



Regional Structures \$ DD Councils: A Contingency View

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REGIONAL STRUCTURES AND
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
PLANNING AND ADVISORY COUNCILS:
A CONTINGENCY VIEW

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to identify and to explore the major issues involved in regionalizing a state development disabilities council. The information for this paper was collected from a number of sources. Some of it came from a survey of regional developmental disabilities structures and their functions which was conducted by Dan Davis and Lynn Gunn (DD/TA Staff) in the fall of 1974. Information also came from an extensive DD/TA evaluation of one state's regional DD councils, consultation which DD/TA has provided to a number of state councils interested in setting up regional DD structures, and DD/TA contact over time with state councils which have regional DD structures.

The perspective for the analysis of this information is based upon current organizational theory which develops a contingency theory of organizational behavior. The basic element of this theory is that organizational structure and management style need to be appropriate to the functions (tasks) and to the environmental characteristics of an organization if the organization is to be successful in accomplishing its goals, and that any organization should analyze tasks and environment to insure that structures and management styles are appropriate.*

*See Paul Lawrence and Jay Lorsch, Organization and Environment, (1969), and Charles Perrow, Organizational Analysis: A Sociological View, (1970) for the development of a contingency theory of organization based on research in a number of companies in a number of different industries and non-profit organizations.

Both the information collected by DD/TA and the organizational research referred to above have led this writer to identify five major issues in regard to regional DD structures. They are:

(1) purposes (2) functions, (3) the criteria for regional divisions and organizational affiliations, (4) accountability, coordination, and control, and (5) choice of regional structures. To be sure, there are other issues, and some are identified at the conclusion of this paper. But this writer believes that these five are essential for a state council to consider if it plans to regionalize in some way or change an already existing regional DD configuration.

Why Have Regional Developmental Disabilities Structures?

The purpose of having regional DD structures is clearly the most important question for a developmental disabilities council to answer in complete detail before it plans and implements a regional program. Regional structures, if they are active and therefore visible, raise expectations and develop constituencies. They may require large sums of money from the state council in order to meet those expectations. They certainly will require attention from the state council, and they will expect to have influence not only at the local level but also on the policies and activities of the state council. In one of the regional programs studied by DD/TAS, persons interviewed unanimously expressed concern that the regional DD structures had been left out of the state council's planning process.

Given a council's need to examine the purposes of regional DD structures before it plans and implements a regional program, what are some of these purposes? The survey of regional mechanisms conducted by DD/TAS identified five major purposes for regional structures from the descriptions of those structures given by the state councils responding to the survey:

- (1) Regional developmental disabilities planning and implementing. (little interaction with state council)
- (2) Regional developmental disabilities service provision and/or coordination. (little interaction with state council)
- (3) Regional needs assessment information collection for the state council and/or dissemination of information from the state council to the regions.
- (4) A) Regional developmental disabilities planning and implementing, and setting regional priorities which constitute or are collated into the state council's plan.
- (4) B) Regional developmental disabilities planning and implementing, and advising the state council on the formulation of its state plan.

- (5) Regional developmental disabilities grant review, and making recommendations to the state council for funding.

Regional developmental disabilities planning and implementing with regional DD structures either advising the state council or having their priorities constitute the state council's plan was the purpose indicated most often by the states responding to the DD/TAS survey. Two state councils allocated almost their entire formula grant allotment to their regional structures whose planning priorities constituted the state council's plan.

What could be other purposes of regional DD structures? The answer to this question depends in part on what state councils view as their mission. If the councils accept the intent of the current federal legislation which is "to assist the states in developing comprehensive and continuing plans for service to persons with developmental disabilities", or if the new legislation clearly mandates that councils should engage in comprehensive planning, they may wish to establish regional DD structures to assist them in a comprehensive planning effort. Regional structures could not only verify, clarify, or provide information for comprehensive planning to the state councils, but also they could stimulate and/or coordinate comprehensive, human service planning at the regional level.

The choice of purpose under these circumstances depends in part on where decisions about state money flow for human service programs are made. If those decisions are centralized in the state capitol, regional structures would probably be more helpful to the state council if they provided the council with accurate planning information for a state-wide planning effort. If money decisions are made primarily at the regional level, regional DD structures would be more useful to the state council if they stimulated and/or coordinated comprehensive regional

planning.

If the state council is wholly or mostly in the grant giving business, regional DD structures could determine and prioritize regional service needs, solicit and review grant applications, and submit recommendations to the state council for funding (Purpose 5 identified by the DD/TAS survey). Regional structures could also insure that grants given in the region by the state council's administering agency meet the priorities set by the state council. One state council for example, is currently using its members to monitor its agency's distribution of grants in each region, but it is considering setting up regional DD planning committees to do this task.

If the state council focuses consumer input on the statewide comprehensive planning process, regional DD structures could form the communication link to the consumer groups in each region. Regional DD structures could convey regional needs and opinions to the state council and information from the state council to the regional groups, or they could mobilize consumer support for implementing comprehensive planning at the regional level. Again, the choice of purpose under these circumstances depends in part on where decisions about state money flow for human service programs are made. A related question: where is the primary responsibility for human service planning; at the regional or at the state level?

It is clear from these statements of possible purposes for regional DD structures that their roles may be: (1) to initiate (within very broad state council administrative guidelines) activities which in the aggregate form the basis for the state council's planning or grant giving efforts and/or (2) to respond to specific directives from the state council in regard to either formulating or implementing the state council's plan. Therefore,

in addition to the question of why have regional developmental disabilities structures, state councils face the related question of who will have primary responsibility for initiating statewide developmental disabilities planning, the state council or the regional structures.

What Functions Can Regional Developmental Disabilities Structures Perform?

The functions which regional structures perform usually depend on the purposes which have been specified for them. The survey of regional mechanisms conducted by DD/TAS identified ten major functions in which regional DD structures currently engage. Nine of these functions were listed by one or more state councils responding to the survey as the primary functions for their regional structures. (See Table 1)

Table 1*	
REGIONAL STRUCTURES: PRIMARY FUNCTIONS	
Functions	Number of States
1) Planning & Evaluation	8
2) Needs Assessment	6
3) Services Review	5
4) Services Coordination	4
5) Services Provision	4
6) DD Advocacy	3
7) Grant Review & Management	2
8) Information & Referral	1
9) Review & Comment	1
10) Education & Training	0
Totals	34

To the extent that planning can be considered to include needs assessment, services review, and evaluation, Table 1 demonstrates that more than half of the state councils, responding to the survey (19) specified planning as the primary function of their regional structures.

There are other functions in which regional DD structures could engage. They could focus consumer input on the state council's comprehensive planning process. They could mobilize consumer and agency support for implementing a comprehensive regional planning effort. They could also become involved in accessing and utilizing the money

*Table based on data collected by Dan Davis and Lynn Gunn for "Regional Structures and Functions of DD Councils: A Survey", DD/TAS Spring, 1975.

flow at the regional and local level for supporting service programs for the developmentally disabled. Revenue sharing and CETA funds, for example, can be accessed at the local level. And if the state council is in the grant giving business, regional DD structures could insure that the priorities of the state council are followed. (See Table 2 for a specification of primary functions of regional structures by state.)

Table 2*		
PRIMARY FUNCTIONS OF REGIONAL STRUCTURES BY STATES		
Primary Function:	States:	Regional Structures
A. DD Advocacy	North Carolina Missouri South Dakota	Regional Staff Regional Staff & Regional Councils Regional Staff
B. Services Review	North Carolina Indiana Wisconsin Tennessee Alabama	Liaison Liaison, Public Hearings, Regional Staff, MR/DD Subcommittees Public Hearings Regional Staff Area MH Boards
C. Services Coordination	Maryland Wisconsin South Dakota Michigan	Liaison Liaison Liaison Regional Interagency Coordinating Committees
D. Service Provision	North Carolina Arkansas Wisconsin Kentucky	Public Hearings Regional Staff Regional Councils District MH-MR Facilities
E. Grant Review & Mgmt	Minnesota Wisconsin	State Council Committee Regional Staff

Table continues on the following page

*Table based on data collected by Dan Davis and Lynn Gunn for "Regional Structures and Functions of DD Councils: A Survey", DD/TAS, Spring, 1975.

Table 2		
PRIMARY FUNCTIONS OF REGIONAL STRUCTURES BY STATES		
Primary Function:	States:	Regional Structures:
F. Planning and Evaluation	Kentucky Michigan Minnesota New Mexico California Colorado South Dakota Nebraska	Liaison, Public Hearings, Regional Staff Regional Staff Liaison, Regional Staff, Regional Councils Public Hearings Liaison, Regional Staff, Regional Councils Regional Councils Regional Councils IREFA Projects
G. Needs Assessment:	Maine New Jersey South Dakota Utah California Oregon Arizona	Regional Staff Regional Councils Surveys of Key People Public Hearings Public Hearings, Regional Workshops Public Hearings Regional Councils Liaison
H. Information & Referral	Kansas	Regional Councils
I. Education and Training	(none)	
J. Other:	New Mexico	Liaison

*Table based on data collected by Dan Davis and Lynn Gunn for "Regional Structures and Functions of DD Councils: A Survey", DD/TAS, Spring, 1975.

What Criteria for Regional Divisions and Organizational Affiliations?

Once a state council determines that it needs regional structures to assist in carrying out its tasks, the question of how to delineate the regions within a state requires attention. In most states the regional boundaries of different health service agencies and health planning groups are differently drawn for different reasons. In only a few states are regional divisions similar for all health planning groups and health

service agencies. Maryland, for example, has the same regional divisions for its seven B agencies involved in health services and for its comprehensive health planning agency.

A report entitled, "An Assessment of State Responses to the Human Services Agency Survey Conducted by the Human Services Institute, in cooperation with the Council of State Governments", (the survey was conducted during the latter part of 1972 and early 1973) showed that state human service agencies were very much concerned with establishing coterminous sub-state regional boundaries. The importance of establishing consistent sub-state regional boundaries and developing regional or district administrative structures in support of service delivery was listed by respondents to this survey as one of the five most important policy issues facing their departments at the current time. They also indicated that establishing coterminous program boundaries and planning or service delivery districts which can be accepted by all service delivery agencies was one of the five major priorities in their state for integrating human service programs.

It may be, however, that the National Health Planning and Resources Development Act of 1974 (PL93-641) when it is implemented will draw planning regions (some of which cross state boundaries) which may supercede existing within-state planning regions.

If state councils determine that it is not in their interest to adopt an existing regional division of a state, they will be faced with identifying the criteria for drawing regional boundaries. Such criteria may be based on geography (particularly when large distances or unusual topography exist), population distribution and client incidence and prevalence, politics, existence of emerging or already formed candidates for regional structures, and money flow.

Money flow may be an over-riding consideration in some states. In one of the states responding to the DD/TAS survey, for example, the state council chose the counties as regional divisions because the greatest concentration of monies (both state and federal) for human services existed at the county level; that is to say, decisions were made at the county level for the disbursement of large amounts of monies for human service programs. If the major decisions about human service money flow are made at the state level, however, money flow may be a less important consideration in determining the criteria for drawing the boundaries of a state council's regional structures.

Whatever considerations are used by state councils to develop the criteria for dividing a state into regions, they need to pay particular attention to the utility of regional divisions in facilitating the purposes and functions of regional structures. If regional structures are primarily engaged in providing services with developmental disabilities money, geography, population distribution, and client incidence and prevalence are some of the important considerations in developing the criteria for drawing regional boundaries. The regional boundaries of state agencies delivering services to the developmentally disabled are important considerations both if a council's regional structures are engaged in service provision (they need to know where the gaps in service provision are) and if those structures are involved in comprehensive regional planning (they need to work closely with other agencies planning human services for a region in order to avoid duplication of effort and maximize the focus of comprehensive regional planning). If regional DD structures are primarily involved in monitoring the state council's administering agency grant award process at the regional level, the regional divisions of the administering agency become one of

the primary considerations in developing the criteria for drawing the boundaries of the council's regional structures. And finally, if regional DD structures have responsibility for both planning and implementing, money flow for human services to the developmentally disabled becomes an important consideration both because regional structures need planning information which the decision making centers can provide and because they need to be able to identify and access the resources which the decision making centers disburse.

The same kind of logic implicit in the discussion of regional divisions also applies to organizational affiliations: state councils need to pay attention to the utility of regional, organizational affiliations in facilitating the purposes and functions of regional DD structures. If regional DD structures administer the major portion of a state council's formula grant allotment (as they do according to two councils responding to the DD/TAS survey), the state council may find it useful to require regional DD structures to affiliate with a regional state agency. In one of the states responding to the DD/TAS survey, for example, the state council's regional advisory committees are affiliated with its administering agency's regional agencies in order to have the benefit of staff support and to facilitate planning information exchange and developmental disabilities money flow.

There are other kinds of organizational affiliations possible for a state council's regional structures which could be useful in facilitating its purposes and functions. In one state which requested technical assistance from DD/TAS in setting up regional structures, regional Associations for Retarded Citizens had set up or were in the process of setting up regional developmental disabilities councils. For staff support this state council may require these regional groups to affiliate with the

regional agencies of its administering agency, but the close ties with the ARC organizations will probably be maintained.

If the purpose of regional structures is to focus consumer input on the comprehensive planning process or to mobilize consumer support in implementing a comprehensive plan, state councils may want to affiliate their regional groups with existing regional voluntary groups or put together a parent coalition and work closely with it. In any event, the utility of any affiliation with other regional groups needs to be examined by the state council.

Coordination, Control and Accountability

The formal relationships between state councils and their regional structures vary considerably. The DD/TA survey showed that one state council gives the major portion of its formula grant monies to its regional groups; their priorities become the state council's priorities. Another state council uses its regional structures to develop regional service need priorities, but the state council dispenses all formula grant funds and makes the final decisions about the way in which regional priorities are translated into the state plan. Between these two extremes there are variations, and they generally depend on the degree of decentralization state councils are willing to tolerate.

Problems have arisen, however, when the state council and the regional DD groups disagreed on the amount of decentralization which ought to occur in their state. In one state, for example, the regional DD groups are demanding more responsibility for grant giving at the local level, more input into the formulation of the state council's plan, and more coordination with their counterparts in other regions of the state. The state council does not want to decentralize the grant giving function, and

it is not sure how much input it wants its regional groups to have in formulating the state plan.

The causes of these difficulties seemed to be related to (1) the degree of understanding by the regional groups of their roles and functions vis-a-vis the state council (those roles and functions were not clearly spelled out when the structures were initially set up), (2) the acceptance by regional groups of their roles and functions as stated initially by the state council, and (3) the degree of sophistication of the regional groups as groups vis-a-vis the DD movement both nationally and within the state. Change in each of these three areas over time caused difficulties in the formal relationship between the state council and its regional groups. It is clear that coordination and control by a state council of its regional DD groups is a crucial element in the effectiveness and efficiency of both the regional program and the state program.

Coordination and Control

How can state councils achieve and maintain effective coordination and control of their regional structures? Some possible answers to this question came out of the DD/TA survey and DD/TA's work with state councils with regional DD structures.

(1) The functions of the regional DD structures should be clearly defined by the state council and written either as a set of detailed guidelines or as an operations manual. Regional structures should understand these functions and organize to accomplish the tasks delineated therein. Initial and continued understanding of the specified functions may require on-going training programs conducted for the regional groups by the state council. Training programs are particularly important if regional structures experience personnel turnover or change in specified functions.

(2) There should be incentives for regional structures to perform their specified functions. State councils should also provide adequate resources to regional DD structures if they want to provide both the where-

with-all and the incentive for the regional DD structures to carry out their functions. To be sure, monetary resources made available to regional DD structures are a powerful incentive for the regional groups to carry out their functions. But in one state DD/TA found that an equally important incentive to the regional groups was their influence on the formulation of the state council's plan and their influence on the local service programs for handicapped persons.

DD/TAS's work with states with regional structures suggests that incentive becomes more important for state councils to consider when the regional DD group's functions are more restricted. Incentive also becomes more important when the regional DD structures consist of unpaid volunteers; they must see the results of their efforts translated into influence either on the local scene or on the state council or on both. Without influence and without resources to implement activities, regional DD structures will not long carry out functions assigned to them by the state council. State councils must consider the incentive question if they are to have coordinated efficient, and effective regional structures.

(3) Communication patterns between the state council and its regional DD structures should be clearly defined, regularly used, and appropriate to the division of functions. The DD/TA survey showed a variety of communication patterns between regional structures and state councils which depend in part, of course, on the kind of regional structure(s) selected by the state council. Regional staff to state council staff, regional group to state council staff, regional group or staff to state council committee, and regional staff or group to state council (and each vice versa), were the most common patterns identified by the survey. The method of communication usually occurred in the form of written or oral reports and written or oral directives. Joint planning or strategy sessions were less frequent methods of communication, and training sessions for regional structures were even less frequent. The survey showed

that most communication between regions was usually limited to instances in which catchment areas for service programs overlapped regional geopolitical boundaries.

Problems with communication between regional DD groups and the state council occurred in one state in which DD/TA worked when the format for regional council reporting was not clearly specified, was not uniformly applied across regions, and was not required at similar intervals across regions. Problems also occurred when joint planning and strategy sessions and training sessions for regional DD groups were overlooked as a means of communication. The regional DD groups complained of an unresponsive state council staff and of having no impact on the state council's planning process. The state council complained of not knowing what their regional DD groups were doing.

Quantity of communication was not the problem in this instance. It was clearly the kind of communication and the process of communication which was causing difficulties in light of the functions which the regional groups and the state council were in the process of accomplishing. A point well taken by state councils with regional DD structures was made by Katz and Kahn in The Social Psychology of Organizations*:

The importance of information processes to organizational functioning does not imply . . . a simple relationship between amount of communication and organizational effectiveness. The advocacy of communication as a desideratum of organization needs to be qualified with respect to the kind of information required for the solution of given problems, and with respect to the nature of the communication process between individuals, groups, and subsystems of organization. Social systems can be defined as restricted communication networks; unrestricted communication implies noise and inefficiency.

*Katz, D. and Kahn, R., The Social Psychology of Organizations, John Wiley and Sons Inc., (New York, 1966), p. 257.

A final point about communication patterns and processes should be made. It is clear from DD/TA's experience with councils with regional structures that problems arise when those patterns and processes are not appropriate to the functions in which councils and their regional DD groups are engaged. If joint planning for the developmentally disabled is the specified function for regional DD groups, for example, joint planning and strategy sessions must occur. Quarterly reports by the regional DD groups to the state council are not by themselves appropriate communication modes for accomplishing the tasks involved in a joint planning effort.

One of the difficulties some councils had with communication patterns and processes is that the functions of their regional DD structures are not clearly delineated and clearly understood. In a couple of instances the functions have changed. State councils should recognize the connection between clearly defined functions for their regional DD groups and appropriately designed communication patterns and processes.

These then are some of the possible answers to the question of how councils can achieve and maintain effective coordination and control of their regional DD structures. Councils which do not have regional structures and are considering them have the advantage of being able to design their system with these issues and possible answers clearly in mind. Councils which have regional structures may have a more difficult time changing established patterns, but considering these issues and answers should be equally useful to them if they contemplate any change efforts.

Accountability

In addition to coordination and control of regional DD structures, state councils inevitably face the problem of accountability of their regional structures. There are two kinds of accountability: monetary and

and programmatic. And there are three basic questions: accountable to whom, for what, and how often? But the key issue is the use of accountability data in the decision making process of both the regional groups and the state council. If we accept the premise on the basis of cost/efficiency that accountability data will only be collected if it will be used in a decision making process, we can begin to think about clearly defining the accountability information needs of the state council and its regional DD groups. Clear definition will answer the three questions raised above.

How to get accountability information is another question. Obtaining monetary data is a relatively straight-forward procedure using accepted accounting practices. Programmatic information is another matter. There have been two approaches to evaluation of human service programs: evaluation before the fact (standards) and evaluation after the fact (research). The value of standards is that they become intimately connected with the decision making process of the organization being evaluated, evaluation is not intrusive; it is simply a matter of seeing if the standards are met. The research approach provides, as its main advantage, flexibility of purpose; it can be descriptive, formative, or impact. There are two significant problems with the research approach to evaluation of human service programs: (1) it is expensive, and (2) the data collection is often an unacceptable intrusion on the organization being evaluated. The problem with standards is that their development is a more highly political process than the research approach, and the tendency is, therefore, toward establishing minimums rather than maximums.

Since DD/TA knows of only one state council which has evaluated its regional program and only two councils which are contemplating an evaluation, we can only speculate on the most appropriate accountability strategies for regional DD structures. It is important to reiterate at the outset that regional DD structures are rarely involved in providing services directly

to clients; more often than not, they are involved in implementing the state council's program either by providing needs assessment data and planning priorities to the state council (to be incorporated into state-wide DD planning process) or by coordinating or implementing program planning efforts at the regional level. Occasionally they are involved in funding service projects at the local or regional level. (see Table 2)

It is important to reiterate the primary functions in which regional DD structures have been involved, because it is clear that there is some variation in those functions both within and across states. If the logic is followed that accountability strategies should be appropriate to the functions of an organization, variation in function suggests variation in accountability strategies. If regional groups are running service programs, client data as well as program data is needed in the decision making process both of the regional groups and of the state council. If regional groups are engaged in coordinating, planning, and monitoring functions, organizational effectiveness data is needed by decision makers both at the regional and the state level particularly if these functions are joint functions of both the regional groups and the state council.

Because of the nature of most DD groups (the press of time, the scarcity of resources, the political press), accountability strategies should facilitate rather than intrude on the DD organization's ability to carry out its functions. It is therefore urged that state councils carefully consider standards as an inexpensive, unobtrusive accountability strategy for their regional DD structures. Standards should be appropriate to function, and they could be expected to vary as functions vary. They could be implemented in the form of detailed guidelines. If regional DD structures do not exist, the state council will probably have primary

responsibility for drawing guidelines. If regional structures do exist state councils may very well have to include their regional structures in the formulation of guidelines. Once guidelines are instituted, accountability information should flow regularly through carefully detailed communication patterns and in appropriate communication modes and include at least oral and written reports, training sessions, and joint planning and strategy sessions. In this manner, adherence to guidelines (standards) could become an integral part of a regional structure's operating procedures.

The ongoing accountability questions are: (1) are we doing what we are designed to do, (2) how well are we doing it, and (3) what are the problems and solutions we have encountered while doing it? The answers to these questions are shared by the decision makers at both the state and the regional level.

One final point on accountability should be made. If standards are the route state councils choose to take, they must beware of the primary drawback of standards: they do not change automatically when the contingencies with which an organization operates change. Standards must be changed. State councils should operate in such a way that when the functions of regional DD structures are changed, the standards under which they operate are also changed.

The need for fine-tuning the relationship between functions of and standards for regional DD structures requires a sensitive, task-related, close-knit communication pattern, and it assumes that state councils will work closely with their regional DD groups. If this assumption does not apply to a particular state council/regional DD structure relationship, standards may, nevertheless, be a useful accountability strategy. Without a close state council/regional structure relationship, the danger of standards becoming inappropriate to function over time may be greater.

But If states' councils are aware of these problems, they can design liaison. procedures to prevent standards from becoming inappropriate to functions.

What Regional Structures?

This question has been deliberately reserved for the end of this paper. Current organizational research* argues for a contingency theory of organizational behavior. The basic element of this theory is that organizational structure and management style must be appropriate both to the tasks of the organization and to the characteristics of the organization's environment if an organization is to be successful in achieving its goals. It is therefore appropriate to have discussed purposes, functions, and, to some extent, the environmental characteristics of regional DD structures, before describing the types and configurations of regional structures which state councils have implemented and the issues involved in the selection of particular regional DD structures.

The DD/TA survey of regional DD structures identified five different structures used either separately or in various combinations by state councils which have decentralized some of their operations. They are:

- 1) Committees set up to represent, work with, plan for, or in some other way relate to a specified regional area within the state.
- 2) liaison person(s) who link the state council with regional human service groups such as Regional Planning Commissions, Councils of Government, Regional MR-MH Centers, etc.
- 3) public hearings within regional districts to aid the state council in regional planning, program implementation, and/or service delivery.

*See footnote on page 1.

- 4) regional staff who may be employed by the state council, the implementing agency, or some other agency and whose primary role is related to regional DD planning, program implementation, and/or service delivery.
- 5) regional councils usually designed on the model of the state council and with some or all of the state council's functions, focused, of course, at the regional level.

Other regional DD related structures identified by the DD/TA survey included regional planning commissions with MR/DD subcommittees, regional interagency coordination committees, DD/SA planning grants to area mental health boards, regional workshops for needs assessment, and community boards.

The DD/TA survey identified various combinations of these five structures. DD committees or councils combined with regional staff was a common configuration. Public hearings combined with regional DD staff or liaison persons was also a common pattern. A few states implemented all of the five regional DD structures together.

Although the information collected by the DD/TA survey is not conclusive, it does suggest that the more restricted both the scope and the number of functions are, the less "sophisticated" the regional DD configurations are. State councils which expected their regional DD structures to do at the regional level what they do at the state level usually implemented regional DD councils or regional DD committees with or without regional DD staff. State councils which were interested primarily in regional needs assessment of regional services monitoring utilized liaison, public hearing, survey, and some DD staff work. One can speculate from this information that the more involved regional DD structures are with influencing and coordinating, planning, and or advocacy at the regional

*as opposed to complex

level, the more appropriate councils and committees with or without staff become.

In any event, organizational research clearly indicates that organizational structures and management styles need to be appropriate to the functions and to the environmental characteristics of an organization if the organization is to be successful in accomplishing its goals. No research, however, has been done, to DD/TA's knowledge, which would enable anyone to specify which structures are most appropriate to specific functions. It is obvious from the DD/TA survey that some state councils have made decisions in this regard, and it is urged that all state councils consider this issue very carefully if they intend to implement regional DD structures. Organizational research does indicate that analysis of task and analysis of environment should precede choice of regional DD structures and management style.*

*See footnote on page 1 .

Conclusion

This paper has identified five key issues which state DD councils have considered and may wish to reconsider as they design, implement, and/or change their regional structures. There are others. The criteria for membership of regional developmental disabilities structures, the implementation strategies for establishing or changing these structures, and the value of a legislative mandate for regional DD structures are three other key issues. Because these three issues are so heavily involved in the idiosyncracies of each state and of each state council, the writer does not have enough information at the present time to expand on these issues. It can be stated, however, that the organizational principal which formed the basis of the thinking of this paper probably can be applied to considering these three issues; i.e., analysis of the tasks and environment of regional DD structures can lead to appropriate conclusions about membership, about implementation strategies for establishment or change, and about the value of a legislative mandate for regional DD structures.

This paper stresses the need for state councils to consider the functions and the environment of their regional structures and to specify functions in writing and to ensure that they are fully understood at both the state and regional level. Failure to do so initially and failure to review both functions and environmental characteristics periodically can lead to difficulties in the relationship between the state council and its regional structures. Specifically, this failure can cause regional DD structures to experience unproductive organizational affiliations, inefficient or intrusive accountability, coordination, and control strategies, unsupportive or uninformed or non-influential membership, ineffective or disruptive implementation or change strategies, and general inability to accomplish goals and

objectives. Specification and review of the tasks and the environment of its regional DD structures, to be sure, is not the only thing a state DD council can do to insure an effective decentralization process, but DD/TA's experience with regional DD structures suggests that it is a major item.

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