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2020 ANNUAL CONFERENCE
ACCOUNTABILITY DRIVEN BY PURPOSE: BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER CRISIS

Case Study: Peeling Back the Curtain on Policy Governance Implementation



Lessons learned from an organization's commitment to implement Policy Governance with excellence.

**Aimee White
and
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Welcome and Introductions




- **Aimee White** is currently serving as a Senior Fellow at the Wandersman Center. Prior to that she ran a community-based evaluation consulting firm specializing in Collaborative, Participatory, and Empowerment Evaluation principles and practices for 16 years. She is currently serving as the President for the American Evaluation Association.
- Her areas of evaluation interest lie in complex adaptive systems change initiatives and social justice-oriented projects. The work is mostly US-Canada based, but has included international scope over the years. Her firm began working with Boards and Board capacity to implement Policy Governance about seven years ago.

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Welcome and Introductions



- **Leslie Goodyear, PhD**, is an internationally recognized expert in evaluation and 2018 president of the American Evaluation Association (AEA). At Education Development Center (EDC), a global non-profit research and development organization, she leads evaluations of education and workforce initiatives, facilitates evaluation capacity building, and serves as an evaluation advisor for clients and colleagues.
- Dr. Goodyear has designed and managed evaluations of formal and informal educational programs that are implemented across multiple countries, in multiple languages, and with varied access to technological resources. In addition to conducting evaluations, in her work as a program officer at the National Science Foundation's Education and Human Resources Division, Leslie helped build organizational evaluation capacity and oversee evaluation policy.

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Setting the Scene

- A large national membership-based professional association serving nearly 7,000 members around the world
- Board chose to move to Policy Governance (PG) in 2008
 - Training and policy changes occurred but no sustainability plan made
- A new Board member with PG experience entered the Board in 2014 and saw no reflection of the governing model's use throughout three-year term
 - Year 2 of the term, Board member began to suggest capacity building around the model if they were going to use it with excellence
 - Had built trust of other Board members and Executive Director to be seen as someone who could grow capacity in the model



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Setting the Scene

- The Board member with PG experience spent the third year of term actively growing other Board member's capacity to understand and implement PG
 - Providing resources (books) and training in Board meetings with activities helping everyone understand what implementing PG with excellence looks like
 - This included building relationships with the current, past, and incoming Presidents to the Board and sharing a few more resources with them
- President Elect had served on the Board when they chose to adopt the model many years before and saw the value
 - Picked up the mantle of actualizing implementation of PG with excellence and working to create sustainability processes for future quality assurance



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Setting the Scene

- Training and resources created broad understanding that Board needed to completely overhaul Policy Manuals
 - Much discussion on how to do this
 - Established small team of Board members to support that process with engagement strategies for rest of Board
- The importance of the Presidential leadership and focus on the necessity to push through the revised documents cannot be emphasized enough
 - Managing personalities and egos on the Board is a delicate dance and takes an astute leader


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Setting the Scene

- Board member who had been coaching and training was rolling out of service and offered to continue to support the process from "outside" of the Board
 - This member had an existing relationship with Govern for Impact (formerly International Policy Governance Association at the time) and relied heavily on resources and consultants from that network
 - Brought in a PG expert to support the Board's creation of all policy documents
- With Board member who rolled off serving as a liaison, the organization engaged the expert to assist with policy development
 - Interesting experience with this for both the liaison and the expert
- Over the course of a few months the policies were developed and brought the Board for review

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 **Setting the Scene**

- Review process for documents is a potential blackhole for the process and must be managed with diligence and good structure
 - Again, the ability of the leader to navigate and move this process along is vital
- This organization is highly collaborative in its approach to everything, so this review process was going to need to be collaborative as well
 - Collaboration often means the need for more time, but the leadership term of the President is only one year so there was a need to push deadlines
- The President took a lot of complaints on pushing this all through
 - Leader potentially needs to be strong enough to manage “not being liked” for a while through this process.


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 **Setting the Scene**


- The Board member with PG experience was then elected President for the organization and entered into another three-year term
 - This meant the hard work done by the previous President could be sustained and that coaching and refereeing could be done with consistency to ensure excellence
- We had to grow the “practice” of Board members around PG principles
 - Utilized meeting tools
 - President-Elect (member who had PG experience served as referee for good PG behaviors, which of course creates interpersonal issues
- All along the way, the Board member with PG experience had been documenting processes, resources, and training materials for use with future Board members
 - Built an annual calendar of “exposure” to PG content and training so that when a new Board member entered their first meeting, she/he/they were trained and ready to engage well.

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Pause for Discussion and Questions on The Scene




 **Points of Contention and Progress**

- **Contention:** Collectively recognizing that the attempt in 2008 was an introduction, but not a sustainable system of implementing PG with excellence
- **Contention:** How to negotiate staying on track with engaging a PG consultant to help with documents
- **Progress:** Everyone willing to learn about PG and try to build sustainable plan to implement with excellence
- **Progress:** Policy documents were completed quickly and by someone specializing in the model

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 **Points of Contention and Progress**


- **Contention:** How to effectively engage all Board members in a collaborative review process
- **Progress:** Board collectively felt ownership of the documents once adopted
- **Contention:** How to get the Board to change its behavior to implement PG with excellence
- **Progress:** Integrated tools and practices into the meeting space and built a sustainability plan for training an onboarding new members to PG

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 **Activity (20 minutes total)**

- Discuss points of Contention and Progress from your own PG Journey
 - In your group (we will have grouped everyone ahead of time) take 5 minutes each to share a point of contention and a point of progress you have experienced
 - Select a couple from your group that everyone feels would be worthy to share with the larger group
 - Identify the person/s you wish to do the full group sharing representing your group




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 **Sustainability Plan for Implementing PG with Excellence**

- Annual Calendar:
 - First quarter of the year a “Town Hall” is held regarding nominations and elections for the Board that year
 - Policy Governance is loosely introduced and those considering running are encouraged to look up materials and connect with Govern for Impact
 - Nominations and Elections occur during 2-3rd quarters
 - The nomination packet has been improved to suggest familiarity with the model and those wishing to run expressing how they know or will grow knowledge about the model




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 **Sustainability Plan for Implementing PG with Excellence**


- Annual Calendar:
 - Once elected, new members are sent the small Board member PG resource, the President Elect is sent the larger “Reinventing Your Board” resource, and a 90-minute webinar is held for new members going over the basic tenets of the model
 - Members are encouraged to read their books, do any research they need to learn more, and connect with Govern for Impact prior to their first meeting in 4th quarter of the year
 - At new Board member’s first in-person meeting they are brought in for a ½ day orientation to service
 - This includes extensive discussion of the PG model and how implementation with excellence is an expectation
 - Norms are set to ask for assistance from existing Board members and those attending the Govern for Impact conference are identified as champions who have more information if needed




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 **Sustainability Plan for Implementing PG with Excellence**

- Annual Calendar:
 - All new Board members attend the annual Govern for Impact conference
 - There are four of them on here today!
 - Sessions (2) are held at our annual conference (occurring during the 4th quarter of the year) on how to get into leadership for the organization
 - When sharing about Board leadership in particular, attendees are introduced to PG and asked to look into it further if they are considering nominations



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 **Lessons Learned and Ideas for You to Try**

- Identify a champion (or group of champions) early on, if there are none intentionally, grow some
- Work with Board leaders (Chairs, Presidents) to grow their understanding of what it looks like to implement PG with excellence
 - Help this person recognize there may be tough decisions to push people when they do not want to be pushed
- Embrace fun tools, metaphors, and practices to hold each other to implementing with excellence
 - The PG cards, swim lanes and free swim, PG corner in communications



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