Abstract

In 2007, 272 Danish municipalities were merged into 98 larger units. In the 6 years since then, the municipal organisations have been through a large number of structural and organisational change processes. Besides organisational changes, they have also experienced economic pressure for working more effectively and there has been an increased demand for new cross-professional services for citizens with still more complex needs.

In an action research project, we have developed a model for measuring and developing organisational capacity for change, drawing on inspiration from Relational Coordination. Organisational capacity for change is defined as an organisation's ability to handle planned and unplanned changes in a competent way. The model for Organisational capacity for change is a three-dimensional model. The model is used both as a survey and a basic for dialogic analysis and interventions. The three dimensions are: Organisational cohesiveness, Strategic competence and Responsibility and ownership.

Three different organisations have participated in the project, a hospital ward, a municipal Elderly Care unit and a Special Unit for Autism with a total of 825 employees and 52 managers. The findings from surveys suggest that there is a significant correlation between the way employees experience their leaders' level of capacity for change and the level of capacity for change among their colleagues - giving middle managers a key position in change processes. Interviews with employees, middle managers and senior managers support this conclusion.