

OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Diana MIHĂESCU ¹, Lucia FRĂȚICIU ²

^{1,2} University of "Lucian Blaga" Sibiu, Romania

Abstract

The management of educational projects, as part of the management's new concept, meets the requirements of a performant management, which integrates the structures and recommended methods, the complexity and the organizational flexibility as well as the social and psychological aspects of the educational organization in which the project is implemented.

Key words: project management, education, educational project

JEL classification: M12, O22, I29

1. Introduction

The globalization, the requirements of a borderless competitive market, technological and communicational development, the dynamic development of the economic and social environment, the organizational tasks' complexity and the fast changes at the macroeconomic level determine the occurrence of some appropriate management concepts in order to solve the transformation and reform problems which occurred either in the public or in the private educational institutions.

Current educational structures, centralized due to the multitude bureaucratic regulations and rigid hierarchical structures, still fail meeting the requirements of a dynamic market and the social effects of this market (Mihăescu, 2012).

¹ Faculty of Law, Department of Public Law and Education Sciences, diana.mihaescu@ulbsibiu.ro

² Faculty of Economics, Department Management, Marketing, Business Administration, lucia.fraticiu@ulbsibiu.ro

Are needed new organizational structures, flexible, which will allow to the educational organizations to respond rapidly to the environment to focus on the market, to meet the community's needs, to assimilate and process in time the new information.

Implementing an educational project requires specific working methods, a systematic approach and appropriate principles. In order to be easier to manage and allow to exercise the management process, most of the educational programs follow a series of steps – the operational landmarks.

2. Initiation or conceptualization of the educational project

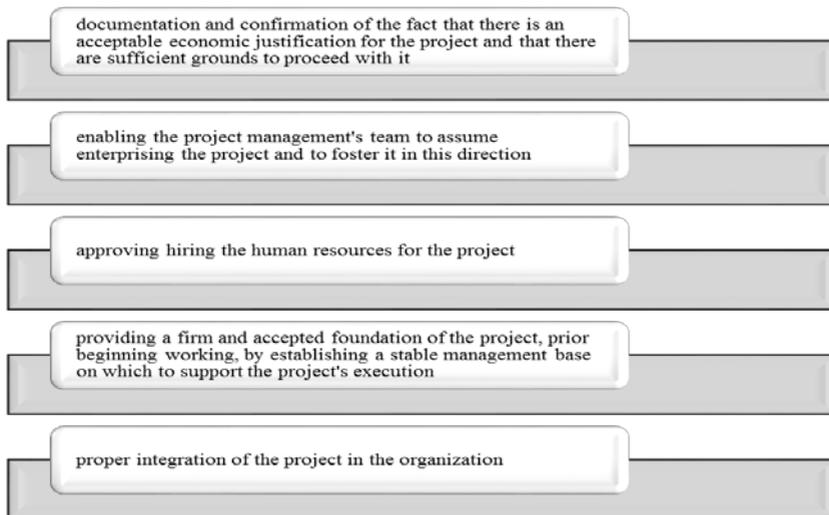
Project initiation is practically the beginning faze of a project, the stage after which it is taken the decision whether or not to start the project and are sets out the main requirements (the constraints time-resources). In this stage it is necessary the documentation activity on the matter, identifying stakeholders, the role that each can play in the development of the project, and the project's expected results (figure no.1).

The result is a project order, which contains the general objective of the educational project, the project's theme and importance and also the responsibilities and the allocated resources. (Mocanu, 2001)

The objective of this phase is to obtain a decision for initiating a designer educational opportunity. This phase requires a brief analysis of the problem, with explicit objectives. The result is a project order, which show overall objective of the educational project, the project's theme and the importance of responsibilities and its resources.

All project phases are managed and conducted by o project order, a label. For each phase or sub-phase basis, for each program and project, and each person involved in the project, it requires a project order. Thus, both the beneficiary and the contractor have a clear basis, supported by partners, which assumes responsibility for the decisions on resources, deadlines, budgets etc.

Figure no.1: Objectives of defining the educational project



3. Planning of the educational project

Project planning includes identifying the required activities in order to have a successful completion of it, defining how to be performed project's activity, estimating and scheduling the activities and resources, budgeting and planning cash flows during the whole period, but also defining the standards that must be respected. Also the planning processes include succession planning of the project's activities to be undertaken (Neagu, 2007). Thus, planning minimizes risks that may arise during the implementation of the educational project.

Given these aspects, systematic planning must be flexible enough to cope with unique activities, discipline through analysis and controls and to be able to accept functional entries. (Mocanu, 2004)

Consequently, planning the educational project it is a basic process in carrying out projects and refers to elaborating a plan or a program which applies in practice and answers to the questions: Who does what? When? At what cost? and according to which specifications? These parameters should be at the level of detail, detail that the project manager considers to be necessary

and sufficient for an efficient and effective control of the project.(Răduț, Bocoș, Chiș, 2015).

In this context, for better defining the framework of the project it is necessary to develop the Project Management Plan, a document that justifies all the needs of the future educational project and will describe how it will be managed.

Also the planning processes include the planning and scheduling activities to be undertaken in educational project.

More specifically, the project manager and his team have the task of carrying identification of main project tasks and to specify the resources needed to achieve it. Based on this analysis, the project is divided into tasks that can be assigned, scheduled, organized and tracked. Then the identified components of the project, should be evaluated for their deployment resources and risks that may hinder the attainment of desired solutions.

When an educational project is having a long term or where there is a high degree of uncertainty regarding the correct approach to it, is almost impossible to plan in detail all activities to run. In these cases, is recommend to proceed with planning on stages: first stage is planned and will be followed by the next stage planned and so on. Planning on stages is recommended since that once decreases the level of planning, the duration will be shorter and therefore the plan will consist in details necessary to conduct activities that will be implemented.

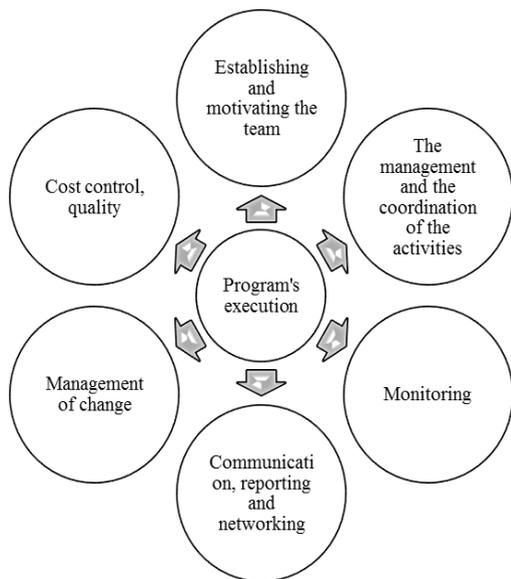
4. Implementing the educational project

The implementation of the educational project it is the stage where the team organizes and applies the educational project plan, closing by attaining the forecasted projected results.(Radu, 2003)

Implementing the educational project takes into consideration the fulfilment of the plan, which involves running the activities included in the project. But also in parallel with all these must take place the activity of monitoring and program's control, and reporting and evaluation of the obtained results (figure no. 2).

Being a team activity, the success of the project depends to a large extent on the manner in which the communication occurs between the project's team members and within each stage and activity and by the consistency and the quality of the communication.

Fig no. 2: Elements of implementing educational projects



The project's implementation strategy requires a permanent and efficient communication among all project's team members, between the team and project's partners, between the project's team and the school and the local community in all the project's stages. (Răduț, Bocoș, Chiș, 2015).

Thus, educational organization's development, with regards of curricular change management and curricular environment it is favoured by the existence of some operational guidance in the management of educational projects field.

5. Completing the educational project

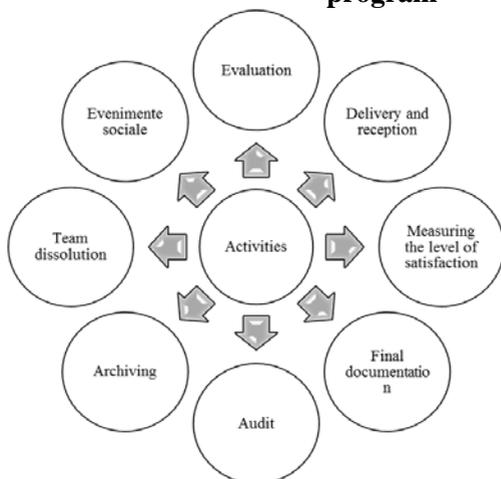
The final stage of the project is the closing stage. Then the results of the project can be exploited. The final task of the project manager is to bring together the educational project's team to review the activities. This is the form of formal and informal dissolution of the relationships between the program's participants.

Closing the activity in an organized manner of an educational project enables participants to learn from mistakes and capitalize the benefits obtained by participating in the implemented project. (Gherghuț, Ceobanu, 2009)

Finishing an educational project involves the completion of all work orders, closing all the contracts with the partners, closing the contracts with the employees, redistribution or conservation of the equipment used, disposal of remaining material resources. All these activities should be planned and included in the expenditure budget, similar to other project activities (figure no.3).

Therefore, are regarded as successful, the educational projects delivered on time without exceeding the budget, and meeting the demands and failures are the projects which have had exceeded time / money allocated and have not delivered what was asked. In practice there is a grey area of semi-success / semi-failure where in the end are falling most of the implemented educational projects. (Voiculescu, Mircescu, Alecu, 2008)

Figure no.3: Specific activities for the stage of closing the educational program



6. Conclusions

Starting from these premises, the educational project's team members must capitalize the entire professional experience which they attain in the field of projects and to be oriented toward:

- Adopting an adequate managerial methodology and using it consistently;
- Implementing a project philosophy which should lead to an efficient project management;
- Developing a viable and feasible project plan;
- Adopting of some realistic and tangible goals which should eliminate or minimize the changes during the project;
- Scheduling, tracking and developing a project budget are inseparable elements;
- Choosing a project manager with professional knowledge in project management, managerial skills and the ability to work in teams;
- Support and involvement of the management team and of project team;
- Focus the attention to correlate time-activity;
- Adopt some effective and fast communication models at all levels of project activity;
- Acknowledgment of the entire team's role for the success of the project;
- Avoiding and eliminating inefficient activities and meetings;
- Quickly identify and resolve potential problems to avoid additional costs;
- Consistent assessment and measurement of progress;
- Strict framing in the financial and quality parameters assumed by the plan.

7. References

- Gherghuț Alois, Ceobanu Ciprian (2009), *Elaborarea și managementul proiectelor în serviciile educaționale*, Ed. Polirom, Iași;
- Mihăescu Diana (2012), *Managementul programelor educaționale*, Ed. Universității "Lucian Blaga" din Sibiu;
- Mocanu Mariana, Schuster Carmen (2004), *Managementul proiectelor*, Ed. All Beck, București;
- Neagu Cibela (2007), *Managementul proiectelor*, Ed. Tritonic, București;
- Radu Victor, (2003) *Management îndrumar pentru proiecte economice*, Ed. Economică, București;
- Răduț/Taciu Ramona, Bocoș Mușata, Chiș Olga (2015), *Tratat de management educațional*, Ed. Paralela 45, București;
- Voiculescu F, Mircescu M., Alecu S (2008), *Managementul proiectelor de cercetare în științele educației*, în "Pregătirea psihopedagogică. Manual pentru definitivat și gradul didactic II". coord. D. Potolea, Iași: Polirom;