

Implementation of Quality Models in the Third Sector in Spain

Alfonso Conde Lacárcel (PhD)

University of Granada/ Faculty of Education Sciences,
Department of Research Methods and Diagnosis in Education, Spain

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Abstract

The Third Sector of Social Action in Spain has been the object of numerous studies. These studies were conducted in order to discover its reality and to favor its visibility and for the permanent improvement of the work processes with different groups generally at risk of exclusion. In 2015, the data provided by the Social Action N.G.O Platform and the Third Sector Platform at the national level indicated numerous difficulties which were to be resolved, including the adequate development of quality management systems. At the same time, the results of a research thesis were presented in the city of Granada so as to discover the level of implementation of quality management systems in N.G.Os, N.P.Os, and associations of the First Level. We followed a methodology of mixed research with the use of questionnaires and interviews on a sample focused on offering community and educational services in non-formal education. After reviewing different aspects, this document presents the continuation of this thesis of research in this occasion at national level. It also aims to complete the panorama that was initiated and was offered to the different administrations and organizations, information for the improvement of its educational management and intervention processes, and equating the fundamental rights of Spanish society. The expected results will require the development of different initiatives for the implementation of quality management models adapted to each area of intervention, following models already combined in European countries, including the Great Britain.

Keywords: Quality control, non-formal education, social justice, third sector

Introduction

According to the data obtained from the research carried out on the Third Sector of Social Action in Spain by Villafranca, Ramírez del Río, Delgado and Gómez González (NGO Platform for Social Action, 2015), the trend on the implementation of models of quality management in non-

governmental organizations, non-profit organizations and associations (hereinafter abbreviated as N.G.Os, N.P.Os and associations) suffers paralysis and stagnation.

According to these researchers, and as found in our research thesis focused on the province of Granada (Spain), the investment that have to be made by organizations of first level (small or very small organizations with an annual budget up to €30,000.00), when implementing these systems, models, norms and/or codes of ethics and manuals of good practice, is of an amount that is often inexpensive. This is both in terms of the economics and at the time of training of the personnel, leaving time for work and intervention with the groups at risk (Conde, 2016).

However, in spite of the few investigations to this respect in our country, voices continue to emerge and call for the need to develop management models, appropriate to non-profit organizations, so as to be oriented towards excellence (Tico, García & Gallego, 2016). At the same time, it aims at solving other problems related to the poor visibility of the work of this type of organizations; also, the provision of services or the possible alliances give rise to a collaborative work in the network (NGO Platform for Social Action, 2016).

One aspect that is still not taken into account and which we considered to be relevant in characterizing all the members of the Third Sector of Social Action is the inclusion in the investigated sample of organizations with religious and sports associations or others that do not meet up to any of the requirements. Thus, this will enable them to be incorporated in the list of organizations and/or associations and would nevertheless help them to perform functions of giving attention to groups at risk of exclusion, community development, educational, etc. In the course of this study, we were able to verify outdated and/or duplicated organizations under different criteria at the local, regional, or national level.

Back to the theme of the current discussion, in the diagnosis made for the elaboration of the 3rd Strategic Plan of the Third Sector of Social Action in Spain (2016), the maximum use of its resources is a requirement on the part of the society that is made available to them today i.e., to N.G.O's, N.P.O's and associations. Subsequently, it is for this reason that aspects such as the professionalization and the implementation of these instruments are precise. These aspects can be found in our research thesis with the improvement of the educational, training or promotional services of the community. This, however, is in addition to the people in those few organizations that had implemented (9%) or were implementing (12%) some quality management systems or standards.

Small and very small N.G.Os, N.P.Os and associations with minimal budgets, but with a great motivation and involvement with the social groups

that are not equal with the rest of society, are a crucial cohesive and compensating element. From our point of view, it also includes those that carry out educational and training activities outside the regulated systems and that contribute to the socio-community development of the people. That is why another of the aspects that we investigated through our questionnaire is the different methodologies used in the work with these groups.

Within these social and educational agents studied, the E.F.Q.M. model is the most extended. This is together with the ISO Standard and the N.G.O Standard with 'Quality in the province of Granada' being palpable in the rest of organizations surveyed by ourselves due to the lack of knowledge of these tools to improve their work.

According to the results found in our research thesis, which can be consulted entirely in the institutional repository of the University of Granada, as well as in the national thesis database (Teseo), we were only able to establish trends, and not generalizations, due to the difficulties of access to the sample.

The lack of support for the implementation of quality management systems as well as similar instruments for the evaluation and improvement of work processes by the different central, regional, and local administrations is another great barrier to be broken. Furthermore, we then proposed the extension of the study carried out by ourselves, this time at a national level, and with the help of the research group Ithaca (H.U.M. 983) of the University of Granada.

Methodology

Design

The design that we have developed is framed within the research with descriptive, applied quasi-experimental analysis based on the main objective of the study:

"To investigate the degree of implementation at national level of systems quality management in N.G.O's, N.P.O's and defined associations' first level by the T.S.A.S (small or very small) that develop activities of non-formal education with groups at risk of exclusion".

As secondary and complementary objectives, we propose:

"To identify the main elements of the educational - training work developed by this type of organizations with their users".

"To analyze working protocols of this type of organizations in relation to quality assessment systems and instruments through the responses of staff and volunteers"

Sample

The selected sample will be extracted from the databases at national, regional, and local levels. Here, we focused on our research interests that was raised in the initial thesis on N.G.O's, N.P.O's and associations that work with groups at risk of exclusion and that respond to the following areas:

- Educational organizations.
- Care for the disabled.
- Socio-cultural organizations.
- Directed to childhood.
- Aid to the suburbs and social promotion.
- Non-governmental organizations.
- Social-beneficial.
- Attention to groups at risk.
- Religiously.

Consequently, the sample has an intentional character, seen as a criteria besides that of the social and educational functions to be developed, which refers to organizations that respond to the definition that the Third Sector of Social Action do at First Level organizations. They have a low budget and, at least, 3 years of experience in serving these groups. In particular, it will consist of the managers, professionals, and volunteers who are part of these organizations.

Instruments

The instrument used for the study is the electronic version of the Questionnaire for Evaluation of the Level of Application of Quality Standards to Non-Formal Education (Conde Lacárcel & López Núñez, 2013). This instrument was designed for the research thesis that has already been exposed previously and validated both by a panel of experts from the University of Granada and professionals related to the subject of our research. In addition, they have followed the validation protocol developed by Bustos (2006) and by the research practice itself.

The questionnaire was designed with the intention to collect information not only on the process of implementation of different models, systems, tools, or standards of quality management, but also about the operation of the organization (ideas, operating protocols, communication, etc.) and the educational partner actions carried out.

It follows a 5 point Likert scale from 1 to 5 that correlates from lower to higher degrees of congruence with the statement being made, as well as elements NS (do not know) and NA (not suitable). This is alongside an open-ended space for any other indications. In its final version, it has a Cronbach Alpha coefficient from .979 to 168 elements.

Results

We are currently in the phase of data collection. So until we have a complete and substantiated analysis, we will not present them in this document. The online questionnaire will be carried out with the help of the Qualtrics Platform that is used by other university and research institutions, such as Harvard University.

Conclusions

In our previous study, we found a series of evolutionary patterns in regard to the implementation of these systems, rules, and instruments of quality management at the local level very discouraging. This is seen both in the access to the sample and in the situation in which we continue to find with respect to N.G.O's, N.P.O's and associations.

In our view, there is still a lack of professionalism in these small organizations in the intervention processes, which is not contrary to their effectiveness. That is, the work they are currently developing as educators and social developers is effective and functional, but equally improvable.

On the other hand, and in relation to our main objective of the investigation, we intend to establish a real panorama that makes tangible the needs for change in the Third Sector of Social Action. It is not possible to develop the objectives proposed by the different platforms and federations, confederations, and singular entities if there is no real awareness for the rest of the non-registered organizations, or if there is a lower level of the need for improvement and a proposal of different types of aid to the first level of organizations.

It is due to this that we aim to obtain throughout this year the necessary data to carry out grounded proposals for improvements that are complementary to those that have already been done before.

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