

Crafting strategy in not-for-profit organisations: The experience of an alumni organisation, BÜMED

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- *This paper describes and discusses the specificities of crafting strategy in not-for-profit organisations deriving from the experience of an alumni organisation in Turkey, BÜMED (Bogazici Universitesi Mezunlar Dernegi: Bogazici University Alumni Association). It has been underlined in the paper that crafting successful strategies in not-for-profit organisations has two essential dimensions. The first one is related to ‘operational effectiveness’; that is, perfecting how the operations are performed and managed in the organisation. In its pursuit of ensuring quality and excellence in management, BÜMED has applied the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) model and it seems to have worked for BÜMED, despite some aberrations. The second dimension, on the other hand, is related to the very concept of strategy itself, whose main emphasis is on priorities and trade-offs. What is underlined in BÜMED’s experience regarding this dimension is the idea that although the principles of excellence in management, if applied properly and internalised by the members of the organisation, carry a potential to have spill-over effects for successful strategising, in the absence of right strategies, good management in and of itself is unlikely to suffice for the desired outcome, which ultimately means the creation of value for the society in the case of not-for-profit organisations.*

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Introduction

Prioritising social impact over creation of wealth and shifting the emphasis from financial to social returns do not relieve a not-for-profit organisation from crafting a strategy that takes its organisational strengths and weaknesses into account and that systematically evaluates

its position within the environment to set a future direction. Moreover, in order to accommodate changing social and economic conditions, not-for-profits today feel compelled to launch income-generating ventures, which in turn might serve as a motivation for change in that they are urged to be more disciplined and more innovative as well as act in a more ‘business-like’ manner (Foster and Bradach, 2005). It has not been easy for not-for-profits to adapt to such pressures and changes taking place in the external environment. The transformation the British Library has gone through in recent years that involved adopting a

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