Introduction

This module focuses on exploring different types of organizations and its structures. To learn more about structures, it is important to learn about the linkages between organizations as it relates to international organizations and as well as different target populations.

Organizational structure is a map of the organization just like any "maps of towns" which shows the main network of relationships and lines of responsibilities that exist between different positions in the organization. There is a difference between internal and external structure. Internal structure means the organizational structure within the organization (NAD). External structure, on the other hand, explains the organization's place in the external context and its relations to other organizations, such as DPO, WFD).

There are many different types of organizations and structures

- Associations
- Non – Governmental Organization (NGO)
- Networking Community (e.g., Federation, Union)
- Government and Ministries
- UN Agencies
- Social Enterprises

An association is a formal organization of people or groups of people with mutual, same and/or similar interests, objectives, and concerns. Examples are RNUD (Rwanda National Union of the Deaf), CHAVITA (The Tanzania Association of the Deaf, popularly known by its Swahili name Chama cha Viziwi Tanzania (CHAVITA).

A non-governmental organization (NGO) is an organization that is not part of a government and was not founded by states. The NGOs operate independently of the government, usually to deliver resources or serve some social or political purpose. Examples of NGOs are for instance Save the Children, ActionAid, Handicap International, CBM.

A networking community such as Federation is an umbrella organization representing affiliated associations with mutual, same and/or similar interests, objectives, and concerns. It is often known as a central organization united and represented by multiple groups founded on an original agreement. Such examples are World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), International Disability Alliance (IDA), The International Committee of Sports for the Deaf (ICSD), African Federation of the Deaf Blind (AFDB).

The government is often composed of ministries such as Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Youth and Sports and many more. A ministry is a specialised organisation responsible for a sector of government public administration, sometimes led by a minister, but usually a senior public servant, that can have responsibility for one or more departments, agencies, bureaus, commissions or other smaller executives, or advisories.

There are many UN organizations and agencies that function to work on issues. For example, UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), UN Women, UNHCR (UN Refugee Agency), UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), WFP (United Nations World Food Programme) and many more. It is through these agencies that the UN performs most of its humanitarian work. The United Nations Charter stipulates that each primary organ of the UN can establish various specialized agencies to fulfil its duties.

Internal Structure

Internal structure reflects the organisational structure within an organisation, such as deaf association. The main purpose of documented organizational structure is to ensure that the board, staff, and members understand and know their roles, responsibilities, and powers within the organization's framework. It also helps the community know who is responsible for what. Internal structure of the organisation should have a clear definition of responsibilities and roles, application of democratic rules, decision-making process, and explanation of how board meetings should be implemented. Please see module 4 Board for more information.

It is important to understand that structure is not the same as hierarchy, i.e., a pyramidal structure. In principle, the structure can be flat – this is still a structure. Please see case studies for examples of organisational structure in different associations.

- Internal structure
  - Organisation structure
  - Board structure
  - Committee structure

Many groups have members who are a part of or represented in Special Interest Groups and/or Committees, both in the organization and externally in the community. They do work and participate in activities focused on a specific goal or group of people that need additional support – youth and women, for example. Many deaf organizations have a group or committee focused on improving the status of deaf education in their country. This is very beneficial for organizations as this provides an opportunity for individuals who are not a part of the board but still want to be involved in the organization's work in the community or nationally.

External Structure

External structure explains the organisation's place in the external context and its relations to the other organizations, such as (DPO or WFD). Many organizations have linkages with different networking communities to facilitate and influence external changes that will impact the organization's vision, strategies, and activities. People and organizations are highly interconnected therefore it is important to identify where the organization is situated in the larger picture. This could mean within the international organizations, geographical regions, and/or special interest groups framework. Organizations may develop formal and/or informal

working relationships and/or partnerships with as many different networking communities and/or organizations that meet the vision of the organization's work. Many national deaf

associations also have linkages with national disability organizations and/or like-minded networking communities' organizations in their country.

For instance, national deaf associations often have a working relationship and/or partnership with provincial, regional, and local deaf organizations. It is encouraged that organizations examine and identify areas of focus so that there will be minimal amount of overlap amongst similar organizations in the country. In addition, many national deaf organizations are members of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) which is an international deaf networking community for National Associations of the Deaf (NADs).

Whereas many national deaf sports organizations are members of the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf (ICSD), also an international deaf networking community for National Sports Associations of the Deaf. The same goes for sign language interpreting organizations who are often members of World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI), an international networking community for National Interpreting Associations. The international networking organizations such as WFD, ICSD and WASLI often host international level conferences, congresses, and events to provide national associations of the deaf with the opportunity to exchange and share information with similar associations around the world.

The World Federation of the Deaf is also a member of the International Disability Alliance and has a consultative status with the United Nations representing all deaf communities around the world. International Disability Alliance is a special interest group representing the disability communities around the world.

Please see case studies for more examples of external structure of various different organisations.