

POSITION PAPER

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

What is organizational development all about? How can we get an understanding of how an organization works? And what is our role? If you are asking yourself these questions, this paper is for you. It presents DUFs considerations on organizational development – as well as lessons learnt, ideas and tools for strengthening your work.

WHY WORK WITH ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

Organizational development has been on the development cooperation agenda for a long time.

The idea is that you need to be a well-functioning organization with sufficient skills and resources in order to do good activities and be able to influence people with power to support your cause.

And you can almost always get better at what you do, be inspired from the experiences of others and develop your work in your organization.

DUF encourages you to work in partnership with other civil society organizations, because there is a lot to learn from working together.

When you engage with people from other parts of the world, you learn a lot from each other and get a better understanding of each other's lives, organizations and contexts.

WHAT IS ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

In DUF organizational development is defined as planned and deliberate processes that create lasting, positive change in the organization.

»» If you are going to support an organization in changing in a meaningful and lasting way, you need to understand the organization. And perhaps the best way to support organizational change is to help an organization to understand itself better?

»» What would you like to learn from each other?

When you enter a partnership between organizations, it is a good idea to look at what you would like to learn from each other. What skills and experiences does each organization have? How can you best exchange experiences or skills?

There are many ways of looking at organizations and many ways of working with organizational development.

The first step to support organizational change is to understand the organizations you work with.

If you ask people what they think about when you say the word 'organization', they will come up with a long list of words such as people getting together, meetings, vision and mission volunteers and staff, activities and so on.

The many answers reflect that organizations are complex, living systems. Organizations change over time and each organization is a unique combination of purpose and ambitions, the people that make up the organization, the way of working and past experience of failure and success.

Organizations develop their own culture, habits, language and stories – sometimes through a conscious effort and sometimes without being aware of it. And there are many forces that influence and shape the organization from outside.

There are many ways of looking at organizations to get a better understanding of what is going on – and in what way it would be helpful to develop the organization. We have chosen some models that we find helpful.

THE THREE CIRCLE MODEL

The three circle model is a model developed by INTRAC.

It describes an organization by three overlapping circles that represent the organizations identity, activities and relationships to the outside world. The three circles are surrounded by the context, that affect the organization and which the organization wants to influence and change.

The model can help us to **see the relationship between different parts of an organization** – and gets us to **analyze what is working well and what could improve**.

Identity – what you are

This circle relates to the organization's purpose and vision, the formal policies and programs as well as the culture of values of the people in the organization.

It also has to do with structures and systems within the organization such as decision making structures and proce-

dures for doing things. The human and financial resources within the organization are also part of this circle.

Activities – what you do

The activities that you do – and their results are also important for understanding an organization. When you look at the activities it is good to ask yourself: Are we making a difference? Are we doing the right things?

Relationships – who you relate to

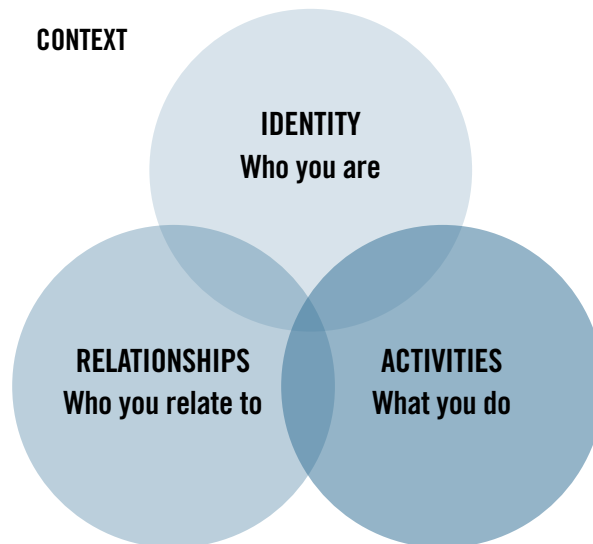
This circle has to do with the relationships between your organization and other actors in society. It can be difficult to bring about change on your own, and it is a good idea to work with or influence other civil society organizations, the state or other actors.

Context

Change happens differently in each context. You have a better chance of making a difference, if you understand the context you work in and your own possibilities for contributing to change.

A context analysis can look at the political, economical, social and cultural factors that influence your organization – or which you want to influence.

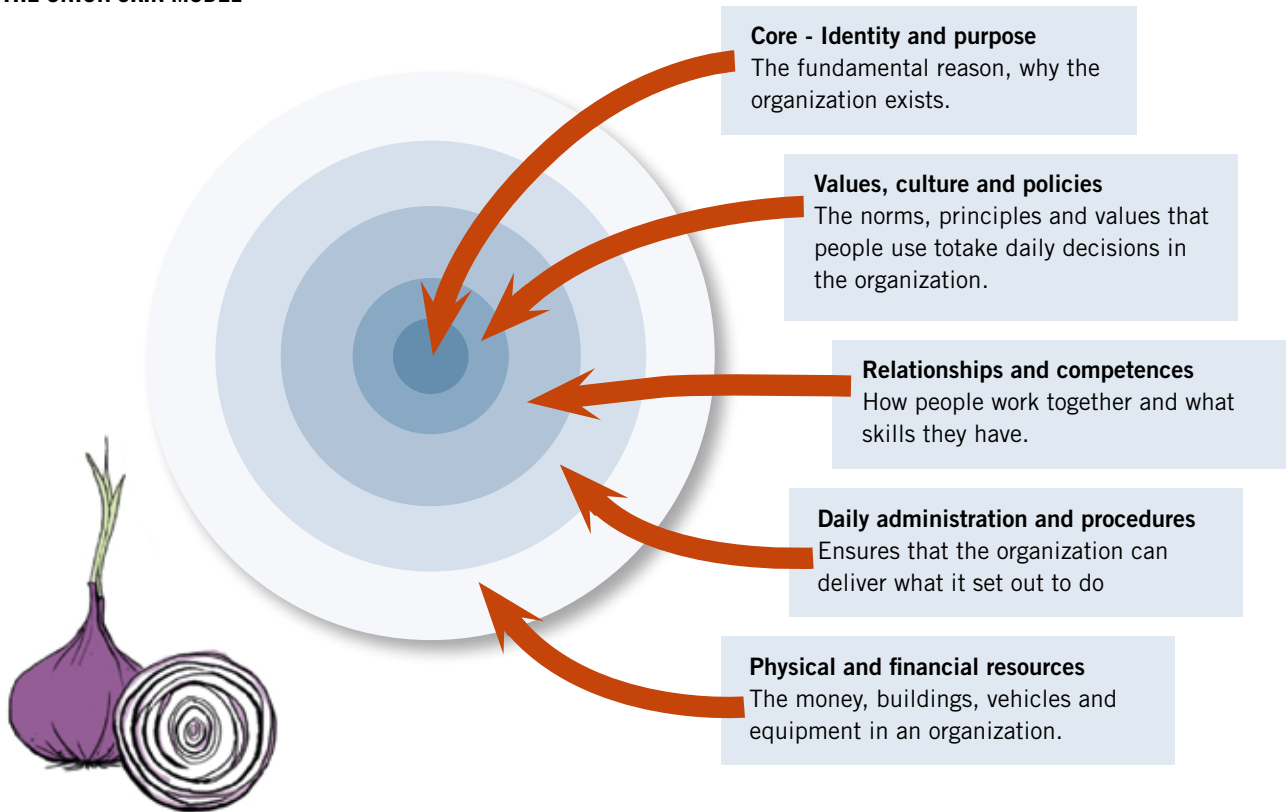
THE THREE CIRCLE MODEL



» You are **your most important tool**. Organizational development doesn't start with the tools and methods, but the person who will use them. It is a good idea to think about why and how you use tools – and reflect on your own relationship to the organization you are working with.

» Just like the **Change triangle**, the three circle model shows that there is a connection between the activities you do, your organizational identity and capacity and the relationships you have to outside actors. In a well-functioning organization, the three circles work together and reinforce each other.

THE ONION SKIN MODEL



THE ONION SKIN MODEL

You can also look more in detail at the internal organizational identity and capacity (the circle: Identity: What you are).

Organizations can be seen as having a number of layers. You can picture an onion which grows in layers of skin from the core outwards.

In organizational terms you can think of the core of the organization as the identity and purpose of the organization – the worldview and vision for change. The next layer is the values, culture and policies of the organization – the ideas of how the organization wants to bring about change. Following these come layers of relationships and competences in the organization, the administration and procedures as well as the physical and financial resources.

The onion skin model is good for showing that effective organizational change is based on coherence between the different layers. For instance, if you change your strategic focus and wants to work with a new theme in the organization, you may have to train staff or volunteers to improve their skills on that theme and be able to deliver.

The model also illustrates that an organization can struggle with problems that are deep rooted, even though the outside layers look fine. For instance if an organization has an unclear purpose and lacks direction in its work, it can have

many different projects but may find it difficult to deliver results that create significant, lasting changes.

The model can help us to **see the relationship between different layers of an organization** – and start a conversation about **how to make sure that changes in one layer of the organization connect to the rest.**

The onion skin model is developed by INTRAC.

HOW TO SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

Relationship is at the heart of bringing about change. If you are to support organizational change, it is important to build and sustain a good relationship with the people you are going to work with. This takes time and effort.

When you start building relationships, you start to understand what is happening and how the organization works.

And when you build trust, it is much easier to have an open, honest conversation about what works and what doesn't and work together to develop the organization in a meaningful way.

- How are you going to build relationships with the people you work with so you trust and understand each other?

It is also a good idea to consider whether your role will be.

- Are you going to be a trainer with lots of knowledge on an issue, a facilitator of a process or maybe a critical friend with an outsider perspective and lots of questions?

If you are to support an organization in bringing about change, it is important that you don't do all the work to develop the organization as one person or a small group only.

If you want more people to own the changes, it is important that they are involved, have a say and also take responsibility of the work. Otherwise, you might end up with a very nice communication policy or a shiny new democratic constitution for the organization that no one will use.

- How are you going to involve people in the process?
- How are you going to motivate them to take responsibility for the changes?

It takes time to support change to happen – and it takes time to ground change, so that it stabilizes. New ways of working together may need time and effort to take root, and people may need mentoring to use their new skills.

- How are you going to support people in turning the good intentions into actions and achievements?
- Does the change live on?

It is a good idea to review the process once in a while and see how things are going and if you are moving in the right direction. That way people learn from the process and reflect on how the organization is developing.

- Are you empowering people to do their own reflection and learning processes?



How do you build a good relationship?

In our experience the following qualities and abilities are important when you want to establish a good relationship:

- **Know yourself**, be clear about who you represent and think about the power you have and how it affects your relationship. Also, it is key to be aware of how you are seen by others and what you represent to them
- Be able to **explain clearly** and **honestly** why you want to change something and how you intend to do it
- **Listen deeply, actively** and **with empathy** to what others say and do
- **Build trust** by being worthy of trust in all that you do
- **Make agreements that reflect the interest of everybody** and encourage that all take responsibility of the work



What is your role?

If you are to support organizational change, it is important to be clear about your own role, position and mandate – as well as the level of experience you are bringing into play. It is a good idea to draw an **organogram** or a **rich picture** and analyze how your role, position, mandate and experience fits with the organizational development process you are proposing.

For instance, if you are a Danish project group consisting of volunteers, who have experience at the local level and you are working together with the board of a professional NGO abroad on revising the organizational strategies, it may be a good idea to involve people from your own board to throw in some experiences from their last strategy process?

It can also be that you are two youth volunteer groups who are working to make sure that youth have a say in your organizations, but you need to get your board to agree with the ideas. In this example, you'll need to consider what your mandate is, how you can convince your board and management to support your ideas and who to involve.

FURTHER INSPIRATION

Tools recommended by DUF

DUF has collected a set of tools for **understanding organizations** that can help you to get a good conversation with your partners on your respective organizations.

There are a wide range of other tools and guides to support you in facilitating organizational change, we recommend to take a look at those:

- **Organizations and Development** by James Taylor
- **The Barefoot guide to Working with Organizations and Social Change** – and **Learning Practices in organizations and social change.**
- **Guide to Organizational Development in Civil Society Organizations** by CISU and DH.

Meet up with DUFs consultants

DUF can provide inspiration on how to analyze organizational setups and needs and give advice on how to facilitate organizational development.



»» It can be difficult and sensitive to change the ways you do things – and if you are trying to get others to change, **you can be met with both enthusiasm and resistance.** It is a good idea to think through the power relationships and interests in an organization – and to think about how you can get everybody to be open to new ideas.

»» It is important to not only focus on the result you want to achieve, but also on the way to reach the result. The working process will determine if you end up with an organization that feels helpless and dependent on you - or if the organization feels more confident and have improved ability to do its work.

If you want people to take responsibility for the work, it is a good idea to make sure people are involved at an early stage and have a say throughout the process – and that you all review what you have learnt at the end.

»» This paper presents DUFs considerations on organizational development – as well as ideas and tools for facilitating organizational change.

Our most important advice is to tailor your approach to your own organizational setup, the work of your organizations and the context you are working in.

That is why the paper doesn't give prescriptions or specific answers to how you should work. Instead we encourage you to think through themes, that we have found to be important to DUF supported partnerships.

We have included the tools used in DUFs learning activities – and we refer you on to other toolkits that we find inspiring. In doing so, we hope to stimulate your own thinking and ideas on how the methods and tools we present may be useful in your own work to create positive change.

There are many other ideas, approaches and tools that are used by young people in civil society organizations that are not included in this paper. Please share your own experiences, ideas and stories with us in order to make the toolbox more practically relevant for others. There are no deadlines and new ideas or tools can be added any time.