

## Step Up is globally recognised!

Step Up Network CIC, which has been operating for just over a year and has been named in NatWest's SE100 2024 list, has now been awarded a Global Recognition Award.

Step Up Network, founded by Ben Hobbis, has been recognized with a **2024 Global Recognition Award** for its exceptional contributions to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in education. Despite operating for just over a year and being run entirely by volunteers, Step Up Network has achieved significant milestones that reflect the effectiveness and dedication of its leadership and community. The organization's emphasis on empowering aspiring and new educational leaders through authentic storytelling and collaborative efforts distinguishes it as a valuable resource in the sector.

In its first year, Step Up Network hosted multiple events that engaged over 250 participants and supported promotions for individuals from underrepresented groups. It earned notable recognition, including being named in the UK's SE100 2024 list of top social enterprises. These achievements are awe-inspiring, considering the organization is entirely volunteer-led, with team members managing full-time jobs and other responsibilities. Operating efficiently while maintaining high satisfaction among event attendees underscores the team's commitment and strategic planning.

The organization's approach to leadership development through personal and professional storytelling sets it apart. While many traditional education programs concentrate solely on technical skills, Step Up Network focuses on the transferable nature of leadership experiences, ensuring its content resonates with a broad range of professionals. The network's events are known for being affordable, genuine, and community-oriented, avoiding the commercialization that often affects similar initiatives in the education sector. This dedication to authenticity has fostered a strong sense of trust and engagement within the community.

### Commitment to Collaboration and Community Impact

Step Up Network's collaborative efforts have led to partnerships with over 20 organizations and networks, further extending its reach and influence. The organization's ability to attract such interest highlights the respect it has earned within the sector. The fact that eight organizations have sought to learn from Step Up Network's success demonstrates its growing influence. This recognition as a thought leader in education reflects how effectively the network has positioned itself as a hub for shared learning and support.

Much of this success is due to the strategic leadership of founder Ben Hobbis, who has effectively coordinated volunteer efforts and limited funding to build a sustainable model. The team's adoption of the "Traction" series to guide its operations has kept the organization focused on its goals and allowed it to exceed expectations consistently. The clear vision and disciplined execution have been crucial in establishing Step Up Network as a credible and influential entity in the education sector.

Another key factor differentiating Step Up Network is its emphasis on storytelling as a tool for professional growth. The organization encourages community members to share their experiences candidly, creating a culture of openness and mutual support. This approach has resonated deeply with its audience, allowing the network to build genuine connections and produce content that reflects educators' real challenges and aspirations. The consistent engagement and positive feedback from participants demonstrate that Step Up Network's methods are innovative and effective in delivering meaningful results.

### **Sustained Growth Through Vision and Volunteerism**

Even with a modest annual revenue, Step Up Network has delivered substantial value to its community. The organization's ability to maintain momentum with limited financial resources highlights the strength of its volunteer-driven model. Despite their full-time jobs and personal responsibilities, the volunteers' dedication underscores the commitment to the organization's mission. Their contributions are key to the sustained growth and operational efficiency that Step Up Network has demonstrated over the past year.

Step Up Network's strategic use of data and feedback has played a crucial role in its success. By tailoring its content and programming to meet the real needs of its community, the organization has ensured that its offerings remain relevant and impactful. The emphasis on soft skills and leadership development that extends beyond specific roles aligns well with the changing demands of the education sector. This flexibility, combined with the network's authentic and inclusive approach, places Step Up Network in a leading position to support the next generation of education professionals.

Through its strategic partnerships, volunteer-led initiatives, and focus on genuine storytelling, Step Up Network has increased and made a lasting impact on the education community. The organization's recognition as a top 100 social enterprise and its success in building a supportive network for aspiring leaders highlight its ability to address significant gaps in leadership development. As Step Up Network continues to expand its influence, it remains dedicated to empowering educators through honest dialogue, skill-building, and collaborative learning opportunities.

## Final Words

Step Up Network's transformation from a small volunteer-led initiative to a recognized social enterprise has been driven by strategic leadership, genuine engagement, and a deep commitment to its mission. The organization's ability to achieve significant milestones within its first year while maintaining a focus on inclusivity and community impact is highly commendable. Receiving a **2024 Global Recognition Award** highlights Step Up Network's influential role in shaping the broader education landscape in a meaningful and sustainable way while continuing to foster an environment where aspiring leaders can thrive.

Step Up's founder, Ben Hobbis, stated *"We are delighted to be recognised again for the work that we have done. It makes the time spent very much worth it and shows how hard work and dedication can pay off."*, he went onto say, *"I must thank everyone who has contributed to the network in any way possible, as without you all it would not be possible to have achieved this."*

-Ends-

### Notes for editors:

More details about the Global Recognition Awards are here:

<https://globalrecognitionawards.org/>



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