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**FACILITATORS ASSISTED TRAINING
OF MANAGERS FROM THE
ROMANIAN SECUNDARY
EDUCATION SYSTEM**

ABSTRACT

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FACILITATORS ASSISTED TRAINING OF MANAGERS FROM THE ROMANIAN SECONDARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Keyword

- Lifelong learning
- Initial training
- Continuous training
- Training standard
- Categories of skills
- Specific skills
- Application areas of competence
- Director of educational institution
- Manager / management
- Management team
- A leader / leadership
- Three level training strategy
- Longitudinal formative intervention
- Facilitator / facilitation
- Specialized assistance
- Institutional development strategy
- Counselling
- Decentralization

1. Argument

In a society based on knowledge and learning, a society that promotes social inclusion, multicultural, democratic values , such as modern society, school is not just a tool for transmitting a certain culture but a cultural construction. Institutional development of the school is based on an on-going process of organizational construction and reconstruction which engage complex functionality mechanisms involving human, material, financial and time in order to achieve predetermined ends.

In this context, the head of school is not only a leader in the classic sense of acceptance. In addition to the many responsibilities once assumed with the acceptance function, the director becomes the promoter of educational policies in schools and the school image in relations with other institutions in the community. To "play" successfully the role of the manager of the school and to assume their responsibilities a manager needs training to develop managerial skills.

The decentralization of managerial activity requires managerial career professionalization through appropriate training and specialization for the ones who conducts the school. In this context the school principal and the staff involved in guidance and control activities carried out at school level should be recruited and trained after professional criteria and specific requirements. This is required by the expansion and diversification of the field of activities and responsibilities, but also by the need to improve their quality. School managers, regardless their managerial function, must become the coordinator and principal leader of all strategies and projects.

If the idea of professionalization of management, guidance and control from Romania has been replaced with the idea of creating a national body of experts in educational management, considered to be trained to become managers in the school system, the problem of continuous training them remained partially resolved.

From our point of view, the participation of managers in training is limited for various reasons:

- The place of training activities is far away from student's home and their movement is difficult;
- The duration of training activities is very high, and the time allotted for the training of students is limited because of the different responsibilities that they must answer as school managers.
- The topic of the training is not sufficiently diversified and is not totally responding to the expectations and interests of learners;

- The training programs meet the needs of general groups and not individual training needs of directors of schools.

The conclusion derived from these considerations is that the training activities of managers must be rethought. We believe that the formative document should be reconsidered in the sense that the managerial skills must be adapted to the context in which director of school education act and according to their personal needs and the needs of development institutions.

The training for schools managers and executives need to become efficient and produce immediate effects in terms of managerial activity and to echo the relationship manager have with the various interest groups involved in education. Therefore, in the investigative experiment, we aimed to identify and validate effective training strategy, assisted by facilitators, directors with management teams, developing management and leadership skills, according to individual training needs.

We started with the idea of facilitators assisted training because it is proven that social facilitation increases the level of consciousness and self-esteem and the responsibility taken for individual actions. We felt that the training process is triggered and sustained by the participants directly involved, directions and training actions are determined by the subjects' of formative process and the skills developed are those necessary for management.

The facilitator is not a trainer in the classic sense of the role. The role of the facilitator is neutral. It is not allowed to intervene in the discussion or give solutions to the problems identified. The facilitator assists, guides, advises trainees group, endorse the training and personal experience veracity of ideas, findings and conclusions. Meetings between groups, assisted by facilitator encourage the development of managerial skills of directors and members of management teams.

Broadly speaking, facilitation is seen as a guided help given to groups to identify their problems and find solutions to them. From our perspective, the facilitation process is not simply a guide of some people but a guide learning process of the self-training groups.

In our view, facilitating directors of schools actually means a different kind of training process, namely the development of managerial skills of the director and the management team, in the "natural" educational environment where the director and his team exercises daily roles. Formation by facilitating can be compared with the qualification in the workplace, a more profound training, a professionally transformation from apprentice stage to autonomous applying and then master.

Training Strategy assisted by facilitators, that we tested is a three level training strategy, which aims to develop a three categories of skills that directors need to fulfil the multiple roles they play in the institutional and relationship with the local community:

- skills aimed at designing and implementing institutional development strategy;
- skills for managing a team;
- Communication skills and relationship with the social partners,

The three levels of facilitator assisted formative intervention were.

- ***The facilitation process to strengthen school-community relationship;***
- ***The specialized assistance to implement the strategy of institutional development and quality assurance of education;***
- ***The counselling process for monitoring / evaluation / review of institutional development strategy in the context of decentralization.***

Training directors through our strategy of facilitator assisted training on three levels means the transition from the stage of director at the stage of manager, and to the leadership. As a director, he was elected as manager in the interests of the service, having the prestige and recognition of the results as a teacher. As a manager, he manages very well institutional resources for organizing the educational process in the school. In the position of the he has a clearly articulated vision of what will become his school and what is the way forward to generate the desired change.

It becomes evident that the process of training is not one right away. Transformation from the managerial skills to the leadership takes place slowly but naturally and occurs gradually, because it is detached from everyday life and is not in conflict with their own development needs.

By facilitator assisted three level strategy, training directors is performed in parallel with the development of the management team, therefore, it comes naturally the consensus on the wording of the vision and mission of the school, adopting the strategy of institutional development.

In our opinion, another advantage of training through facilitation activities is that manager skills and management team works closely correlated with the evolution of the educational environment and the specific micro community social context, in line with individual needs and institutional training.

Given the above considerations to the fore, we considered that a research study is needed for the issue of facilitator assisted training. The object of research was the facilitator assisted

three level training process and its impact on the modelling process of management skills specific of manager relationships with interest groups from the education.

Structure of the thesis

This paper is a study on the training of managers from the Romanian secondary education system, divided into two sections:

- Section A - "***Highlights in initial and continuous training of managers in Romanian secondary education***";
- Section B - "***Study on facilitator assisted training of directors of schools in rural education***".

The first section, performed over four chapters, includes an overall picture on the developments of managers training in Romanian secondary education in a changing legislative and social environment in the perspective of the alignment of Romanian educational system with the European education and training system.

Chapter I, "***The evolution of initial and continuous training system of managers from the Romanian secondary education system***", represents an overview of the evolution of European and national policies in the field of initial and continuous training of all personnel in leadership, guidance and control of the school system.

Manager training strategy is presented in both centralized and decentralized system. Training programs typologies are described and there are references to training providers and accreditation of their methodology and their training offer. Last but not least, it has highlighted the role that professional transferable credits system has to highlight the steps taken for the development and management teaching career.

Chapter II, "***Evolution of training standards for directors of schools in secondary education***", are shown training content standards in force in the periods 2002-2012 and from 2012 to present.

Are described and analysed categories of managerial skills / leadership skills and their specific fields of application in the sphere of management, and the leadership field. Also, a comparative analysis of training standards is conducted for directors of schools available in periods 2002-2012 and 2012-2014.

Chapter III, "*Current status and roles of directors of educational institutions*", are described the multiple roles of directors, according to the areas of management interventions. The director of schools is viewed from three distinct perspectives, three roles which "interpretation" requires other skills and competencies:

- The role of manager, a role in which the emphasis is on resource management, design and implementation of strategies and action plans;
- The role of leader, who has a personal style of leadership, making decisions, delegating tasks, engaging resources, involving men in achieving institutional development;
- The role of leader causing organizational changes, which persuade members of the school to join the mission and vision, to implement the institutional development strategy, to assume present and future transformations, as a learning organization.

Not least, directors of schools training needs are shown from the perspective of organizational psychology, and the impact that stress and burnout can generate for individuals and organizations opportunities to mitigate these effects.

Chapter IV, "*Critical analysis on the selection and training of educational directors of educational institutions in Romania*", successful elements are shown both in terms of recruitment and training of persons in positions of leadership, guidance and control, as well as the limitations of initial and continuing managers training system. A subchapter is dedicated to facilitate the proposal of alternative training for directors, based on recognized experiences and models of good practice.

The second section of the paper "*Study regarding the assisted training facilitators of directors of educational institutions in rural*" composed of six chapters, where is described in detail in the experimental intervention, its results the conclusions we reached and our proposals.

Chapter V, "*Research coordinates*", begins with some arguments regarding the choice of the research topic. It shows that both principals of schools from the urban and rural schools have the same training needs, only urban managers are more likely to participate in accredited training programs than those in rural areas. In addition, socio-economic and micro- community climate in the rural area is about the same, so we considered that it will not essentially influence the research results. Another reason was the example of good practice offered by the Rural Education Project, project in which the school community facility component yielded admirable results.

Also here are formulated the research questions, is presented the purpose of research, and the research hypotheses. Are described the variables involved in the investigative process and

ways to operationalize them. Regarding specific and research methodology is both an overview of methods for collecting and analysing research data and an overview of the correlation between the dependent variables, research methods and the associated research tools. Some of the research tools used is tools for assessing /self-evaluation of leadership skills, of managerial staff in the educational units, annexes to O.M. 3637/2012 piloted and validated. Other research tools, self-assessment questionnaires or surveys polling various categories of teaching staff, Google Docs format applied online and processed with specific Google docs tools are own conception.

Chapter VI, "***Pre –experimental stage*** ", socioeconomic characteristics of communities are presented and the institutional context of schools where the formative intervention took place. The three level formative intervention participants are grouped by category: direct and indirect beneficiaries and interest groups. Are made charts and statistical processing regarding the share of beneficiaries in the formative intervention regarding the school years and groups of interest.

Chapter VII, "***The longitudinal stage of training intervention*** ", starts with some issues of principle and strategic aspects related to the three level formative intervention stages. Are also presented, in detail, the three stages of formative intervention aimed at institutional the design and implementation of the strategy of institutional development, ensuring quality of education, the implementation of the decentralization strategy. As formative processes, the three longitudinal intervention processes, started for the directors and members of management teams were conducted during 2004-2013. On a personal note three level longitudinal formative interventions targeted: skills development strategy design and implementation of institutional development, coordination skills and communication skills development and relationship with the social partners.

Chapter VIII, "***Post-experimental Stage***", is dedicated to the evaluation skills levels acquired / developed by participants in the formative intervention as a consequence of the three level training strategies. Are valued leadership skills, organized by areas of intervention management (analysis and interpretation of information, the use of value judgments, management / leadership other organization processes, communication). Also are assessed the specific leadership skills, essential components (strategic leadership, shared values and attitudes manifested, leadership in the community).

Chapter IX, "***Data presentation, analysis and interpretation***", are presented, analysed and interpreted two categories of data relevant to the investigative process:

- Data on the of management skills of directors in the Pre –experimental stage and at the end of the longitudinal stage of training intervention. These data have resulted as a

consequence of self-assessment questionnaire (questionnaire aimed at the development stages of three categories of competences: the design and implementation of the strategy of institutional development, team coordination skills, communication skills and relationship with the social partners) before and after the step of longitudinal formative intervention.

- Data on the development of skills in leadership highlighted in post experimental phase as a result of the assessment instruments attached to the training standards for the staff with management guidance and control from the secondary education (related to OM 3637 / 2012).

The data were centralized, statistically processed and interpreted. For each category of skills we calculated the average, standard statistical average and standard deviation. There have been diagrams of the development of skill levels, distributions curves environments compared with the average standard of competence for each category and the results were interpreted.

Chapter X, "*Conclusions and recommendations*", refers to the impact that implementation of facilitators' assisted three level training strategy has on the level of managerial skills development targeted by the research conducted. Also are provided the answers to the research questions are presented proposals for exploration and exploitation of the potential of facilitating formative process. It emphasized the role of facilitator in the formation and is contoured professional profile generic facilitator.

3. Coordinates of research

This research aimed to identify and to validate an effective training strategy, assisted by facilitators, applied to principals of schools in order to develop management and leadership skills, according to individual training needs.

The objectives during the investigation process were:

- 01. Identify stages of formative intervention assisted by facilitators in the training process of directors of educational and managerial teams.***
- 02. Identify specific topic for training activities in order to meet the expectations and development needs of individual trainee.***
- 03. Requesting feedback regarding the efficiency of the facilitator assisted formative training.***
- 04. Identify suggestions of directors regarding the formative process assisted by facilitators.***

O5. Identify areas of theoretical studies and skills required for the quality performance of the facilitator.

O6. Designing and implementing a three level training strategy assisted by facilitators for managers in secondary education.

The research has left from the following assumptions:

The general hypothesis of the research:

Training managers through a three level training strategy involving the entire management team which is assisted by a facilitator and it is performed in the school's educational environment, have a significantly impact to the development of management skills / leadership.

Specific Hypothesis 1:

Training managers through a three level training strategy involving the entire management team which is assisted by a facilitator and is performed in the school educational environment, promotes skills development strategy aimed at designing and implementing institutional development.

Specific Hypothesis 2:

Training managers through a three level training strategy involving the entire management team is assisted by a facilitator and is performed in the school educational environment, leads to development of team coordination, to strengthen the management team and leadership development in school organization.

Specific Hypothesis 3:

Training managers through a three level training strategy involving the entire management team is assisted by a facilitator and is performed in the school educational environment, foster communication and networking skills with the social partners and determine qualitative changes in the school-community relationship.

The variables involved in the investigation and operationalization

Independent variable:

Applying three level training strategy of managers assisted by facilitators

The dependent variables relate to the development of general competențelor directors formed to research participants as a result of the action of the independent variable:

The dependent variables relate to the development of general skills that directors acquired during the research participation as a result of the action of the independent variable:

- *The development of skills aimed to design and implement institutional development strategy;*
- *Developing skills for managing a team;*
- *Developing communication and networking with the social partners.*

Interdependence between the variables involved in the investigation and the scope of these is highlighted in Figure 1.

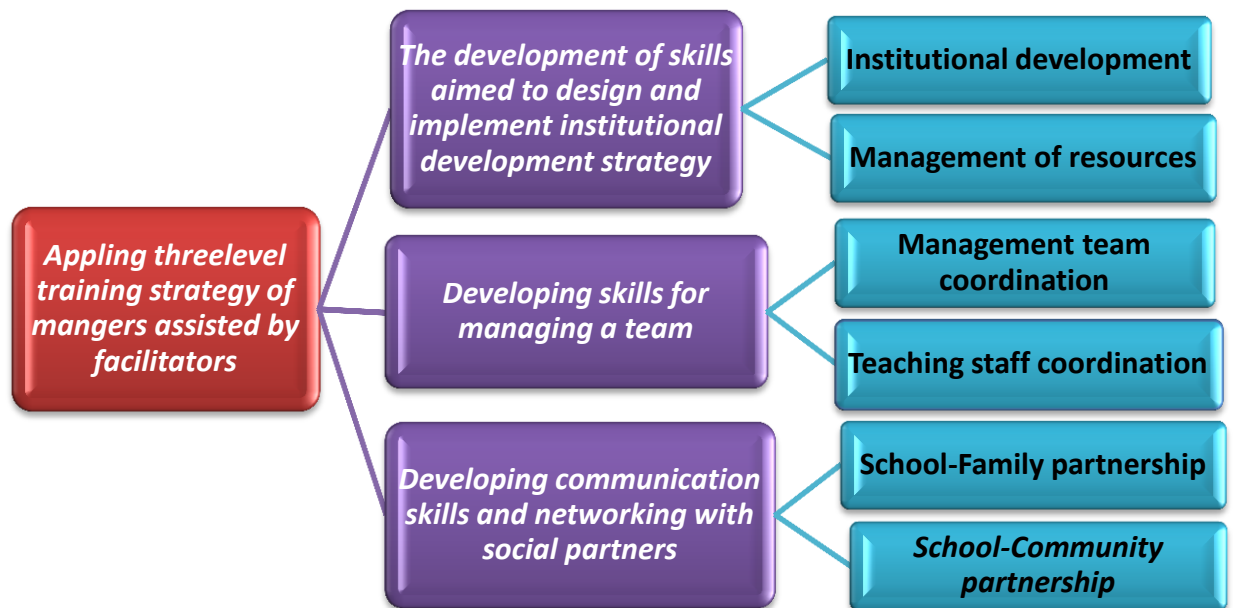


Figure 1. Variables involved in the research performed

The independent variable used in research is *“Applying three level training strategy of mangers assisted by facilitators”* and it pursues three lines of action:

- a facilitator assisting the skills training process aimed at designing and implementing institutional development strategy;
- a facilitator assisting the process of team coordinating skills training;
- a facilitator assisting the process of development of communication skills and networking with social partners.

The three levels of the training strategy assisted by facilitator applied to managers and executives have resulted in three formative processes:

- *Facilitating process to strengthen the relationship school - community*
- *The process of specialized assistance for the implementation of institutional development strategy and for ensuring the quality of education;*
- *Counseling process for monitoring / evaluation / review of institutional development strategy in the context of decentralization;*

1. Facilitation process for strengthening the school – community relationship (2004-2007)

This process was conducted in each participating school during three meetings of 8 hours each. Participants in these meetings (the school, board members, teachers representatives, representatives of the parents committee, representatives of municipalities, local councils and other institutions in the local community), assisted by facilitator discussed together, they consulted each other and have worked together in order to diagnose internal and external environment analysis (SWOT analysis), the mission of the school and the project of institutional development. Following discussion assisted by the facilitator, the director and board members have been established operational goals and steps to achieve for every identified strategic target.

As formative process of the directors, this approach has contributed to the design and implementation skills training strategy for institutional development. From the perspective of strategic leadership, process facilitation contributed to the ability of the manager to develop institutional development mission and objectives through consultation of stakeholders of the school and taking collective strategy for institutional development. The facilitate program also aimed to improve the coordination of management team, skills facilitate by building consensus among team members, ensuring the functioning of the management team and collaboration between the principal and the board.

2. The specialized assistance for the implementation of institutional development strategy (2007-2011)

This formative approach was conducted in each school participating to the research during 4 meetings of 8 hours each. Period of specialized assistance process coincided with the period of the implementation of the institutional development strategy and implementation period of the system of quality assurance in high school education. As a formative approach, the specialized assistance aimed to develop skills in order to design and implement a viable strategy for institutional development, the implementation of the institutional development project and the annual operational plan. Meanwhile, executives and management teams received support for developing the strategy for ensuring the quality of education. Procedures have been developed for monitoring and for the internal evaluation of quality, specific tools for internal evaluation and self-assessment. Alongside were designed and implemented monitoring tools on the stage of the institutional development strategy implementation endorsed by the facilitator.

3. The counseling process for monitoring / evaluation / review of institutional development strategy (2011-2013)

The last level of formative approach consisted in counselling the directors and management teams to assess the implementation stage of the institutional development project and for its review in the context of the decentralization of secondary education. During the meetings held in this stage of the project the strategy of monitoring the level of implementation of the institutional development project was designed.

They established criteria, methods, assessment tools tailored to strategic goals and the specific of annual operational plan. The results were the starting point in reviewing the strategy for institutional development. Related procedures were developed regarding the decentralization process and a favourable institutional context was created for institutional development in a decentralized system in which the role of the manager was increased on institutional plan and school accountability has increased and the local community to ensure the quality of education.

We also took into consideration the managerial competencies of the participating managers and executives in the meaning of "growth" of specific skills from those required to management to those required by strategic leadership.

4. Stages of research

Research was carried out over a period of 10 years, the period during which schools involved, the managers of educational establishments, the boards of directors and even local communities have registered processes of transformation, some generated by intervention formative one, other generated by progress and development of the community, crossing economic and social crisis in three phases, whose planning is shown in table 1.

Table 1 .Stages of research

Stage Research	Period	Actions
Stage I The experiment frame work	2004–2007	- Collect data about the participating schools, the institutional environment, local communities and their specific socio-economic environment; - Surveys of participants regarding the training threelevel strategy assisted by a facilitator.
Stage II	2004-2007	Facilitation process for strengthening the school – community relationship ○ Facilitating constructive discussions between directors,

The longitudinal stage of training intervention		<p>management team and the representatives of the other groups of interest in order to ensure responsibilities and roles in the partnership school-community for the development of educational institution;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facilitating constructive discussions between directors and managerial team members for the distribution of tasks, roles and responsibilities; ○ Facilitating constructive discussions between directors, managerial team members and team members of the project for the implementation of educational projects.
	2007-2011	<p>The specialized assistance for the implementation of institutional development strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Specialized assistance of directors and project management teams for the implementation of the institutional development and annual operational plans; ○ Specialized assistance of directors and board members in order to develop strategies to monitor the implementation of the project for institutional development; ○ Specialized assistance of directors and board members to identify risks and establish a plan in order to reduce them; ○ Specialized assistance of directors and board members for developing quality assurance procedures; ○ Specialized assistance of directors and board members for developing internal self-evaluation procedures; ○ Specialized assistance directors and board members for developing quality assurance strategy and instruments of internal auditing.
	2011-2013	<p>The counselling process for monitoring / evaluation / review of institutional development strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Counselling directors and board members to monitor and assess the implementation of institutional development project; ○ Counselling directors and board members to establish specific procedures for institutional development in the context of decentralization; ○ Counselling directors and board members to review the institutional development strategy in the context of decentralization.
Stage III Post experimental phase	2013-2014	<p>-Collection of data related to the results obtained; - Require participant's feedback relating to the impact of the implementation of the three level strategy assisted on institutional and personal level.</p>

➤ **Stage I - The experiment frame work**

The preparation phase of the research was a stage for gathering information regarding the situation of the schools and the communities that the facilitator is going to come into contact, to the expectations of the participants. Researcher examined different sources of information (terminals for the presentation of participating schools, data on schools and communities gathered from the Internet) and he created a picture of each unit of education, about the socio-economic context in which they carrying on their activities.

At this stage, the researcher get in contact with representatives of schools that would place the three levels formative intervention discussed with principals involved, questioned directors and board members about the expectations they had from the meetings local community representatives will have in the second phase of the investigated intervention. He also informed the directors and board members of its intention to initiate an investigation on the implementation and validation of tree level training strategy assisted by the facilitator. Directors of schools and board members who agreed to participate in research at this stage they assessed their own management skills by completing the self-assessment questionnaire designed for the three categories of skills covered in the longitudinal stage of training intervention.

➤ **Stage II - The longitudinal stage of training intervention**

The longitudinal stage of training intervention had a pretty big stretch time since we tried to capture the development of management skills in relation to the development of the institution through all phases of implementation of an institutional development project: design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review.

- ***Facilitation process for strengthening the school – community relationship***

Facilitating aimed to strengthen school-community relationship. It was in the forefront supporting all the "actors" involved in the educational process for identifying and taking roles they have, for joint decisions on the development of the educational institution as a leading provider of educational services to the community.

Facilitation process was took place in 48 schools, out of which 28 legal personality school and 20 teaching structures. In this process attended 686 people, including 357 teachers and 229 parents and representatives of other interest groups. Among participants in this process entered, after the survey sample, only those with management responsibility, who agreed to participate in the study undertaken by the researcher. The initial sample consisted of 29 principals (of which 28

directors and one deputy) and 122 members of the board, coming from 28 schools with legal personality located in rural settlements in Cluj County.

The results of the facilitation, institutional action were:

- Establish school mission, known and assumed by all those involved directly in the educational activities of the school room;
- A project preparation of the institutional development and operational plan for the first year of implementation;
- An educational project development through the implementation of which school would diversify educational services to students and other beneficiaries of the local community. Filling in the form of the project and of the demand for financing, their submission in order to participate at school for the selection of projects, which were to be financed from non-reimbursable funds.

The results of the facilitation process as formative process were highlighted by the personal skills of directors and management teams that were able to communicate better with the social partners:

- an active listening to the opinions of the participants;
 - one to openly express their opinions;
 - to respect and take account of others opinions.
- ***The specialized assistance for the implementation of institutional development strategy***

The specialized assistance to directors and management teams lasted a full cycle of implementation of institutional development strategy (4 years), equivalent with the duration of managerial contract of the headmaster of school. The specialized assistance was focused on two fronts: implementing institutional development strategy and the implementation of quality management at the institutional level.

On this stage, process of specialized assistance for institutional development strategy and ensuring the quality of educational process in the study participated 18 schools that benefited from the facility. Participants in the investigative process were 19 directors (18 directors and one deputy), 79 members of the board of directors, in total 98 persons in managerial duties.

The results of specialized assistance in institutional terms were:

- the design and implementation of annual operational plans;

- developing a strategy for monitoring the project implementation level of institutional development;
- identifying risks and establishing their downward action;
- the development of quality assurance procedures;
- developing internal self-evaluation procedures;
- to develop a quality assurance strategy and internal auditing tools.

As formative process, the process of specialized assistance has led to shaping managers competences of coordination of management teams and the collectives of teachers, aimed at following capacities:

- to ensure optimal functionality and efficiency of the board members as management team;
- to share the vision, the values and their own specific organizational culture elements with the teaching staff members.

- ***The counselling process for monitoring / evaluation / review of institutional development strategy***

The process of counselling the directors and management teams with a view to monitoring, evaluation and revision of the institutional development project was carried out over a period of two years, a period which coincided with the period of the appointment of directors, by delegation, until the date of organising the competition. Also, from a political point of view, during the period 2011-2013 there have been extensive changes, that have made important modifications of legislation in the field of education (under the law education, No 1/2011 and complementary legislation concerned) of which the most important was implement the strategy of decentralization of the system of school education.

In step process of counselling for monitoring/evaluation/review the strategy of institutional development in the context of decentralised approach have participated in research 12 of schools in which process was carried out by facility, 12 directors, 47 members of the boards of directors of participating schools, in total 59 persons with managerial responsibilities.

The results of the consultancy process, from institutional plan framework, have been:

- developing and implementing a strategy for monitoring the degree of implementation of the institutional development plan;
- developing and implementing a strategy for assessing institutional development;
- a development plan review of institutional development strategy in the context of decentralization in accordance with local and national policies in education.

The results of the counselling process, the formative process were highlighted by capacity directors and management teams:

- to analyse the educational context in which the institution operates, in order to design an appropriate strategy in decentralized institutional development;

- to design institutional development strategy consistent with the educational needs of interest groups with specific school organization, respecting education policies at the local, national, European level;

- to use the issues raised by the monitoring and evaluation to review the strategy for institutional development.

➤ **Stage III - Post experimental phase**

At this stage the researcher was informed about the results of longitudinal stage of training intervention. Were analysed the trainees opinions about what it meant, in their view, to be part of this research. Relevant data about the level of competence achieved by directors and management team were collected.

Also, participants feedback regarding three level training strategy assisted by a facilitator was requested.

5. Results of research

In step post experimental phase, in order to determine to what extent powers, whose development has been affected as a result of the application of tree level training strategy assisted by facilitator, have been demonstrated in leadership I have used three of the instruments for the evaluation of the driving skills/leadership for staff with managerial functions of the units of school education, instruments validated and approved O. M. 3637/2012.

Instruments and scores obtained as a result of their application have been presented in detail in the paper. In the following we will only achieve centralization scores on the three areas of the leadership:

- Strategic leadership;

- Leadership shown by shared values and attitudes affirmation;

- Leadership in the community.

A comprehensive picture of the level of managerial skills / leadership was obtained as a result of the survey *"instrument for evaluating / self-evaluating, management skills / leadership for staff in management of secondary school units in management / leadership - Annex 1 OM3637 / 2012"*.

This questionnaire was used to assess the development of skills in management / leadership of all 59 participants (directors and board members) who completed the last stage of research.

As the summary data table for the 59 participants has a very large size will not be shown in the following. On each item average responses varies between 40% and 90%.

In order to equvalate percentage stairs with multilevel stairs we used conversion scores presented in Table 2

Table 2. Distribution of responses to the assessment tool / self-management skills / leadership category percentage

Percentage band representing the progress of the item	Average level of competence considered for percentage interval
40% - 49%	1
50% - 59%	2
60% - 69%	3
70% - 79%	4
80% - 89%	5
≥ 90%	6

Table summarizing the answers given by the directors for each item and each category of items was completed as Excel document, and because of large size was not inserted in the paper. Chart responses recorded by the directors to this questionnaire are presented in Figure 2.

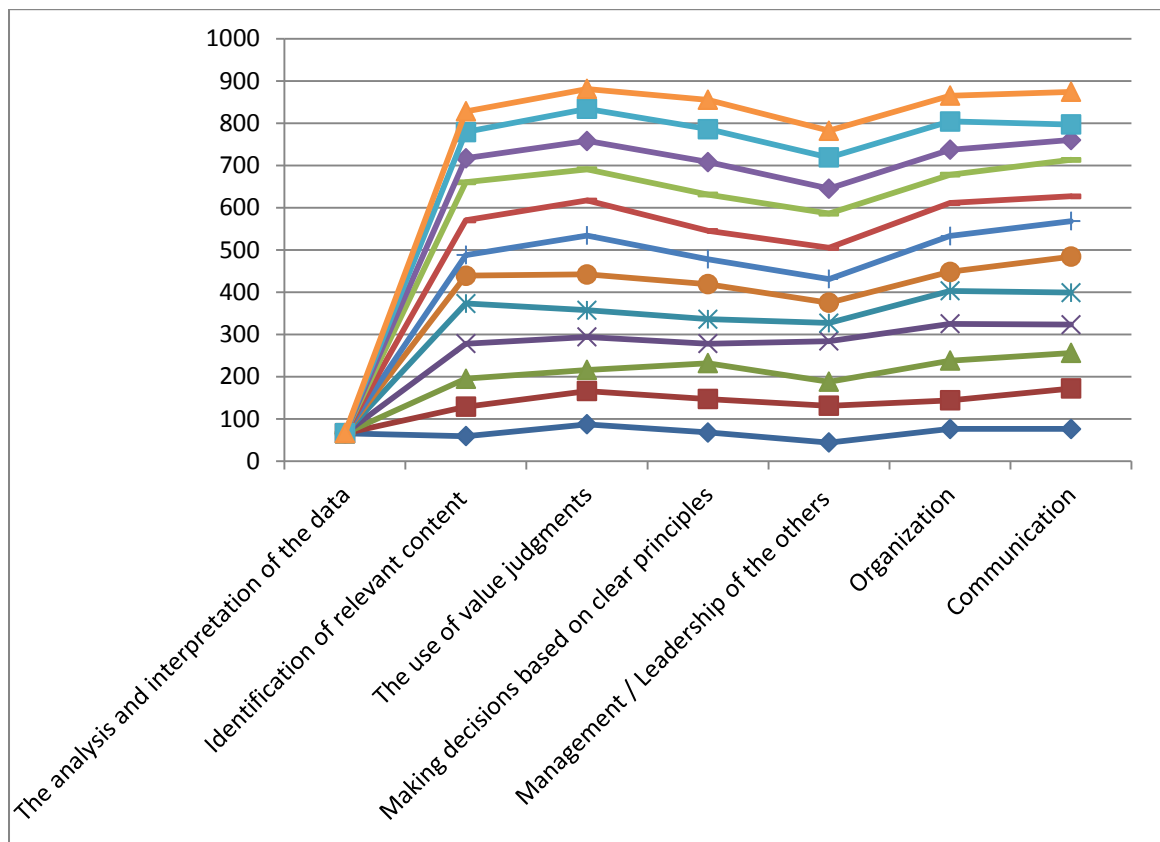


Figure 2. Diagram answers given by the directors to instrument for assessment / self-assessment, management skills / leadership on category items

From the diagram shown in Figure 2 we conclude that the best scores obtained by principals are made for items from the units "the use of value judgments" and "communication". Also, from the chart we can see that two of the directors of research participants achieved high scores in all categories of skills assessed.

To determine the level of skills in leadership we applied in parallel document analysis method and questionnaire method applied to directors participating in research and other categories of persons who represent interest groups in the community. The instruments used in the post experimental phase and the results are detailed in Chapter VIII of the paper.

We made a few references to the centralization process of all instruments used for field leadership. The dashboard is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Instrument distribution of scores on the manifestation of leadership areas obtained by executives participating in research in the application of all instruments used

Director	Strategic Leadership institutional level	Strategic Leadership personal level	Leadership by values and attitudes institutional level	Leadership by values and attitudes personal level	Community Leadership institutional level	Community Leadership personal level
D1	4	3,50	4	3,50	4	3
D2	4	3,75	4	3,50	3	3,50
D3	3	3	3	3,50	3	3,50
D4	4	3,50	4	3,25	4	4
D5	3	2,75	3	3,50	3	3
D6	3	2,75	4	3,50	4	3,75
D7	4	4	5	3,75	4	3,25
D8	4	3,50	4	2,75	4	3,50
D9	3	3,25	4	3,50	4	3
D10	2	2,50	3	3,25	3	3,50
D11	4	4	5	3,50	4	4
D12	3	3,25	4	3,25	4	4

This panel is, in fact, the general picture of the level of the director's general skills (dependent variables) participants to research, after completion of the work training, after the process of implementing the three level strategy of training (independent variable).

For the purpose of determining the effects of independent variable action on dependent variables we prepared a comparative analysis of this instrument panel with variables panel operation at the beginning of the training.

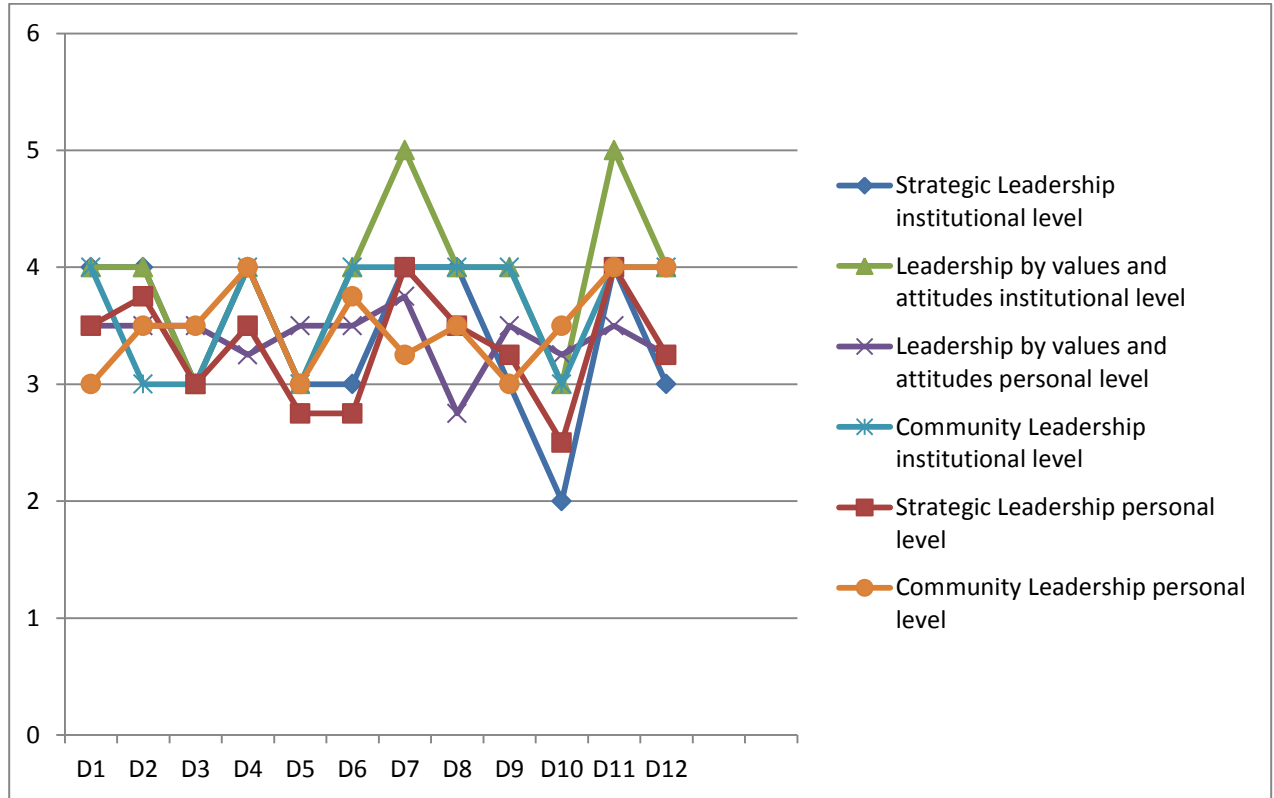


Figure 3 Levels of skills in leadership diagram, of the directors from participating schools in the three level training strategy assisted by a facilitator

From the diagram shown in Figure 3. we can see that director's skills levels vary between scores 3 and 4, 3 being the standard medium, and 4 a higher level than the standard. They recorded two maximum levels of skills in leadership manifested by shared values and expressing new attitudes at institutional level, obtained by D7 and D10 directors. Also, there is a minimum level of skills development in leadership in the community, at institutional level, obtained by D10 director.

For each director and each leadership category skills we performed with the calculation of average and average standard deviation. The results are available in Table 4.

Table 4. Average and average standard deviations on skills category in leadership table

Director	Strategic Leadership		Leadership by values and attitudes		Leadership in the community	
	Average	Average Standard Deviation	Average	Average Standard Deviation	Average	Average Standard Deviation
D1	3,75	0,25	3,75	0,25	3,5	0,5
D2	3,875	0,125	3,75	0,25	3,125	0,875
D3	3	1	3,125	0,875	3,125	0,875
D4	3,75	0,25	3,625	0,375	4	0
D5	2,875	1,125	3,125	0,875	3	1
D6	2,875	1,125	3,75	0,25	3,875	0,125
D7	4	0	4,125	0,875	3,625	0,375
D8	3,75	0,25	3,625	0,375	3,75	0,25
D9	3,125	0,875	3,75	0,25	3,5	0,5
D10	2,25	1,75	3,125	0,875	3,125	0,875
D11	4	0	4,25	0,25	4	0
D12	3,125	0,875	3,625	0,375	4	0

Table 4 shows that the average standard deviations are less than one unit for most of the average skill levels recorded. One situation seems critical the one of D10 director who obtained a standard average over-unit on the strategic leadership.

Graph appropriate with the average calculated from the three variables in leadership is shown in Figure 4.

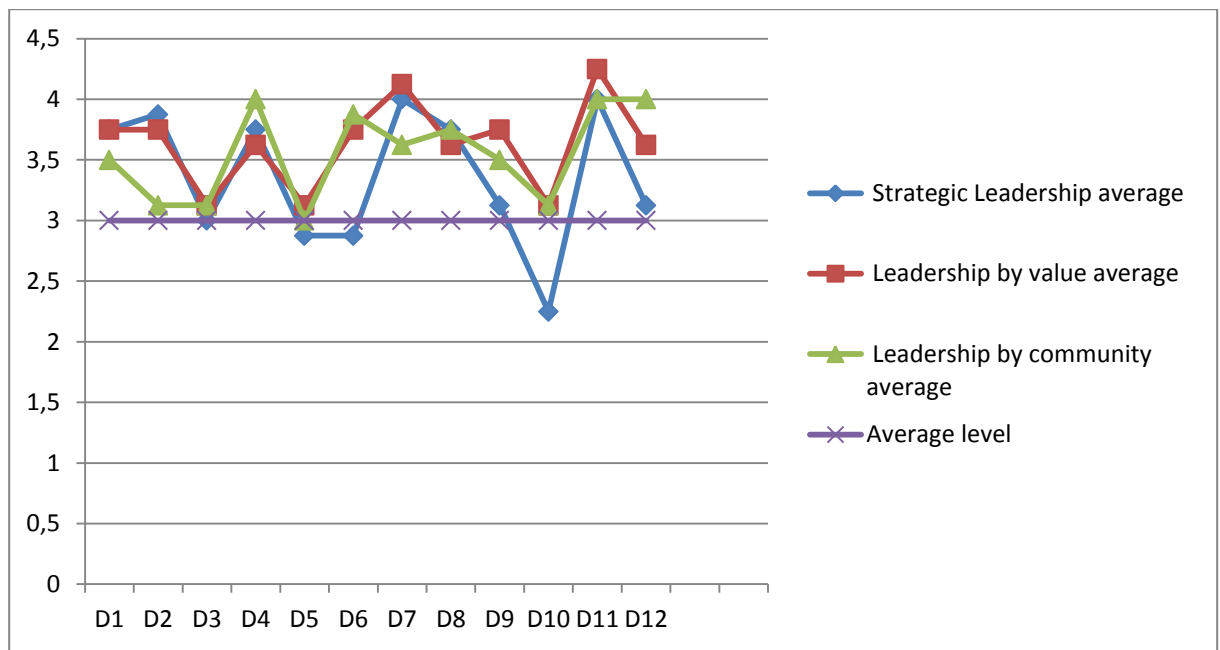


Figure 4. Average level of the executives compared to the average standard level for each area of manifestation of leadership

From the diagram shown in Figure 4. we can easily see that the average level of skills acquired on the three areas of manifestation of leadership is greater than the average standard.

There is a lower average than the standard for D5, D6, directors on strategic leadership component, but the difference is insignificant. The only significant difference is the D10 director in the strategic leadership.

The general tendency is to increase skills levels in the three areas of leadership for all directors who have benefited from the three level training strategy assisted by a facilitator.

The research results were presented to each director individually. We requested for their opinion on the veracity of our findings. The unanimous opinion was that the application of the three level training strategy assisted improved managerial and leadership skills of managers.

As development needs identified, feasible for a new stage of formative intervention were organizational psychology component. Topics of interest proposed by directors for a formative stage of intervention were:

- Burnout and its consequences; (9 proposals)
- Organizational Psihodramele (7 proposals)
- Leadership Styles (4 proposals)
- Collective intelligence and emotional intelligence organizations (4 proposals).

6. Conclusions and recommendations

The continuous development of the competences of school manager, no matter whether it is about the specific powers of management or of powers from the leadership scope it becomes a daily practice, as the director of the educational establishment is one of the most important vectors in generating institutional development strategy, creating an organizational culture adapted to continuous transformations in educational sphere. Continuous development will always improve your personal leading style.

Leadership style is the "key" in developing an effective strategy for institutional development. There is no universally effective leadership style, because driving situations and organizational contexts of schools are extremely diverse and dynamic. Leadership must be adapted to situation, meaning to be transformative, imaginative, constructive or permanently reconfigured.

Leadership style involves a balancing between two constituent areas: the central area, as a constant reference, a kind of hard core identifying the governor and the peripheral area, flexible, ensuring adaptability to situations. Although it is difficult for a leadership style to reach perfection, it may tend to achieve such a style. The share of desirable effects of leadership style is higher, how long his practice is associated with several positive effects, and it is adapted to school conditions, the style will be better, more efficient more desirable.

Leading style can be regarded as a harmonious blending of competencies in action. From this point of view, we believe that the most important factor in shaping and developing personal leadership style is the training of managerial and leadership development.

The research followed the formation and exercise of individual leadership styles, which bears the imprint of the institutional environment in which they develop, the values and customs specific to organizational culture, the environment and local community, not at least, the "force" of the management team.

The research was started with the idea of designing and implementing a three level training strategy for managers with the management team, assisted by the facilitator in the learning environment of the school. The impact of training strategies on the level of development of managerial skills and competencies, we think it was particularly big. In addition, involvement of participants in their own training was increased. They were motivated and empowered to participate in formative steps and found that the training answered to their expectations and individual development needs.

Following the analysis and interpretation of statistical results, we I have come to several conclusions regarding to the degree of confirmation of research hypotheses, findings to be presented in the following paragraphs:

Conclusions regarding the impact of the implementation of the three level training strategy for managers, assisted by facilitators, on the level of skills development aimed at designing and implementing institutional development strategy

Following statistics, it is clear that directors participating in the formative experiment, applying the three level training strategy assisted by the facilitator, we have changed the designing and implementing institutional development strategy in the way of "increase" or "large increase". In a few cases has been maintained at a stable level of expertise as evidenced by the quantifier "constant". One director (D10) recorded smaller changes of the skills than the ones targeted through formative process, but changes were also increased in personal or institutional level.

However, statistics show a profound increase skills aimed to design and implement institutional development strategy, on a personal level for D11 director who recorded a score of 100%.

From the above considerations it follows that the specific hypothesis 1 is confirmed.

Conclusions regarding the impact of the implementation of the three level training strategy for managers assisted by facilitators on the level of skills development in team coordination

Both document analysis and statistical data obtained confirms the fact that the three level training strategy assisted by facilitator favoured team coordination skills manifested by directors in the relation with the management team and with the other teachers. Favourable responses given by the teachers and board members from the questionnaires led to the idea of improving relations of the director with the management team and other teams organized at the institutional level. Therefore we can say that the institutional leadership was improved by sharing common values, specific to school organizational culture.

Regarding the relationship between the director and board of directors, the distribution of responses to questionnaires on team coordination skills, confirms the existence of a very good relation in two thirds of cases presented.

However, we believe that, due to fluctuations of the administrative staff, the statistical indicators of the table may be compromised.

Given the above considerations, we believe that the specific hypothesis 2 is partially confirmed.

Conclusions regarding the impact of the implementation of the three level training strategy for managers assisted by facilitators, on the level of development of communication skills and networking with social partners

Qualitative changes in the school-community relationship are undeniable. First, to reveal an attitude, reflected in the fact that institutional development strategy, strategic project had clear objectives on strengthening the link between the school and local community organization. For the first time, in schools where the three level training strategy for managers assisted by facilitators was applied held a consultation process with community representatives on specific issues whose solutions they could identify only together.

Regarding the trend of increasing the level of development of communication skills and relationship with the "social partners" in personal plan, it recorded the highest scores, reaching a maximum increase of 60%. It should be noted that on three cases of the participants in research, D4, D11, D12, these skills have reached the development level of 100%.

All these arguments lead to the idea that three specific hypothesis are fully confirmed in the research.

Therefore, we can say that training managers through a three level training strategy for the entire management team, assisted by the facilitator and completed in educational environment of the school, enhance managerial and leadership skills of the managers. We can also notice the qualitative leap made by the directors participating in research, going from the stage of director to manager level and then become a leader, followed by the management team and teachers in school.

We are convinced that those directors have demonstrated over time that they have such high levels of leadership skills in schools that have not been changed from political considerations. We believe that they have won fully respect of the community that, by showing leadership in the community, were able to play roles that were returned as social status.

We also want to highlight the positive attitudes of research participants:

- Interest and willingness to engage the participants in their own training;
- Motivation and determination manifested in their own professional development;
- Assumed the responsibility of executives and board members to participate in formative steps;

- Recognition of individual development needs of participants and guide the process to their satisfaction.

Attitudes, observed during the implementation of the training strategy, were not treated on this research, but they have been demonstrated both during the formative intervention phase and during other stages of the investigation. Involvement requires more than the presence in an activity, involvement requires active participation, driven, assumed.

From this point of view, driving managers through a three level training strategy involving entire management team, assisted by the facilitator and enhanced in educational environment of the school, was actually a self-training process, guided by the facilitator. This process created a competition in changing the optical skills training, modelling a viable system of values. Mission, vision and strategy shared new values stated were absorbed by the organizational culture of the institution of school as a learning organization, its members think and act as individuals who are driving to the same scope.

The training of directors and management team, assisted by the facilitator, helped develop leadership skills and training their own style from the director, to the leader, able to anticipate the future and act accordingly.

Looking back at the echo the three level training strategy assisted by the facilitator had, at the changes that were generated by this process, not only in terms of institutional development, but also in terms of training participants involved in this project we can say that the purpose and objectives of the trial have been met.

From the perspective of the investigation undertaken, given the fact that two specific hypotheses were confirmed, and the third hypothesis was partially confirmed, I think the general assumption has been validated training results.

Also during the three stages of the research were outlined the answers to the raised questions during the research, answers that we record in the following paragraphs:

❖ **Can we consider “to facilitate” a formative process?**

Facilitation is a formative process witnessed a process in which participants are object and subject of the formative approach. It can be argued strongly that facilitation is a process of self-training, the development of those skills and competencies that are necessary for the individual in order to be able to successfully complete certain activities. From this perspective, facilitating as the formative process helps develop those skills that are not sufficiently developed, but which are necessary and helpful to the facility person.

❖ Which are the formative stages of intervention in this process?

Facilitation is made in order to help two different groups of interests to collaborate, to work better together to identify issues affecting both groups and to find viable solutions to resolve the advantage of both parties. Participation in the facilitation process must be given by both parties. The facilitator is a neutral person who assists in the discussions, which guides and assists participating individuals to find and implement their own solutions to common problems.

Given the complete picture of facilitating as formative process, from our point of view, formative stages of intervention are the following:

- Stage setting sounding the expectations of participants and topics for meetings of participation;
- Step of gathering the information regarding the topics that were set;
- Design phase approach, formative training stimulus materials, organization of work;
- Facilitating stage;
- Formative evaluation stage of the process;
- Reflection on the formative intervention.

❖ What are the advantages of such a process?

Some of the advantages that we have identified during the research are:

- Training is done in the educational context in which participants operate, this eliminates the discomfort of moving to another location and enables using earned time for other activities;
- Formation is punctual, on the agreed topic established between the parties, not on a topic irrelevant to the participants;
- Formation is focused on the individual development needs of participants in the facilitation process;
- Skills development is made in the group in which people operate in line with the development needs of the team;
- The opportunity to develop a motivational environment for enhancing confidence in self-development, fostering self-control and self-governance;
- Fostering understanding and acceptance criteria for successful ideas and performances;
- Generating new opportunities remove communication and change barriers, diversification of choice and encourage innovation;

- Costs related to the formative process would be much lower than the cost needed to participate in an accredited training program.

❖ What are the disadvantages of such a process?

Some of the disadvantages of facilitation as formative process, are:

- Formation may be too specific on topics of immediate interest, preventing the development of complementary skills;
- Training participants remain in their closed group and not come into contact with other groups that may offer different views on the issues discussed;
- Expectations of participants, for training, could decrease the consistency;
- Interest and motivation to participate in such a formative process could be lower and lower over the time;

❖ How would we design a training program assisted by facilitator?

A training program assisted by a facilitator is a program with a fixed structure but with a flexible theme, adapted to the needs of stakeholders participating.

We propose the following structure:

First meeting - Establishing common objectives of the two participating groups, establishing a strategy of "cohabitation" (developing the ability to investigate environmental, strategic design skills, communication skills and networking);

A second meeting - Identify common problems and solutions "custom" in their resolution (negotiation skills, discovering skills in analysis and synthesis, problem solving);

Third meeting - planning stages of implementation of identified solutions (design and organizational skills, leadership skills and coordination, resource management skills, risk management);

Other steps as effectively implement those solutions or monitoring / assessment of the performance of the proposed approach may be the subject of a specialized assistance, combined with advice on specific issues.

In our opinion, in the coming years, training programs assisted by facilitators will gain ground and will be preferred by the groups who want flexible formative steps, consistent, efficient, focused on personal development needs, which can be easily used as daily habits.

❖ How can we certify this facilitator assisted training?

Secondary legislation allows current certification of the training process assisted by facilitator on two "tracks" of certification:

- If formative steps should be described as thematic modules of a training program for category IV, the school where the facilitation process has been held, based on documents showing participation in the program, request the recognition to the Specialist Accreditation Programme and the certification of the graduates, according to the methodology for accreditation and periodic assessment of training providers and their programs (O.M. 5564/2011)

- If not consistency formative steps necessary to provide the training modules, the school based on attendance lists can consider these activities with at most 5 transferable professional credits, according to the Methodology of accumulation, recognition and equivalence of forms of continuous improving (O.M. 5562/2011)

❖ **What is the generic professional profile of the facilitator?**

From our point of view, the description of the generic professional profile facilitator must start from the fact that it is first and foremost a competent trainer. Given the status of the facilitator, being the one assisting and facilitate the professional continuous self-organizing groups, we can define its role and necessary skills in order to successfully exercise this position.

The facilitator can take to portray according to the list of qualities of a good trainer (after Shaw and Pretty, Guijt, Thompson, Scoones, M. Ormston, 2007):

- Warm personality, energy and vitality;
- Genuine desire to help others to develop and (self) continuous improvement;
- The skills and interpersonal skills (must be able to motivate trainees to encourage rather than blame, identify learning potential in any situation, to smile, to be open and to have "presence" to show tact and empathy, to value all contributions of the participants etc.).

- Flexibility, sensitivity and responsibility, the ability to identify and solve the problems of the trainees - vital on recognizing the needs of trainees as they occur during the development program and during training;

- Good preparation, which involves continuous adaptation of plans and materials, to use participant's ideas and skills and to give everyone the best formation experience possible;

- Knowledge and enthusiasm;
- Credibility in the eyes of the participants;
- Self-confidence.

Also, in describing the professional profile of the facilitator can be approved the comprehensive model of training competencies provided by WR Miller. From the perspective of the mentioned author, the categories of competencies required for trainers are:

- Technical skills related to knowledge and skills specific to the field of the trainer;
- Skills for the design, implementation and evaluation of training;
- Personal skills - personal characteristics (attitudes, intellectual skills, creativity and not the least, interpersonal skills) and personal behaviour (positive behaviour, but at the same time ethical use of positive incentives, consider the feelings of others, etc...).

Also, the facilitator must master at the highest level, communication skills, since he is the coordinator of the communication process. Deficiencies in this area could jeopardize not only the formation goals, but can hamper or even block communication processes within groups. Moreover, the facilitator should be a nice presence, to make himself liked by the trainees, to be empathic and assertive.

The facilitator should have a rich store of knowledge and experience in the field on which he is the facilitator. Otherwise, in our view, the facilitation process, the formative process would be compromised because there might commit serious errors in terms of the scientific content that is transmitted.

This research allowed me to reflect more on what is and on what should become facilitating as a training process. The research questions were formulated in terms of the formative potential of facilitation process. The answers to the research questions were developed after discussions with participants in this experiment investigation and following a personal reflection on my own activities.

In conclusion, the facilitation is a formative approach and also a self-formative one. Its potential has not been fully explored and not used at the maximum level. Therefore, our proposal covers two aspects:

- to explore in detail the formative potential of the facilitation process, we propose the initiation of more extensive research on this subject and creating a pilot training program assisted by facilitators;
- to discover the potential of facilitating in formative purpose, we propose the design and implementation of training programs for the facilitators (with structural funding) which, besides facilitating the process skills needed to be specialized in facilitation issues. We also propose the implementation of training programs assisted by facilitators with facilitators trained for this task.

Facilitation means training, but not only assisted formation of groups, but also self-training of the facilitator. Even if the facilitator is a neutral person, facilitation process will shape the pace with pace facilitate.

As a facilitator, I lived with joy and amazement professional satisfactions related to this process, which influenced me positively. I received spiritual wealth, generosity, dedication and determination of the people I came in contact during the three level training strategy. Positive experiences with the participants during the investigative process marked me in a positive way and gave me the idea of doing this research.