Accountability issues in non-governmental organizations applying quality management

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In Colombia, cases of alleged corruption and questions regarding the inner management capabilities and transparency in the processes of non-governmental organizations have increased the pressure for them to respond to the demands of a variety of stakeholders. As stakes have risen, competition to show better results, sustainability and larger impact has become fiercer. A more demanding society pushes the nonprofit world to use better managerial tools. To achieve proper accountability, organizations have adopted quality management tools from the private world.

Quality, understood as the degree of fulfillment between the organizations’ performance and the stakeholders’ expectations, plays a key role as the organizations faces a more demanding accountability. The analysis and understanding of the relationship between stakeholders and organizations is the main issue around good performance.

To address problems or demands in terms of performance, many NGOs have sought the ISO certification. This attempt to improve their work with the communities by standardization has proven not to be so useful. First, the ISO certification does not ensure compliance of the stakeholders’ expectations. Second, for the organizations there is no real understanding what the relation is between the certification and quality. Third, there is an overall lack of basic knowledge of quality management and its use for NGOs.

Stakeholders do agree that standardization is necessary. As this kind of organizations provides a public service, they should be an example for other organizations both private and public, of what quality means. Nevertheless, in Colombia there are many factors that play against this quality assurance. In the country, there are many territories where there is none or small government presence. In this situation, NGOs turn themselves in to the sole provider of services to the communities. The expectations of the community turn into immediate demands. As organizations respond to basic needs no matter how it is done, as long as they comply. Then this becomes a result oriented approach.

There is no prior standard that the organization can (in terms of viability) of want (in terms of desire) to comply, because the expectation of the community is so basic, that any result would be a good result, as long as the basic need is fulfilled. Or, from a donor’s point of view, the performance and the process to achieve results do not matter, because there is an emotional or a religious connection with the NGO that inhibits the adequate assessment of managerial tools and procedures.

If the stakeholders’ expectations are defining NGOs performance, this analysis seeks to understand how these expectations influence on the use of managerial tools of quality in NGOs in Colombia. And the way quality management tools help the organizations to improve their performance, results, ensures accountability, and the satisfaction of the “client needs”. The basic awareness of managerial tools could derive in a better understanding of the everyday performance and to truly fulfill the stakeholders’ needs and expectations.
Key words: non-governmental, quality, quality management, stakeholders’ needs and expectations for nonprofit organizations

INTRODUCTION

For non-governmental organizations one of the main priorities is to be able to respond to their stakeholders expectations and to show the utmost transparency and ethical behavior. This immediately demands that the organizational procedures respond to expectations on every step of their value chain, as well as they respond to the core values and mission.

As we have many management tools in the private world that have proven useful to achieve quality and accountability in the non-governmental world, this document will analyze the use of the ISO certification within managerial theory. The objective is to determine if the use of these tools actually responds to an increasing set of stakeholders demands.

Non-governmental organizations are facing a higher demand of accountability from years before. Stakeholders claim more actions that improve the non-governmental intervention, be as organized as private organizations, deliver results, be transparent and efficient, be sustainable. This leaves behind the charity work for “social entrepreneurial organizations”, combining the best of both worlds. As a result, a number of tools from the private world have turned into the non-profit world. The competition between them leaves with no other choice but to improve their performance by using these new tools, and to respond to a various actors which have legitimate interest it their actions.

Because this new demands are not only about final results, Quality Management becomes has a connection to accountability, to ensure that the procedures inside the NGOs also respond to expectations in terms governance, labor conditions, and well established and monitored processes. The key issue is to guarantee, by managerial tools, that there is quality among all the non-governmental organizations’ intervention, which fulfills expectations of its many stakeholders.

Organizations in Colombia have been working in conditions of internal conflict for the past 60 years. The nonprofit sector appears to be filling up the space between the private world and the government and embraces the challenges left behind. In Colombia, even though the history of nonprofit organizations can be traced before¹, with the 1991 Constitution, the decentralization and the democratization of the country and the strengthening of public participation, brought new dynamics for the sector², and by the same source, it brought a much more empowered civil society that demands more accountable organizations both private and public, including the nonprofit. Through the years, people have overcome the charitable solutions, to demand a more sustainable transparent and effective action and intervention.

This document in its first part will explain what does quality mean, supporting in a series of theories and models to analyze the state of the art of the main concepts, to convey on

² Villar, El Tercer Sector, 88. Authors´ translation
The theoretical foundations of quality management in the nonprofit world. The second part will analyze those concepts comparing with the collection of data (qualitative and quantitative) for NGOs in Colombia and representative stakeholders of how quality management tools and resources are put into practice in social interventions. Finally, this document will present an analysis on how non-governmental organizations are using managerial tools to improve their performance and stakeholders’ satisfaction. By understanding what quality management (QM) is, the organization will reach proper accountability.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Quality

Since the 1950s, academics have talked about quality and its definition. Joseph M. Juran is considered a pioneer in terms of understanding quality. In his book, “Juran’s quality book”3, he establishes two meanings of quality: One, that quality means “features of products which meet customer needs and thereby provide the customer satisfaction”. The second one, that quality means “freedom from deficiencies”.4

Later on, Juran established that quality had changed its focus from conformance “to specification to meeting customer expectations”, regarded as a definition “fit for customer use”. This suggests an earlier step, to understand the customer needs and expectations and establish a client profile. Meeting expectations is nothing more that understanding “the client” and to provide adequate ways to communicate to report its demands.

Today, the definition of quality is not about exclusively of the products or processes anymore. It is targeted to meet customer requirements. In other words, “it is not a matter of what you do or how you do it but who uses it that counts”.5 Use, as a benefit for the customer must be fulfilled because it is expected to.

For this purpose, the definition of quality will be as established in the ISO 9000:2000 as “the degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfills a need or expectation that is stated, general implied or obligatory”.6 The ISO 9000 family is one of the management tools for quality that have been used in the NGO world.

This “degree” of fulfillment is expressed by (pp) the needs, requirements and expectations that are constantly changing from various stakeholders with different interests. So quality is the difference between the standard stated, implied or required (the expectations7) and the standard reached (the performance).

Stakeholders, along with the customers, are the ones who establish the needs, the expectations and requirements. The difference between a customer and a stakeholder is that these last ones do not necessary receive the product or service, but they have an “interest in the performance or success of an organization”(pp)

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4 Rose, Project Quality, 5
5 Rose, Project Quality, 16-17
6 Rose, Project Quality, 17
8 Expectations as implied needs or requirements.
For example, in NGO intervention, the beneficiaries receive the service, but the donors have a legitimate interest that has to be fulfilled. To analyze quality as a main concept around accountability is to understand that the expectations from stakeholders refer to the procedures and inner governance of the organizations, as well as the final results.

**The ISO 9000 family**

The main objective of the ISO framework is to achieve quality of the services or products and to lead to customer satisfaction\(^9\). It also created standard procedures to ensure that in all lines of production and in every step of the value chain, there will be a documented process.

This documentation is meant to standardize the way we measure quality, from the production to the client satisfaction. The ISO family was created to provide measurements on quality and guidelines on quality management, so the client will see the certificate and be “sure” that his/her expectations (whatever they are) will be fulfilled.

As a managerial tool, ISO has also been imported to the nonprofit world. Many NGOs in search of the quality demanded from stakeholders, have reached for an ISO certification. The process demands a lot of time and it is expensive, but still nonprofits are proudly showing their ISO certification as an assurance of quality a good performance and part of their accountability reports.

**Total Quality Management**

The term Quality Management is also defined in the ISO 9000 as “coordinated activities to direct and control an organization with regards to quality“\(^10\).

This definition implies several characteristics\(^11\), being the most important for this documents’ purpose the customer focus and improvement. As we had said before, the new definition of quality focuses on the customer, and because organizations depend on their customers, they “should understand current and future customer needs, meet customer requirements and strive to exceed customer expectations“\(^12\). Continual improvement has to be a permanent objective of the organization: To question everything and to look for better ways to do things, improving current performance, methods and targets.

Total Quality Management (TQM) is defined as a “practical but strategic approach to running an organization that focuses on the needs of customers and clients. It rejects any outcome other than excellence (...)“\(^13\). It aims to develop these terms to a level in which the company creates a culture “where the aim of every member of staff is to delight customers (...) In TQM, the customer is sovereign“\(^14\). So phrases as customer is always right, will apply in TQM. For the main purpose is to fulfill the customers’ and clients expectations.

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For every customer expectation will be a response on the company through TQM and it will move as the new expectations arise. The performance of every staff member will be to narrow the gap to the customer expectations.

Performance is seen with a holistic approach. Rather as a sum of actions and pieces, is to adapt mechanisms for this actions and pieces to be connected and executed along with the organizations’ strategy.

This is no more than going beyond the stakeholder approach where it was enough to have stakeholders happy (with more profit), and now managers and leaders are in pursuit of “great products, happy customers and loyal staff”\textsuperscript{15}, by building a high performance culture in the organization.

Therefore, organizations nowadays see their performance with yes, the shareholder satisfaction, but also employees and customers, and how the business contribute to a society as: “a noble purpose and a clear inviolate values have never been more important”\textsuperscript{16}

**Stakeholder theory**

In the same direction on seeking only to satisfy stakeholders needs and expectations, R. Edward Freeman introduces the Stakeholder Theory, based on the legitimate right to claim by customers, suppliers, local communities and employees: “just as stockholders have a right to demand certain actions by management, so do other stakeholders have the right to make claims”\textsuperscript{17}. So the Stakeholder theory is an approach of organizational management and business ethics that addresses certain moral behavior and values in the organizations management. The definition of stakeholder by Freeman is “any group or individual that can affect or be affected by the realization if a company’s objectives”\textsuperscript{18}. By this definition organizations should seek stakeholder satisfaction inside and out: from employees and unions, to clients and external suppliers and to any social group that have or could have a direct interest, with no territorial limit.

A manager should pursue a relationship with all stakeholders because it is “a matter of achieving the organizations’ objectives which is in turn a matter of survival. (...) balancing and interacting with multiple relationships and multiple objectives”\textsuperscript{19}. Therefore, a stakeholder approach gives management yet another tool to identify and understand stakeholders and their interests to fulfill organizational internal goals as well as external interests.


\textsuperscript{16} Hope and Player, *Beyond Performance*, 12.

\textsuperscript{17} Marianne Jennings, “Business and Society: The tough issues of economics, Social Responsability and Business,” in *Business Ethics: Case Studies and Selected Readings*(Mason, Ohio: Thomson/South-Western, 2006), 98.


METHODS

As social issues or opportunities are complex and multidimensional in its own nature, several methods are and can be used to structure projects and to measure its outcomes and outputs to respond to these issues. Quality can be certainly understood in a quantitative way: how much money did the organization made, how much products have been sold, number of clients, and percentage of increase. But, regarding expectations it is safe to say that they have to measure in a more qualitative way. This document will not see methodology as quantitative vs. qualitative, but how these methods can be used together and how the complement themselves. The methodology is seen as a multimethod research employing various research methods for data collecting and analysis. In this approach “researchers employ two or more research methods, but may or may not restrict the research to a single worldview”20.

This investigation used some tools to gather quantitative data to have a stage of comparison with the qualitative data. The use of a survey questionnaire with closed ended questions, gave the investigation a small sample of how non-governmental organizations understand the use a key quality characteristics. As these characteristics are not, at first, seen in a quantitative form, they were collected in a quantitative way by supporting them with quantitative data for further analysis.

The questionnaire was used for administrative convenience and widening of the findings to reach out as many organizations around Colombia to be validated on their quality management approach. Quantitative method was used because among other strengths, it is easy to manipulate and categorize.

The justification of this investigation is based in two main points. One, regarding the four purpose of a research are: exploration, explanation, description and prediction, and two, its significance for its practice (pp). As the research questions ask on how to close de gap between performance and stakeholders’ expectations, the combination of methods will provide a view of quality in the non-governmental organizations and significant findings.

Data collection

For this document there were two ways for gathering information. A survey prepared with 20 questions. Three were established as open ended questions and 17 as multiple choice questions. With this survey organizations21 had the chance to address issues of performance, quality and stakeholders.

We divided the questions into three categories:

1. Notion and quality or performance
2. Stakeholder identification and communication channels
3. Tools of quality measurement: QM tools


21 For this document, a survey was send to NGOs working in poverty alleviation in Colombia to understand how they measure their performance, and how they understand quality. All these organizations have been working on these issues between 15 and 30 years, and they have an income per year between 2000 and 4000 million pesos, which establishes them for this area of NGOs as a medium range among NGOs.
The interview was performed with 4 main questions and as free as possible. The interviews where design to understand from different stakeholders with an interest in the NGOs intervention. The main questions were

1. What do you look in an organization when donating? The minimum requirements
2. Do you ask for the same standards to all NGOs as a donor?
3. How do you make sure that the organization knows your expectations?
4. What does it mean to you that the NGOs intervention has a quality standard?

The data was collected and separated among the main themes selected in the TQM theory. The answers among interviewers were transcript and then matched the responses of the organizations with the stakeholders` expectations.

The data has been analyzed according the QM principles. First the organizations were asked about the definition of quality, and the understanding of performance, and the managerial tools addressed in terms of leadership, (direction and purpose of the organization or planning); involvement of people and how often the management asks for their employees feedback; the process approach in terms of how to meet desirable results for every task and to identify how every task works together to understand the need to include QM tools and to set as a permanent goal of the organizations its continuous improvement.

**DATA ANALYSIS- FINDINGS**

"a non-profit organization providing a social service, must be certified by something, i.e., having a soup kitchen because I'm good to people, is a public service. If you want to make the club to look at the stars, perfect, no one has to certify it, because that has nothing to do with the public. But while having to do with a public service, I do think there should be some entity certifying standards, a minimum. Family Welfare is fully regulated, what are the standards for food, what are the nutritional standards, what are minimum criteria to care for children or old people. If I am the nun of a little town in Colombia, I already have standards, not that it does not have them, people know they have them. (...) what I experienced is that if people do self-regulation would be the first form of self-control. Because if they close the first nursing home because they are not washing the sheets, having or not having a contract with the state, the service is the same, and humans are the same."

The 1994 ISO framework started as a set of rules that aimed to help documenting every step of the production in the companies. This had a perverse response as the ISO 9000 "built a bureaucracy of procedures and forms that had very little effect on quality". This perverse cycle has ended in the NGO world were organizations are getting a certification that they do not really understand the need?

To find out more about this need, we asked organizations for their definition of quality. The answers provided the first finding of this analysis: people use the word quality, but they do not understand what quality really means. Words such as efficiency, service and clients were the most used by the organizations, and lead us to the main concepts that

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22 Angela Escallón, Personal interview, Bogotá, Colombia November 10, 2014.
23 Hoyle, *Quality Management*, 96
24 This was an open question, for the organizations to answer freely.
define quality and how the organizations perceive, understand and act upon. Answers as: “Optimal state of improvement” and “Process management for continuous improvement”, present the most accurate definition (11.8 % of the data collected) since QM tools nature is precisely to find a way to get feedback for continuous improvement. The answers referred either to expectations or to performance but not the relation that is intrinsic to the definition of quality. For example, “to do things the right way” can be understood as an expectation, and as a performance in processes. “Resistance to time” is also an ambiguous answer, because regarding to sustainability is definitely one of the main expectations of a stakeholder, as well as an organizations’ goal. You could say that if the organizations “do things right”, it would irremediably turn into the clients satisfaction. And that is definitely not the case as we would see later on.

In terms of standards, Colombian governmental institutions have been trying to establish standards for the NGO intervention. Standards have been especially important, in terms of reporting and service especially in programs for children. But also there is an increased need to have an ISO certification. For Rachele Morgante25, quality is defined as standards, impact and transparency, which can be achieved by giving specific instruction to the organizations: “What I look is the financial structure, governance model, the experience they have had previous projects, if they are accepted in the community, the history they have in the community, and more or less all the organizational part. At the project level, usually depends on what you’re looking for. For example in projects that involve children, it all comes down to more coverage in places with no State presence”

For NGOs that work with child nutrition following the same example, the ICBF (Colombian Institute for Family Welfare), have set up specific standards of nutrition with guidelines and formats that the organizations must follow if they want to continue receiving governmental aid. These standards and very specific and rigid, and its compliance suggests a great amount of administrative work, that not every organization can comply. This is a matter of “can”, different from “not knowing”, because they do know they need to apply certain rules, but they choose not to. This can be explained as many stakeholders do not care what happens inside of organization but the results: “Once one makes the vote of confidence in an organization, (...) then I think it is not power the donor be intervening in the internal processes. Like when I trust a bank, what I see is that the bank does well, but I'm not every day watching to see if they will break or waiting to tell me who decide on the Board bank manager or anything. I hope to have a good attention as a customer, and institutional strength. That's what I ask any entity, and is also asking the third sector”26

To understand more about the definition of quality, there was a follow up question: Which characteristics define quality in organizations like yours? Again, the most frequent words were: commitment and service. This gives us how NGOs perceive themselves and the work they do has an intrinsic connection to their own performance. This is about processes (efficiency), commitment (of the team and to the objectives, transparency), human resources, good management (planning, organization) and to comply with objectives (client satisfaction, impact, effectiveness). All of them part of TQM theory.

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25 Rachele Morgante, Personal interview, Bogotá, Colombia November 15, 2014.
26 Cristina Alvarez, Personal interview, Bogotá, Colombia November 13, 2014.
How does the organization define de parameters of quality?

Graphic 1, represents the quality criteria. 47% of the organizations understand the parameters as quality planning. Quality planning has to do with establishing goals, and planning processes. The organization that stated “Other” said that it is based on results, the participation and commitment of every person involved in the process. The positive response of the community is how the organization defines quality, so if the results are good, the beneficiaries won’t ask about the processes. As this document establishes, the core base of QM is customer satisfaction the identification of who that client is, who has the right to challenge my intervention, is basis for answering this question. For example the beneficiaries always will base their expectations on the result, so all planning can be directed to the satisfaction of the final deliverable. If the stakeholder is the donor, the report will combine results of the entire project (outcomes and outputs and the financials): “In our culture where there is so much distrust, the more evidence one gives you the donor, the more evidence one gives to the person, to show that their money was invested first invested. That it is invested properly, second, with results, third. The more evidence one can give, people are more relaxed, because the basis on which the relationship I think there is a lot of mistrust is established. By nature our culture is so suspicious, that people will take advantage of situations.”

To define the criteria, NGOs have turned into the ISO certification. Some of the organizations have supported these actions on the ISO family. 23,5% of the surveyed organizations are ISO certified. As said before, the ISO family can be useful, but it has to be under a stronger planning structure accompanied by other tools, such as constant review of the staff activities and measures to improve what needs to be improved. This was not mentioned in any answer, seem like the ISO certification turned out to be a sum of document with no real use. The 17,6 % of the organizations answered that the ISO processes are too rigid, and it has not been yet required from stakeholders, or they find that there is no need or interest. The ones that do have interest are now in the process of

27 Escallon, "Interview"
certification: four of the organizations have started the process. This brings a total of 9/17 organizations with ISO or in the process of certification.

Regarding standards, and ISO certifications, the interviewed stakeholders agreed with the organizations: “[these certifications] are very expensive process and because we enter a vicious circle of donors thinking that organizations have to be cheaper in terms of administration, the percentage is less. I am moving between 10 and 12% and I'm being generous; others say “no, I want only my money to be invest only in infrastructure, I just want to buy the notebooks of children” then do not allow them to organizations establish or collect the necessary resources to invest in improvements to internal processes (a) and (b) is looks bad that the money is spent on improving internal processes.”

Asking the organizations about the meaning of performances helps us understand the perception of what makes an intervention or task successful that meets up the expectations. Terms such as “best result”, “compliance of objectives” and “proper execution”, are perceived as the way to conquer successful performance. Which criteria does the organization use to measure performance? To have as insight on how the organizations no only understand what performance but how is it related to QMs first principle: customer focus. And in this case, the stakeholders focus.

Which criteria does the organization use to measure performance?

![Pie chart showing the distribution of criteria used by organizations to measure performance](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>According to direct beneficiaries expectations</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>According to all stakeholders expectations</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>According to results (number of projects executed, money raised)</td>
<td>17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify)</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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The organizations evaluate their performance based only in results. From the expectations of direct beneficiaries (the promise delivered) and according to their results (mostly quantitative indicators: number of project executed, money raised). So success is

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28 Alvarez “personal Interview”
measured by the final results when the program or project has been finalized. The organizations that answer “other”, stated that they measure their performance by the feedback given by the stakeholders, where they find the information for improvement.

How do you measure the organizations’ performance?

Even though many organizations have ISO they do not match its procedures to their performance. None of the organizations certificated understand measurement of quality, as the way in which the organization reaches expectations of the stakeholders to their actual performance. ISO has been a trend used by these organizations, and it is used more as a way for the procedures to be more organized as the NGO grows bigger, and there for the auditing process becomes more demanding. But it seems that it has not yet found the link between having and ISO certification with the actual performance demanded by their stakeholders. To have an ISO certification does not necessarily have an impact of the measurement of performance and, further on, the improvement of the organizations day to day activities.

Asking this question we approach to the definition of quality where performance meets the expectations. To understand more about the stakeholders organizations were asked about the stakeholders identification and for the way they get the information about the expectations of each of the stakeholders and the way their respond to such expectations.

In terms of accountability, there is an initiative called “ONGs por la transparencia” (NGOs for transparency) that urges NGOs to a full disclosure data, from good government, to finance, to donors, to internal administrative issues. This has been a huge need for organizations due to many cases of corruption among the nonprofit world. But has no real impact for two reasons, one, there is not an organization that groups these organizations.

29 The initiative urges NGOs to every year to report details of their intervention. It is not mandatory, but every year many NGOs around the country link to this page and give their data. http://www.ongporlata transparencia.org.co/
And two, this is a voluntary task for NGOs, that has grown but not yet near to have a percentage significant to be representative of all NGOs for establishing standards and guides to the ideal disclosure to achieve proper accountability

How often do you report? As the main answer was “whenever a project ends” with a 39%, the main characteristic of stakeholder reporting surfaces, asQM is understood by projects and not by the general concept of good performance of the organization as a whole. To understand quality as the sum of projects limits the broader sense of QM and does not allow identifying ways of improvement inside the organizations, which it seems only to be measured by number of projects, money raised, increasing donors, and so on. Regarding this, Cristina Alvarez, said: “I think in terms of accountability, there are different levels. There is a report of periodic accounts -can be quarterly-, where you know exactly what is happening with your donation on a specific project, but clearly an organization makes an annual public accountability, must be audited, must be public, has to put on a website. Then one if you look at the type of organization”.

As the main issue of the report surfaced, the survey asked directly of the relationship between the report and quality.

Which do you think is the relationship between the stakeholder report and quality?

![Pie chart showing the distribution of responses to the question: Which do you think is the relationship between the stakeholder report and quality?](#)

- 52.9%: Is the only way quality can be measured
- 35.3%: It has nothing to do with quality, is an activity report
- 11.8%: Other (specify)

An interesting answer was given in “Other” answers, “you get feedback from processes”, addressing one of the main characteristics of QM, that is the chance to understand this feedback and, more importantly, to improve intervention. But there is no real link to the ISO certification, or to the tools that can be useful for this improvement.

**Conclusion**

ISO 9000 is seen as a framework on which we can build and maintain a successful organization. Even though many organizations wish to obtain a certificate, it is not clear what exactly the dispositions of the ISO 9000 family are: Are they standards? Mere
guidelines? Principles? Hoyle\textsuperscript{30} says that the ISO 9000 family has been used wrongly because it was created to respond to interests of people or commercial interests that usually compromise quality. If it is so, the understanding of what can be done given this framework to improve quality and to assess and to understand its limitations since it was implemented will PPP

From the collection and analysis of data and findings, to fully improve as QM theory has established, the organizations have not only to understand the meaning of quality, but the ways in which their performance can be improved. Regarding quality, the organizations relate the term with effectiveness and efficiency. These terms of course are part of the definition of quality and yes, they have to be taking into account. But still in organization which have ISO 9000 the do not connect the ISO certification with quality. So the understanding of the definition of quality and what it implies is still poor. As for stakeholders, they relate quality to a set of criteria that the organizations must comply and the results they have. If you have good results, they do not question anything else.

As the hypothesis of this document was to analyze if these organizations by understanding and using QM procedures will improve NGOs intervention and therefore ensure to fulfill stakeholders’ expectations and succeed in terms of accountability, every aspect of the hypothesis will be addressed, as proven true, but not possible to analyze, as the NGOs lack to have the basic knowledge for understanding QM.

Assuming the ISO certification is helpful for QM processes, the same organizations said that obtaining certification is an expensive process and that the budget of the intervention is either very little in administrative terms or is strictly linked to the wishes of a donor that specifies where should you spend his/her money, and establishes that the report reflects the entire investment.

Organizations that have ISO certification do not agree on ISO to be a tool to measure the performance and quality of processes and organizational intervention. The stakeholders do not see a big advantage in ISO. They know that the standards are necessary but not agree that a standard of the private sector can fulfill the expectations of NGOs, as they do not have the same characteristics.

Stakeholders do agree on is that standards are necessary, that there should be a standardization of many processes as organizations provide a public service, and as such, must make this an example of quality. But in Colombia, in areas where is no governmental presence, NGOs become the government, providing all services. And it is done because of the goodness of people, and there will be no standard that want or can comply. And furthermore, for many stakeholders it does not matter, because there is an emotional connection does not affect their approval of their processes.

As corruption cases came to light, civil society, and the rest of the NGOs stakeholders´ exercised a much stronger oversight of the organizations. They have responded to reports, reporting at different times of the intervention to assure stakeholders and especially the donors that their organization is good, that the donation goes where it’s supposed to go. This is considered as a step towards a true accountability and transparency. Now if the reports are the only way in which the work is being shown (the

\textsuperscript{30}Hoyle, Quality Management, 108-109
good work) of the organization, once most stakeholders begin to pay attention to the internal processes, what will the organizations do?

The data collected proved that the organizations do not understand the meaning of quality and do not understand the ISO certification can be useful to provide more information about the organizations performance, and therefore to comply with the multiple stakeholders and the increasing expectations. The compliance of standards of the government is not seen as a way to improve, but to do the minimum to get financial resources for “a year more”.

In sum, the organizations are basing their accountability solely in results. Still there are no standards on how the organizations must account for their actions and intervention, and this can be explained by the identification of stakeholders and that NGOs in Colombia do not work together. Poor identification can result in a poor report. There will be no quality in NGOs as long as that their managers do not fully understand that quality management can be useful not only for working effectively and efficiently, and also to assure that the stakeholders’ expectations are fulfilled, and that the organization identifies and acts on ways of improvement.


