



Developing our institution through Strategic Thinking

Faculty of Medicine of Sousse, Tunisia



I - Context et problem :

A turbulent environment, an increasingly difficult economic situation characterized by the concentration and the scarcity of the resources in the environment of the organizations, the acceleration of the technological change, fast change of social values etc... are as many elements that mark the end of the certainty that are, up to now, considered as acquired.

Unable to remain indifferent to these major changes in its environment, the Medical School of Sousse (FMS) thus engaged a process of strategic thinking (ST); process which would be a unique opportunity for the mobilization of the faculty as well as partners of the institution around a vision for the future of the school's development and which arranges strategic prospects of development for the years to come. A Steering committee, with the help of a contact person with the necessary expertise in the field, has been charged to conceive, implement and follow up the whole approach of the ST.

II – Purpose and description of the plan :

The process of ST, initiated in January, lies within this scope and mainly aims at equipping the structure of a strategic orientation and a plan of action. The course of this process was planned on 5 stages: 1) preparation of the process; 2) analysis of the internal & external environment; 3) evaluation of the organizational capacity; 4) fixing of the strategic focus; and 5) development of a strategic plan of action.

Supports of data collection (data sheets for every structure), **focus groups** and **policy workshops** made it possible to develop the plan of strategic focus (PSF). Almost all the teaching staff (gathered by service, by department,...) administrative staff, as well as the students, were targeted, at some point, to take part in this exercise

III – Observed and anticipated impacts:

III.1 – Values and beliefs :

Human development represents the starting point and the final aim of each of our interventions. Therefore, we do believe that :

- **The implication of the different stakeholders** allows the implementation of the participative management principle, focusing on the accountability at all levels and the information broadcasting between the functional units (intra organisation) and the partners of the FMS ;
- **The provision of high-quality services** and at the least cost, by a staff whose fundamental qualities are the transparency, the integrity and the respect for the professional ethics.
- **The quest for quality** is carried out in the context of a fair use of the available resources ; it is also part of all the daily activities that affect directly or indirectly the beneficiaries of our services.

III.2- Vision and Mission

We believe that a skilled, able, conscientious, and competent management of the institution will allow us to fulfill in the best way the functions of the FMS which are : The provision of high-quality services in the fields of training and research in healthcare ; the generating of resources, and the developing of coalitions and partnerships strengthens our development; This cannot be possible without the competence, commitment, and creativity of the teaching staff who, together, serve the first purpose of our institution, which is: «**To contribute throughout training, research, and capacity building to solve the most frequent health problems and to improve the state of health and well being of the Tunisian population**».

III.3- Strategic orientations:

The elements of the mission integrate the following strategic axes and objectives :

1st Axis: Provision of quality services in the fields of training, research, and expertise: The services enhancement (training, research, and expertise) has to be a continuous activity as they can constantly be improved. This approach is based on a hypothesis that everyone, at all levels of the institution, can make valuable suggestions on ways to improve the process.

Objective 1: Design a global project of educational reform of the medical curriculum that takes into account the needs of the population as well as international training standards and procedures.

Objective 2: Improving the post graduate training and continuing medical education quality throughout the school close involvement in these programs.

Objective 3: Developing a research strategy allying the scientific rigor and the adaptation to the health needs of the population.

2nd Axis: Teaching and support staff capacity building: the training and the development of competencies has to be the lynchpin of the capacity-building within the FMS. Professionals tend to be more productive in an environment that support them and provide them with the necessary resources.

Objective 4: Develop a mechanism that allows each one, in his own field of expertise and within the priority fields of the institution, to improve his competencies so that he would be effective, motivated, and accountable, as well as an incentive system to improve the services' quality .

3rd Axis: Implementation of mechanisms that encourage the students' participation and interaction: the institution should offer her students ,through well-defined mechanisms, the opportunity to contribute to defining the priorities and the strategies regarding education.

Objective 5: Improve the accessibility of students to different means of training allowing an active learning and a continuous self-development.

Objective 6: Develop the sense of belonging and improve the quality of students' life within the institution .

4th Axis: Strategic management of the institution: the institution's performance depends on the ability of the persons in charge at every level to clarify every decision by relevant contextual and scientific informations, to create a favourable context for the implementation of this policy . The organizational structure must be fitted to our mission goals .

Objective 7: Create steering allowing everyone to be more creative , to participate and to make an even greater commitment in order to ensure the institution's development .

5th Axis: Building coalition , networks and useful partnerships to FMS : nowadays, the development of organizations depends on alliances and partnerships. The involved partners are similar and related institutions , professional associations, pharmaceutical groups ,NGOs , research foundations, local or national politicians

Objective 8: Build networks and coalitions locally , nationally and globally to encourage exchanges for a better visibility .

CONCLUSION: Carrying out a strategic planning turns out to be important for at least two reasons . First , in the preparation phase , it engages the teachers and the partners concerned and interested by the development of the school , through consultation ,reconciliation and discussion activities . Second , in the implementation phase , it defines the institution's development vision ,its role and its priorities , and the necessary consistency in the undertaken actions and the realised mandates .