

Stefan Islandi

Language Undefined



Stefan Islandi

Director, Danish NCD Alliance (DNCDA)

Denmark

Why would you like to be on the NCDA Board of Directors?

The world is navigating deeply challenging times - and that, sadly, is an understatement.

Respect for scientific facts is dwindling, and development funding is being replaced by funding for arms - just to mention a few of the most depressing facts. In times like these, there are no true winners - and, as always, those with the least suffer the most.

Throughout my career, I have been committed to improving the lives of some of the most vulnerable populations in low-resource settings, particularly across Africa and Southeast Asia. I firmly believe that one of the most pressing development issues we face today is the growing burden of NCDs. Empowering PLWNCDs and promoting locally led development must be at the heart of our response.

I cannot think of a more important platform from which to fight NCDs than the NCDA Board of Directors.

I am committed to contributing meaningfully to the fight against NCDs, particularly in the Global South. Advancing the global NCD agenda requires collaboration and strong partnerships. My key priority will be to strengthen NCD services at the primary health care level. Far too often, I have seen primary health clinics without trained staff, essential equipment, or access to life-saving medications for NCDs.

In addition, I will work to foster closer collaboration between the NCD movement and the disability movement. The link between NCDs and disability is clear and two-directional - and both movements share common goals, especially the urgent need for increased investment in health systems.

What makes you a good candidate for the NCDA Board of Directors?

I believe I am an excellent candidate for the NCDA Board of Directors for several key reasons. As the Director of the Danish NCD Alliance, I have gained deep insights into the diverse NCD challenges across various settings. A key part of our work has been supporting seven East African NCD Alliances - both national and regional - from their inception. Partly through my fundraising efforts, we have secured stable, long-term funding, contributing to their tremendous success.

Additionally, I currently serve on the board of CISU, Denmark's largest civil society network, comprising over 300 members and generating an annual turnover of more than USD 50 million. This role has further honed my leadership and organizational skills.

My career also includes extensive diplomatic experience with both the UN and the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where I developed strong negotiation and diplomatic skills - assets I will bring to the NCDA Board.

However, I believe my most valuable strength is my in-depth, firsthand understanding of health challenges in developing countries and my experience working with volunteers. With over a decade of Red Cross experience in Africa (managing dozens of development projects and emergency operations) and, alongside more than 15 years living and working in developing countries, I bring a grounded, practical understanding of the issues.

Lastly, my personal experience as a parent of a PLWNCD gives me a profound understanding of the struggles within the health system. Lived experience is irreplaceable, and I bring this perspective to my work.

Biography

Stefan Islandi holds a Master's degree in Development Studies and Public Administration from Roskilde University (Denmark) and University of Edinburgh (Scotland). He is Director of the Danish NCD Alliance, which brings together some of Denmark's largest patient organizations. With over 25 years of experience in development and humanitarian work, Stefan began his career with UNDP in Laos, before serving five years as a diplomat with the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, followed by leadership roles within the Red Cross. He has spent five years in Southeast Asia and a decade in Africa. A significant part of his time in Africa was as Head of Region for Danish Red Cross in East and the Horn of Africa, where he led large teams and worked closely with governments and hundreds of dedicated volunteers. He has operated in numerous African countries and led emergency operations in some of the world's most fragile regions.

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