



MDAC seeks volunteer Board Members

Deadline: 22 January 2010. For details on how to apply, see below.

The Mental Disability Advocacy Center (MDAC) is an international human rights NGO based in Budapest. The mission of MDAC is to advance the rights of children and adults with intellectual disabilities and psycho-social (mental health) disabilities. MDAC's vision is for a world that values emotional, mental and learning differences, and where people respect each others autonomy and dignity. MDAC's work focuses on central and eastern Europe, and the organisation is developing programing in Africa.

What does MDAC do?

MDAC's main activities include working with NGOs and lawyers in various countries on strategic litigation, so as to seek remedies through the judicial system and build international and domestic jurisprudence to advance human rights. MDAC is involved in around 25 cases which are pending before the European Court of Human Rights and is starting a project to bring cases to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. MDAC works also on law and policy reform at the domestic level, and is engaged in policy at various bodies of the United Nations, the Council of Europe and the European Union, playing both a watchdog and a resource role. It is also a partner organisaiton in several European research consortia.

MDAC has three strategic priority areas: (1) the right to legal capacity and to supported decision-making, (2) the right to liberty and live in the community (including the right to education for children with disabilities), and (3) the right to integrity and freedom from ill-treatment. MDAC has recognised that in order to fulfil its substantive mission, it needs to develop the capacity of NGOs and governments to understand human rights related to persons with intellectual disabilities and mental health disabilities, as well contributing to building the advocacy capacities of NGOs, in particular disabled people's organisations.

What is MDAC's governance structure?

MDAC is registered as a non-profit foundation in Hungary and was established in 2002. The organisation is governed by an international Board, whose members carry out their role in an unpaid, voluntarily capacity. Board Members serve for a three year term which is usually renewable once. The core functions of the Board are to approve annual budgets, audits and work plans for the organisation, to set strategy, and to appoint and appraise the Executive Director.

The MDAC Board meets in March and November each year in Budapest, and holds one telecponference each July. Board Members are expected to contribute to the vibrancy of the organisation and actively contribute to its healthy development. Thus, Board Members individually and collectively support MDAC programing in different ways according to their skills and experience.

Rákóczi út 27/B, H-1088 Budapest, Hungary • tel: +36 1 413 2730 • fax: +36 1 413 2739 • e-mail: mdac@mdac.info

mdac advances the human rights of children and adults with actual or perceived intellectual or psycho-social disabilities. Focusing on Europe and Central Asia, we use a combination of law and advocacy to promote equality and social integration.



Which Board positions are open?

Two Members of the Board are approaching the final year of their second terms in office. Due to these rotations, MDAC is seeking people to join MDAC as Board Members during 2010, so that there will be a period of shadowing and induction. We are particularly seeking Board Members with the relevant skills and experience who would be willing to put themselves forward to be considered as Chair or Treasurer from March 2011 onwards. MDAC is particularly interested in receiving applications from persons from the intellectual disabilities community who are currently under-represented on the Board. For detailed role descriptions please see below.

How can you apply to become a Board Member?

MDAC is an international human rights organisation which has a serious commitment to growth and to quality. The organisation seeks top quality and committed Board Members. If you wish to apply, please send your CV, names and contact details of two referees, together with a 2-3 page letter specifying how you would be able to contribute to the health and growth of the organisation.

Please send these documents by email to JoinTheTeam@mdac.info, with "Board" in the subject line. The deadline for receiving applications is **22 January 2010**. The MDAC Board hopes to invite shortlisted applicants to its meeting which will be held in March 2010 in Budapest. If you have an informal enquiry about Board Membership, please feel free to contact in the first instance Oliver Lewis, MDAC Executive Director, by sending an email to mdac@mdac.info.



Role Description for all Board Members

MDAC Board Members are expected to contribute to the organization in the following ways:

- Know and support the mission of the organization.
- Regularly attend Board meetings. Prepare for Board meetings in advance.
- Demonstrate support for MDAC's cause by promoting its good work, generating goodwill for the organization, encouraging support for its efforts, and keeping informed about its programs and activities.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Avoid conflicts of interest and commitment.
- Help promote MDAC's visibility and advocate for its programs.
- Help develop MDAC's financial or other resources.
- Participate in hiring the Executive Director and overseeing the Executive Director, including through an annual performance review. Support the Executive Director in decision-making.
- Participate in reviewing strategic plans and setting long-term priorities.
- Participate in reviewing and approving an annual budget for the organization, and reviewing its revenues and expenses on a quarterly basis to ensure that MDAC's mission is being upheld and its finances managed in a sound and ethical manner.
- Participate in events, award ceremonies and fundraising meetings.
- Set procedures and policies to ensure that MDAC is organized and managed in an accountable, fair and systematic manner and in compliance with applicable law.

Individual MDAC Board performance is regularly evaluated using the following criteria:

1. Has very good English language abilities.
2. Attends at least half the Board meetings each year in person.
3. Acts on behalf of the organisation and its interests.
4. Complies with the Conflict of Interest and Commitment policy.
5. Makes an annual personal financial contribution to MDAC.
6. Helps staff to promote MDAC's good work and visibility, introducing the organization to new communities, corporate sponsors, foundations, media and helpful individuals and potential partners.
7. Contributes expertise in the substance of MDAC's work or in management, governance, finance or other areas to advance MDAC's mission and fulfill its strategy.

MDAC Board Members are expected to spend at least one day per month carrying out their role. Please note, all Board Members are volunteers, but MDAC will reimburse reasonable travel and accommodation expenses.



Board Chair Role Description

- Partners with the Executive Director and the Board in achieving the organization's mission.
- Provides leadership to the Board.
- Ensures that the Board has a planned, annual program of meetings, including time to discuss some issues in depth as well.
- Schedules Board meetings, sets meeting agendas in consultation with the Executive Director, the Executive Committee and other Board members.
- Chairs Board meetings. Leads discussions at meetings, adheres to agendas and observes rules of order.
- Coordinates any Board activity outside/between the meetings.
- Encourages Board's role in strategic planning.
- Discusses issues confronting the organization with the Executive Director.
- Helps guide and mediate Board actions with respect to organizational priorities and governance concerns.
- With the Treasurer and other Board members,, monitors financial planning and financial reports.
- With other persons as designated by the Board, formally evaluates the performance of the Executive Director and informally evaluates the effectiveness of the Board members.
- Assures and leads Board's self assessment – the Board reviewing its performance and the way delegated powers are exercised.
- Performs other responsibilities assigned by the Board.

Required skills and experience

The ideal Chair of the Board is a person with significant experience of charing public or private sector organisations. The person will have a deep understanding of governance, leadership and strategy development and oversight, as well as experience of supervising and supporting senior managers. This person need not be a human rights or disability specialist, but must have a demonstrated passion for MDAC's mission.

The Chair of the MDAC Board is expected to spend up to five hours a week carrying out the role.

Board Treasurer Role Description

- Maintains an overview of the organization's financial affairs, ensuring its financial viability and ensuring that proper financial records and procedures are maintained.
- Works to ensure the long term financial sustainability of the organization.
- Oversees, approves and, with staff, presents budgets, accounts and financial statements to the Board.
- Reviews financial resources of the organization in light of its present and future needs.
- Ensures that appropriate accounting procedures and controls are in place.
- Liaises with staff about financial matters.
- Advises on the financial implications of the organization's strategic plans.
- Monitors the organization's investment activity and ensures its consistency with the organization's policies and legal responsibilities.
- Ensures that the accounts are subject to external audit as required by law or policy and that recommendations are implemented
- Informs the Board about its financial responsibilities.
- Sits on appraisal, recruitment and disciplinary panels as required.

Required skills and experience

- Relevant university degree (preferably in economics or finances);
- Minimum 10 years experience in a financial area;
- Good advisory, presentation and budgetary oversight skills;
- Knowledge of Hungarian accounting procedures and regulations;
- Knowledge of European Union regulations on financial management.



Board Secretary Role Description

- Keeps minutes of Board meetings and coordinates Board feedback and approval of minutes
- Records Board decisions and action items arising out of Board meetings.
- With the approval of the Board, acting as Chair when Chair is not available.

Executive Committee Description

The Executive Committee consists of the Board Chair, the Treasurer and the Secretary. Executive Committee meetings are open to all Board members upon request.

The Executive Committee shall meet (by phone) on a regular basis, generally once per month, together with the Executive Director. The Executive Committee may also meet in closed session without the Executive Director.

The purpose of the Executive Committee is to provide ongoing oversight of the organization between Board meetings. The Executive Committee is not empowered to make decisions for the Board unless the Board explicitly authorizes the Executive Committee to do so. The agenda of the Executive Committee shall be determined in advance by the Committee and the Executive Director.