
MINUTES OF DIGNITY BOARD MEETING SEPTEMBER 9, 2022

AT BRYGGERVANGEN – 3.00 to 6.00 p.m.

PARTICIPANTS: Dea Seidenfaden (DS), Emil Kiørboe, Manfred Nowak *on teams*, Tomas Martin, Karin Hansen, Nomfundo Mogapi *on teams*, Lars Udsholt *on teams*

FROM MANAGEMENT: Rasmus Grue Christensen (RGC)

ABSENT: Louise Holck, Lotte Leicht, Marie Louise Nørredam, Camilla Rathcke

GUEST: Program manager Søs Nissen and Country director Jo-Anne Prud-Homme du Hancourt

REFERENT: Mette Grimstrup

1. Approval of agenda of board meeting June 23, 2022

The agenda was approved.

2. Orientation from the Chairperson

DS introduced the meeting and bit a warm welcome to Lars Udsholt, new member of the board. A round of presentations followed.

3. Orientation from the CEO

Short briefing by RGC: This autumn focus is on organizational issues mainly. Morten Olesen has become the new COO, and a new CFO is being appointed, starting Nov. 1st, 2022, according to plan.

Financially we are in smooth waters for the time being. DIGNITY's turn over will be around 200 mio. kr. as expected. End result still too early to say, but things are looking ok.

For the first time in several years, we are not negotiating or finalizing agreements with key donors, so we can focus more on implementation, i.e. finalizing organizational changes and concretizing the localization agenda with the implementation of our international programmes.

Discussing DIGNITY's accountability strategy will also be a priority in the coming year. The second phase of IAPB ends in 2023, after which we hope to engage in a number of other activities in the same domain.

And finally, celebrating our 40 years anniversary will be an internal priority in the second half of 2022.

4. Dispositions in EC

Projects above 4 mio. DKK approved by the EC:

- Capacity building on accountability – a separate grant from the US State Department

The board approved of the decision.

5. Presentation of DAPP and the situation in Tunisia

Country director Jo-Anne Prud-Homme du Hancourt presented an overview of the present political crisis in Tunisia and consequences for DIGNITY's future work.

The board thanked for the presentation. A short discussion followed, among other things about the difficult balancing act that NGOs face when choosing when to participate in or boycott dubious official processes and which official partners to keep cooperating with in an increasingly autocratic environment.

Program director Søs Nissen presented the DAPP (Danish-Arab Partnership Programme) and DIGNITY's role as lead of the consortium.

The board also applauded this very straight and clear presentation on the pros and cons of leading such a complicated endeavor as DAPP and acknowledged DIGNITY's focus on cooperation.

6. Status on APV 2022

Short status by RGC: Apart from a few delays due to a sick leave in HR, we are on fully track with the APV action plan. It is appreciated by both staff and management that a lot of the working environment work has been professionalized, among other things with an extensive staff handbook. This was also reflected in the positive APV from last year.

Comments from the board:

The staff representatives underlined the importance of management focusing on relational care, stress prevention etc., when considering the organizational changes. They also emphasized that even though the implementation of the region agreement has worked well, there are still challenges with the working environment in the clinic.

Concerning the plans to hire more people internationally, RGC confirmed that there has been a slight shift in focus, due to juridical obstacles. When DIGNITY hire people internationally, they must therefore either work from Copenhagen or from one of the country offices. Otherwise, they will be hired as consultants.

The board will continue to follow the APV action plan status annually. In general, the DIGNITY APV status is very high, and this was also noted and appreciated by the board.

RGC was asked to give an analysis of the challenges in the clinic and the work being done to address them at the next board meeting in Dec. And to keep the board updated on the subject till then.

7. Research in DIGNITY

The board discussed the framework for research and knowledge work in DIGNITY going forward and how to strengthen DIGNITY's position as an internationally recognized knowledge and research institution - also in a situation with growing localization pressure.

RGC presented a paper on the issue, highlighting four challenges for DIGNITY's knowledge and research development: 1) Localization – we are under significant pressure to 'localize' more funds and decision-power to the Global South. This also includes the research area. 2) External fundraising – our research funding base is too narrow and fragile and must be broadened in the coming years. 3) International dissemination – we have an untapped potential for more active public dissemination of our research and knowledge, notably for specialized international audiences. And 4) Internal knowledge sharing – we have a somewhat fragmented research and knowledge environment in DIGNITY and need to strengthen the internal interaction and knowledge-sharing across researchers and professional disciplines.

The board acknowledged the attention given to the four issues mentioned and discussed different possibilities going forward. It was concluded that there was support for management going forward with the plans outlined in the paper.

8. Board seminar program

Everybody still plans to participate in person.

The draft program was approved. Briefing about the clinic was added to the program as mentioned above.

9. AOB

Lotte Leicht's first term runs out in January 2023. There are no procedures in the Rules of Procedure for reappointing members, but the EC will suggest a procedure for reappointment to be adopted in the Rules of Procedure.

Till next board meeting there will be a list of terms of election for all board members for orientation.

The EC has chosen to postpone the discussion of expanding the board further as it was deemed more pertinent to give the newly internationalized board more time to work together first. This was approved of.