

STRATEGIC GUIDELINES IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CONDITIONS FOR SCHOOL AUTONOMY DEVELOPMENT AND EFFICIENCY

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Abstract: Issues related to management of school development can be explained through the process of organizational development. Organizational development (OD) is defined as a long-term effort of improvement and modification of a school with more effective school organization management.

According to S. Ilieva, the term "organizational development" (OD) means the stages the organization undergoes in the process of its establishment, evolution, survival, prosperity or destruction, that is, at this level OD is the way organizations change and evolve. This view is based on the assumption that institutions, each characterized by its own specific problems, crises and ways of overcoming them and respectively to continue the process of development.

On the other hand, under OD are implied the various techniques and interventions that are used to help or facilitate the implementation of certain planned and legitimate dimensions in the structure, processes and human resources within the organization. OD is described as a process that involves efforts to improve.

Keywords : organizational development, intergroup improvement, positive research, management, strategy, reform, innovation

INTRODUCTION

The organizational development as an approach to a dynamic modification of the school institutional. Since the term **“organizational development” (OD)** introduction in the 1960`s many attempts has been made to answer the question what exactly is OD. The possible answers include different analysis` levels and reflect the various theoretical concepts. It is usually stated that when talking about **OD we generally want to find ways in which the organization changes from a present to a better-developed state.**¹⁷

The main problem is that OD can be considered as a specific area of research, practice, and expertise. One of the first broad definitions of OD belongs to R. Beckhard. According to him, the OD is a planned, management-led attempt to increase organizational efficiency and health through planned interventions in organizational processes. Using the knowledge of behavioral science.¹⁸

OD is planned, thus it requires a systematic diagnosis, program development and resource mobilization (financial, technical, human) in a separate structural unit or across the organization. In order to succeed, it is necessary for the senior management (Regional management of education /RME/, Ministry of education and science /MES/) to engage and support efforts for organizational change. OD is not limited to specific techniques, such as behavioral modeling, **sensitive** training or transactional analysis, nor yet the narrow set of team-based interventions.

Other definitions emphasize some specific features of OD. For example, OD is a response to a change, a complex learning strategy that aims to transform the organization's beliefs, values, attitudes, and structure so that they can better adapt to new technologies.

The most commonly cited definition of OD is offered by W. French and S. Bell, and according to them ... "OD is a maintained top-management sustained effort to improve the processes of problem solving and the update of the organization through effective and joint diagnosis and management organizational culture with a special emphasis on the formal work group, temporary teams and inter-group culture, which is conducted with the help of a consultant-facilitator and is based on the theory and technology of the applied behavioral sciences, including the exploration of the activity"¹⁹

¹⁷ Beckhard, R. (1969). Organizations development: model. Addison – Wesley, Readings, MA

¹⁸ Илиева, С., Организационно развитие, УИ „Св. Климент Охридски”, С., 1998, с. 12

Lawrence, P., et J. Lorsch, (1969) Developing Organizations: Diagnosis and action. Addison Wesley, Reading, MA

¹⁹ French, W., Bell, C. (1984) Organization development: Behavioral Science interventions for organization improvement (3d. ed.) Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

✓ **OD** can be characterized in different ways: as a process of organizational change planning; as an applied scientific discipline of behavior; as a system of values; as a specific set of activities and techniques; as an experience based on learning; as an organizational improvement approach (French, Bell, Zawacku, 1979)

✓ **OD** is typically defined as a planned change that has the ultimate goal of organizational improvement. However, it differs substantially as an independent area from other technologies and interventions for organizational improvement precisely because of its focus on the social processes in the organization and the humanistic values it maintains and follows.

The main features that distinguish interventions for OD from more traditional ones are as follows:

- Focus on group and organizational processes, not on the content of specific issues;
- A working group is a key unit for learning more effective ways of organizational behavior;
- Focus on cooperation in managing the culture of the working group;
- Focus on the management of the culture of the overall system;
- Using the business survey model;
- Using a change agent who is a specialist in the field of management science;
- Considering the change as a continuous process;

At the basis of successful organizational development programs are the following values for the people in it:

- From the conception of a man as bad, lazy and irresponsible to the view that man is generally good;
- From avoidance or negative assessment of individuals to their assertion as human beings;
- From the view of individuals as something invariable to their consideration in the process of becoming and developing;

- From resistance and fear of individual differences to their acceptance and use;
- From the use of the individual mainly in relation to his / her position towards perceiving him/her as a whole personality;

- By suppressing feelings towards their proper expression and effective use;
- From "putting masks" and playing games to a real, uneducated behavior
- Using status to maintain power and personal prestige to the use of status for the relevant organizational purposes;

- From not trusting people beginning to trust them;
- To avoid confronting others with significant unpleasant facts towards an appropriate confrontation;
- Avoiding risk-taking to a readiness for risk;
- From the view that the process of work is a non-productive effort to considering it as essential to the effective performance of tasks;

- From the mainstream of competition to greater emphasis on cooperation.²⁰

The OD values of people in the organization can be summarized as follows:

1. Allowing people to act primarily as human beings rather than as resources in the production process;
2. Re-empowering each organizational member as well as the organization itself to develop its full potential;
3. Increasing efficiency in terms of the goals of the entire organization;
4. Creating an environment where it is possible to find an exciting and challenging work;
5. Enabling people in the organization to influence how they relate to work, organization, and environment;
6. Treating people as individuals with a complex set of needs, all of which are important to their labor and life;

Successful implementation of OD is only possible if two basic principles are considered, related to the difficulties with most major changes in the OD. The first is - conducting a change requires time and patience, and key initiators need a relatively long-term perspective. The second is - improving performance as a result of OD efforts must be accompanied and supported by appropriate changes in the entire human resources system.

Summarizing the above said regarding the essence of organizational development:

- ✓ **OD** does not exclude data collection and diagnostic activities;

²⁰ Tannenbaum, R., Davis, S., (1972), Values man and organizations. In: Mergulies, N., Raia, A., (Eds). Organizational development: Values, process and technology, McGraw Hill Book Company, N.Y.

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- ✓ OD does not always take years and does not always have to involve the entire organization;
 - ✓ OD is not a variation or form of managerial development;
 - ✓ OD is not an approach that can only be applied by external agents of change;
 - ✓ OD is not something the external consultant does to the organization;
 - ✓ OD is not the same as the sensitive training;
 - ✓ OD is not to make everyone happy or to make people love each other;
 - ✓ OD is not limited to team building activities;
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2. Managing school changes included in the integrative model by using tools of organizational development.

The implementation of this model should be seen in the context of the organizational development concept. This concept includes a set of actions aimed at implementing planned changes in the school organization and based on human-democratic values in order to increase organizational efficiency.

The OD paradigm attaches crucial importance to humanitarian growth and organizational excellence; the collaboration and broad involvement of all contributors to decision-making, diagnostics and process research. An important role in OD plays the agents of change (managers, innovators, mediators, consultants, etc.). Values such as government, authority, control, conflict, coercion - are not particularly valued in organizational development. The values that are at the basis of the concept of OD are:

- ✓ **Respecting people.** Members of the school community are considered responsible, moral, conscientious, initiative and honest. To that we should treat with respect, not humiliate their sense of self-dignity;
- ✓ **Trust and support.** Autonomous and developing school organizations have a relationship of trust and openness. There is an atmosphere of mutual support;
- ✓ **Leveling the power of authority.** Autonomous and emerging organizations do not place great importance on strict adherence to subordination in relations between members of the organization. This is what the project-team organization of work and matrix structure of the school organization contributes to.
- ✓ **Open problem-solving.** The problems of an autonomous school organization should be resolved not by subversive struggle, bureaucratic tricks, and manipulations, but honestly and openly in public forums;
- ✓ **Wide involvement of all** interested in the quality and efficiency of the learning process in **preparation and decision making.** The more people in school take part in the change planning, and are involved in decisions to make changes to school development, the greater the chances of success are.

For the practical implementation of OD actions regarding the autonomous school organization as a perfect, self-governing, learning, innovative, author's, and leadership, **six tools** that can be used by school leaders and agents of change are important.

1. **Conducting self-analysis exercises.** This method changes the behavior of members of school communities through unstructured group interaction. The participants of the training groups in a free and open environment discuss their own problems by using different interactive methods and technologies with the help of behavioral specialists - moderators, mediators, facilitators, mentors, consultants. Throughout the course of self-analysis, people learn through observation and personal participation rather than as a result of reports and lectures. T-group mediators create opportunities for expressing own ideas, beliefs, and concepts. They can also fulfill the role of group leaders.

2. **Large-scale feedback.** The use of this tool makes it possible to assess the views and opinions of members of the school community, to identify the differences and to obtain the feedback received as a result of the questions. Group discussion on the basis of large-scale feedback should lead to conclusions: "Are the members of the group able to listen to each other?"; "Are new ideas generated?"; "Can the decision-making process improve?"

3. **Process consulting.** No school organization can be ideal. It can strive for a higher perfection in its work by developing and realizing transitions from one to another, a perfect organizational-educational model. Not all schools and school leaders have the capacity to do so independently. They need **process consultation**, a consultant or a consulting team that helps the client (**process consultation**) to perceive, understand and adequately react to some or other changes.

4. **To found teams.** Modern organizations are increasingly resorting to teamwork. They are particularly necessary in terms of organizational development and change of school. By creating different types of teams, intensive interaction is achieved between members of the team in order to increase their mutual trust and openness.

5. **Intergroup development.** Its purpose is to change the relationship between the various formal and informal groups in the school community. The tasks of organizational development include the resolution of the destructive conflicts between the groups in the different organizations by solving the problems of the conflicting parties.

6. **Positive research.** As the name suggests, positive research is based on positive moments. Typically, the approaches used in organizational development are oriented towards identifying and solving existing problems. The positive research (PR, appreciative inquiry) is aimed primarily at establishing unique qualities, special merits of the organization, the improvement of which can increase the performance of the school. In other words, this approach emphasizes not the problems of the organization but its successes, strengths. Positive research is an effective strategy for introducing innovation and making changes to school organizations.

The PR followers say that problem-oriented approaches offer people to act with a view to past failures and focus on failings. Thus, they practically never form new ideas in people. Instead of creating an atmosphere conducive to positive change, large-scale feedback, and process consultation, the PR is limited to seeking guilty and taking protective measures. Therefore, it is far more appropriate for the PR to initiate the organizational improvement, and to make changes based on own merits, strengths, and competitive advantages.

The PR process consists of four stages. As a rule, these stages take place at organizational meetings (conferences, sessions) of the groups and are held for 2-3 days under the general guidance of a specially trained agent. The four steps cover the following actions:

- ✓ **Discovery** – aims to clarify what the attitudes of schools or a particular group are;
- ✓ **Dreaming** – the information obtained from the "discovery" is used to draw the picture of the possible future vision of the organization;
- ✓ **Design** – based on the picture of the imaginary future of the organization, the participants in the workshop try to develop a united view of its unique qualities;
- ✓ **Destiny** – at the fourth stage the participants try to determine the fate of their organization. They discuss how the organization, the school intends to realize its "dream"; purpose. This stage includes, as a rule, the development of a strategy, program, plan, and projects for the improvement of the organization (the school), according to the shared dream of all people, the chosen vision, and the accepted mission.

LITERATURE

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