

### **Chair as facilitator**

Facilitation is a key skill for Chairs. As facilitator the Chair keeps the debate and track, giving participants a chance to air their views and bring the group to the point where they are able to make an informed decision. In a recent Chair's study, Chairs who are seen as demonstrating certain leadership style and traits (team leadership, Emotional intelligence and Spiritual intelligence are more likely to be seen as effective in building high quality relationships with the key actors who interact with them. The effective chair is seen to be a team leader who "works with" other rather than "under" or "over" them (Harrison and Murray). This further reveals the importance of personal commitment and interpersonal behaviour captured by concepts of Spiritual and Emotional Intelligence. Chairs who spend time with the key actors in their environment were more likely positively underscoring the social and relational nature of the chair leadership role.

#### **An effective facilitator:**

- Keeps to the agenda, but leaves time for group participants to discuss issues
- Gives all participants an opportunity to speak and to be heard
- Creates a safe space for people to participate without fear of airing their views
- Ensures there is sufficient time for the discussion
- Does not allow any one individual or group to dominate the debate
- Keeps the discussion focused and on track
- Aims to conclude the discussion with a decisive vote or steer towards the decision
- Ensures minority views are heard
- Ensures there is a sense of the meeting,, with the decision or next steps recorded for future reference
- Clarifies expectations, commitments and people's roles in taking this forward
- Encourages participation and inclusion
- Facilitates the deepening of relationships

#### **More information**

Perceptions of Board Chair Leadership Effectiveness in Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Organizations (Open University 2012)

A Chairs Practical Guide to the Basics of Board Leadership (Tesse Akpeki)