outer circumstances demand statutes. **But in our field, we should be quite clear that all talk about programs and statutes is only a concession to the world, and that the important thing must be the individual life together, what follows from these actual people. Mutual understanding is the decisive thing.***

– Rudolf Steiner, October 10, 1916, Zurich

“... the important thing must be the individual life together”—**autonomy in association**

Mission Statement:

Grounded in the principle of Autonomy in Association, [name] brings individuals together in living, collaborative community; exists to foster courage, collegial support, and shared learning among those engaged in biography work; seeks to strengthen shared ethical standards without prescribing uniformity, recognizing that biography work lives through diverse expressions and paths; strives to increase the visibility and reach of biography work as a vital and emerging field of practice, serving personal, social, and spiritual development of all who participate.

Membership (See Membership Agreements)

Best Practices (See Best Practices)

Coordinating body:

The **Initiative Circle (IC)** is an inclusive and open group that seeks to support biography work, in light of anthroposophy, through circle work, collegial dialogue, conferencing, and other associative activity. The Initiative Circle is committed to diversity and wholeness, encouraging both “consciousness of the field of the group” and individual initiative.

The **work of the Initiative Circle is two-pronged**, taking responsibility for:

- **practical activity:** handled through monthly meetings and focused largely on circle work and conferencing; open to those who wish to be hands-on, giving time and energy to fulfilling functional needs; and
- **thought leadership:** quarterly meetings, open to all who take responsibility for biography work broadly and seriously, envisioning future developments, supporting quality biography work, building respect for the role of the biography worker, and more.

Vision:

[name] An Association for Biography Work seeks to sustain and/or develop the following areas of activity and aspects of the work, ***as determined and prioritized by those who become involved. This is a gift of associating. Member contributions become substance.***

Agreements

All associations, whether between two or thousands, stand on shared agreements. We aim to bring evermore consciousness and conscientiousness to articulating roles and responsibilities within our organization. We believe that the more emphatic we can be about our agreements the more effective we are likely to be. Membership Agreements and Best Practices serve as the core of our shared agreements.

Financial Responsibility

Financial obligations include but are not limited to maintaining website domains and hosting; costs involved in establishing and maintaining non-profit status; conference costs (whether met by gifts/fundraising or fees); administrative assistance (currently all volunteer), etc. Financial support would be aided by non-profit status coupled with a clearly articulated program for development. The financial wellbeing of [name] will have implications for such things as research, mentoring, visibility, etc., and is therefore deserving of our attention. We anticipate founding legal and financial agreements upon threefold principles, ideally guided by a long-range plan, all of which, as a member organization, will depend on those who show interest in working within this area and the will of the association as a whole.

Circle Work

This initiative arose more than ten years ago from a question asked by Paulette Arnold who had observed that there were a number of individuals in the Midwest (trained with CBSA or with Novalis Institute), who might **gather together for growth and support**. This was the birth moment of what became the Heartland Circle, which continues to meet monthly to this day. Since then, and especially following the biography conference of October 2022, other circles have formed, and “Circle work” has become a recognized way of associating (more on circles at: autonomyinassociation.com). Going forward, we intend to make the value and practice of Circle work more explicit for professional development, peer mentorship, and advances in the work itself. We believe strength in our field is predicated on strength in our relationships – as colleagues, mentors, peer-mentors, talking partners.

Conferences

These are invitational events, *by and for* biography workers, social art facilitators, and researchers; three have been held since Nov 2022 at 18-month intervals, each attended by 25-35 individuals. The 2025 event included a formal continuing education/professional development component. We intend to continue to hold such conferences. The IC has discussed holding a conference open to the public. The IC has expressed interest in hosting the Worldwide Biography Conference in 2030.

Note: Several conferences were held prior to 2022, organized by the Center for Biography and Social Art.

Research

Predicated on the idea that all biography work is exploratory, [name] considers the role of research primary and seeks to support individuals in taking it seriously. A formal Research Circle was initiated in May 2023; Research Circles continue, exploring the nature of spiritual research, building understanding of what “qualifies” as research in our field (e.g. every conversation we have with another human being, individual projects, deep preparation for leading a group), helping to create new forms for serious research, and encouraging publishing.

Mentoring

- Strengthen practices around peer-mentoring, one-to-one and within circles.
- Create a pool of committed and competent mentors; build clear forms and processes around the role of mentoring, increasing its perceived and actual value.
- Plan for succession regarding the ongoing needs of the work and organizational life, that is, look for someone you might encourage to get more involved, open doors for others, invite others, generally or perhaps quite directly, to assume responsibility for given activities; if you hold / have held a particular role for a period of time look for individual/s who can succeed you and facilitate a thoughtful transition.
- Create opportunities for others, ensuring the future of the field – “Ignite the initiative of the other!” (R Steiner).

Strong Guidance within the broader anthroposophical community

- Provide consultation, guidance, or coaching to those who are not formally trained but nonetheless wish to offer biography work in their local communities, e.g. branches, schools, etc., acknowledging: this is already happening (“untrained” individuals are doing biography work out of their own inspiration and initiative); some communities that are smaller or more isolated than others do not have access to trained biography workers; biography work is free to anyone who wants to take it up – trained biography workers are not proprietors, but rather stewards. Meaningful consultation provides opportunity to educate others, as well as to steward, nurture, and watch over the Being of Biography.
- Be more intentional about bringing biography work to all realms and Sections of anthroposophical activity, e.g. teacher training, BD, social inclusion, medicine.
- Hold meetings purposefully acknowledged as open meetings of the General Section of the Michael School of Spiritual Science, e.g. Thought Leaders Circle, for strengthening understanding and visibility of the growing role of biography work within the General Section, where biography work is placed. Other areas of study and vocation belonging to the General Section include Christology, karma and reincarnation, and the evolution of consciousness.

A Shared Lexicon

The idea is that overtime we will develop a relatively comprehensive list of words, phrases, and terms that biography workers and social art practitioners use regularly, increasing

understanding between us and importantly more broadly among those we serve. As a first, strong step, the IC recommends **adopting and committing to the broad use of “biography work”** because it is a term recognized within the anthroposophical community worldwide, including the US, and this has been the case for decades now; and because “biography work” encompasses many ways of working in any number of areas, including social art. In other words, “biography work” is universal and optimally inclusive and does not bar the use of terms or identifiers preferred by individuals, such as social art or coaching.

Note: The term and way of working designated “biography and social art” is largely unique to the US; indeed, it is an initiative of the Center for Biography and Social Art, deserving its own recognition.

Appropriate alternative paths to certification

In addition to those trainings recognized by the Goetheanum, [the association for biography work] may move toward establishing its own way of assessing and recognizing credible paths to sound and responsible practice, i.e. self-training.

Websites

AutonomyInAssociation.com

An “inward-facing” website regarding when, where, how biography workers, social art practitioners, and researchers may associate with one another through conferencing, circles, for determination of best practices, sharing resources, news items, meeting dates, etc.

BiographyWork.com (currently a mockup)

An “outward-facing” online presence for biography work, including but not limited to:

- a directory for all practitioners who agree to Membership Agreements and Best Practices
- best practices
- a broadly accepted “definition” of biography work
- quotes from R. Steiner relative to biography work and other info relevant to visitors
- modes of payment (possibly in the future)