



Dances of Universal Peace International
Board of Directors

Board Meeting Minutes
On Tuesday, June 11, 2024
Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3268838813>

ASSISTANTS

Board Members	Time zone	Start time
Darvesha MacDonald, Chair	Daylight Mountain Time MST	12.00 pm
NurAna Wilansky	Illinois CST	1.00 pm
Rukmini Miller	New York EST	2.00 pm
Arjun Calero	Colombia GMT-5	1.00 pm
Munira Reed	Ohio EST	2.00 pm
Khabir Mayer-Glauninger	Germany CET	8.00 pm
Douglas Stevenson	Tennessee	1.00 pm
Yelena Swarana Dudarjoka	Latvia	9.00 pm

Staff	
Vakil Carlos Rojas	Executive Director Colombia GMT-5 1.00 pm
Martha Bracken	Office Manager Seattle PST 11.00 am

Toward the One, the Perfection of Love, Harmony, and Beauty, the Only Being; United with all the Illuminated Souls who form the Embodiment of the Master, the Spirit of Guidance.

SUGGESTED TIME, Total: 80 minutes.

Agenda

1. Acceptance of Minutes of the Board Meeting held April 16, 2024:
2. Financial Reports
3. Executive Director's report.
4. Small Grants Program: Proposal and update. The background has been added here for you to review.
5. Guidance Council update
6. Dates of future BoD meetings (2024)

1. Minutes of the Board Meeting held April 16, 2024:

See [linked document here](#). One Board member to move acceptance of the minutes, one to second, and record if all are in favor.

NurAna to move, Munira to second. All in favor.

2. Financial Reports:

[ACCESS THE 2024 SPREADSHEET FILE HERE with the latest reports.](#)

Douglas: We report a loss due to the loss of value of our shares. We have nothing to be worried about. Negative numbers are only on paper.

3. Executive Director's report.

1. Advances in the platform migration process.

- a. Landing pages and libraries in 7 languages are being created.
- b. A system to translate all our content into 110 languages is being explored.
- c. 500 dances are being tested in the new library system.
- d. We are looking for ways to measure our current page use.
- e. Douglas is researching our database system.

2. Advances with the new Web Migration Committee.

- a. Two meetings have been held.
- b. The aesthetic issues have been solved, and we are now focusing on structure and content.
- c. We agree the new platform is in a pilot phase and we must test its efficiency.
- d. We have taken a step-by-step approach, migrating basic public content already on our website. After the committee approves it, we will proceed with the next steps.

Board discussion: We need to be aware of how our people will migrate, taking care of the regions, different ways of payment, etc.

Darvesha suggests creating a direct link for HOW TO BECOME A DANCE LEADER. It also suggests that a guild member could join the guild even without using the platform.

Douglas and Vakil explain that we are planning to migrate people by batches according to their payment due date and also according to the region's needs and payments.

4. Small Grants Program: Proposal

June 5, 2024

Dear Board Members,

Thank you for inviting the Small Grants Program (SGP) to submit this request. The SGP committee has reviewed Arjun's 9-page proposal to improve the SGP, and understands the reasons behind each suggested improvement. We agree and support the proposed changes, and appreciated the opportunity to provide feedback to the proposal.

The committee has worked diligently for three years to follow the guidelines and criteria that Aziz and Darvesha created for the Small Grants Program. Our records demonstrate that we have approved only grants meeting current guidelines and criteria. In addition, we have allowed grant recipients to receive up to the two-awards-per-cycle-maximum approved by the Board. For two consecutive years, we have successfully operated within the budget approved by the Board of Directors because the total number of applications received and approved fell just below the \$20,000 mark. (Whether this is a miracle or a coincidence is unknown.)

In 2022 and 2023, at the time the Board approved our annual budget, we were assured that if the SGP experienced a significant increase in the number of legitimate applications we received during a particular cycle, we could request additional funds to cover that increase. Our budget has been contingent upon the number of legitimate applications we receive and approve, not on our ability to predict how many applications we might receive.

This is the first year we have experienced a significant increase in the number of grant submissions. This is likely due to several factors, including expanded awareness of the Small Grants Program due to word-of-mouth, and promotional incentives that The board itself suggested and supported (i.e., Vakil's fantastic idea that grant recipients write brief testimonials on the DUPIN FaceBook page to acknowledge the financial support of the SGP, writing articles about the SGP in DUPIN newsletters, etc.). These incentives appear to be working because our rate of grant submissions has increased by 31% over this time last year!

The Small Grants Program team has only ever operated within the parameters that Aziz and Darvesha created for the program. Since the Board is no longer satisfied with those parameters, and believes the Small Grants Program would be of more excellent service to the DUP community with expanded and more clearly defined guidelines and criteria, and more comprehensive application, scoring, and tracking processes (all of which the SGP team agrees with), the obvious solution is to expand and improve the SGP. I was disappointed to learn from Arjun that some members of his subcommittee anticipated being met with resistance from me and the SGP committee to changes that could improve a program we are dedicated to, and have spent so much time and energy supporting and promoting. Personally, it is a blessing for me to serve the Dances in this capacity. My team desires only for the Small Grants Program to succeed and be the best program it can be!

It is unnecessary and counterproductive to blame anybody for unforeseen shortcomings of the program. At the time, and with the information and resources they had, Aziz and Darvesha created the best possible guidelines, criteria, and parameters for a small grants program they could. The SGP committee has followed those guidelines, criteria, and parameters attentively and precisely. With three years of experience behind us, we all have much greater clarity about the areas and ways in which the SGP can expand, improve, and be of greater benefit to the

Dances of Universal Peace. This is a natural evolution.

Based on recent communications, the SGP team would like to express concern about:

- 1) any implication that we do not know how to operate within a budget; and
- 2) any assertion that we have approved grants that do not meet the current guidelines and criteria.

The Small Grants Program team does not agree with either of the above. During the month of May, Arjun and I spent many hours reviewing specific examples of approved grants and individual grant recipients that raised concerns and/or appeared problematic to members of his subcommittee. In each case, Arjun and I agreed that the Small Grants Program committee had operated within the current guidelines, criteria, and parameters. We also agreed that updating and revising several of those guidelines, criteria, and parameters would be advisable.

If the current 31% increase in the rate of applications continues during this cycle that closes on November 30th, we will reach the \$20,000 cap for 2024 grant disbursements by late August. To complete the grant cycle, we would need additional funds to cover the months of September, October, and November. If the current 31% increase continues during those three months, the amount of additional funds needed will be \$6,200. The SGP team has a plan that we believe will help us “stretch” any additional funds authorized by the Board and, hopefully, see us to November 30th. We would be happy to share details of that plan with any interested Board members.

Our committee respectfully requests that the Board authorize the additional \$6,200 to allow the Small Grants Program to complete its current grant cycle that closes on November 30th. We understand that, although the Board made the offer to provide these additional funds at the time they approved the budget, the Board may also choose to rescind the offer. If the Board denies our request and decides to shut down the current grant cycle prior to November 30th

, we ask that the

The board notify the DUP grant-writing public on the DUPIN website in a way that does not assign fault to the Small Grants Program team.

Thank you for your consideration,

Rukmini Miller, Manager
Small Grants Program

From: Grants Dancer <grants@dancesofuniversalpeace.org>

Subject: Blurb for the Board Meeting

Date: June 6, 2024 at 3:29:21 PM MDT

DRAFT Proposed Notice for the Small Grants Program Webpage:

The Small Grants Program has experienced a significant increase in applications this cycle,

challenging our 2024 budget. Although we are happy to consider so many applications for wonderful projects sharing the Dances of Universal Peace worldwide, we require applicants to **demonstrate sincere financial need by submitting a comprehensive budget that includes all estimated expenses and income**. Applications that do not include complete budget information will not be accepted. Thank you for your understanding.

(Note to Board only: Currently, applicants submit basic budget info; however, if we require an applicant to include all estimated income (i.e. foreign tourists paying to take a holiday in Mexico, etc.) as well as expenses, it will help weed out those not truly in financial need. This would protect the projects that are using the grant funds to provide scholarships and other support to the truly in-need local/regional leaders, musicians, and dancers who would otherwise face financial hardship to attend.)

Jun 7, 2024, 12:57 PM

Darvesha wrote

Overnight I thought about adding criteria for the remainder of this grants cycle, not only as far as budget and need, but also long-term benefits. I spoke to Rukmini and she wrote:

That guideline currently reads, "Support training, events, camps, retreats, and other activities that increase participation in the Dances of Universal Peace." We could add "... increase LONG TERM GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT AT LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVELS THROUGH participation in the Dances of Universal Peace." Or something like that...

So the idea is that we would add this and what Rukmini suggested yesterday, more information about their budget, proving that there is a real financial need for the grant.

Whether or not we vote to add additional funds if needed in this cycle, I think we should nevertheless add these criteria now so it is in effect in this current cycle. Perhaps such criteria will slow down the flood of applications. Perhaps it will not. But it will give the Grants Team tighter criteria to work with for the rest of this cycle so they can make better discriminations for this cycle until we revise.

Much love,
Darvesha

Arjun letter: Rukmini and Arjun are very happy to share with you all the final version of the proposal after a good length of creative work and discussion, bridging the inspiration for what is possible (Arjun) with the on-the-ground experience of running the program (Rukmini). The proposal has already been reviewed by the ad-hoc committee of this Board formed for this matter.

WE ARE NOT IN A HURRY. It will take the rest of 2024 to be ready to launch the new version of the program on 2025. The 2024 small grants cycle will operate as planned originally. So we want to move calmly but at a steady pace.

When reading the proposal, please note that change is always going to bring insecurity and that new stuff initially looks much more complex than it actually is. But once you get it, it feels nice and easy (the first time you drove a bicycle, the first time you got a smartphone).

Also notice that we are not seeking a perfect proposal that won't need any further evolution. We are just taking one step ahead. So the question in your heads should not be if this proposal is perfect, but if it is safe enough, good enough, and promising enough to give it a fair opportunity to be tested.

Adoption and implementation will require effort from the board, the grants team, and the public, who will have to learn the new avenues to get what they want. That process will also be uncomfortable for all at the beginning.

We are now opening the document for your revision and comments (please make the comments directly in the document). You can also propose changes if you feel something is too problematic or won't work or if you find a much better way to do it.

Rukmini and Arjun will extract the comments and propose changes. If approved, from September on, there will be time to get the systems ready for launching it into operation in 2025 (mostly related to improving the application formats and database).

Please find a good quality time to read it. There are 9 pages full of good stuff to digest.

This is the document:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1l3iv-BXlgBjkRyjImpi0Wio1veK7d70o6IBD0lrM3so/edit?usp=sharing>

Board deliberation:

Darvesha presents the situation and the proposal based on the previous background.

Munira: This is a matter of how we manage our budget as a board. I am fine with both options.

Arjun: We must hear Khabir as a member of the grants committee. We fund all the proposals that meet the requirements. I want to know, Is it important for the grants program to finish the year approving more grants? If so I would support the proposal.

Khabir: Not every proposal is approved. There is a voting criteria with points. (transmission , next gen, etc) New criterias will need a different process for qualification. The committee is doing a good job and I would support adding to the recent 2024 cycle budget.

NurAna: Asks how cycles work. Khabir answers: we have one cycle per year.

Darvesha: We could hold on approving until nov and then decide based on the grants given.

Douglas presents a proposal: To close reception of proposal on Sept 1 and then consider and award the recipients of this grant cycle on nov 1, adding the criteria stated by Ruknimi. We will announce this on facebook, newsletter and webpage. The board agrees to add up to 3000 USD to the budget if after receiving the proposals the grants committee considers it is necessary and the proposals merit this. The grants program can administer the current budget until sept 1 to ongoing proposals.

RUKMINI SENDS A FINAL MESSAGE TO OUR GLOBAL COMMUNITY SUMMARIZING ALL DELIBERATIONS

The Small Grants Program has experienced a significant increase in applications this cycle that has challenged our 2024 budget. Although we are happy to consider so many applications for wonderful projects sharing the Dances of Universal Peace worldwide, we require applicants to ***demonstrate sincere financial need by submitting a comprehensive budget that includes all estimated expenses and income.*** This budget must be included in the online application form. Applications that do not include complete budget information will not be considered.

As always, priority will be given to Dances of Universal Peace projects that aim to:

- be self-sustaining beyond an initial event;
- support Next Generation leaders, musicians, and dancers; and
- support training, events, camps, retreats, and other activities that increase long term growth and development at local and regional levels through participation in the Dances.

Our current cycle was scheduled to close on November 30, 2024. It will now ***close on September 1, 2024.*** Applications for 2024 projects and events taking place in early 2025 must be received by September 1st. Depending on the number of applications we receive, we will aim to provide decisions on grant awards by October 1st. As planned, our next grant cycle is expected to open on January 1, 2025.

Thank you for your understanding. We look forward to receiving your application! [PLEASE APPLY HERE](#)

5. Guidance Council update

The council had many questions and objections about the migrating project. Therefore, a Web committee was created to overview the process, including the consideration of various GC and board members.

6. Dates of future BoD meetings (2024)

The proposed dates for Board meetings are as follows.

Tuesday, September 10, 2024

Tuesday, November 12, 2024

Meetings are usually at **19.00 UTC** from November 5 to March 12 and **18.00 UTC** from March to November ie, **at 11.00 am Seattle time**, unless arranged otherwise.