

CHANGES PRODUCED BY PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED IN THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION FROM ARGES COUNTY

Cristina VOICU-OLTEANU^{1*}, Iuliana TALMACIU^{2†}

Valahia University of Targoviște, voltcristina@yahoo.com

Valahia University of Targoviște, iuliana_talmaciu@yahoo.com

Abstract: *In a social and economic environment characterized by change, Romania's public administration must integrate and implement the administrative values characteristic to the European space: transparency, predictability, responsibility, adaptability and efficiency. These ones must be found in the administrative institutions and processes on all levels. This research is aimed to establish what change in public administration represents, to quantify the main directions of action in the change process regarding public management at the level of local collectivities and to trace the results of the projects financed by the Operational Programme Administrative Capacity Development (OPACD) as well as the expected impact of these ones on the local public administration from Arges county.*

Key words: *change, changes in public administration, Operational Programme Administrative Capacity Development*

JEL Classification Codes:

1. INTRODUCTION

”Change takes place all over the universe, inclusively in our private life and in organizations' life” (Burduș E. et all., 2003:14)

Within the studies regarding the main currents that affect individuals, organizations and society, John Naisbitt (1982) emphasized some types of major changes:

- the transition from an industrial society to an informational society (more than 60% of Americans now work as programmers, teachers, clerks, secretaries, accountants, stock brokers, managers, insurance people, bureaucrats, lawyers, bankers, technicians, or in healthcare. Manufacturing too now has more information workers);
- the transition from the situation where top technology impressed with its complexity to the use of top technologies in a personalized manner (the trend away from factory-like production systems to “high” technology robots, computers, and cutting edge automation requires a greater sense of self and closeness with others);
- the transition from a national economy to a global economy (although we’re more likely to compare industries between nations, industries are becoming global);
- the transition from short term managerial predictions to long term predictions (we are becoming more aware of the long term implications of short term fixes and strategies);

* Phd. Student

† Phd. Student

- the transition from centralization to decentralization (best performing companies increase the autonomy of workers across organizations, at all levels in the hierarchy. Control is maintained through a nucleus of shared values).

We consider that a significant number of changes and with great impact occurred in what concerns not only public administration, but organizations also. "Administration gathers a machine composed of state institutions created to apply regulations, procedures and politics, normative acts etc. and management represents the ensemble of processes and relations within an organization whereby it is aimed the achievement of defined objectives. In other words, the management in an organization is represented by a group of individuals responsible for the achievement of certain objectives, and the administration is represented by distinct institutional structures whereby the power of the state is exercised. ". [Androniceanu, A., 1999: pag.100-134]

The growth of administrative capacity refers to a set of changes that allow public authorities to improve the formulation and implementation of programmes to obtain an enhanced impact. The projects financed through the Operational Programme Administrative Capacity Development (OPACD) in Arges County contributed to putting into practice these goals, with concrete results that will determine the efficient improvement and efficacy in public sector, and management in public administration will orient itself in a higher extent on objectives and results.

Operational Programme Administrative Capacity Development (OPACD) aims to create a more effective and efficient public administration for the socio – economic benefit of Romanian society. As specific objectives, the Operational Programme Administrative Capacity Development (OP PAC) aims to consolidate the process of taking efficient decisions such as the improvement of quality and efficiency in the provision of public services, with emphasize on the decentralization process from some key areas.

2. CHANGES IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Romania's public administration faced, in the last couple of years, significant changes regarding its own operating framework, political and citizen expectations, attributions, responsibilities, etc.

“The main directions of action in the public management change process at the level of local collectivities targets:

- The profound reorganization of public management;
- The orientation of public authorities and institutions directly towards citizen's needs;
- The professionalization of public function;
- The decentralization of public services and consolidation of local administrative and financial autonomy;
- The change of the formulation process for public politics, decisional act at central level and the increase of this process's transparency
- The efficiency of public administration
- The informatization of local and central public administration [Androniceanu A, 2007: 32]

Regarding the orientation of public authorities and institutions directly towards citizen's needs, some priority directions of actions stand out:

- creation, at the level of each administrative territorial unit, of web sites which allow citizens to access information of public interest regarding the activity of local public administration's authorities (in conformity with law no. 544/2001, updated), as well as administrative forms, documents necessary to obtain some assents, organizational chart and the attributions of local public administration's representatives;
- implementation of electronic management systems for documents, which allow the improvement to the way citizens' requests are processed, reduction of waiting terms and increase of the administrative act's transparency.
- introduction and management of electronic collecting systems for local taxes and assessments at the level of all administrative territorial units.
- experience transfer and adaptation by exchange of good practices in the field of human resources, economy and law, in order to improve the process of fulfilling the administrative tasks.
- introduction and certification of some integrated systems regarding quality, health and occupational security management;
- sessions of organized instruction carried for the purpose of developing the employees' professional abilities.

2.1. Projects financed by the Operational Programme Administrative Capacity Development in Arges County

The projects financed by the Operational Programme Administrative Capacity Development (OPACD) contribute to the put into practice of the thematic priority "Consolidation of an effective administrative capacity", established at the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF), by their contribution to the creation of an efficient public administration for the socio – economic benefit of Romanian society.

The results of this programme, which regards an improvement of the relation between local administration and citizen, can be quantified by the indicator level (%) of citizens' trust in public administration and the level (%) of governmental efficiency. (Table 1).

Table no.1 Indicator of impact and its components

Indicators		2007	2008 - 2010	2011	2012	2015	Total
The level of citizens' trust in local public administration (%)	Realized		-				-
	Target					60	-
	Reference value	52					
The level of governmental efficiency (%)	Realized		-				-
	Target					60	-
	Reference value	56,9					

[Source: The annual implementation report of the Operational Programme Administrative Capacity Development, AM OPACD, 2012:11]

The Operational Programme Administrative Capacity Development (OPACD) is implemented through three priority axes, linked directly to the specific objectives: improvements of structure and process for public politics cycle management, improvement of quality and efficiency for public politics provision (Table no.2), with an emphasis on the

decentralization and technical assistance process. By analysing the quantitative indicators of each priority axe results a priority interest for the increase of authorities' transparency, increase of local incomes collection degree and increase of the knowledge level in formulating public politics, but also for the development of cost standards in certain sectors where the process of reform had already begun.

Tabel no. 2 Projects implemented in Arges County within The Operational Programme Administrative Capacity Development

No. crt.	Beneficiary	Project's title	Priority axe / Intervention field	Project's total budget (lei-without VAT)	Solicited irredeemable assistance (lei)
1.	Institution of the Prefect – Arges County	European integration of officials from local public administration by developing project management abilities	Improvement of structure and process of public politics cycle management /Improvement of organizational efficiency	1.135.391,33	963.947,24
2.	Curtea de Arges City Hall	Improvement of services provided by Curtea de Arges City Hall, by implementing integrated management systems	Improvement of quality and efficiency of public services provision, with emphasis on the decentralization process/ Improvement of quality and efficiency of services provision	372.000,00	364.560,00
3.	Arges County Council - General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection Arges	Specialization of the personnel involved in the provision and management of social services in Arges County Council and city halls from Arges county	Improvement of structure and process of the public politics cycle management /Improvement of organizational efficiency	678.995,00	665.415,10
4.	Arges City Council - General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection Arges	Implementation of a quality management system at the level of some services within the General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection Arges	Improvement of quality and efficiency of public services provision, with emphasis on the decentralization process/ Improvement of quality and efficiency of services provision	271.150,00	265.727,00

5.	Draganu commune	Adaptation to actual and future needs for the local development strategy of Draganu commune	Improvement of structure and process of the public politics cycle management / Improvement regarding the decisions taken at the political – administrative level	261.006,44	255.786,31
----	-----------------	---	--	------------	------------

Data source: processing of authors from the List of projects approved for financing from the Operational Programme Administrative Capacity Development and the Situation of payments published by the Management Authority in October 2013

2.2. Obtained results and expected impact of these ones on local public administration from Arges County

Analysing the objectives proposed within the projects, the following main priorities identified and proposed as action directions stand out, with a direct impact on local administrative capacity development:

1. development of professional skills for the employees of local public authorities from Arges County
2. implementation of certain integrated management systems within public institutions from Arges County ;
3. elaboration of development plans.

1. Development of employees' professional skills within local city halls and city councils of communes, cities and municipalities from Arges County, from Arges County Council and from the Institution of the Prefect – Arges County, in the activity fields appropriate to the attributions these ones have (Table no.3):

Table no. 3 Instruction of public institutions' employees

Beneficiary	No. participants	Specialization fields	Impact/Expected changes in public administration
Institution of the Prefect – Arges county	249	Communitary development (agents of local development); European business – European Integration; Management of decentralized services; Public acquisitions; Accountancy; Urbanism;	Increase of employees' expertise from Arges County local public institutions in order to increase local public institutions' capacity to implement and manage projects with irredeemable financing and to ensure local initiatives' durability
Curtea de Arges City Hall	68	Environment and quality management	Modernization in the local public administration from Curtea de Arges municipality, by specializing the city hall's employees, resulting the motivation and mobilization of these ones towards innovation and qualitative public services

Changes produced by Projects Implemented in the Operational Programme Administrative Capacity Development on Public Administration from Arges County

Arges County Council - General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection Arges	200	Management of projects and partnerships; Management of social services; Strategic planning; Trainer of trainers;	Specialization of employees who work in the social domain, in order to enforce the institutional/administrative capacity of county city halls in order to ensure a better implementation of programmes and projects in social services field
Arges County Council - General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection Arges	127	Management of quality systems and audit of quality systems	Improvement of quality and increase of public services efficiency provided at the level of Arges County Council - General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection Arges by consolidating the administrative capacity to manage these services
Draganu commune	14	Communication and public relations; Projects elaboration and management ; Public acquisitions; Strategic planning;	Gain of increased skills necessary to implement the Strategy of Durable Development 2010 - 2020 and to provide some public services to increase by 50% the number of projects financed by European funds realized by the city halls' employees who got involved due to the obtained preparation
TOTAL	659		

Data sources: processing of authors based on the financed projects' results published by beneficiaries

2. Implementation of certain management systems certified by competent bodies which integrate all the institutions' systems and processes in a single complete framework, allowing this one to function as a single authority with unified objectives (Table no. 4):

Table no. 4 Implementation of management systems

Beneficiary	Certified management systems	Impact/Expected changes in public administration
Curtea de Arges City Hall	Integrated management system of quality – environment - health and occupational security in conjunction with a management software for documents	Implementation of this management integrated system will lead to the reduction of costs, to a better use of human, logistic financial resources, resources that the authority has, the increase of employees' responsibility degree in performing their work tasks, debureaucratisation by implementing a management system for documents

Arges County Council - General Directorate of Social Assistance and Child Protection Arges	Combined management system of quality, health and occupational security in conjunction with a manual of combined management system of quality, health and occupational security and appropriate procedures	Implementation of this integrated management system will lead to the integration of SR EN ISO 9001:2008 și SR OHSAS 18001:2008 standards, an increase in employees' performances by training them about the quality management field, environment, health and security at work, and to a better understanding of institution's policy, work procedures instituted by the quality manual.
--	--	--

Data source: processing of authors based on the financed projects' results published by beneficiaries

3. Elaboration of development plans as an integrated tool of public management which includes the developing directions through an integrated approach of problems public authorities face and reflects the development aspirations locally, based on the area's existent potential (Table 5):

Table no. 5 Elaboration of Durable Development Strategy

Beneficiary	Management systems certified by certifying bodies	Impact/Expected changes in public administration
Draganu commune	Development strategy adapted to citizens' short and long term needs	The Creation of the Durable Development Strategy 2010 – 2020 reflects as accurately as possible the common stringent community development priorities and supports these ones by public and private investments focused to efficiently use the specified funds, internally and externally as well

Data source: processing of authors based on the financed projects' results published by beneficiaries

The results obtained after finishing the proposed activities within the financing projects can be grouped as follows:

- Achievement of more outputs for the same inputs. In the analysed cases, employees' professional skills development generates the provision of the same public services with a reduced personnel, taking into consideration their specialization in interdisciplinary activity fields;
- The increase of activity's quality by correlating the identified problems, by processing and solving them faster. Concretely, implementing such integrated management systems determines the increase of institutional efficiency and the reduction of response time to citizens' demands;
- Strategic changes within a time horizon, which involve the institution's flexibility and orientation towards the needs and opportunities present locally, by a strategic planning of resources and assignment of these ones towards identified objectives, materialized in the Creation of the Durable Development Strategy 2010-2020.

CONCLUSIONS

The necessity to invest in the institutional capacity is proposed and planned through short and long-term plans, because the socio – economic performance and good government constitute the premises for prosperity and development in all member states. The increase of the administrative capacity refers to a set of structural and process changes that allow public authorities to improve programmes' formulation and implementation in order to obtain increased results.

European strategies claim the necessity of a better legislation, as well as a better elaboration and provision of public politics for the purpose of ensuring conditions for economic growth and creation of new jobs. Therefore, it is recognised the important contribution that a better reglementation can have in the improvement of politics and strategies framework, which should lead to a direct improvement in the administrative performance, with emphasis on aspects related to strategic planning regarding the improvement of politics' coherency at institutional level and reforms regarding public expenses management by allocating budgetary funds based on performance (program budgeting).

REFERENCES

1. Androniceanu, A., *Strategic changes in public management at the local level of the Romanian public administration*, Public administration and management, no. 7, Bucharest, 2007
2. Androniceanu, A., *Public Management*, Editura Economică, Bucharest, 1999
3. Burduş, E., Căprărescu, G., Androniceanu, A., Miles, M., *Organisational Change Management*, 2nd edition, Editura Economică, Bucharest, 2003
4. Naisbitt J. *Megatrends*, 1982, available at minnesotafuturists.pbworks.com, accessed on March 13, 2014
5. Newton, R., *Managing change step by step: everything you need to create and develop a plan*, Editura ALL, 2009
6. ***Annual report for the implementation of the Operational Programme Administrative Capacity Development, AM OPACD, 2012, Bucharest
7. ***List of projects approved for financing within the Operational Programme Administrative Capacity Development and Situation of payments published by the Management Authority in October 2013, Bucharest