

Board Member Transition

How to secure continuity in the governance of your affiliate

Wikimedia Conference 2017, Pre-Conference, March 29

Moritz Rahm (WMDE)



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Goal:

Understanding the different phases of transition

Outline:

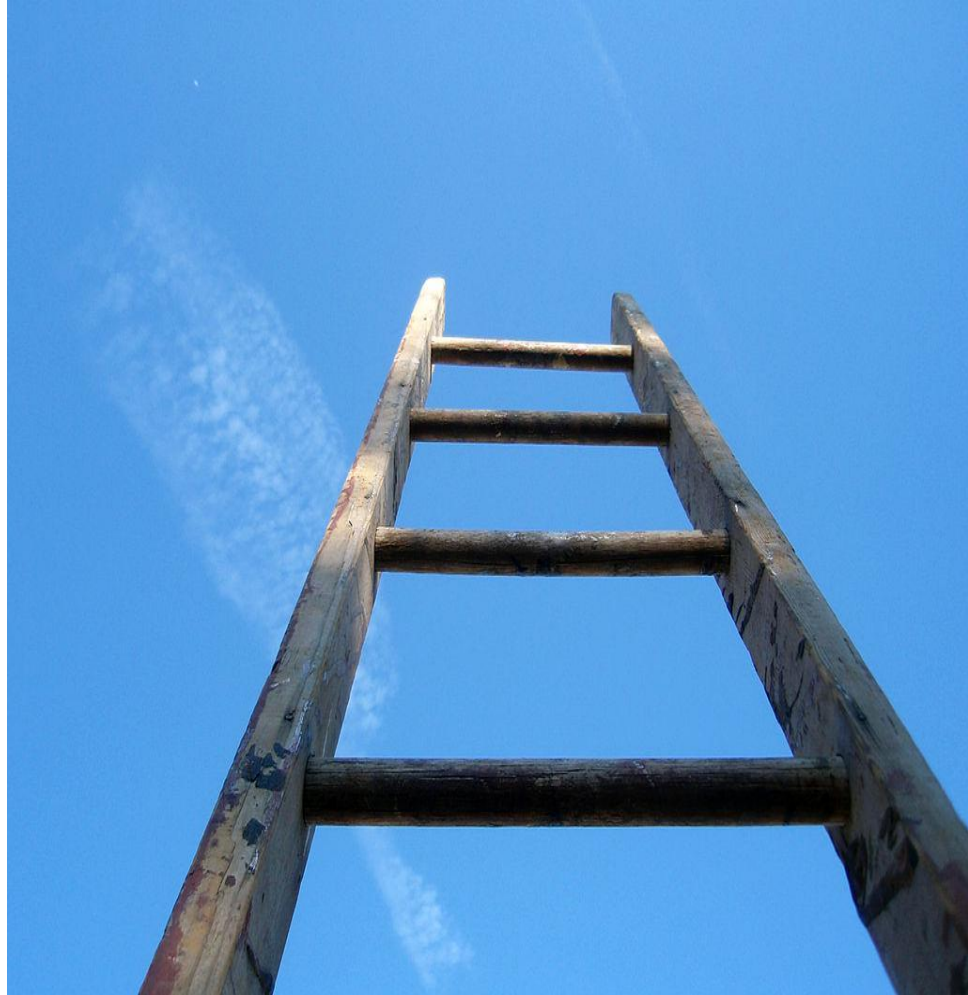
1. **Introduction: Transition phases and structures**
2. **In-depth: Transition phases**

Board transition is a challenge



Daria from Copenhagen, Denmark (<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rage.jpg>), „Rage“, Bildproportionen geändert von Moritz Rahm (WMDE), <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>

Board transition is an opportunity



Introduction: Transition phases and transition structures



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TRANSITION PHASES

Induction

Succession planning
and recruitment

Forming a team and
engaging new board
members

Ongoing improvement
of board practices and
structures

TRANSITION STRUCTURES

Terms of office

Board size

Board structure

Staff & available support

Appointed board members

Electoral procedure

Bylaws

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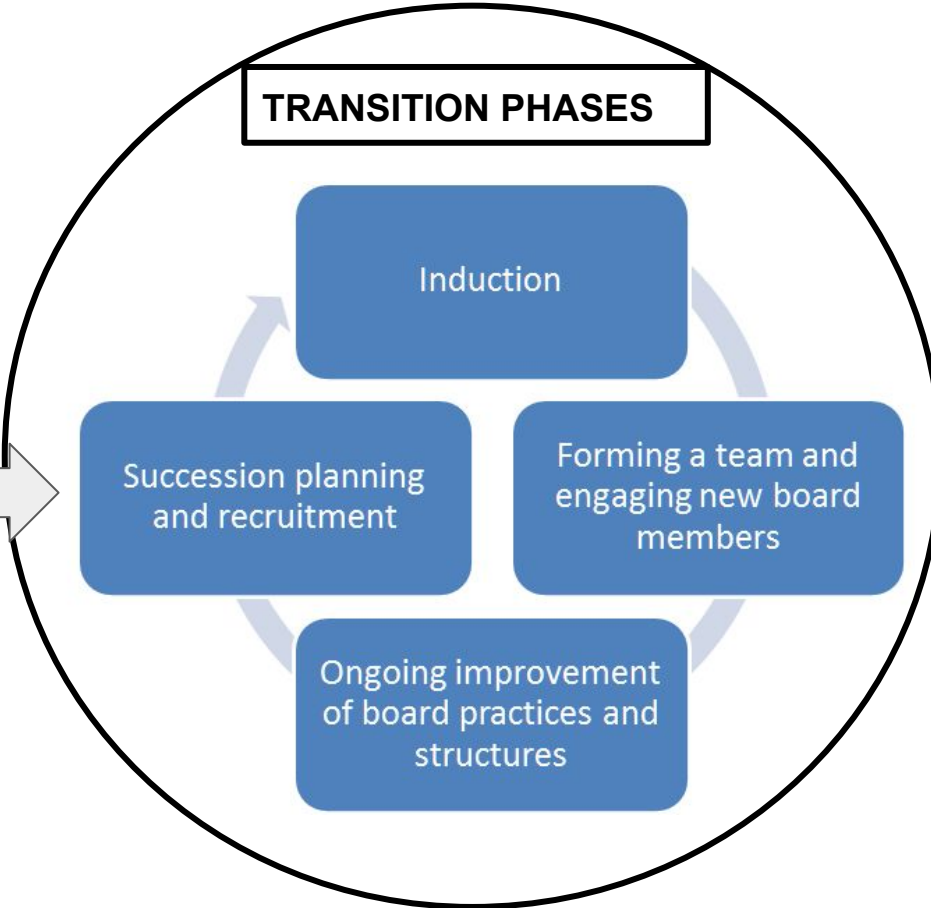
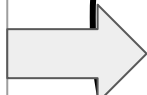
TRANSITION PHASES

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Transition phases



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INDUCTION



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“An induction programme is **a structured way** of providing new board members with all the information and support they need to be confident and productive in their role. The aim is to help new members to understand the organisation, the environment in which it operates, and their role in making the organisation a success. An induction programme can last for **between a few months and a year**, depending on scale and complexity of the organisation.”

Leading Governance (2013): [Board Member Induction](#) (emphasis added)



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What to cover?



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**history, vision
and mission of
the organization**

**budget and financial
situation**

**bylaws and
governance
arrangements**

**challenges the
organization
faces**

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WHAT to cover?

**the organization's structure
and staff overview**

**strategic and
annual plan**

**role of the
board**

**tools for
collaboration**

**key campaigns /
projects and
events**

**role & responsibilities
of board members**

**board rules &
processes**

**meeting staff / community members /
stakeholders**

available support



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abbreviations and board FAQ

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How to do it ???



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INDUCTION PROGRAM

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graph TD; A[INDUCTION PROGRAM] --> B[Text Formats]; A --> C[In-Person Formats]; B --> D[Compilation of existing key documents]; B --> E[Creation of specific induction documents]; B --> F[Board handbook]; C --> G[Individual or group induction sessions (the basics & questions)]; C --> H[Handover meetings board officers-predecessors]; C --> I[Office tour to meet the staff]; C --> J[Meetings with community members / key stakeholders]; C --> K[Induction workshop with experienced board members / staff / external speakers];
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Text Formats

Compilation of existing key documents

Creation of specific induction documents

Board handbook

In-Person Formats

Individual or group induction sessions (the basics & questions)

Handover meetings board officers-predecessors

Office tour to meet the staff

Meetings with community members / key stakeholders

Induction workshop with experienced board members / staff / external speakers

Induction program WMDE 2016/17

Timeline	What	Purpose / Content covered
NOV 26	General Assembly / Board elections	
	Dinner new board and ED	Get to know each other
NOV 27	Constituent meeting of the board	socializing / formal stuff / immediate next steps and allocation of tasks / handing over the board handbook
	Individual induction session with newly elected board members	going through the board handbook, questions & answers (with board chair and advisor to the board)
DEC-JAN	Continued individual support start in board committees	all the formal stuff, support in getting started; lots of E-Mails and calls. Active involvement in committees
JAN 28/29	Two-day board retreat	teambuilding, current state of the organisation and challenges ahead, board priorities for the term, final allocation of tasks and committees
MAR 17	Office Tour for new board members	Get to know the staff and their work / WMDE's programmes

Forming a team and engaging new board members



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- **Grant time for socializing and teambuilding. Don't forget the fun!**
- **Agree on clear goals and priorities for your term**
- **Establish common norms (or rules) for working together**
- **Allocate tasks and engage new board members to keep them motivated**

Example WMDE: two-day board retreat after the elections



Christopher Michel
(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Penguin_in_Antarctica_jumping_out_of_the_water.jpg),
„Penguin in Antarctica jumping out of the water”,
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/legalcode>

Ongoing improvement of board processes and structures



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“Recruiting good board members is only the beginning. To keep them informed, involved and motivated, the board should continually evaluate itself and commit to effective board practices”

BoardSource (2012): The Nonprofit Board Answer Book, 3rd edition, p. 106

! Retention of board members

WHAT TO EVALUATE	HOW
<p>Board meetings</p> <p>Board relationships and collaboration</p> <p>role and goals of the board in practice</p> <p>Bylaws and structures</p> <p>↓</p> <p>! transition structures (terms of office, board size, board structure...)</p>	<p>Discussion at a board meeting</p> <p>Anonymous online self-assessment with discussion</p> <p>Debrief meeting at the end of the board's term</p> <p>! collect specific ideas for improvements and implement them</p>



Succession Planning and Recruitment



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- Take a strategic approach: succession planning is not only about recruiting board members, but about recruiting the *right* board members
- Start with succession planning in good time before the elections

1. **Identify what the board needs and who you are looking for**
2. **Develop job descriptions for board members**
3. **Make a plan where & when to publicize your call for candidates**
4. **Personally approach prospective candidates - involve the board, staff & other well-networked persons (“multipliers”)**

! Be on the lookout for prospective board members throughout the whole year and maintain a list



I WANT YOU

TAKEAWAYS

Analyze the transition phases and structures in your organization

Discuss specific ideas for improvements and implement them step-by-step

Don't make dealing with transition a one-time initiative - integrate it in your board processes and allocation of tasks



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References and Further Reading

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