

Constitution

Name and Location

This community group is called “Steppe Sisters”

This group is based (as of 2023) primarily in the UK for administrative purposes

Aims and Objectives

Steppe Sisters is a charitable community group. The purpose of the group is to connect women researchers in the human sciences (including but not limited to history, archaeology, anthropology, palaeoecology, and historical sciences) who conduct research in Central Asia (including but not limited to CIS countries, Mongolia and China). These aims will be achieved by:

- Fostering communication among members, particularly via private online platforms as well as organizing in-person conferences and workshops
- Overcoming cross-cultural divides in academic practices, traditions and culture by encouraging open and frank questions by members on ‘how to be’ an academic across the divide of North American/European and the Russian speaking academies.
- Supporting the career development and progression of students and early career researchers from Central Asia through the provision of mentorship, and a database of career guidance documents and online workshops and talks
- Promote the research of women researchers in the region by maintaining an up to date online bibliography (public) and publication repository (private) as well as publicizing new publications by our members
- Advance equality and diversity in human sciences through outreach activities within Central Asian countries

Membership

Membership to our private online forums and discussion groups will be limited to women* who conduct research in Central Asia, but can be based internationally. Men who wish to support the group will be allowed to access our mailing list, and can gain information via our public website and Twitter, and to contribute through offering training opportunities.

Membership is granted upon acceptance into the Steppe Sisters Facebook group, Slack workspace, or when noted in writing upon application to join the email newsletter list. Applicants must agree to follow the code of conduct, and may be refused membership if they do not agree to abide by these rules. Membership will be managed by the Secretary, a member of the Steering Committee. Additionally, any complaints about other members will be dealt with by the membership chair.

Membership terminates with death, self-selected discontinuation of membership (withdrawal from online spaces), or expulsion due to a breach of community guidelines.

An applicant who has been refused membership or a member who has been disqualified by breaching the code of conduct may protest the decision to the Steering Committee which then makes a final decision about acceptance or continuation of membership, with a two-thirds majority of the Steering Committee who have been convened (quorum of 5) and are present in accordance with the bylaws.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is formed of not more than 15 members but must have a minimum of five (President, Secretary, Treasurer and two other members) who join by expressing an interest to the existing committee members and must be supported by at least two Steppe Sisters as nominators/references. The Steering Committee must meet at least four times a year, one of which may be the Annual General Meeting. Committee members serve officer terms of 3 years. Steering

Committee members may not serve more than two consecutive terms unless there are extraordinary circumstances.

Annual General Meeting

An annual general meeting will be held online and open to all members. An update as to the activities of the group, future plans, and a presentation of the annual state of the finances will be given. Additionally, any nominations for the Steering Committee and other administrative matters will be dealt with at this time.

Alteration to the Constitution

Any request or notice for an alteration to the constitution shall require a majority of those present and eligible to vote at an Annual General Meeting, with the outcome reported at the next Annual General Meeting and via online channels (email, social media, etc).

Any request or notice for an alteration to the constitution shall be given to the Chairperson at least 28 days prior to an Annual General Meeting, outlining the reason for the proposed amendment.

Operation of Bank Accounts

The signatures of two signatories (one of which must be the Treasurer) appointed by the committee shall be required in relation to all operations (other than lodgement of funds) on the bank and building society accounts held by the group.

Accounts shall be examined annually according by a member of the group who is not a current member of the Steering Committee prior to the AGM and the presentation of the annual state of accounts.

The accounting year shall run from 01 April to the 31 March. The committee shall ensure that proper accounting records are maintained in accordance with all applicable statutory requirements.

The Treasurer shall prepare annual accounts, complying with all relevant statutory requirements; if an audit is required under any statutory provisions or if they otherwise think fit, they shall ensure that an audit of such accounts is carried out by a qualified auditor.

Minutes

The Secretary shall ensure that minutes are made of all proceedings at general meetings and sub-committees' meetings; a minute of any meeting shall include the names of those present, an outline of the discussions, and actions agreed.

The Secretary will prepare (in consultation with the Chair and other members) the Agenda for the meeting, and will aim to circulate at least 3 days ahead of any general meetings. This may be via the sharing of a link to the relevant online document to which all Steering Committee members can access.

Dissolution

The organisation may be dissolved if deemed necessary by the members in a majority vote at an Annual General Meeting or an Extraordinary General Meeting called for such a resolution.

None of the organisation's assets may be distributed or otherwise applied (on being wound up or at any other time) except to further its charitable purposes.

Any assets held by or in the name of the organisation; provided all debts and liabilities have been satisfied, shall be given or transferred to such other organisations having charitable objects similar to some or all objects of the Partnership. The expression 'charitable object' shall mean a charitable purpose under section 7 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 which is also regarded as a charitable purpose in relation to the application of the Taxes Acts.

2025 Steering Committee Members with Roles

Chair: Ashleigh Haruda

Secretary: Cecilia Conte

Treasurer: Dilnoza Dutaraeva

Communications: Aiya Raissova (social media) & Mariana Castro (website)

Newsletter Editor: Elissa Bullion

Programmes: Maira Klyshbekova

Ordinary Members:

Ainash Childebaeva

Aybike Tezel

Dilrabo Tosheva

Hilola Nazirova

Katie Campbell

Kristen Hopper

Marhabo Saparova

Ex Officio Member:

Alicia Ventresca Miller

DATE of Signatures:

1. CHAIR (name and email address)



Ashleigh Haruda
ashleigh.haruda@arch.ox.ac.uk

2. SECRETARY (name and email address)



Cecilia Conte
cecilia.conte.15@ucl.ac.uk

3. TREASURER (name and email address)



Dr. Dilnoza Duturaeva
dilnoza.duturaeva@york.ac.uk