
MINUTES OF DIGNITY BOARD MEETING SEPTEMBER 19, 2024

AT DIGNITY, Bryggervangen 55, Cph

PARTICIPANTS: Lars Udsholt, Emil Kiørboe, Tomas Martin, Anna Mette Nathan, Sadia Khan, Marie Louise Nørredam, Emil Kiørboe, ON TEAMS: Nomfundo Mogapi, Lotte Leicht, Manfred Nowak (till pt. 6)

ABSENT: Dea Seidenfaden (though present on teams at pt. 5 and 6), Louise Holck, Manfred Nowak (from pt. 6),

FROM MANAGEMENT: Rasmus Grue Christensen

GUESTS:

At pt. 5: Nikolai Cerisier Roitman, Head of DIGNITY's Rehabilitation Clinic

At pt. 6: Flemming Konradsen, Novo Nordisk Foundation and from DIGNITY's management group: Lene Høg Jensen, Nikolai Cerisier Roitmann, Linda Nordin, ON TEAMS: Therese Rytter & Marie Brasholt

REFERENT: Mette Grimstrup

1. Approval of agenda of board meeting Sept. 19, 2024

Lars Udsholt (LU) welcomed the participants at the meeting, noting that Dea Seidenfaden was absent (though attending pt. 5 and 6 on teams), so therefore LU chaired the meeting.

It was requested that pt. 8 was treated before pt. 5 and 6. The agenda was approved with that amendment.

2. Orientation from the Chairperson

LU noted that two meetings have been held in the EC, preparing for the board meeting. The EC has approved appointment letters for the next board members from IMR and the Psychologist Association (Dea Seidenfaden and Louise Holck's terms run out in May 2025).

3. Orientation from the CEO

Orientation by Rasmus Grue Christensen (RGC): Things are relatively calm for the time being with a strong focus on implementation and operations. Two overall things are, however, also on the agenda: Strategy process and negotiation of the next DED with the Danish MFA.

Regarding the latter, the finance bill for 2025 revealed an increase in the DED of 5 mil. DKK, from 53 to 58 mil. DKK, per year. This is an achievement in times when development funding in general is decreasing. However, in effect, inflation will eat up most of the increase. We are therefore looking into other important funds, for instance on our accountability work in Palestine and Ukraine. International fundraising will be an important part of the new international strategy.

We are still working on new country presences in Uganda, Burkina Faso, and Morocco. Perhaps also in Kiev. This also demands that we develop a more coherent administrative framework internationally. This is in the making.

This week, our international Global Partnership Workshop has been held - always inspiring to hear experiences from human rights defenders in different parts of the world.

The board thanked for the orientation. Nomfundo Mogapi (NM) inquired about the strategy relating to the country offices and how DIGNITY will avoid competing with local organizations.

RGC assured that DIGNITY is almost always hiring local staff. The intention is not setting up local 'DIGNITYs', competing with local civil society, but to do what we do in Copenhagen, but now closer to partners and local realities. He agreed that it might be worth describing the approach and strategy in a more coherent way, perhaps making it a point for a coming board meeting.

4. Disposition in the EC

Projects above 4 mio. DKK approved by the Executive Committee (EC):

RGC informed the board that DIGNITY didn't get a large grant for Myanmar, which we applied for in the spring. But the Novo Nordisk Foundation had just approved of a 4 mio. DKK grant for a clinical research project.

5. National Strategy

RGC shortly presented the strategy framework. We're still working with 3 strategies – one overall strategy – DIGNITY towards 2030, discussed by the board discussed in April – one international and one national strategy, the drafts of which have been discussed/will be discussed at the last and present board meeting. For both the national and international strategies a second half will be developed, focusing more on the concrete organizational resources and structures needed for implementing the strategic targets presented in the draft strategies.

With these corner stones in place, Nikolai Cerisier Roitmann, director of DIGNITY's Rehabilitation Clinic, presented the draft national strategy.

The strategy focuses on consolidating and stabilizing the work in the clinic but also presents two development targets, building strategic partnerships with other players, civil society groups and municipal actors, and developing an intensive care treatment for patients. One of the key points being that the year-long debate on whether the clinic should reach out for new target groups is closed for now. Instead focus will be on improving our reach to our primary target group, traumatized people with refugee background and their families, via strategic partnerships and alliances with community networks.

The board applauded the very well-written and interesting draft strategy. It was noted that focusing on the target group but expanding the reach seemed a good way to go, making it more flexible and less expensive for clients to reach, perhaps by digital means.

The wording of the strategy was also discussed. In order to stay relevant for the Danish health care system, using a more specific health care language might be worth contemplating. It was also recommended that digitalization should play a bigger role, as this would become a focus point in the Danish health care reform.

RGC and NICR thanked for the discussion and the many relevant comments. A final strategy will be discussed in December.

6. Research in DIGNITY

Tomas Martin (TM) shortly presented the background for the day's discussion. A small working group in the board has been discussing strategic issues around research in DIGNITY – decolonization of research, research fundraising, and the internal organization of research .

As a finalization of these discussions, Flemming Konradsen, VP of Novo Nordisk Foundation, Social & Humanitarian, and prof. at Cph University, had been invited to facilitate a discussion in the board on the future of research in DIGNITY. A small group from DIGNITY's management team also attended the discussion.

Flemming Konradsen (FK) facilitated a lively and engaged discussion on DIGNITY as a research organization. Asking the simple question: What sets DIGNITY apart in the research field? - FK suggested that DIGNITY sharpened its research profile, both regarding themes and methodologies. Agreeing that some of DIGNITY's assets were the multidisciplinary, the embeddedness in practice, and access to data, FK recommended focusing on 5-7 "researchable subjects" as a strategy for creating more impact and improving DIGNITY's communication and fundraising possibilities in the research field. Offering research capacity building, data management etc. could also be a way of multiplying the effects of research efforts.

Another recommendation was to create research networks, perhaps 3-5 organizations/universities researching the same topic in different contexts would both improve results and strengthen the small research community inside DIGNITY.

The board thanked for a very insightful and fruitful debate.

7. Rules of Procedure

The board was presented with a list of suggested amendments to the Rules of Procedure as a result of various discussions in the board in 2024. Among other things, the amendments seek to establish clear and transparent procedures for appointment of new board members, implementation of the board's decision on a financial advisor, etc.

The board approved of all amendments, except for pt. 2.6, where the last part of the sentence is deleted, so that pt. 2.6 stops at "communicated to the appointing organization."

With this amendment, the Rules of Procedure was approved.

8. Board seminar in January 2025

The board confirmed the date of the board seminar in 2025 – January 30-31. On the agenda will probably be implementation of the strategies adopted in December 2024.

9. AOB

Nothing to report

10. Board's 15 min

Closed item.