

## Chair of the UnitingWorld Board

Suitability Criteria for use by the Search Committee

12 July 2022

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### Role of the Chair<sup>1</sup>

The Chairperson has a leadership role in facilitating governance processes.

#### **Leadership of the Board**

- Setting the tone for the board, including the establishment of a common purpose.
- Chairing board meetings efficiently and shaping the agenda in relation to goals, strategy, budget, and executive performance.
- Facilitating the effective functioning of the board including managing the conduct, frequency, and length of board meetings.
- Facilitating proper information flow to the board and seeking to ensure that the information provided to the board is relevant, accurate, timely and sufficient to keep the board appropriately informed of the performance of UnitingWorld and of any developments that may have a material impact on the organisation or its performance.
- Seeking to ensure that the board can maintain adequate understanding of the organisation's financial position, strategic performance, operations, and affairs generally and the opportunities and challenges facing the organisation.
- Facilitating open and constructive communications amongst board members and encouraging their contribution to board deliberations.

#### **Board Performance Management**

- Encouraging contributions by all board members and seeking consensus when making decisions.
- Liaising with and counselling, as appropriate, board members.
- Motivating board members and where appropriate dealing with underperformance.
- Overseeing and facilitating board, committee and board member evaluation reviews and succession planning.
- Assisting with the selection of board and committee members.

#### **Relationship with National Director**

- Establishing and maintaining an effective working relationship with the National Director.
- Liaising and interfacing with the National Director as the primary contact between the board and management but without necessarily preventing direct access of fellow Board Members.
- Overseeing negotiations for the National Director's employment.
- Planning for the National Director's succession.
- Provide guidance and direction to the National Director as requested in between meetings.
- Mentor the National Director. and
- Conduct the National Director's performance review in consultation with the UCA General Secretary.

#### **Communications and Stakeholder management**

- Communicating the views of the board, in conjunction with the National Director, to UnitingWorld's stakeholders.
- In collaboration with the National Director, seeking to ensure that communications with stakeholders and the public are accurate and effective.

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<sup>1</sup> Extracted from the UnitingWorld Procedures Manual, approved by the Board in March 2019

- Advocating for UnitingWorld in public and to stakeholders and being available for public speaking events.
- Participating, and encouraging Board members to participate in fundraising for UnitingWorld.
- Working to build the performance and reputation of UnitingWorld and safeguarding the good name and values of UnitingWorld.

## Key Qualities<sup>2</sup>

**Restraint:** Great chairs create conditions that allow other people to shine. People describe them as “restrained,” “non-domineering,” and “leaving room for others.” Effective chairs speak little; their interventions are focused on process and people rather than on content and are encouraging.

**Patience:** Good chairs know how to pause and reflect. Instead of rushing to get things done quickly, they focus on getting things done properly. They encourage introspection and thoughtfulness. They regularly seek feedback from Board members regarding meetings and debrief extensively with the CEO to capture learning.

**Availability:** Good chairs schedule time to invest in their role. Beyond the Board and Committee meeting schedules, they have regular meetings with the CEO (weekly/fortnightly) and other exec and Board members on a regular schedule. However, as importantly, they are available and responsive as needed for ad hoc consultation as required. We estimate the role will need 50-80 hours a year.

## Key Skills

**Grasp of the distinction between Governance and Management<sup>2</sup>:** The Chair needs to be the guide on the side, not the one coming up with the solutions. They need to ensure that the Board stays in the realms of governance and strategy and does not get involved in the executive functions.

**Ability to facilitate collaboration in a non-traditional team<sup>2</sup>:** Board members only meet a few times a year, and they are not a traditional team. The work of facilitating collaboration requires a focus on quickly scoping, structuring, and sorting the collaborative work. The Chair needs to understand the different Board members’ skills, perspectives and concerns and ensures robust discussion and the emergence of consensus.

**A deep understanding of the organisation<sup>3</sup>:** The Chair does not have to be from the sector, but they need to learn the context in which the agency operates (the stakeholders, the donors, the competition); the business itself (how it works, what makes it tick); and most importantly the values and ethics that drive the work.

**The ability to drive culture:** The Chair sets the tone for the organisation by both word and action. They will explicitly address how the work of the Board will be done in ways that reflect the values of the organisation. They will be sensitive to power dynamics including due to gender, race and ability and be pro-active in ensuring the psychological safety of Board members and Exec to engage frankly.

## UnitingWorld Specific Desirables

- An understanding of the aid sector and the governance standards required by DFAT Accreditation for the aid sector.
- A commitment to the ethos, an understanding of the polity, and membership of the UCA
- Networks within the international development sector
- Experience in global church to church relationships.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://hbr.org/2018/03/how-to-be-a-good-board-chair>

<sup>3</sup> NPA Chair-CEO Masterclass