

Strategic Communication: The Role and Duties of Foundation Chief Executives

Between the Board and Grantees – The Pivotal Role of Foundation Chief Executives

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SOME TOPICS

- The Van Leer Entity
- General trends
- Executive Director (ExD) and the Board
- Communication inside The Foundation
- Communication outside the Foundation
- Efficiency and Effectiveness

‘Van Leer Entity’

based on existing core values

1. The Van Leer Family stood for: a recognizable relation between earning money and spending money for charitable purposes ;
 - earning money: VLGf: initially 100% owner worldwide packaging company (> 40 countries), since 1999 through general investments, and through venture capital company: Crecor BV;
 - spending : BVLF, VLJI and JFC.

'Van Leer Entity'

based on existing core values (CONT.)

- 2.- Continuity: long term investment strategy - balanced spending pattern;
- 3.- No scattering but focus and impact;
- 4.- Strategic views: children as the best investment – worldwide (BVLF), bridge building (VLJI), general and specific investments –global- (VLGF), Jewish/Israeli films and film archive, annual film festival (JFC) and venture capital (CRECOR).

‘Van Leer Entity’
based on existing core values (CONT.)

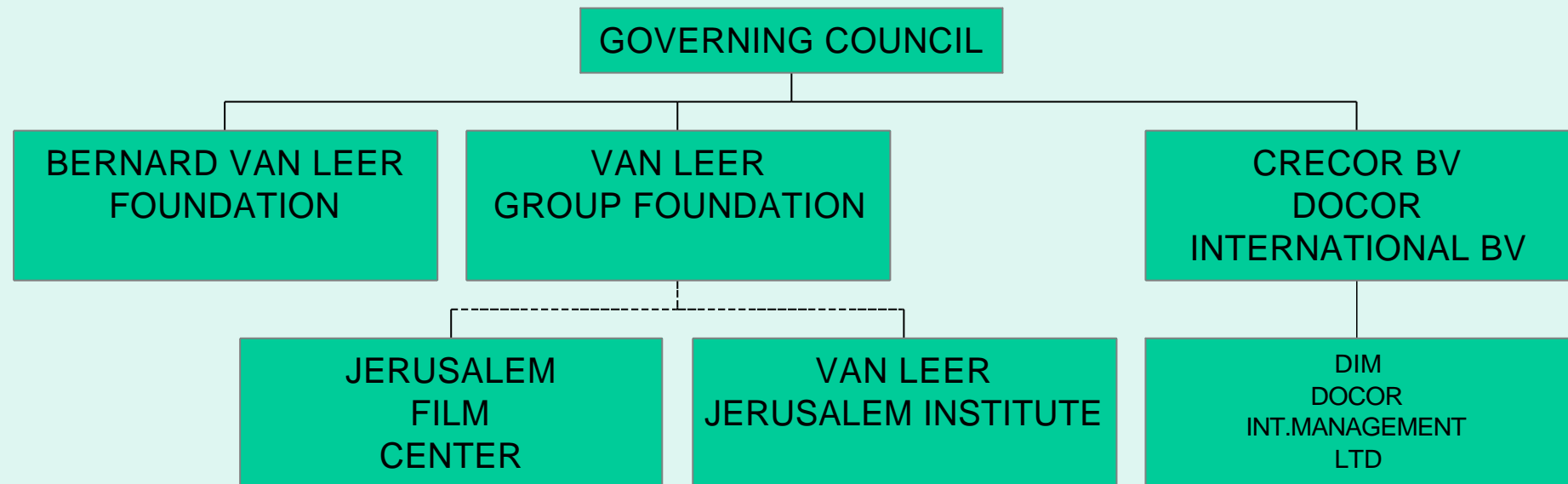
- 5.- Liberal attitudes: respect for history and also for diversity; interest in pluriform society based on human dignity; always combined with effectiveness;
- 6.- International perspective: charitable organizations and composition Boards and staff.

'Van Leer Entity'
based on existing core values (CONT.)

7.- The 'business' principles of the Van Leer's were always:

- high quality
- a good sense for new developments and trends
- entrepreneurial and willing to take risks

VAN LEER ENTITY



Some general observations

- Foundations boards become more professional and businesslike
- Changing (third-party) liabilities of Trustees
- In some European countries Board is by law fully responsible for Foundation (e.g. in The Netherlands); can delegate certain tasks to ExD
- → written rules and regulations for Trustees, for ExD and some aspects of their interaction
- ‘Paradoxal role of ExD as agent and educator Board’ → role ExD in appointment new Trustees

Some general observations (cont.)

- ‘No surprises’
- ExD intermediate between Board and staff
- Team spirit between ExD and Chairman Board
- Balancing with information
- ExD and network capabilities of Trustees
- ‘Figure head of Foundation’

STRATEGY

(from the perspective/experience of the Van Leer Foundations)

- Changes in environment
- Internal and external transparency and accountability
- Information and output/practice-oriented/marketing of published output/advocacy activities/workshops-seminars, etc.
- Consequences → operational, organizational and governance

Presentation to the outside world

- Acceptance greater public accountability
- Be a more professional organization
- Internet
- Marketing products: videos, DVD's, publications, resource material, etc.
- Computerized data management
- Project experience and local partners

GOVERNANCE

“ A GOOD BOARD IS A VICTORY, NOT A GIFT ”

- Delegation of grant making to ExD
- Keep touch with activities – several ways
- Focus on effectiveness and output
- Concentrate on Strategic guidance and parameters of Foundation’s policy and programme

GOVERNANCE (cont.)

- Chairperson and ExD
- The Board and the ExD re ethical issues in connections with partners
- Periodical field trips
- No discussion in Board meeting about individual projects
- To keep the Board involved, a few projects at each meeting; board approval all projects above a certain (high) amount Information about decisions ExD on a more general level
- Annual discussion Board with ExD re human resource issues

GOVERNANCE (cont.)

- Every five year ExD makes a detailed and elaborated strategic plan; retreat of Board and ExD
- Remuneration committee and audit committee
- Open lines of communications between ExD, staff and Trustees
- Regular contacts between individual Trustees and ExD
- Once a year meeting Board and ExD (no staff present)