Executive Officer Report to AGM

A Review of the Challenges and Successes in 2023

OVERVIEW

Objectives leading into 2023 and Challenges Ahead

The board's goal for 2023 was to restore BELMAS to a position of growth and deliver its charitable objectives.

To achieve this, it implemented a management change with the EO (appointed in 2022) leading a full strategic review following a survey of the Board which highlighted:

- *80% felt that decision-making was NOT effective.*
- *70% of the Board felt the current structure of Exec and Council was NOT fit for purpose.*
- *70% are NOT confident that BELMAS are compliant with financial regulations.*

These findings led to a set of prioritised tasks due to operational urgency. Financial issues in 2022 were addressed, and an HR expert was brought in to create current, relevant and business critical policies (28).

The December 2022 Strategic Away Day provided a platform for its mission, vision and values to be agreed in early 2023, alongside a new constitution both supported by a measurable strategic roadmap for the next 3 – 5 years.

Crucially, the process to convert the organisation to a CIO (completed January 2024) also began, with the trustee board engaged and informed of the benefits of the conversion. In addition, a new sub-committee structure was created, initially with a focus on financial controls in line with the CC8 guidance.

A key action was to also ensure BELMAS delivered for its members. The focus was placed on restoring the annual conference to a financially viable and beneficial event, while focusing resource on member benefits through its core charitable activities.

Membership Survey 2023

BELMAS conducted its first membership satisfaction survey in autumn 2023 with a completion target rate of 10% of the membership. 18% of the membership took part in the survey with some pleasing headline results:

- 97% would recommend BELMAS to a colleague or friend.
- 91% were satisfied or very satisfied with BELMAS overall.

- 94% satisfied or very satisfied with the Journals.
- 68% satisfied or very satisfied with Research Interest Groups.
- 65% satisfied or very satisfied with the BELMAS Blog.
- 59% satisfied or very satisfied with the Annual Conference.

- 88% satisfied or very satisfied with the BELMAS Office team, with no members dissatisfied.
- 78% satisfied or very satisfied with the work of the Board of Trustees, with no members dissatisfied.

OPERATIONAL EMPLOYEE RESTRUCTURE

In 2022, BELMAS reduced its staff capacity following a resignation, and not being in a financial position to recruit for the role. Following a better financial performance and forecast in August 2023, BELMAS conducted a resource review and restructured to return the staff capacity back to four. This restructure focused on membership engagement by changing the "Marketing and Communications Administrator" role to "Membership engagement Manager (Deputy Executive Officer) and recruiting for a part-time "Membership Engagement Administrator".

ACCREDITATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS

BELMAS invested £188 to continue its membership with NCVO who delivered online training to new Trustees appointed in 2023, alongside a Governance Wheel session and Skills Audit at the 2023 Strategic Away Day in December.

It also continued its members with the Academy of Social Sciences at a cost of £333 where the Executive Officer or Chair of the Board attends the monthly conferences group and the CEOs group. Here, BELMAS learns from other membership organisations and absorbs information from policy briefings affecting learned societies from a social sciences background.

BELMAS renewed its Living Wage Employer status in line with its new organisation value of Social Justice at a cost of £60 and continued to be accredited as a "Disability Confident: Committed" Organisation.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE 2023-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN AND KEY SUCCESSES

Following many years of having no strategy, the BELMAS Board approved its ambitious 2023-2026 strategic plan with three objectives that would ensure the sustainability of the organisation:

1. *Increase both the UK and International Membership*
2. *Ensure the Organisation is Financially Sustainable*
3. *Assure BELMAS good governance as a charity and membership organisation*

Through its new "KPI Dashboard" that tracks and monitors progress against targets, BELMAS achieved ***65% of its objectives.***

Key Successes Included:

1. Delivery of a conversion to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) that has adopted a new constitution and by-laws and new sub-committee structure that includes:

    a. **Finance & Risk Committee** that has increased responsibility and scrutiny of the Management Accounts, long term sustainability and risks to BELMAS
    b. **EDI Committee** that has been tasked with the delivery of an EDI Strategy.
    c. **Conference & Events Committee** to oversee other membership focused events in addition to the annual Conference such as ECR Month.
    d. **Awards, Bursaries & Grants Committee** which has reviewed the process for all the BELMAS Awards, Bursaries & Grants as launched in 2024.
    e. **DSA Advisory Board** which is made up of Distinguished Award Winners and act in an expert advisory capacity to the Chair of the Board, Executive Officer and wider Board.

2. In 2023 BELMAS recorded an increase in membership of **15.63%** against 2022.

3. A turnaround on the sustainability of the annual conference - a **105.29% reduction** in deficit against 2022, resulting in a £5,500 surplus.

4. Investment in and delivery of a new fit-for-purpose website that has reduced overheads costs by **56.25%.**

5. Launch of BELMAS' first ECR month that engaged over **10%** of the membership across five events (1 in-person and 4 online).

6. Review of RIG processes and introduction of a new RIG Handbook resulting in increased activity and satisfaction ratings to date include:

    a. Quality of RIG Sessions **(4.73/5)**
    b. Organisation of Events **(4.96/5)**
    c. Overall Satisfaction **(4.73/5)**

7. BELMAS had it highest ever number of candidates in an election to the Board with 17 candidates standing for 5 roles. This is a **240**% increase from 5 candidates for 3 roles in 2022. From an EDI perspective, there was an increase in Black and Asian candidates from 20% (1) in 2022 to 29% (5) in 2023. **29.33%** of the membership voted in the elections – **an increase of nearly 4%** against 2022 (25.37%).

8. Increase in engagement across social media channels with the Twitter/X accounts following increasing from 3,852 (2021), 4,016 (2022) to 4,231 (2023). This has seen rises of 4.26% (2021-2022) and 5.35% (2022-2023) with an overall **increase over a two-year period of 9.84%.**

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE & ENGAGEMENT/PARTNERSHIPS

One of the risks from 2022 was the lack of financial control against charitable objectives within international conference and travel expenditure for Trustees. New processes have been put in place to ensure that all international travel was focused on the charitable purposes of BELMAS, with clear and full reports being presented to the Board after each visit.

As a result, BELMAS has increased its outputs from international visits whilst reducing its spend on from £17,250 (2022) to £12,469 (2023).

In 2023, BELMAS attended the following conferences:

- EARDA in Ankara, Turkey – April 2023 (Dr Denise Mifsud)
- WLE in Manilla, Philippines – July 2023 (Dr Victoria Showunmi)
- ECER in Glasgow, UK – August 2023 (Dr Deb Outhwaite & Dr Denise Mifsud)
- BERA in Birmingham, UK – September 2023 (Dr Deb Outhwaite)
- IEAL-J in Kingston, Jamaica – October 2023 (Dr Deb Outhwaite)

REVISED MISSION, VISION AND VALUES STATEMENTS

In early 2023, the Board of Trustees approved its new Mission, Vision and Values following lengthy consultation with the membership and stakeholders. They are:

Mission

Our mission is to be the place where research meets practice in Educational Leadership Management and Administration.

Vision

Our vision is to be an innovative, globally recognised and respected Learned Society for the development of Educational Leadership Management and Administration.

Our Values

Integrity: We are transparent, honest and hold ourselves and others to high standards

Scholarship: We are a global learning community that embraces difference of opinion

Social Justice: We are brave and equitable

Inclusion: We recognise many voices and celebrate diversity in all of our work

INDUCTION AND TRUSTEE TRAINING

As of 2023, all Trustees have induction and annual refresher training delivered by NCVO during the BELMAS strategic away day as part of its improved Governance within the strategic plan. Where new Trustees are appointed to the Board away from the strategy day, BELMAS provides funding for online half-day courses, again delivered by NCVO.

All new Trustees have an induction session with the Executive Officer and Chair of the Board that looks at the CC3 document, Constitution and focuses on the challenges and opportunities of the charity. In addition to this they are required to complete a Skills Audit and Conflict of Interest Register.

Ryan Beasley

Executive Officer

British Educational Leadership,
Management and Administration Society