Kanban and scrum are both methods of working. They are both widely used in software development.

Kanban is a board that allows teams to track progress visually. It has a simple structure where tasks exist in the backlog. From the backlog a task is picked by a developer and is refined until it is ready to be moved to the next phase. When tasks are completed, they are moved to the done column and more work tasks can be started from the backlog. This process is repeated until the project is completed.

In Kanban, there are some rules that govern task movements on the board. Teams must agree on rules on when a task is ready to be moved to the next phase. There must also be limits to how many items can reside in each phase. This is to stop one team from being overwhelmed. Other teams can help to smooth along tasks if a phase is full.

The main similarities between kanban and scrum are that they implement a backlog of tasks, and they both operate using a pull system. In a pull system, tasks are selected from a backlog of tasks and are worked on by developers. In kanban developers pull individual tasks, in scrum however, a set of tasks is pulled to a separate, sprint backlog. From this smaller backlog, developers pull individual tasks.

There are no strict requirements about anything related to the organization, teams, and other things besides the board in kanban. As long as the rules of the board are followed, projects using kanban can look like anything. This is the main difference between kanban and scrum.

Scrum on the other hand has very strict rules, at least if following the scrum guide which states that if anything is changed or left out, it is no longer scrum. Scrum demands that a team has a scrum master, a product owner, and developers.

Scrum divides work into smaller sprints whereas kanban is a large evolving backlog. Scrum has several ceremonies that occur at the starts of sprints, ends of sprints, and during sprints. This helps keep track of things in a scrum project. What can be accomplished in 2 weeks is somewhat measurable, unlike in kanban where project is measured afterwards.

Kanban can be implemented within a scrum team. The board kanban offers, can be used to track tasks in a scrum environment. Using scrum rules to move tasks along in a kanban board provides a powerful combination for teams. It allows teams to have the structure of a scrum team and the visibility of a kanban board. There are even whole new ways of working developed for combining the benefits of kanban and scrum, such as Scrumban.

All in all, kanban is the more flexible choice. It is easy to implement in any organization and can be utilized in several fields. Scrum on the other hand is a strict, proven way of working. What works for each organization must be decided on an individual basis.