DIF - Code of Conduct
(ratified document)

Last Revised: 6/20/20

Purpose: *Creating an open, healthy and productive culture where members and the community can build and grow together.*

Note: This is a living document intended to evolve with our community over time. As such, please comment or open issues as you see fit; the DIF Steering Committee will review and accept proposals for change on a quarterly basis.

Open, Inclusive & Diverse

Open: We invite anyone to participate in our community. We preferably use public methods of communication for project-related messages, unless discussing something sensitive.

Inclusive: We work together to resolve conflict, assume good intentions, and do our best to act in an empathetic fashion. We may all experience some frustration from time to time, but we do not allow frustration to turn into a personal attack. A community where people feel uncomfortable, threatened, or unheard/dismissed (explicitly or implicitly) is not a productive one. We should be respectful when dealing with other community members as well as with people outside our community, contributing to an atmosphere of inclusion. DIF takes seriously the maintenance of substantive inclusion in which any member feels empowered to contribute; if any do not feel the group's chairs are doing enough to create this atmosphere, they may go elsewhere in DIF for help achieving this change.

Diverse: DIF welcomes and encourages participation by everyone. We are committed to being a community that everyone feels good about joining. Although we may not be able to satisfy everyone, we will always work to treat everyone fairly.

- No matter how you identify yourself or how others perceive you: we welcome you. Though no list can hope to be comprehensive, we explicitly honour diversity in age, culture, ethnicity, genotype, gender identity or expression, language, national origin, neurotype, phenotype, political beliefs, profession, race, religion, dis/ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, subculture and technical ability.

- Diversity of perspective, identity and experience should be considered a positive contribution. Diversity and empathetic, pro-actively inclusive ways of stewarding cooperation is an ongoing commitment, not a one-time gesture; DIF's Steering Committee and Working Group Chairs and Editors concretely support ongoing training or cooperative learning between leaders of working groups, mailing lists, and other venues.

Diversity is never definitively out-of-scope or foreclosed as irrelevant to more urgent business.

- Though we welcome people fluent in all languages, DIF development is conducted in English. Participants that feel functional but disadvantaged in English should feel comfortable requesting to bring coworkers to meetings or tap bilingual participants/colleagues to assist in a side discussion during meetings.

Welcoming, Empathetic & Thoughtful

Welcoming, Empathetic & Thoughtful: We work together to resolve conflict, assume good intentions, and do our best to act in an empathetic fashion. We may all experience some frustration from time to time, but we do not allow frustration to turn into a

personal attack or a perception of implicit hostility. A community where people feel uncomfortable or threatened is not a productive one. We should be respectful when dealing with other community members as well as with people outside our community.

Positive contributions: In backchannels or downtime (before a meeting officially begins, for example), it never hurts to check the mood or comfort level of any given group, and particularly its newest or quietest participants.

Step down considerately: Members of every project come and go. When somebody leaves or disengages from the project they should tell people they are leaving and take the proper steps to ensure that others can pick up where they left off. In doing so, they should remain respectful of those who continue to participate in the project and should not misrepresent the project's goals or achievements. Likewise, community members should respect any individual's choice to leave the project.

Collaborative, Inquisitive & Concise

Collaborative: Our work will be used by other people, and in turn we will depend on the work of others. When we make something for the benefit of the project, we are willing to explain to others how it works, so that they can build on the work to make it even better. Any decision we make will affect users and colleagues, and we take those consequences seriously when making decisions.

Inquisitive: Nobody knows everything! Asking questions early avoids many problems later, so questions are encouraged, though they may be redirected to the appropriate forum. Those who are asked should be responsive and helpful, within the context of our shared goal of improving DIF's project code.

Concise: Keep in mind that what you write once will be read by hundreds of people. Writing a short email means people can understand the conversation as efficiently as possible. Short emails should always strive to be empathetic, welcoming, friendly and patient. When a long explanation is necessary, consider adding a summary.

- Try to bring new ideas to a conversation so that each mail adds something unique to the thread, keeping in mind that the rest of the thread still contains the other messages with arguments that have already been made.

- Try to stay on topic, especially in discussions that are already fairly large.

Healthy conflict and disagreement can be productive or restrictive, explicit or implicit, and there are many ways to disagree and convey differing perspectives that are natural and necessary steps towards consensus. However, some types of conflict entail behaviors that contribute to a suboptimal community dynamic that is prohibitive to collaboration and progress.

Our goal with this is to address suboptimal community dynamics forming and persisting.

Examples of unacceptable behavior include:

- **Communications with someone's employer** intended to directly or indirectly penalize, intimidate or silence that person.

- **Disrespectful representations** (or caricatures) of the words, position, or work of another in outside contexts.

  - **Employer-prejudicial narratives** - Taking moral high ground or dismissing the ideas or work of another based on perceived allegiance to large organizations (private and/or public) that directly or indirectly employs or contracts an individual participant incurs a high cost to productivity of the discussion.

- Subtle ways of **shutting someone down,** taking away space to be heard, and instigating ongoing discomfort or avoiding resolution.

- **Inappropriate or disruptive tone** - The use of sexualized language or imagery, and sexual attention or advances of any kind or any other conduct which could reasonably be considered inappropriate in a professional setting. Even if no one present (at the time) would be harmed or insulted, it can still hinder collegial participation (including asynchronous participation) and productive use of limited time. Other example of inappropriate, disrespectful, or disruptive activities include:

  - **Trolling**, insulting or derogatory comments, and personal or political attacks

  - **Harassment** in and/or outside of the community discussion channels

  - **Soft-Doxxing** - Publishing others' private information, such as a physical or email address, without their explicit permission, including leaving such information in publicly-visible collaboration software documents.

- Subtly **divisive tone** (aka "microaggressions") - Many minor, or even unconscious/unwitting contributions can be made to the community as a whole excluding individuals and groups, or disincentivizing their participation.

  - Emphasizing or drawing attention to a **majority/minority boundary** or to a stereotype about a social group or employer

- ○ **Scapegoating** or typecasting a subset of the group ("oh, of course they are bringing up XX again")

- ○ **"Implicit delegation"-**- "calling on" the same group member to speak to a specific issue that they did not ask to be the expert in, particularly when the member is being singled out for this role by membership in a social group or employment affiliation

Dispute Escalation and Incident Resolution Mechanisms

We are all here to contribute value and reap the benefits of community collaboration. While it is natural to have disagreements and find situations uncomfortable, DIF believes that resolving any issues should take place within the community via open communication.

DIF has within it a group of members who have some training and skills in supporting healthy conflict resolution that can be volunteer community advocates.

If something does happen, open communication and shared, cross community healing is a must. The community should get better as a whole.

- The community evolves if there is connection among members

- Handling any situation in such a way that the community can come out stronger is a generally applicable directive

- Preference is improvement rather than exclusion

We understand that different situations might require different solutions but a **good-faith attempt to resolve by escalating through the levels** listed below is the best way to garner cooperation from the community
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Level 0 - Address it privately (even if doesn't feel like a problem yet)

- Examples of what to say: "The comment you made about x bothered me because ..." or "The group might feel a little more at ease if you made clear that..." or "Help me feel better about your perspective on..." or "I am not comfortable with the language you used there." or "In my company/culture, we generally do/don't..." "What did you mean when you said..." or "My impression was that ..."

- See something, say something: "Have we only heard from a few people so far in the meeting?" or "I wonder if maybe attendance is dropping off more than usual lately?" It is also good practice to name something as close to the time it happened as possible.

Level 1 - Talk to someone else

- Reach out to fellow members and discuss the situation with them, see if other approaches might resolve the situation. This may include community advocates.

Level 2 - Reach out to the Working Group chair

- The chair can advise on Level 0

- The chair can mitigate or intermediate the discussion

- The chair can draw on the advice and support of the community advocates to mitigate or intermediate the discussion.

Level 3 - Reach out to a chair of another Working Group

- In case the WG's leadership is the problem, chairs of other WGs can help to mitigate and intermediate

- The other working group chair can draw on the advice and support of the community advocates to mitigate or intermediate the discussion.

Level 4 - Reach out to the Steering Committee (together)

- If the issue is not resolvable with the previous levels, the Steering Committee has the power to evaluate the case and decide to apply enforcement.

- The Steering Committee can address issues if the problem is a Steering Committee member by excluding the member from the discussion and from decision-making

Level 5 - Reach out to JDF

- If the problem is with the Steering Committee as a whole or with the outcome of level 4, the problem can be escalated to the Joint Development Foundation, the legal framework provider of DIF.

Unacceptable Paths to Dispute Resolution

- It is not ok to directly reach out to other member's employers. Due to the nature of for-profit organizations this can lead to irreversible situations. Before someone would reach out to another member's employers you must reach out to the Steering Committee and discuss this step with someone on the Steering Community. Talking to members' employers hurts the person but the entire community can be harmed.

In conclusion, research has established that greater diversity leads to, "increased profitability and creativity, stronger governance and better problem-solving abilities." Community acceptance of and commitment to adherence to this code of conduct ensures a working environment optimized for collaboration and progress; we will build the best identity products together.

Appendix: Resources

Decentralized Identity Foundation Old Code of Conduct:
https://github.com/decentralized-identity/org/blob/master/code-of-conduct.md

Wikimedia Foundation foundation's core principles:
https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wikimedia_Foundation_Guiding_Principles

.net Foundation's code-of-conduct
https://dotnetfoundation.org/code-of-conduct

Mozilla Foundation manifesto
https://www.mozilla.org/en-US/about/manifesto/

W3C Mission
https://www.w3.org/Consortium/mission

Apache Foundation Code of Conduct
https://www.apache.org/foundation/policies/conduct

GNOME foundation principle and mission
https://wiki.gnome.org/FoundationBoard/Resources/Charter

OpenAI charter
https://openai.com/charter/

World Economic Forum: The Business Case for Diversity
https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/04/business-case-for-diversity-in-the-workplace/