
MINUTES OF DIGNITY BOARD MEETING APRIL 22, 2021

ON TEAMS – 3.00 to 6.00 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS: Louise Holck, Christian Balslev-Olesen (CBO), Dea Seidenfaden, Tomas Martin, Karin Hansen, Nomfundo Mogapi, Manfred Nowak, Lotte Leicht, Emil Kiørboe, Marie Louise Nørredam

FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD: Rasmus Grue Christensen (RGC), Dorrit Rée Akselbo (DRA)

GUESTS: Accountant Kenn Elmgren (item 4 and 5), Morten Olesen (item 7)

ABSENT: Camilla Rathcke

REFEREE: Mette Grimstrup

1. Approval of agenda of Board meeting April 22, 2021

Agenda is approved.

2. Status from the Chairperson

CBO reported that the Executive Committee has been informed about the Belarus project and have had a meeting with accountant Kenn Elmgren who has gone through the accounts thoroughly.

COVID-19 restrictions still influence the Board's work and means that we cannot meet physically as we would have liked to. The board seminar in September, however, would hopefully be organized as a physical meeting.

3. Status from the CEO

RGC gave an update on the Belarus platform, including origin, launch, first steps, and longer perspectives. RGC also informed the board on current advocacy activities in a Danish context.

The board praised the Belarus project that can set an example for future projects, not only where the UN system may work slowly, but also where the gravity of the crimes is not heavy enough for the UN to enter. The board also discussed on-going advocacy and stressed the importance of continued both constructive and critical approaches.

4. Approval of annual accounts 2020

Introduction by CBO, with strong praise of the result, including the fact that we will increase the equity considerably this year, which has earlier been a major concern for the board. Financial management has also improved markedly.

DRA gave a brief introduction to the accounts, including an overall view of the development of the overall results from 2017 and onwards. (*See the attached presentation: 2020 Annual Accounts*)

Accountant Kenn Elmgren then presented the accounts, stating that this has been the most undramatic accounts that he has participated in so far.

He underlined the statement on p. 4, stating that there were no comments, p. 8 that the accounting praxis is unchanged, and the income statement on p. 12 with a profit on 1,75 mio. which is the best result for many years.

The Board is asked to approve of the plan to deposit DKK 1 mio. on the equity and DKK 0,75 mio. on competence development for the employees. The reserve for competence development will be seen as part of the equity since it is voluntary and can be dissolved if the Board finds it necessary.

Short discussion: It was mentioned that it is appreciated in the organization that more resources are spent on management, including HR and the Dialogue Forum. Questions were asked as to how the reserve will be accessed. And whether there was a budget for selfcare for the staff during COVID or other plans to secure the employees' wellbeing during the pandemic. The travel budget was also mentioned – as to whether it will be smaller in the future due to the possibility to travel less and work more online, also in order to channel more money to the partners. This is possible, but still difficult to foresee. The board was told that there is no plan for the competence development yet, but if the board agrees to the reserve, a strategic plan will be produced. And that DIGNITY already has a health insurance that gives the employees easy access to chiropractors, psychologists etc.

The Board approved of the plan for the competence fund and equity on provision that there will be made strategic guidelines for the competence fund.

The Board approved the financial report and the auditor's comments.

5. Forecast 2021

The Board thanked for the information. A concern was raised regarding the possible negative impact on the rehabilitation clinic's obligations regarding the contract with Region Hovedstaden and the completion of agreed upon annual sessions with patients as a result of unfilled positions in the rehabilitation department. It was mentioned that it is a recurring pattern that there are more sessions in the clinic in the last part of the year than in the beginning. In addition, the clinic has engaged in a number of other services with new sources of income. There were no further comments.

6. Risk analysis

There will be made a separate analysis for the Belarus project.

The Board asked into the risk assessment of data security and research and clinical data. The Risk Analysis has so far only been discussed in management and by specific staff members, but it was mentioned that it

could improve by a broader discussion in the organization, e.g. the Dialogue Forum, in order to involve staff continuously. The Board was told that DRA is leading a GDPR upgrade for the time being, which focuses very heavily on the research data. Data security is a priority in 2021.

The Board thanked for the orientation.

7. Localisation

This item is the opening of a broader discussion that will continue at the coming Board meetings.

Morten Olesen, international program director in DIGNITY, introduced the paper. The project of localization came out of three recommendations from the Foreign Ministry: That DIGNITY increases funding to Africa, increases the share of DIGNITY's funding that is channeled directly to partners, and focuses on even more coherent regional programming.

This led to a reorganization of the international department and the budget system in DIGNITY last year. Next step is to develop a partnership policy and to begin exploring the possibilities for increasing the new partnerships in Africa.

At this meeting, the Board is asked to approve of the first steps as described in the paper, including the plans of an intermediate, exploratory representation in Burkina Faso with the primary responsibility to formulate a potential DIGNITY programme for the Sahel region and find new relevant partners.

Presentation by Nomfundo Mogapi: Localisation and Country Presence (attached)

Nomfundo Mogapi, director of CSVr, initiated the discussion with a brief presentation of CSVr – The Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation. CSVr has got more than 30 years of experience in violence prevention, peace building and human rights. Working with rehabilitation, research, advocacy and knowledge building, the organization is based in South Africa, with many partners throughout the continent and a long an ongoing partnership with DIGNITY.

Mogapi pointed out the need to be specific when talking about partnerships, and to acknowledge the inherent power imbalances in partnerships between donor organizations and local partners. This makes it extremely important to be able to listen to and respect local knowledge, and to be very clear about roles, responsibilities and structures. This also means being able to work with the uncomfortableness of power imbalances on a very personal level – for DIGNITY staff to be aware of their role as representatives of a donor organization.

Global Alliance was mentioned as a model for cooperation, highlighting what it actually takes to build a partnership.

The Board then discussed the subject, agreeing that one of the objectives of a local presence in Burkina Faso was making it possible for DIGNITY to better listen and learn from the local organizations. And that it is worth countering the old-fashioned notion of local presence, understood as a country office with a Western employee, as a prerequisite for development work.

The Board thus approved of starting the process as described in the paper, with a local, explorative presence in Ouagadougou with the task to understand the Sahel area better, as a starting point getting to know the local context by working with existing partners of CSV.

8. DIGNITY Towards 2025

The board praised the new overall document which will finalize the extensive strategy development processes in the last year.

It was suggested that physiotherapists and social workers are mentioned.

Discussion of whether rehabilitation should be understood as part of the goal to eradicate torture, or rather as a prerequisite for better advocacy. Advancing accountability and justice for torture is also part of prevention. Until now, DIGNITY has included documentation in prevention, but it could just as well be part of rehabilitation. This division is partly practical, since documentation has not been a major priority up until now.

It is important that survivors and victims are not just receivers of help, they are drivers of change. There is an empowering story in the fact that those who are most affected by these atrocities are also the agents of change.

RGC will finish the document after this discussion. Board members with specific suggestions for improvement of the document are very welcome to send them to Rasmus.

9. Evaluation of the meeting

On the part of the Chairperson a big appreciation of the different presentations, especially the very direct and to-the-point presentation by Nomfundo Mogapi.

Meeting	Item	Subject	Decision	Responsible	Status
2021 BM 2	4	Approval of annual accounts	The Board approved of the annual accounts, including a proposal to deposit DKK 1 mio. for the equity, and DKK 750.000 for competence development.	Management	
2021 BM 2	7	Localisation	The Board approved of the initial steps, i.e. an intermediate, explorative representation in Burkina Faso.	Management	