

2024 / 2025

The Study Company

Companhia do Estudo



Volunteering Handbook

PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

Volunteering Handbook

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1. Our History

Companhia do Estudo, or The Study Company (TSC) is a volunteering programme born in March 2021 with the support of the Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences of the University of Porto (FPCEUP), CASPAE, the **Clínica da Educação**, and **NewMind**.

After a 3-month pilot, that involved 30 volunteers and 32 children, the programme launched its first official edition in partnership with five companies: **Bluepharma**, **Critical Software**, **Critical Techworks**, **Nest Collective**, and **Present Technologies** – with the aim of combating social inequalities through the most powerful tool - education.

Since then, our journey has been one of growth and impact. With the addition of two more esteemed partners, **LTPlabs** and **Msg Life Iberia**, The Study Company has flourished, now boasting the involvement of over 150 dedicated volunteers. Together, we have weekly mentored and supported over 500 children, with a further 500 actively participating in the myriad events and initiatives we organise or champion, our programme has touched the lives of students across 25 schools and educational institutions.

As we embark on this next chapter, our commitment remains unwavering. We are driven by a steadfast determination to inspire and motivate the next generation through our mentoring programmes, to foster digital literacy with our Scratch classes, and to broaden horizons through our open days, workshops, and diverse array of sports and cultural activities – the four cornerstones of our Company.

We firmly believe that through The Study Company, we can effect real change in the lives of children and young people who rely on our support, thereby contributing to a world that is not only better but fairer for all.

2. Our Purpose

“A Companhia do Estudo somos todos nós” (“The Study Company: Be a Company”)

The Study Company has the mission to **promote equitable access to education, combat failure and early school leaving (ESL), open horizons and inspire, motivate, and develop skills for all children and young people**, particularly those in unfavourable socioeconomic contexts.

Supported by volunteers and partner organisations, TSC promotes individualised monitoring and support for children and young people who need it most and facilitates access to resources that may be necessary so that they do not fall behind on their school journey.

In close coordination with the educational, cultural, sporting, scientific and business communities, it also organizes and supports various initiatives, complementary to the school curriculum and the efforts of teachers and parents, which contribute to their better development.

We share the vision that “...every child deserves a champion – an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection, and insists that they become the best that they can possibly be.” — Rita Pierson

3. Our Values

Respect: At The Study Company, respect isn't just a word; it's a guiding principle that permeates every aspect of our work. We believe in honouring the inherent dignity of every individual, whether they're a member of our team, a volunteer, a partner, or a child in need. It's about recognising the value in each person and fostering an environment of inclusivity and understanding, where everyone's voice is heard and respected.

Ownership: The Study Company isn't just an organisation; it's a collective endeavour fuelled by the passion and dedication of every individual involved. We believe in the power of unity, understanding that together, we can achieve far more than we ever could alone. It's about taking ownership of our mission to promote equitable access to education and refusing to relent until every child has the opportunity to thrive. The power to make a real and lasting difference in the lives of those we serve lies in our hands.

Equity: At The Study Company, we're committed to breaking down barriers and levelling the playing field for all children, regardless of their background or circumstances. We believe in a world where every child has the chance to pursue their dreams and reach their full potential. It's about championing fairness and justice, ensuring that every individual is treated with the respect and dignity they deserve. In our pursuit of equity, we're not just changing lives; we're shaping a brighter, more inclusive future for generations to come.

Purpose: For us, The Study Company isn't just a name; it's a beacon of hope and possibility. It's a reminder that each of us has the power to make a meaningful impact in the world. We believe in living with purpose, in dedicating ourselves to a cause greater than ourselves. It's about empowering children and young people to believe in themselves, to dream big, and to chase those dreams with unwavering determination. In our commitment to purpose, we're not just transforming lives; we're igniting a spark of potential that has the power to light up the world.

4. Citizenship Education

The Study Company promotes citizenship education through its different pillars aligned with the principles of global citizenship education as outlined by UNESCO. Our work underlines the “human rights education, peace education, education for sustainable development and education for international understanding, aimed at forming a transformative force, building the knowledge, skills, values and behaviours that learners need to be able to contribute to a just and peaceful world” ([ABDELFATAH, Port Said Journal of Educational Research \(PSJER\), 2022](#)).

Our approach is multi-dimensional, and we seek to promote a holistic development, integrating its various dimensions:

- **Cognitive** – promote access to education, culture, sport, science, and the arts aiming at the integral development of the child or young person, the balance and well-being of society and supporting all those who face unfavourable conditions.
- **Environmental and Ecological** – promote education that develops respect for the environment, natural resources, and ecosystems, so that the new generation, imbued

with a strong ecological sense, develops harmoniously and acquires healthy habits and behaviours for themselves and the planet.

- **Social-Economic** – promoting education that equips children and young people with skills and competencies that help them reach their maximum potential, thus contributing to the construction of a more sustainable economy and fair access to professional opportunities.
- **Ethical** – promote education that encourages respect and the dissemination of different cultures and languages, aiming for a more diverse and inclusive society, preparing children and young people to be “citizens of the world” in complete respect for others and in harmony with difference.

5. Our Pillars

I. INSPIRAR (INSPIRE)

Mission: Inspire children to develop their self-esteem and confidence, and trust-based relationships

Target: children attending 1º e 2 ciclos (PT), Key Stages 1 and 2 (UK), and Lower School (US)

The INSPIRAR programme aims to fully develop children along three main axes: Competence, Autonomy and Connection. By promoting a relationship between the child and a mentor who inspires and motivates them to reach their maximum potential, it aims to help them acquire and develop skills, promoting their academic success.

Format: Through an individualized relationship and support, the child's motivation, self-esteem, confidence, and ambition are worked on, challenging, and guiding their development and academic progress. The weekly follow-up sessions are in person and coordinated with schools and associations, for greater proximity to the child's social and educational context.

Training: This pillar provides for initial training of 12 hours (level I) and 8 hours (level II).

Monitoring: Monthly focus group sessions (1 hour). Fortnightly (during the 1st Period)

Commitment: 1 hour/week

Technical Coordination: Daniela Ferreira – Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the University of Porto (FPCEUP)

II. MOTIVAR (MOTIVATE)

Mission: Motivate young people to go further in their academic achievement.

Target: children attending 3º ciclo and Secundário (PT), Key Stages 3 and 4 (UK), and Middle and High School (US)

The mentors' mission is to inspire and empower students by applying tailored strategies to boost their academic motivation. They aim to understand students' needs, hold them accountable, and foster their autonomy. Through personalized guidance and engagement, mentors guide students to embrace learning enthusiastically, nurturing their academic motivation along the way.

In individual or small group sessions, guidance and/or explanations are provided to help these young people perform better at school, promote self-confidence, ambition, and inspire them towards their future.

Format: Individual or small group support for young people in the 3rd cycle or secondary school, in person or remotely.

Training: This pillar provides two training programmes Level I (10 hours), Level II (4 hours)

Monitoring: Monthly focus group sessions (1 hour)

Commitment: 1 hour/week

Technical Coordination: Renato Paiva (Clínica da Educação)

III. MOTIVATE+

Mission: To support young people from secondary, regular or vocational education, or university in the construction of their life project.

Target: young people from Secondary (regular or vocational education (PT), Key Stage 4 (UK), High School (US) or university

Through a one-to-one relationship and based on coaching and mentoring techniques, the young person is invited to reflect on their life project. Motivate + (plus) is an arm of Companhia de Estudo that provides mentoring to students from diverse backgrounds, including international students in Portugal who may not have Portuguese as their first language. The "motivate+ pillar" also welcomes mentors who work through the medium of English language, and international mentors from our partner organisations.

Format: Individual follow-up in weekly mentoring sessions.

Training: This pillar provides for an initial training of 12 hours.

Follow-up: Monthly focus group/supervision sessions (1 hour)

Commitment: 1 hour/week

Technical Coordination: Neil Mason (NewMind)

III. DESENVOLVER (DEVELOP)

Develop digital literacy

Mission: Develop technological skills in our children. Combat gender inequality in ICT professions.

Bring programming and robotics to primary schools, providing weekly training to their classes. Scratch training is specially designed for young children and contributes to the development of their analytical and metacognitive skills, which in turn can help to promote their self-confidence.

Each volunteer will be part of a team of 3 trainers who will be responsible for a class during the current academic year. Weekly Scratch classes (1 hour) take place in-person at schools or other educational organisations.

Format: Teaching Scratch to 3rd or 4th year students (3 trainers per class).

Training: This pillar provides for initial training of 20 hours.

Monitoring: Monthly focus group sessions (1 hour)

Commitment: 1 hour/week

Technical Coordination: Ricardo Almeida (CASPAE)

IV. EXPANDIR (EXPAND)

Expand horizons and ambition

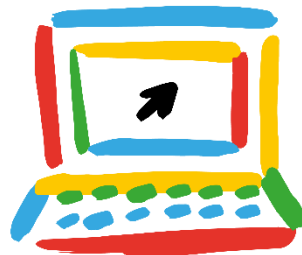
Mission: Expand horizons, give the world to our children and young people.

The purpose of education is the training and development of citizens, contributing to the construction of a fairer and more balanced society. This is an essential pillar to take the full development of our children and young people as far as possible.

EXPANDIR promotes workshops or other events that provide memorable and enriching experiences for our children and young people, through the sharing of knowledge and experiences that may motivate and excite them, through access to culture, science, and sport.

Format: Events, Experiences and Workshops.

Technical Coordination: The Study Company and Partner Organisations



6. The School Systems in Portugal, UK, and US

Age	Portugal Educational System		UK Years		US/International Grades		
4 - 5	Jardim de Infância (Kindergarten)	Educação pré-escolar Pre-School	Reception	Early Years Foundation Stage	Pre-Kindergarten	Early Childhood	
5 - 6	Jardim de Infância (Kindergarten)		Year 1		Key Stage 1		Kindergarten
6 - 7	1st Grade	1º Ciclo (1st Cycle)	Year 2	Key Stage 2		1st Grade	
7 - 8	2nd Grade		Year 3		2nd Grade		
8 - 9	3rd Grade		Year 4		3rd Grade		
9 - 10	4th Grade		Year 5		4th Grade		
10 - 11	5th Grade		Year 6		5th Grade		
11 - 12	6th Grade	2º Ciclo (2nd Cycle)	Year 7	Key Stage 3	6th Grade	Middle School	
12 - 13	7th Grade		Year 8		7th Grade		
13 - 14	8th Grade		Year 9		8th Grade		
14 - 15	9th Grade	3º Ciclo (3rd Cycle)	Year 10	Key Stage 4 (GCSE)	9th Grade (Freshman)	High School	
15 - 16	10th Grade		Year 11		10th Grade (Sophomore)		
16 - 17	11th Grade		Year 12 / Lower 6th		A Levels		11th Grade (Junior)
17 - 18	12th Grade		Year 13 / Upper 6th				12th Grade (Senior)

7. Registration

Registration for the volunteering programme is formalised after an application period through the submission of the following documentation:

- Signed Volunteering Agreement
- Criminal Record Certificate

8. Volunteering

The volunteers of the Study Company, when carrying out their volunteer work, must:

- Observe the deontological principles that govern the activity carried out - volunteering, namely strict respect for the private life of all those who benefit from it and properly use identification as a volunteer in the exercise of their activity.

- b) Guarantee the regularity of voluntary work in accordance with the commitment agreed with the promoting organisation. In the event of having to cancel a scheduled session due to any unforeseen circumstances, the volunteer has the duty to send this communication to the child in advance through the channel established for this purpose (through the teacher or guardian);
- c) Report situations of risk or danger to the child. (see Children and Young People Protection Policy);
- d) Seek to respect the rules that regulate the functioning of the entity to which it collaborates and its respective programs or projects.
- e) Do not express opinions or judgments about the behaviours or actions of the child's caregivers (parents, guardians, or teachers) in front of the child.
- f) Do not accept or offer material goods to the child on a regular basis and without knowledge of the coordination and institution where they work. If it is a notable or special moment (e.g. the child's birthday or the end of the school year), a symbolic gift may be acceptable, and this offer must be made known to the study company.
- g) Quickly report to the coordination any changes (of the mentor or mentee) that compromise availability and that may interfere with the volunteering commitment assumed.
- h) Ensure the good use of material resources and goods, equipment and utensils made available to them.
- i) Act diligently, impartially and in solidarity.
- j) Participate in training programs aimed at the correct development of voluntary work.
- k) Participate actively and constructively in monitoring sessions, being supportive of other volunteers in carrying out their duties, fostering an environment of open and non-judgmental communication.
- l) Collaborate with professionals from the promoting organisation, respecting their options and following their technical guidelines.
- m) Not assume the role of representative of the promoting organisation without its knowledge and prior authorisation.

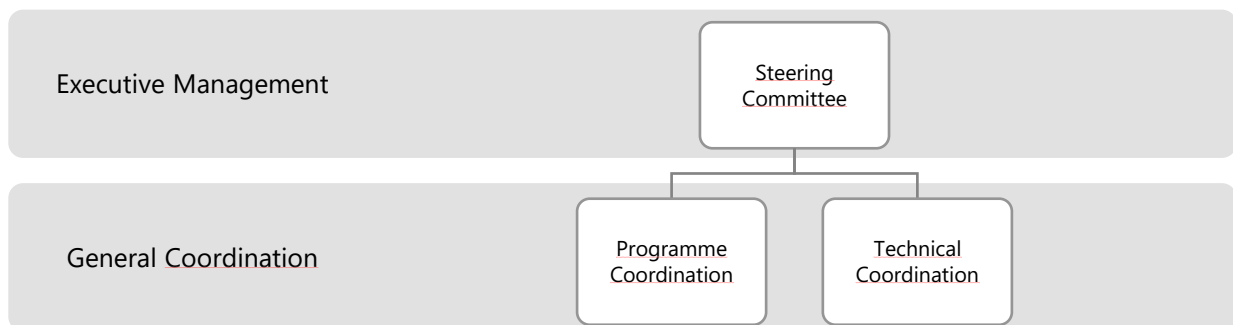
9. Rights of Children and Young People – Guidelines

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as someone under the age of 18. Based on this assumption and considering the nature of its action, the TSC undertakes to:

- a) Guarantee the rights provided for in [the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) to all children, without any discrimination, regardless of any consideration of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion of the child, their parents or legal representatives, or their national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or any other situation.

- b) Report any concerns, suspicions, or situations of violation of the rights and principles enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- c) Do not disclose personal data of children or young people (The signing of a consent and confidentiality agreement is mandatory when there is a need to collect personal data from children and young people).
- d) Do not collaborate with institutions or entities that act against the best interests of the child.
- e) Do not use inappropriate, disrespectful, or harmful language or behaviour against the rights of children or young people.
- f) Do not use information or images of children without the written consent of their parents, legal representatives, or guardians (in the case of children and young people under 18), always respecting a child's opinion.
- g) The child's formal consent must also be provided by the child, if he or she is at least 12 years old.

10. Governance Model



Executive Management

The executive management of TSC is the responsibility of the Steering Committee. Composed of a representative member of each company partner of the Study Company, and representatives of the Programme and Technical Coordination teams, the Steering Committee has the responsibility to define the strategy and vision for the programme, ensuring the best conditions for the coordination teams for its implementation.

General Coordination

The general coordination of the programme is of the responsibility of the Programme Coordination Team and the Technical Coordination team. Together, they implement and report the action plan for the academic year.

The Programme Coordination team oversees all the operations related to the coordination of the volunteers:

- **Volunteers' Coordination:**
 - **Volunteer recruitment and selection:** Identify and attract qualified volunteers to participate in educational programs. Conduct interviews and assessments to ensure volunteers' suitability for the organization's goals.

- **Volunteer supervision:** Oversee volunteer activities to ensure alignment with organization goals. Coordinate schedules and assignments to optimize volunteer engagement.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** Establish and maintain positive relationships with volunteers, schools, educational institutions, and other partners. Resolve conflicts and issues effectively and ethically.
- **Administrative management:** Maintain accurate records of hours worked, participation and achievements of volunteers. Collaborate with the administrative team to ensure compliance with legal and administrative requirements.
- **Communication:** Ensure clear and effective communication of the programme in internal and external channels.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Implement monitoring systems to evaluate volunteer performance and programme effectiveness. Collect feedback regularly to continually improve processes.

Technical Coordination Team

The Technical Coordination team of TSC plays a crucial role in ensuring the successful implementation of the programme. The Technical Coordination team ensures that volunteers are well-prepared, supported, and guided throughout their engagement in the programme. They work closely with the Programme Coordination Team to align activities and objectives, ultimately contributing to the overall success of The Study Company programme.

- **Defining Methodology:** The Technical Coordination team is responsible for establishing the methodology that will be used throughout the program. This involves determining the approach, techniques, and procedures that will guide the work of volunteers.
- **Training:** They develop and implement training programmes for volunteers to ensure they are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out their mission effectively. This could involve workshops, seminars, or online training modules designed to enhance volunteers' continuing development.
- **Supervision:** Throughout the academic year, the Technical Coordination team provides supervision and guidance to volunteers. They conduct monitoring sessions to assess progress, offer support, and address any challenges or issues that may arise during the implementation of the program.
- **Impact Assessment:** The team is responsible for evaluating the impact of the programme. This involves collecting data, analysing outcomes, and assessing the effectiveness of interventions. Impact assessment helps determine the program's success and identifies areas for improvement.

11. Whistleblowing

We recognise the importance of transparency and accountability in maintaining the trust and confidence of our volunteers, partners, and organisations. Therefore, we provide a whistleblowing channel that is easily accessible to all individuals associated with our organisation.

This [whistleblowing channel](#) serves as a confidential and secure avenue for volunteers, partners, and organisations to report any suspected or actual breaches of our Code of Ethics. Whether it involves unethical behaviour, violations of our principles, or any other concerns that may compromise our values and mission, we encourage individuals to come forward and speak up.

We are committed to thoroughly investigating all reports received through the whistleblowing channel and taking appropriate action to address any issues identified. We guarantee protection against retaliation for those who report in good faith.

12. Contact

For more information, please contact:

General Coordination: companhia@companhiadoestudo.org

13. Commitment

Volunteers shall strive to uphold the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and accountability in their work, ensuring that all decisions and actions are made with careful consideration for the ethical principles and the well-being of those affected. By adhering to The Study Company volunteers demonstrate their commitment to this code of ethics and contribute to the positive reputation and effectiveness of the programme.

Any violation of the principles outlined in this code of ethics will result in a disciplinary procedure which may and ultimately lead to removal from the programme."

I declare that I have read and accept the principles and guidance contained in this handbook.

Name:

Date:

Signature: