



Suzanne Keatinge
Former CEO

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“Dóchas is the Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations. It is a meeting place for organisations committed to tackling poverty and inequality.

Caplor Horizons has contributed to Dóchas in various ways in recent years.

It helped us facilitate our 2015 strategy. This was with my predecessor, Hans Zomer, who commented (in March 2015) that the process led by Ian (Williams), had provided an *“imaginative, dynamic and effective approach which was grounded in great understanding of strategy and the sector”*. Furthermore, he commented that the *“results exceeded expectations”*.

In November 2016, Caplor Horizons facilitated a special meeting of our Board, where we aimed to develop a sense of team spirit, as well as progress some sensitive issues about our structure. This proved to be a huge success, with many of the Directors commenting on the great pace of the day, the sensitive way the decisions were facilitated, and the energy and creativity that Lorna (Pearcey) and Ian brought. I was also extremely impressed with the preparation. Our calls were always very focused, and I felt that the team from Caplor Horizons really listened and heard what we needed from the day, whilst bringing in-depth knowledge and experience. We were also able to explore and work through ideas together.

Caplor Horizons was able to collaborate with us on a very successful event in February 2017 with Charles Handy, the social philosopher and management guru. At this event, we had leaders from the Irish NGO sector hearing and engaging with Charles’s thinking, including from his book ‘The Second Curve’.

Caplor Horizons completed the mid-term review of our strategy from July to October 2018. This was obviously a very important moment for reflection and learning for our network, so we appreciated the thoughtful way that they managed the entire process. In particular, the communication with Peter (Moore), the Caplor Horizons Advisor who led the process, was both open, regular and timely. He delivered everything on time and checked in and/or sought clarification where necessary. He also facilitated an effective validation workshop which sought open and honest feedback. Above all, the written reports were extremely clear and well-written. In particular, the final report was kept short, as we had requested, with a clear set of recommendations that were practical and clear. Overall, we were delighted with the process. It was well-managed, came in on budget, and was very professional.

Most recently, the team of Caplor Horizons, including Lorna, Ian, Rosie (Bishop) and Dan (Bishop) has been involved with two very important activities.



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- Firstly, work has been ongoing in the last few months to facilitate a process with the Chairs and Deputy Chairs of our Working Groups. A programme called “Reaching New Horizons” was developed. The sessions focused on effective planning and subsequent sessions will focus on developing and exposing leadership skills and managing group dynamics in virtual and face to face meetings. The work so far has been hugely positive in terms of developing a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities charing groups in the Dóchas network pose and no doubt the lessons learnt will prove valuable to the individuals taking part.
- Secondly, a process has been facilitated with staff and board members leading to the drafting of an interim strategy document. This included the facilitation of an Away Day with the board, which included team development and governance training. The Caplor House model really helped with that training and allowed us to build a good ‘virtual’ rapport during these sessions. Facilitating planning sessions virtually was very challenging, and involved a lot more prepping, but we worked ‘behind the scenes’ with Caplor to ensure the sessions were successful. The Chair of our board, Finola Finnan, commented after the Away Day: *“many thanks for a very energising and enjoyable day. I think we advanced the agenda hugely, both in terms of content and teambuilding. The preparation was excellent and the level of engagement high throughout the day. I look forward to working with you again.”*

I highly recommend Caplor Horizons.”