

# Charity Governance Code Update

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# The case for change

- About me: Independent Chair of the Charity Governance Code Steering Group
- The code is in and of the sector, and voluntary
- A portrait of 'good'
- Most significant refresh in eight years
- Strong case for change
- Retained the house and the general 'architecture' of principles

# Changes to the approach

- ‘Top level’ of the Code – universal outcomes: *You know it’s working when...*
- Why this top level matters, and to whom it applies
- Boards (and, where they exist, senior staff) to use their discretion...
  - Relevant behaviours for each Principle
  - Policies, processes and practice
  - Suggested evidence and assurance

# Changes to the frame



# Delivering on organisational purpose in difficult times

- Torrid times in the sector more widely
- Changes in the landscape for international aid funding
- Geopolitical shifts, wars and the political lens on international organisations
- The challenges of decolonisation and transformation
- Less money, more need, more stress, high exposure to risk
- Sometimes, these circumstances are reasons to be bolder in reviewing governance and how you work

# The Code on behaviours

- Encouragement around the Board being
  - focused on issues that matter most to the success of the charity's mission
  - forward-thinking and outward-looking, and using insights from diverse sources
  - open to new ideas, approaches or partnerships
  - alert to how the charity's purpose and values link directly with any other moral, social or environmental responsibilities
  - Supportive of the charity's right to speak out about its mission, even if unpopular

# The Code on decision making

- Clarity on what gets decided where
- Making effective and orderly use of time – right content, right time
- Ability to learn from what's happened before
- Using the diversity of the Board – working through by exploring different viewpoints
- Making good use of committees to serve the Board's work – expectations of chairs to support Board decision making
- Practical matters: shaping of agendas, digital access to information

# The Code on managing resources and risks

- Board understanding the charity's capabilities, capacity and resources
- Assessing whether resources are sustainable or if fundamental change is needed, and by resources we include people (not just money but all Board members should 'get' the finances too)
- Effective risk management – difficult balance to strike (UK/other countries' norms): accountability and adaptation are both needed
- We also reference balancing taking risks with safeguarding the charity's service users, staff and resources
- In terms of EDI, important to understand how inequality of resources, opportunity and power affects the charity, its work, users, the Board itself

# Working with the Code

- Using the Code as a catalyst for quality discussions
- There is a strong tug in organisations to take an approach of ‘one and done’ but we need to embrace the dynamics of organisational and people change
- Creating spaces in which people think together and address the big challenges
- Focusing on the quality of time together and what contributes to it being well used and talents optimised – doesn’t happen by accident

# Further help



- Where to find the Code:  
[www.charitygovernancecode.org](http://www.charitygovernancecode.org)
- Where to find connected resources:
- <https://www.charitygovernancecode.org/charity-governance-code/resources/>
- Where to find Radojka:  
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/radojka-miljevic-605839/>