MODULE 10

The Health, Growth, and Development of a Professional Association

2nd EDITION 2019
Acknowledgments

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Where to find the complete the Professional Association Strengthening manual:

The complete set of Professional Association Strengthening modules can be downloaded for no fee at: www.StrongProfAssoc.org.

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Introduction
All the modules in this series are geared towards the development and nurturing of a vibrant, effective professional association (PA). This module is about moving forward, i.e., the ability of the association to continue growing, fulfilling its objectives, being creative, and representing its members. Moving forward also means that the PA is able to sustain itself and to continue despite changes in the country and the profession. For this to happen, the PA must be able to take care of its health and constantly monitor performance.

Objectives
- To describe a well-functioning (healthy) PA.
- To identify some diagnostic signs and symptoms of an unhealthy PA.
- To describe approaches to identify the state of health of a PA.
- To suggest remedies for some of the most common causes of association dysfunction.

What is Organizational Health?
Organizational health is the ability to align around a common vision, execute against that vision effectively, and renew itself through innovation and creative thinking. In other words, organizational health is "how the ship is run, no matter who is at the helm and what waves rock the vessel" (McKinsey 2017)

Organizational Health Diagnostic and Development (2017) define organizational health as the organization’s ability to function effectively, cope adequately, to change appropriately and to grow from within. It is important for PAs to work not only on their business but also on their health. This is good for the PA and its members. There needs to be a balance between short-term performance and long-term health. According to McKinsey (2017) organizational health is directly related to performance. PAs need to attend to their health and they need to consider long-term health against short-term performance. PAs like other organizations, that work on their health do not only achieve measurable improvements in their organizational well-being but also demonstrate tangible performance gains. It is therefore important for PAs to start working on their health as rigorously as they do on their strategic planning providing pathways for leaders at all levels to take part, and embedding and measuring the new ways of working.

Dimensions of Organizational Health
McKinsey (2017) lists elements deemed important for organizational health. These are:
- **Goal focus** – having clarity, acceptance, support, and advocacy for the organizational goals
- **Communication adequacy** – having information travel vertically and horizontally within the boundaries of the organization without distortion
- **Optimal power equalization** – maintaining a relatively equitable distribution of influence between the leaders and the members
- **Resource utilization coordinating and maintaining inputs** – looking after resources, particularly personnel, effectively with a minimal sense of strain
- **Cohesiveness** – giving members a clear sense of identity
- **Morale** – giving members a sense of security, satisfaction, well-being and pleasure
- **Innovativeness** – allowing others to be innovative, diverse, creative, and risk taking
Autonomy – giving members and leaders alike the freedom to fulfil their roles and responsibilities
Adaptation – ability to tolerate stress and maintain stability while changing to meet unique needs of stakeholders
Problem solving adequacy – ability to perceive problems and solve them with minimal energy. The problem gets solved, stays solved, and the problem-solving procedures are strengthened.

Characteristics of a Healthy Professional Association

A PA that is vibrant and well-functioning:
- Has the ability to maintain the visibility of the profession.
- Has the ability to fulfil objectives; the PA is creative and represents its members well.
- Serves as the go-to organization for information related to the professional field.
- Is goal driven, well led and managed, and produces results that are recognized by the target population and policy makers.
- Establishes a niche that can only be filled by itself and the members of the profession. What is done and accomplished by the PA would not be done and accomplished without it.
- Establishes professional unity, identity, and a sense of belonging among members.
- Produces evidence and contributes to the provision of quality care.
- Is considered a worthwhile partner and is sought out by other organizations, including other health care PAs.
- Is invited to contribute to decision and policy making circles and its opinion is valued.
- Contributes to the achievement of national health care provision strategies.
- Serves as a gatekeeper for quality of care.

The absence of some of the above characteristics indicates an unhealthy PA.

Characteristics of an Unhealthy Professional Association

A PA that is not functioning well is characterized by:
- Lack of a sense of identity and belonging among members.
- Bickering and fighting for leadership positions.
- No results that can be attributed to the profession.
- No representation of the profession in decision making circles.
- Weak leadership.
- No common goal for the members.
- No sense of commitment or ownership of the association or its activities. Individuals are concerned about themselves rather than the greater professional good because they do not identify with the profession.
- Membership is low and sometimes those who are members are disgruntled. There is no visible benefit to be a member of the PA.
- Policy makers, the community, and the population served are not aware of the contributions of the association or its members.

The Importance of Organizational Health and of Measuring It

Improved health corresponds with enhanced performance. PAs may feel despondent because they perceive themselves as weak. There is no reason for despair because research has shown that weak organizations benefit most from working on their health; they get the most out of the process. Results are more visible and the sense of accomplishment higher. At the same time, measuring the health of the PA is important because you cannot improve what you do not measure. Measuring outcomes allows organizations to identify and spread best practices, to pinpoint areas of weakness and to hold the PA accountable for its results

Diagnostic approaches

A number of tools and approaches can be used to measure organizational health and diagnose the causes of association dysfunction. A few are described briefly below.
1. **Member Association Capacity Assessment Tool (MACAT; International Confederation of Midwives)**

The MACAT enables professionals to diagnose and pinpoint the problem area(s). It consists of a series of questions framed to determine the presence or absence of a required aspect of the organization. Its major advantage is that it is easy to administer, and results are easy to read. It can be self-administered or administered with the aid of an outside consultant to enhance the objectivity of the responses. It does not require extensive resources, and it can be used by beginners to determine what needs to be in place to make a PA strong.

Its shortcoming is that it informs the PA of what is or is not in place, but it does not describe how to address identified gaps. The tool and related guidelines are provided in Module 2 of this manual, and they are also available (in English or French) on the ICM website.

This MACAT has been used in 76 countries in high and in low resource settings to date. All users have claimed that it is easy to use, to understand, to interpret, and to repeat after a few years. In Afghanistan, the midwives association uses the MACAT to measure progress every 3 years and uses the results to address identified gaps.

2. **Using Organizational Health Index (OHI) by McKinsey (2017)**

The Organizational Health Index (OHI) measures and tracks nine organizational elements that drive performance and provides simple but powerful roadmap to leaders and managers to improve organizational health. The nine elements are direction; coordination and control; innovation; motivation; environment and values; capability; external orientation; accountability; and leadership.

### McKinsey’s Basic Beliefs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Matters</th>
<th>Focus on right practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance is driven by organizational health – 9 elements with 37 underlying management practices</td>
<td>Although a company must achieve a minimum threshold level for all management practices, they need distinctiveness in only six or seven practices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Know your organization’s archetype</th>
<th>Orient for action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>McKinsey has identified four patterns of organizational behavior or “archetypes” that most organizations fall into: Market focus, executive edge, talent/knowledge core, and leadership drive.</td>
<td>The management challenge is to fully understand its archetype and select the right combination of management practices necessary to deliver outstanding performance and health.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the authors of OHI shifting your organization toward higher performance the PA needs to:

- Assess underlying mindsets and behaviors that impact performance.
- Understand your organization’s archetype to identify the six to seven “must have” practices for success.
- Prioritize intervention programs needed to improve health.
- Periodically track health to ensure on going progress and catch potential issues early.

**Figure 1. Linking organizational health and performance**

The OHI solution

1. Provides hard measures for the soft issues that impact performance
2. Benchmarks organizational health against a wide range of organizations
3. Identifies and prioritizes needed changes and intervention programs
4. Tracks progress and catches potential issues early

For more information on OHI go to [http://solutions.mckinsey.com/ohi](http://solutions.mckinsey.com/ohi)
What makes OHI unique

It prescribes interventions to improve those elements of health directly linked to performance so that leaders know where to focus organizational efforts to deliver on their mission.

OHI provides detailed findings for how your organization is performing on the nine elements of health-related performance. The findings include sore points as well as best practices for different parts of the PA.

3. Capacity Building of Health Professional Associations (International Federation of Gynaecology and Obstetrics [FIGO])

FIGO developed a step-by-step diagnostic tool to help a PA identify problems and develop interventions to solve those problems. A user friendly document with clear instructions on how to take the process forward is provided online.

4. The 5 Core Capabilities approach

One approach suggested by Nuffic is to use the 5 core capabilities approach. Morgan starts off by defining the three key words in his approach – competencies, capacity, and capabilities.

**Capabilities** – the collective ability of a group or system to do something either inside or outside the system. It is those capabilities that enable the organization to fulfill a function (to do things) and at the same time to sustain itself. Morgan identifies five core capabilities: the capability to act and commit; the capability to generate development results; the capability to adapt and self-renew; the capability to relate to external stakeholders; the capability to achieve coherence. (Morgan, 2006). These five core capabilities provide another basis for assessing the capacity of an organization and enable the organization to define a baseline for evaluating change and performance over time. The capabilities are separate but interdependent.

For those interested in this alternate way of measuring organizational health, see annex 1.

In Georgia Central Asia, there was no midwives association. HERAXXI, a development organization, needed support to create this association, including guidance on what structures to put in place and how each structure would function. With support from MATRA, an organization funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and technical expertise from ICM, the MACAT was used as a reference to describe clearly how to create an association. After 18 months, the Midwives Association of Georgia was established with all 7 components of a well-functioning PA.

How to Use the Results of Diagnostic Approaches

The results of an organizational capacity assessment process are useful for the following:

- **Development of interventions and resource mobilization.** Despite the slight differences in the approaches used, the assessment of capacity provides information to assist the association to develop interventions to fill in gaps. A PA can do this internally or by soliciting external technical support. The identification of gaps and needed solutions enables the PA to mobilize funds and other support as required.

In Yemen, a MACAT was administered in 2014, and results indicated the need for regulation of the practice of midwifery in the country. The midwifery association used results to convince policy makers to develop a Midwifery Council. The government did not have adequate resources for this purpose, so the association used the results to request support from development partners. The United Nations Population Fund offered financial support for this purpose. Work was slated to begin in the first quarter of 2015, but unfortunately it did not happen because of civil unrest in the country.

- **Strategic planning and prioritization of activities.** The results from the assessment inform the strategic planning process of the association. Activities can be prioritized to create a logical structure to strengthen the association.
• **Insight on what to expect.** The assessment process provides an opportunity for members and leaders to understand the organization better. It provides insights into what needs to be in place, what is functioning well, and what is in place but not functioning. Leaders develop a deeper understanding of the functionality of the processes in place. That knowledge can enhance ownership and a sense of responsibility to ensure that processes work well.

• **Bonding effect.** All the tools referred to above depend on the participation of members and key stakeholders. Participatory involvement can create a bonding effect among members and leaders and also engender a sense of belonging and ownership. The function and output of the PA are better appreciated by members.

**Moving Forward**

**Addressing organizational health:**

**Which approach is the best**

Addressing organizational health involves processes of change and aims to enable organizations to resolve, innovate and respond to society needs. It is interesting to note that the three approaches suggested above all focus on specific aspects of the organization and identify important elements – Nuffic, MACAT, and OHI. PAs can check and determine which find easiest to use. The three approaches require periodic monitoring and tracking of performance. They all lead to the development of interventions to correct sore points. There are more similarities to the approaches than there are differences. The one difference is that, for the moment, OHI has only been used on for profit companies and public-sector organizations while the other two have been used on development organizations and associations. All the same there is a lot to learn from each of them and the results are most likely the same as long as each approach is used appropriately.

These learning materials are focused on the development of a vibrant PA. To move forward, effective leadership is needed (see Module 6), and an association should sustain itself and achieve its objectives in a manner that is appreciated by the public and policy makers. It should be visible.

To move forward, the members need to recognize that strengthening the PA is not a one-time event. It is important to keep a finger on the pulse of the organization to ensure that issues are addressed before they become problems. It is important to regularly, perhaps every 3-5 years, administer an assessment to confirm the functionality and effectiveness of the organization. This can help avert problems and it also acts as a motivator when things are going well.

**Effective Collaboration**

One association meets with the Ministry of Health each quarter to inform them about the activities of the association. When there is nothing special to report, the association pays a courtesy visit to the Ministry. The result is that no maternal, newborn, child health activity takes place without an invitation to the association. These activities include decision making and celebrations.

**Tips to Ensure Continuous Growth of the PA**

Effective Collaboration and Networking

• Host activities of interest for members, the public, and other health care PAs.

• Stay active in government organized activities in order to retain a seat at the policy making table.

• Develop a regular schedule of visits to policy makers. Do not wait to be invited. This keeps the PA on the policy making radar.

• Maintain an active social media presence on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter.

• Develop relationships such as twinning with other professional associations that are doing well.

Two associations started off with grants of €3,000. The following year one received an additional grant of €5,000 because of good results. In 2015, the association received a grant of €300,000. It is reasonable to believe this association will be in existence for a while!

**Strategic Activity Planning and Fund Raising**

• Develop programs that are self-perpetuating and if possible that also generate funds. One example is a
continuing professional development program that fulfills members’ needs for re-licensure.

- Identify current issues in which the potential for project funding is high.
- Scan for donors who are willing to fund small projects in the professional field. Financial support from a well-known donor raises the profile of the association and increases potential for long term sustainability.

**Continuous Membership Drive**

- Develop member-only activities and resources to entice non-members to join.
- Establish clear member benefits.
- Visit professional education schools to inform prospective graduates about the association and inform them about member benefits and benefits to the country.

**REFERENCES**


One association conducts continuing professional development activities for a fee. Members receive a 20% discount. This has encouraged non-members to join.
ANNEX 1: The 5 Capabilities approach in capacity development of organizations

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: ALL THE TEXT BELOW IS AN EXCERPT FROM A FLYER DEVELOPED BY NUFFIC INTERNATIONALIZING EDUCATION. THE YEAR IS NOT STATED

THIS FLYER CAN BE USED AS A REFERENCE ON HOW THE 5C APPROACH CAN BE INTEGRATED IN NICHE PROJECTS.

The NICHE programme contributes to sustainable strengthening of higher education and TVET capacity in partner countries, thus contributing to economic development and the reduction of poverty.

The NICHE programme focuses on capacity development of organisations. The capacity development should be grounded in a thorough analysis of the requesting organisation’s capacities and its context, linked to the broader capacity needs at sectoral and national level. The programme aims to develop capacity in developing countries through a holistic approach.

Why a 5C Approach?

In order to achieve sustainable outcomes a NICHE project is embedded in the organisation as a whole.

In order to understand the organisation and how to strengthen its capacity, NICHE uses a holistic approach, called the 5 Capabilities (5C) approach.

The goal of the 5C approach is to assess in a participative way the capabilities of an organisation and to assist in evaluating the changes over time. It is a tool for preparing a future dialogue on improving capacity development. It highlights which capabilities it needs to develop in order to realise the organisation’s objectives. Therefore, the 5C framework could be beneficial for the strengthening of the organisation during self-assessment, reflection, and planning.

Capacity and the 5 five core capabilities

Capacity development

In NICHE, capacity development is seen as a process whereby people, organisations and society as a whole unleash, strengthen, create, adapt, and maintain capacity overtime (OECD/DAC, 2006). Capacity development must be well designed and executed in order to produce sustainable effects. The literature shows that this is a process that is only successful when built on a clear vision, a broad-based commitment and active stakeholder participation.

Capacity development takes place at three levels:

1. Individual (professional development of individuals);
2. Organisational (strengthening the capabilities of organisations);
3. Institutional (development of rules and conditions which allow organisations to function properly). The three levels are interdependent, so this requires an integrated approach combining individual development with organisational reforms and institutional changes in order to effectively use newly acquired knowledge and skills.

Capacity development of organisations

Capacity development often involves processes of change and aims to enable organisations and institutions to resolve, innovate and respond to society needs.

Morgan (2006) suggests the following definitions for commonly used terms:

- **Competencies**: the energies, skills, and abilities of individuals
- **Capabilities**: the collective ability of a group or a system to do something either inside or outside the system
- **Capacity**: the overall ability of an organisation or system to create value for others

It is those capabilities that enable an organisation to fulfil a function (“to do things”) and at the same time to sustain itself. Morgan identifies five core capabilities: the capability to act and commit; the capability to generate development results; the capability to adapt and self-renew; the capability to relate to external stakeholders; the capability to achieve coherence. (Morgan, 2006).
The five core capabilities

The five core capabilities provide a basis for assessing the capacity of an organisation or system at a given point in time.

This enables the organisation to define a baseline for evaluating changes in capacity and performance over time. The 5C framework distinguishes ‘five core capabilities’ in organisations and in systems:

1. The capability to act and commit;
2. The capability to deliver on development objectives;
3. The capability to adapt and self-renew;
4. The capability to relate to external stakeholders;
5. The capability to achieve coherence.

These five capabilities are separate but interdependent. The capabilities are only meaningful for an organisation when the pointers per capability are formulated in the words of the organisation itself.

I. Capability to act and commit

This capability assumes that the organisation has a legal basis for engaging in binding commitments (autonomy), that it has effective systems (administrative, financial, human resource development, monitoring + evaluation, etc.) in place and that the organisation has a committed and stable leadership.

Suggested pointers that are often used to describe this capability and to capture change are:

1. Existence and regular review of organisational business plans, strategies, and visions. Plans and strategies are followed by effective implementation and
monitoring.

2. Effective systems; structures and (gender) vision with a legal basis to make binding commitments.
3. Leadership has decision autonomy and implements decisions in time.
4. Staff is managed pro-actively and encouraged to do their best.

II. The capability to deliver

For instance, an educational organisation with this capability offers educational programmes which respond to demands from the labour market and are gender sensitive. It offers education which adheres to agreed standards and performance measures.

Suggested pointers that are often used to describe this capability and to capture change are:

1. To have access to current and future financial resources
2. Existence of effective systems regarding a) administration, b) finance, c) information management, d) monitoring, e) ICT, f) quality management, g) outreach, h) strategic planning and management;
3. The organisation has the skills and knowledge, the staff to carry out technical, service delivery and logistical tasks;
4. The organisation has appropriate infrastructure.

III. Capability to adapt and self-renew

This capability assumes that the organisation is open to learning and self-reflection. It is alert on shifting contexts and has processes and structures in place (e.g. knowledge management systems) to cope with changing environments.

The organisation encourages innovation.

Suggested pointers that are often used to describe this capability and to capture change are:

1. The organisation or system is able to assess trends or changes and has anticipated or adapted to these effectively.
2. The organisation has an active knowledge management system to learn from past mistakes and successes.
3. The organisation has a training protocol and a HR development plan which encourages and rewards learning and exchange.
4. Participants demonstrate the ability and discipline to learn and absorb new ideas.
5. Change is positively valued. A fruitful balance is maintained between stability and change.

IV. Capability to relate to external stakeholders

The organisation with this capability can build and maintain relationships with external partners, for instance for the acquisition of funding. It has political legitimacy, social credibility, and reputation. The organisation can analyse different contexts and stakeholders with attention to power relations.

Suggested pointers that are often used to describe this capability and to capture change are:

1. Existence of a strategy and resources to network and relate to other relevant stakeholders.
2. Existence and density of contacts or networks with stakeholders, donors, universities, and training institutes. As a consequence, did the networks result in sharing knowledge and experience, mobilising adequate technical and financial resources, or influencing the broader policy frameworks in which they operate?
3. The organisation is linked to, and oriented towards the labour market. The content of its programmes is sensitive to labour market demands.
4. The organisation or system is seen as legitimate and accountable in the eyes of its supporters and stakeholders.

5. The integrity of the organisation, its leadership and staff are widely acknowledged.

V. Capability to achieve coherence

This capability assumes that the organisation shares a common vision and strategy and is able to keep the balance between diversity and focus and between innovation and stability. It has a style of management that fits the organisation.

Suggested pointers that are often used to describe this capability and to capture change are:

1. Existence and application of a set of simple principles which govern the organisation’s operations.
2. Consistency between ambitions, vision, strategy, and operations within the organisation.
3. The organisation has a shared vision and strategy and maintains a clear identity, related to its core mandate and interests.
4. Gender concerns are part of the organisation’s policy and practice.
5. All structures inside the organisation or system are sufficiently integrated.

Rules of thumb

The following key components are needed for successfully applying the 5C framework in capacity development:

- Ownership is crucial for sustainable capacity development. It concerns the willingness and the ability to engage and an open attitude towards change.
- The use of the 5C framework requires the involvement of multiple stakeholders. The meaning of each capacity is specific for each organisation. The process is only meaningful if the stakeholders agree on shared values and when all stakeholders are oriented in the same direction.
- Define clearly which are the boundaries of the organisation or the system that is being analysed with the 5C approach.
- Keep in mind that the 5C analysis forms the basis for the NICHE project. Stronger capacity of the organisation directly contributes to the sustainability of the outcomes of the NICHE project.
- A critical mass of staff members should be involved, and their active participation should be encouraged by top management.