INVESTIGACIÓN/RESEARCH

Considerations about involved groups and organizational culture to elaborate strategic planning in medical libraries

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ABSTRACT

In Cuba, information management developed by the medical library is organized according to the principles that govern management in health. This responds to budgets set by the National System of Information on Medical Sciences (SNICM, Spanish abbreviation) and the policies drawn up by the Ministry of Public Health (MINSAP, Spanish abbreviation). For the correct operation of these institutions, it is necessary to define their respective strategic planning, a situation endorsed in the standards of the system, so this article is intended to establish the requirements that must be taken into account for the elaboration of this instrument, from the definition of the involved groups and the analysis of organizational culture. The set of suggestions is provided to guide medical librarians in the development of this tool, which responds to a current need in the system.

Consideraciones sobre los grupos implicados y la cultura organizacional para elaborar la planificación estratégica en bibliotecas médicas

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RESUMEN

En Cuba, la gestión de información desarrollada por las bibliotecas médicas se organiza según los principios que rigen la gerencia en salud. Ello responde a presupuestos establecidos por el Sistema Nacional de Información de Ciencias Médicas (SNICM) y a las políticas trazadas por el Ministerio de Salud Pública (MINSAP). Para el correcto funcionamiento de estas instituciones es necesario definir su respectiva planificación estratégica, situación refrendada en los estándares del sistema, por lo que el presente artículo tiene como objetivo establecer los requerimientos que deben tenerse en cuenta para la elaboración de este instrumento, a partir de la definición de los grupos implicados y el análisis de la cultura organizacional. El conjunto de sugerencias brindadas pretenden orientar a las bibliotecarias médicas en la elaboración de esta herramienta, lo que responde a una necesidad actual del sistema.

Palabras clave:
Bibliotecas médicas - gerencia en salud - planificación estratégica**.**

1. INTRODUCTION

As a social science, librarianship has a well-defined system of laws, principles, categories and object of study, which is why it stands as the systematic set of knowledge about the book and the library. Its action is based on the many relationships that are established between the collections of bibliographic documents arranged according to pre-established rules and the library as an institution.

These links require logical arrangement to ensure optimal information management. Hence the importance of the study of the discipline organization and administration of information units, given their links with the managerial activity.

Librarianship, information management and administrative management are inextricably linked phenomena. In the field of medical sciences, information management developed by libraries is organized and administered in accordance with the principles governing health management.

Information management in medical libraries is also related to the welfare, teaching and research processes, which is why an inadequate development of the library activity has repercussions on them. In Cuba, this type of activity is executed according to the budgets established by SNICM, in accordance with the policies outlined by MINSAP.

SNICM is headed by the National Information Center (CNICM), which regulates the behavior of similar instances at the provincial level (CNICM, 2007b). During the last years, this system has carried out a reorganization work aimed at raising the quality of service delivery, the most evident expression of which is given by the computerization processes developed in medical libraries (CNICM, 2007b and Center for Computer Science Development, 2007).

Accordingly, for proper functioning of these institutions, it is necessary to clearly define their respective strategic planning, a situation endorsed in the standards established at the system level (CNICM, 2011a, b); an activity that is given great importance in the Cuban health sector, which encourages continuous training in this

area, as reflected in the research of Abay, Benitez and Monzón (2011), Arocha et al. (2012, 2013), Benítez, Abay and Monzón (2013), Carnota (2010) and Rivero (2013), among other authors.

The elaboration of strategic planning implies the arrangement of a sequence of work aimed at solving the identified problems, in which each step is necessary for the next one (Climax, 2012 and Diaz, 2005), with which the set of designed actions are oriented towards a specific objective (Ochoa, 2006, Sánchez, 2011 and Viteri, Jacome and Medina, 2013).

2. OBJETIVES Y METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this article is to establish the requirements that must be taken into account for the elaboration of strategic planning of medical libraries, based on the definition of the involved groups and the analysis of the organizational culture as elements that allow the revision of the mission. Although the Cuban model has been taken as an example, it is also true that the aspects addressed in it could become useful references for other medical libraries in Latin America.

In order to do so, the criteria stated by Álvarez (2008), Díaz, Ramírez and Palacios (2010), Ponjuán (s.a.) and Rodríguez and Alemañy (2009) have been taken into account, as well as those criteria stated by specialists from the Center for Business and Territorial Management Studies (CEDET, 2008), located in the Faculty of Economics and Business Sciences of the University of Camagüey, Cuba. The set of suggestions provided herein seek to guide medical librarians in the development of this type of tool.

2. DISCUSSION

The involved groups.

The library is a social organization that responds to interests and information needs generated within society, so that one aspect that should be properly reflected in strategic library planning is the one referring to the groups involved in the fulfillment of the mission of the unit. This will correspond to the historical analysis carried out previously and to the revision of the institutional mission based on elements such as trades, strategic segmentation and corporate identity.

Human influence is present in any of the fields of action of the library. Within them are the activities of entry to and exit from the system. The former encompass tasks that allow synthetic analytical processing of information, while the activities of exit are linked to service provision.

Accordingly, the human factor is a decisive element that must be analyzed in its whole dimension when reviewing the institutional mission. This can be done either by isolated individuals or by groups or organizations that help or hinder the action of the entity, given the direct or indirect influence they exert on it (Díaz, Ramírez and Palacios, 2010 and Rodríguez and Alemañy, 2009).

In the case of Cuban medical libraries, the stakeholders or involved groups include the Ministry of Public Health (MINSAP), the Provincial or Municipal Health Directorate, the other medical libraries that make up a territorial or national network,

libraries belonging to other information systems, municipal and provincial libraries, printing houses, executives and workers not only from the library but also from the polyclinic, the hospital, users, suppliers, competitors, the government, among many others that are cataloged according to their place in relation to the institution; either inside or outside it, which makes them receive the qualification of *internal or external groups*.

This way, the actions of medical libraries are subject to the effort of their staff as internal stakeholders, as well as neutrality or participation (positive or negative) of external stakeholders. This determines the establishment of a kind of balance between powers and attitudes that in international business management is recognized as *political game*. It gives rise to the existence of the entity as such (Díaz, Ramírez and Palacios, 2010).

The relationship of power is given by the influence exerted by certain factors on the organization. On the other hand, attitudes reflect the response, whether favorable or not, toward the unit; that is, they show the ability to use the influence exerted on the organization for the benefit or prejudice of the organization.

Any library decision that is made must be analyzed from this perspective. Of course, in order to determine the impact of decisions from the political game, it is first necessary to define who the involved groups are according to the above generalities.

Once this is done, we will be able to formulate the map of powers; an instrument that helps to graphically represent the different stakeholders involved in the business dynamics. This is materialized according to:
• The power that the multiple involved groups exert on the organization, be it of support or of obstacle.
• The attitude, whether favorable or unfavorable, that they show.

Díaz, Ramírez and Palacios (2010), explain that this allows us to organize the stakeholders in the following areas:
• Zone of potential allies: It groups those who support the organization and show a favorable attitude toward it.
• Zone of potential opponents: It groups those that hinder the development of the organization and show an unfavorable attitude towards it.
• Unstable zone: It groups those who have support power and an unfavorable attitude or those who have hindering power and a favorable attitude.

Based on the above, it becomes evident that there is need to expand the zone of potential allies, as opposed to that of potential opponents. With regard to the latter, thorough work must be carried out using all possible means with the aim of neutralizing, stabilizing or reducing it, given the negative impact it represents for institutional development.

The analysis of the involved groups is an urgent need for the development of strategic planning of medical libraries, since it allows them to:
• Address the various situations faced by the organization, based on in-depth knowledge of the involved stakeholders and the respective positions they take on.
• Analyze the causes of these stances.

• Make decisions duly based on the analysis of the consequences and implications for all stakeholders.
• Find allies.
• Eliminate unfavorable influences.
• Develop processes that promote the development of the organization according to the timely analysis of all involved parties (Díaz, Ramírez and Palacios, 2010).

The success of strategic planning will depend to a large extent on the efforts of internal stakeholders to neutralize unfavorable factors in order to gain the support of external stakeholders. This is a decisive element to be taken into account when proceeding to the review of the institutional mission, since both groups are related to its fulfillment from inside and outside the organization (Díaz, Ramírez and Palacios, 2010 and Rodríguez and Alemañy, 2009).

The identification of the involved groups has a significant impact on the development of the strategy. The actions envisaged in it should be oriented to ensure that the management tool is accepted and supported at all times by both internal and external stakeholders.

3.1 The analysis of the organizational culture

Another aspect to be considered is the analysis of the organizational culture. This is a concept closely related to the human factor. From the point of view of librarianship, Ponjuán (s.a.), defines organizational culture as a dynamic set of values, ideas, beliefs, expectations, habits, skills, attitudes and traditions shared by the people who make up an organization that regulate their functioning within it in the labor context.

The common nature of the different elements mentioned above is related to the influence of managers on the group of workers, which contributes to create a way of being and acting of the organization that distinguishes it from the others and contributes to the achievement of the mission (Díaz, Ramírez and Palacios, 2010).
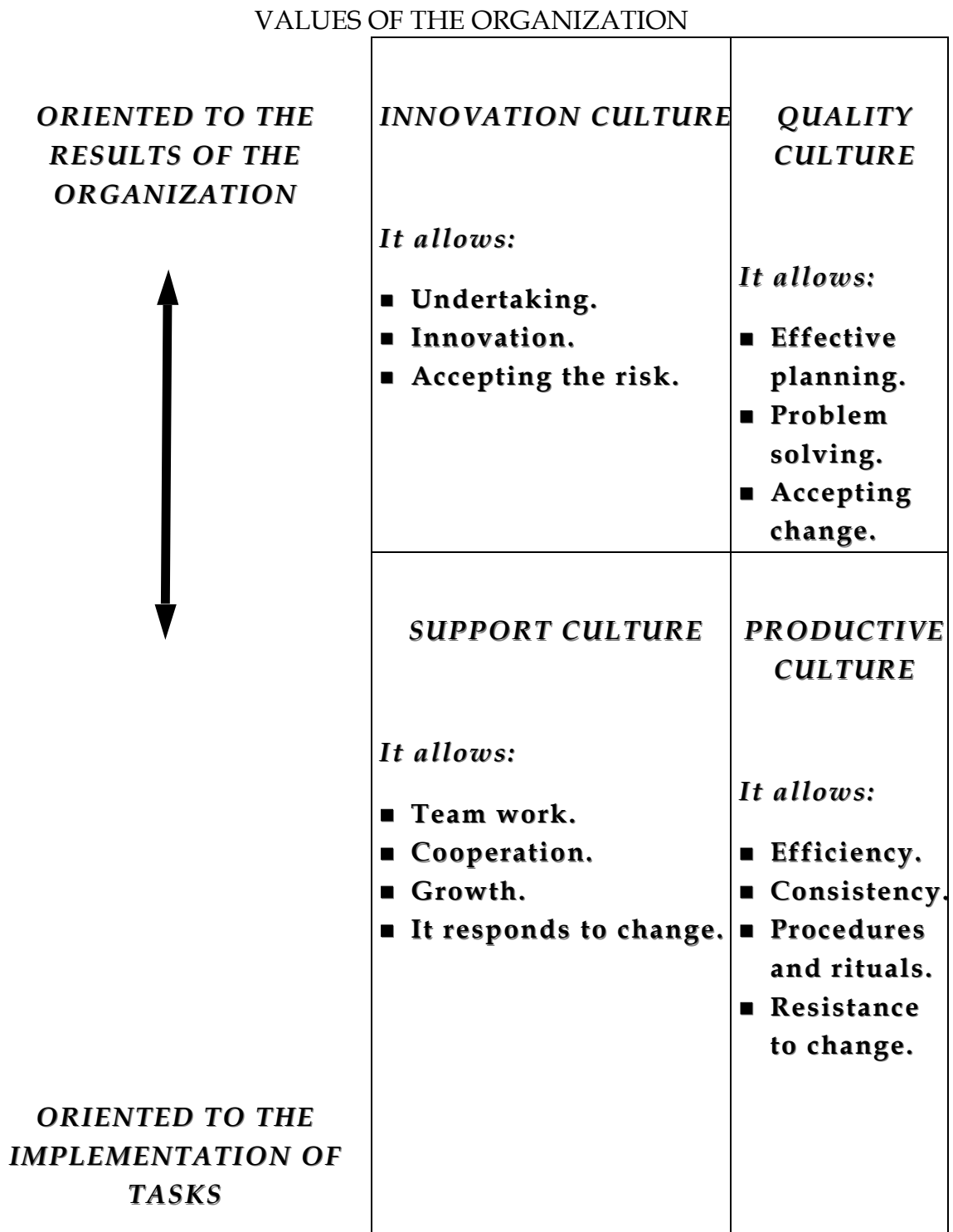
The organizational culture is created along the institutional course and does not allow for violent changes. It shows the degree of internal integration of the organization, expresses its identity and way of reacting; that is, the way its members think, feel and act. In this, the methods and styles of management play a decisive role, as well as the human quality and the degree of competitiveness of the workers (Díaz, Ramírez and Palacios, 2010 and Ponjuán, s.a.).
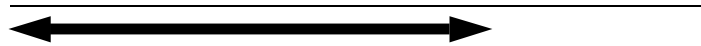
The assimilation or not of the strategic processes depends on its level of development; the reason according to which it is necessary to have it very present for the purpose of directing its refining. Organizational culture facilitates the implementation of strategic planning according to the degree of consistency between the two; or on the contrary, it can become a serious obstacle that prevents or delays change (Díaz, Ramírez and Palacios, 2010 and Rodríguez and Alemañy, 2009).

This influences the workers' interpretation of strategic planning and their action in relation to it. It is important, therefore, to analyze the type of culture existing in the organization in order to mitigate the processes of resistance to change, since the stronger and more entrenched the organizational culture and the greater the change the strategy provokes, the more difficult it will be to achieve congruence between both of them (Rodríguez and Alemañy, 2009).

Díaz, Ramírez and Palacios (2010), classify organizational culture in two dimensions that take into account the orientation of values and the organization. The fundamental aspects regarding this classification system are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Classification of organizational culture according to values of the organization

VALUES OF THE ORGANIZATION

ORIENTED TO THE RESULTS OF THE ORGANIZATION ↕	*INNOVATION CULTURE* *It allows:* - Undertaking. - Innovation. - Accepting the risk.	*QUALITY CULTURE* *It allows:* - Effective planning. - Problem solving. - Accepting change.
	SUPPORT CULTURE *It allows:* - Team work. - Cooperation. - Growth. - It responds to change.	*PRODUCTIVE CULTURE* *It allows:* - Efficiency. - Consistency. - Procedures and rituals. - Resistance to change.
ORIENTED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TASKS		

<---------------------->

SOCIAL
TECHNICAL

ORIENTATION OF THE
ORGANIZATION

Fuente:: proposed by Díaz, Ramírez and
Palacios (2010)

Ponjuán explains that a timely analysis of organizational culture allows information institutions to attend to and understand the different situations that give rise to the existence of certain phenomena, their functioning and the reaction to them.

The functions of the organizational culture are aimed at adapting the institution to the external environment, as well as to the integration of its internal processes, since, facing a changing environment, the information unit must be able to maintain its mission, objectives, strategies and goals.

To do this, the organization must ensure its functioning from internal elements of an integrating nature, including authority distribution, human relations, the stimulus and sanctions system, information flows, internal communication and many more. For this reason, the strategic projection of medical libraries should include a detailed analysis of organizational culture.

3.2 The desired values

Rodríguez and Alemañy (2009), explain that the desired or shared values represent the goals or aspirations that should characterize the organization. They are guiding concepts that go beyond the conventional expression of corporate objectives. They identify the institution and are essential elements of management.

Ronda and Marcané (2009) identify them as tools that contribute to promote and legitimize organizational change, achieve effectiveness in the implementation of strategic planning, increase efficiency and effectiveness of the organization and help systematization of strategic thinking, continuous learning and the sense of commitment and belonging of workers.

In fact, as Diaz, Ramírez and Palacios (2010) point out, the desired values are representative of the organizational culture as part of the corporate identity. The value system of the organization supports the necessary attitudes and skills, translated into practical actions that allow accomplishment of the entity's mission; that is, they make it possible to mobilize the set of capacities of the organization for the sake of common interests.

However, the way this list is often misrepresented does not accurately reflect the basic beliefs that underlie the culture of the organization. This means that the defined

values simply become, as Ronda and Marcané (2009) point out, slogans and they are not potentiated as internal energy that drives the library to success.

A review of the ethical assumptions that must govern the behavior of librarians, established in the Statutes of the Cuban Association of Librarians (ASCUBI, 2003) and its subsequent Code of Ethics, as well as the precepts set forth in Law 271 as of 2010. Libraries of the Republic of Cuba, will help to solve this difficulty (Cuba, Council of State, 2010).

3.3 Strategic diagnosis

Strategic diagnosis allows us to review the current state of the organization with respect to its future position. For this, the changing reality of the environment is taken into account. It is a process aimed at identifying the needs of the institution, as well as defining actions to achieve vision (University of Camagüey, CEDET, 2008).

Ronda and Marcané (2009), state that strategic diagnosis has three levels: the analysis of the macro-environment, the analysis of the micro-environment and the analysis of the internal environment of the organization. The first two would make it possible to identify the opportunities and threats that influence the organization because they are based on the study of external factors, while the analysis of the internal environment makes it possible to establish strengths and weaknesses.

On the other hand, Diaz, Ramírez and Palacios (2010) indicate that strategic diagnosis is materialized through external and internal analysis. The former identifies opportunities and threats, while the latter shows the strengths and weaknesses present in the organization.

This criterion coincides with that expressed by Rodríguez and Alemañy (2009), who identify the stages of strategic diagnosis as context and internal analysis, and it also coincides with the one of Ponjuán (s.a.), who denominates them: evaluation of the current situation of the organization, and assessment of the current situation of the environment.

As can be observed, the latter authors group the stages corresponding to analysis of the macro-environment (general environment) and analysis of the micro-environment (competitive environment) to which Ronda and Marcané refer (2009) within the categories of external analysis, context analysis or evaluation of the current situation of the environment.

External analysis represents the contextual framework in which the organization operates. Among the aspects that must be scrutinized as part of it in a medical library are the following:

• Macro-environment or general environment: It analyzes the behavior of economic, political, legal, social, educational, cultural, demographic, legal, ecological and technological forces.

• Micro-environment or competitive environment: It analyzes the behavior of external forces originated by entities belonging to the same sector to which the organization belongs and which produce the same services and goods in function of a common market, which generates competitiveness. Within the categories to be analyzed from this perspective are users, suppliers, real competitors, potential competitors, products and services, among others.

For its part, internal diagnosis could be carried out from the elements established by IASCM (2007a) for informational audits. Logically, this study should take into account the elaboration of products and the provision of services, summarizing the results of the activities of the library (Ponjuán, s.a.).

Once the internal analysis is completed, a sufficiently clear idea of the capabilities of the library to face the environment will be available, which allows definition of positioning vis-a-vis users compared to other organizations that are or may be competing (Díaz, Ramírez and Palacios, 2010, Rodríguez and Alemañy, 2009, Ponjuán, s.a. and Ronda and Marcané, 2009).

The above-mentioned authors coincide in pointing to the SWOT matrix as a management tool of great usefulness in carrying out strategic diagnosis, although the BAFI matrix (Pardo et al., 2006) can also be used. The importance of these tools is that they allow us to detect the limitations and errors that prevent the increase in performance of a system; as well as suggest how they should be improved (Arroyo and Berenguer, 2009 and Díaz, Ramírez and Palacios, 2010).

Regardless of the instrument used, strategic diagnosis should analyze the external environment in depth, according to its two key dimensions: macro- and micro-environment, as well as the internal environment.

3.4 The definition of the scenarios

A scenario is the description of the possible environments in which the organization will operate during the future and which will influence its behavior. It is what is expected to happen, not what is desired. Historical analysis, the mission, the results of strategic diagnosis (weaknesses, strengths, threats and opportunities), the involved groups and the key factors are taken into account.

The latter represent all the natural or social events that could have favorable or unfavorable influence on the organization, which in turn has no possibility to prevent or provoke them (Díaz, Ramírez and Palacios, 2010 and Rodríguez and Alemañy, 2009).

This analysis is clearly prospective. It takes into account possible changes or unforeseen phenomena that the organization may face. Scenarios are forecasting models; reasonable assumptions about the future of the organization.

In this case, foresight is not intended to indicate the most probable state of the environment as the basis of the study of strategies, but to draw up an inventory of the different possible states to reduce the crisis risk through different strategies (Rodríguez and Alemañy, 2009).

The elaboration of scenarios is extremely complex and requires a high level of information and specialization. Diaz, Ramírez and Palacios (2010) recommend elaborating three versions of scenarios: one positive, which does not necessarily have to be optimal or favorable, an intermediate or more probable one and a negative one, which does not have to be very bad or unfavorable.

To each of them it is necessary to fix its probability of occurrence, with emphasis on the intermediate one, which is defined as the one of action to jump to the future. Contingency options should be prepared in the event that the other two are given. This reduces uncertainty in organizational development.

When even the declaration of the most probable scenario is not indicated in the strategic planning of a medical library, the rest of the analysis is seriously compromised given the lack of organizational perspective.

3.5 Vision

Ponjuán (s.a.) explains that vision is just the image of the future that we want to create described in the present tense, as if it happened at this very moment. Vision shows where you want to go at the institutional level, and what the entity will be like once it gets there.

It is the integrated, intuitive, participative, imaginative, objective and precise synthesis of the aspirations, wishes and interests of the members of the organization; the crystallization of the expected future result that the members of the information unit agree on.

Vision orients, guides, aligns, creatively and proactively projects thought, the reason according to which it must anticipate the requirements of the users when it comes to explaining the raison d'être of the entity.

Its elaboration requires that there is full identification, correspondence and integration from teamwork among all the members of the organization, whether they are executives, professionals or technicians. This will make it much more feasible to achieve the future image that is intended. That is, it must be projected in a shared way, which gives it an original perspective of an identity nature.

Consensus and active participation of all the above mentioned factors are decisive in its materialization, in addition to users, whose criteria are fundamental as the final destination of the information services.

Its elaboration is therefore not an easy process, since it draws on the analysis of all the elements analyzed so far in relation to strategic planning. In addition, it requires a high sense of commitment and belonging of the group of workers with the organization in order to harmonize criteria.

This can be somewhat complicated if there are tendencies to individualism or conventionalism on the part of the members of the organization, which in turn accentuates the processes of resistance.

With the appropriate adaptations, as a rule, many of the medical libraries in Cuba have adopted as vision the one declared by CNICM, a speech that complies with the aforementioned regularities. That is:

• It has a predetermined horizon.
• It is written in a simple and clear way so that everyone understands it and engages.
• It is imaginative, but objective.
• It is positive and encouraging.
• It is not expressed in figures.
• It is expressed in the present tense as if it had already been reached (Díaz, Ramírez and Palacios, 2010).

3.6 Definition of the areas of key results, the goals, the strategic objectives and the action plan

As its name implies, the areas of key results are the key areas of impact towards which the actions of the organization are oriented in a given time. Of course, there

must be logical correspondence between them, the goals, the objectives and the strategies.

Goals are the results that an organization wishes to achieve in the long term. As such, they orient the institution towards the future, so they are expressed from declarations of an ample nature. It is obvious that, given their global nature, they lack immediateness, the reason that determines the need to set objectives.

These objectives specify when, how and what will be done to reach the proposed goal. Objectives need details, for which they fragment goals into specific tasks; define what the parties should do in relation to the whole, whether it is in the long, medium or short term, in order to transform the mission statement into concrete actions, through which it is possible to measure institutional progress (Ponjuán, Sa and Díaz, Ramírez and Palacios, 2010).

Accordingly, they are one of the fundamental categories of management activity since they condition the way of acting of the organization. They represent the expression of a purpose to be obtained (Rodríguez and Alemañy, 2009).

Of course, the formulation of strategies makes it possible to complete the proposed objectives. In that sense, the objectives would be the purposes to be achieved, while the strategy represents the means to achieve them. Strategies, which are characterized by their dynamism, flexibility and constant transformation, are the set of operations to be carried out by the organization to achieve the objectives, hence we can talk about strategic objectives.

All this is specified in the action plan or strategic plan, a document that details how the organizational strategy will be carried out, according to objectives, their respective actions, measurement or evaluation criteria, participants, deadlines, among other aspects . The formulation of the action plan must respond to specific elements (Ponjuán, S. a.).

This ratifies the need to clearly define the institutional goals and, consequently, the strategic objectives, which should not be confused with the work functions to be performed by any library located in a health unit.

For example, Functional Guidance 11/07, issued by CNICM (2007c), regulates a series of functional regulations common to Primary Health Care (PHC) libraries, according to the budgets that govern the operation of SNICM. However, these functions should not be confused with strategic objectives, given their comprehensive nature. Functions frame tasks; activities that, well worked, could fulfill strategic objectives.

The drafting of the strategic objectives must be characterized by an integrative physiognomy, consistent with the mission and institutional vision. Confusing functions with objectives does not allow strategic planning to be contextualized, making it difficult to articulate all the elements that make it up.

The objectives should be inserted into strategic planning, while favoring the insertion of the rest of the elements that integrate it, since in essence they constitute the basis of the strategy to be defined.

Strategies designed to fulfill the objectives, as well as the respective measurement criteria established for their evaluation, should be accurately stated. All this will be reflected in the action plan; the instrument that should clearly reflect the logical and systemic relationship existing among the areas of key results / goals / strategic

objectives / actions. This instrument will establish precise dates for completion of the various envisaged actions. (Rodríguez and Alemañy, 2009).

4. CONCLUSIONS

The library responds to interests and social information needs, so that its strategic planning should detail the groups involved in the fulfillment of the mission of the unit, whether they are internal or external stakeholders.

Similarly, careful consideration should be given to the analysis of the organizational culture, because it shows the identity of the library and the degree of internal integration achieved by it. This is related to the enunciation of the desired values as superior aspirations that must characterize the actions of the institution and contribute to promote organizational change, according to their internalization by each of the members of the organization.

Once this has been done, we will be able to proceed with strategic diagnosis, which is just a review of the current state of the organization with respect to its future position based on the analysis of the external and internal environment. The use of a management tool, such as the SWOT matrix, will make it possible to identify the relationship between internal and external forces.

This analysis will lead to the definition of the scenarios in which the organization will function and which will influence its behavior, as well as the organizational vision as an image of the future that is desired for the entity.

Another aspect of strategic planning is the definition of the areas of key results, that is, the areas of impact towards which the actions of the library are oriented in a given time. There must be logical correspondence among them, the goals, the objectives and the strategies.

The former represent the results that the library wants to achieve in the long term. Given their global nature, they lack immediateness, a reason that determines the need to establish objectives as ends to be achieved. At the same time, the formulation of the strategies allows us to visualize the means that will enable the proposed objectives to be achieved, all of which will be shown in the action plan that will in turn express the actions with which it intends to reverse the deficiencies detected in the process of diagnosis.

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