

Dóchas

The Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations

Dóchas Board 92 (1-23)
26/01/23

Dóchas Board

held in The Willow Room, The Lennox Building, 50 Richmond Street, Dublin 2, on
Thursday, 26 January 2023 at 10.00am

M i n u t e s

Present:

- Sarah O'Toole (CBM Ireland) Chairperson
- John Moffett (Misean Cara) Vice Chairperson
- Siobhán Cassidy (Trócaire) Treasurer
- Lucia Ennis (Concern Worldwide)
- Una Murray (Sightsavers)
- Karol Balfe (ActionAid Ireland)
- Bobby McCormack (Development Perspectives)
- Eamon Sharkey (GOAL)
- Senan Turnbull (External Board Member)
- Martina Fitzgerald (External Board Member)
- Grace Milton (External Board Members)

In attendance:

- Jane-Ann McKenna (CEO of Dóchas)
- Anna Farrell (Finance & Operations Manager, Dóchas)
- Gillian Ivory (Head of Membership Engagement, Dóchas) – for item 3 only

1. Meeting Opening and Standing Items

The Chairperson opened the meeting welcoming those present.

a. Apologies and Agenda

There were no apologies and no changes to the agenda as circulated. One member (Bobby) left at 11.50am and isn't available to join the Away Day session in the afternoon.

b. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

All members present confirmed that there were no conflicts of interest.

c. Minutes of Board Meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting, held on 24th November 2022, were approved: Siobhán Cassidy (Proposed), Karol Balfe (Seconded).

d. Matters Arising and To-do List

Most of the items on the to-do list, with the exception of the following, have either been completed or will be addressed during this meeting:

- A management change at ICVA delayed the progress of discussions on the long-term plan in relation to the salary hosting agreement. We don't intend to extend the agreement beyond 2023.

- The CEO and Treasurer have had some initial discussions on our financial procedures and controls.
- We will follow up with Board members to see if they can support with regard to corporate contacts.

2. Reports and Updates

a. CEO Report

The **CEO Report**, which was circulated in advance, was taken as read.

b. Emerging Issues – Irish Aid funding

The CEO briefed the Board on our engagement with Irish Aid around our multi-year strategic partnership funding application (summary document shared in advance). A final decision has been deferred pending the outcome of a meeting with the Director General, Michael Gaffey, which the CEO and Chair will attend. Irish Aid is keen to bring this to conclusion in February.

During a general discussion the following comments were made:

- The original 4-year proposal will be the focus for the meeting on 30th Jan.
- Our draft accounts for 2022 are currently being prepared so we will have further clarification on our reserves. It is important to note that reserves are for financial sustainability, emergencies and capital expenditure rather than for operational costs.
- This application has been an in-depth and time-consuming process for CEO and team, so there is support to negotiate a four-year agreement now.
- There has been increased interest across the board in Irish Aid in terms of public engagement. Worldview builds public consensus and support for a strong ODA programme, which will be important in a shifting political climate.
- It is important to clarify the constraints that members are under - the cost of living crisis is affecting all members and that many members are struggling, particularly those in the small to medium category. If additional support isn't forthcoming and if our other sources of funding (i.e. membership fees) decline we won't be able to maintain the current level of support.
- We need to continue to engage with Irish Aid on LLD and EU pieces in the coming four years, and see what is feasible in this regard.

The CEO said that she has a sense of where the Board is at in relation to the way forward with Irish Aid.

As the Board won't be meeting again until 30th March, the first point of call following the meeting will be engagement with the sub-committee on Finance, Audit and Risk (FARC). We have developed a number of scenarios around the budget for 2023, which we will look at with FARC once we know Irish Aid's decision.

Decision:

- If there is no movement on the €490k on 30th Jan. the Chairperson and CEO will indicate that they need time to reflect and to check that the Board is comfortable with the final decision.
- The CEO will send a written update to the Board following the meeting on 30th Jan.
- Responsibility for signing off on the 2023 budget was delegated to FARC, who will report to the next Board meeting.

3. Strategic Topic

Gillian Ivory, Head of Membership Engagement, joined the meeting for this section only.

- **Member Survey:** A PowerPoint outlining the results of our 2022 member survey was circulated to members in advance. The CEO presented the key findings of the survey, which focused on measuring

our impact and progress against our strategy and on the connections/collaborations that exist between members and with other key stakeholders.

- **Network Mapping:** This section of the survey relates to the impact network piece in the strategy. The CEO outlined the process to date, which involved engaging with the Small Foundation and Converge on impact networks, introducing a new Network Delegate role within the membership, developing a new survey with a mapping element, launching the survey, looking at the survey results and integrating and training on the new mapping tools. Going forward we want to develop the network so that there is enhanced connection and collaboration across the sector as a whole, whether that comes directly through Dóchas or otherwise. We want to create shared purpose around key areas and support members to connect and collaborate around those areas.

Gillian said that the survey provided us with data which we used to create a series of maps using a piece of software (Kumu) to show the relationships that exist between: organisations; organisations and their donors; sectoral practices & key areas of interest; advocacy priorities; shared learning priorities; and alliances. The purpose is to facilitate and enhance collaboration and improve our effectiveness. She demonstrated the type of data collected in the survey, the various relationship maps that can be produced from the data and the potential the mapping piece offers.

The CEO said that we want to use the data as a tool to direct what we focus on. It will be a guiding tool rather than an exact science and will be used to inform next steps in terms of what we talk to members about and what we choose to prioritise. If we are to move away from formalised working groups we need to broaden our perspective. Our members want to focus on a range of topics so we need to look at how we prioritise and at the kind of forum or structures needed to support that. Some of the data needs to be cleaned/refined, maps aren't currently available publicly and organisations cannot currently edit their own data. We have to consider how we want to curate this.

During a general conversation the following comments were made:

- The mapping piece could be a useful tool to indicate to Irish Aid where the ambition on the strategy is going and what sort of partnership could be achieved.
- While the Dóchas membership are the focus of this piece the other aspect is the relationship with other networks (e.g. The Irish Emergency Alliance; Stop Climate Chaos; The Wheel; etc)
- We would be looking at convening on areas where it adds value to convene within Dóchas and where we can link or signpost members to where the issue is happening elsewhere.
- It would be useful if the geographical map on the Dóchas website could be incorporated into this piece.
- This exercise clearly demonstrates the breadth of the membership and the value of Dóchas and could be used with Irish Aid to outline why we need continued support.

The CEO said that there are a number of phases to this project. In terms of next steps, we will engage with Network Delegates in March to explore the map and consider how it can support the work of our members, consider priority areas for sectoral practices, advocacy and shared learning, explore options around structures that might apply and look at tools that could help members collaborate better.

4. Governance

- a. **Risk Register:** The CEO presented the Risk Register, copies of which were circulated in advance, noting that risks 11 (Fraud, theft by 3rd parties) and 12 (Staffing gaps or turnover) remain Amber for the reasons identified in the 'Actions to be taken/or taken since last review' column. It is proposed that risk 9 (Irish Aid withdraws support) move from Green to Amber. We have already discussed this issue under agenda item 2(b) but just to note there is an increased risk if there is no movement on the €490k per annum over the next four years.

It was noted that cyber security has rocketed to the top of the list of risks for charities overall so it may be necessary to look at the protections we have in place to mitigate any risk in that regard.

Action:

- John to share cyber security service level agreement Misesan Cara has in place with Right-Click.

Decision:

- Risk 9 will move from Green to Amber pending the outcome of discussions with Irish Aid around future funding.

b. Board Nominee Process & Succession Planning: The CEO referred members the Memo on board nominations and succession planning, copies of which were circulated in advance.

During a general discussion it was noted that:

- One Board member (Peter) stepped down last November;
- Three Board members (Una, Senan and Martina) are due to step down at the AGM (18th May)
- Two (Una and Senan) have indicated that they will not seek re-election and one (Martina) is interested in seeking re-election if approved by the Board.
- The Chairperson will leave CBM Ireland on 30/03/23. Our Governance Manual and Code of Conduct for Board members stipulate that board members elected from among the membership must resign from the Board in the event that they leave the employ of the nominating agency.
- Our revised Constitution has been submitted to the Regulator and if it is approved the maximum number of Board members will 9 (12 previously). There will be an adjustment period once the change has been agreed so the reduction doesn't have to come into force at the 2023 AGM.
- With those who have/will step down at the AGM our number will be reduced by five (Peter, Una, Senan, Sarah and Martina) so we need to decide how many vacancies and what skillsets we would like to open up in February to attract candidates.

Decisions:

- The current Chairperson will step down on 30th March 2023 in line with our governance rules.
- The current Vice Chairperson will act as interim Chairperson pending the election of a new Chairperson at the first Board meeting (22 June) after the AGM.
- This afternoons Board Away Day will consider the skillsets that currently exist on the Board and identify any gaps.

Actions:

- Sarah, John and Senan will follow up around the number of vacancies and the skillsets to be opened up in February to attract candidates.

5. Other Business

There was no other business.

Chairperson:.....

Date:.....