

THE ROLE OF CHAMBER ORGANIZATIONS IN THE HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT – FUNDAMENTAL CONDITION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract:

The concept of “sustainable development” is still a matter of discussion and is read in different ways by the specialists in the field, but all of them agree on the determinant role of the human, personal factor in sustainable development. In this work a special emphasis is made on the role of chamber organizations at different stages and in different forms of the formation and development of the human capital. Organization of the process of its formation concerns all the participants of economic and social life, public and private life, the “balance of power” and the distribution of responsibilities between them being different in various countries. Chamber organizations dispose of a rich experience in this field.

Keywords: chamber organizations, initial formation, continual formation, professional formation, socio-economic essential.

JEL Classification: O₁₅, O₁₆

Against the background of economic crisis, the management errors were penalized hard enough by the market. Thus, we acknowledge the fact: those who haven't shown themselves prudent enough or haven't proved a proactive attitude, were eliminated or, at least forced to rethink their strategy. Being this context, the chamber organizations (The Chamber of Commerce and Industry) are present on all levels, local, national and international, providing the business men with the solutions of the actual problems through new services and programs of continual formation of the human capital, giving the entrepreneurs the orientation to a sustainable economic, social and ecological development.

The concept of “sustainable economic development” represents the form of economic development when it is supposed that satisfying the present consumption needs may not compromise or cause any prejudice to the needs of the next generations. The concept, which emerged almost 10 years ago, is still a matter of discussion and is read differently by specialists

from various fields: economists, sociologists, philosophers, ecologists, but all of them agree on the fact that the role of the human factor is crucial in the sustainable development process. The best-known definition of the „sustainable development” is that given by the World Commission for Ecology and Development (WCED) in the report “Our Common Future”, also known as the Brundtland Report: *“Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”*.

For the business environment, the management of sustainable development is a guiding light for the companies, directing them in order to maximize their environmental concerns, economic and social activities in a realistic manner. (Petrescu I., 2008, p.8)

Commercial organizations, the majority of them having “formation” among their priority directions of activity, have an important role in developing the human factor / an essential condition for sustainable development.

Nowadays, there exist about 10,000 Chambers of Commerce and Industry worldwide. However, there is no unique “formula” for them in all the countries. Their structure, provided services, as well as the place and role differs from one country to another, depending on the historical, political, economic, social circumstances in which the Chamber was founded and unfolds its activity

One of the fields of activity of these counselling organizations is the professional development. It manifests itself differently in different countries.

On the basis of an analysis of the information published on the sites of the National Chambers of Commerce and Industry we can figure out that, among the Chamber Organizations of the 47 states, members of the Eurochambres, 44 have “formation” listed among their directions of activity and just 3 of the organizations (those from Denmark) haven’t mentioned “formation” among their activities.

At present, the changes in the business environment are much more consistent, following one another, their speed continuously increasing. Within these changes there may be pointed out several main directions, giving a sufficiently clear image about the challenges of the future and the impact these challenges may have on the existents and operation of the firms.

In this context, the human factor and the development of the human skills is the core of the sustainable development for the coming years.

The five findings listed below characterize the socioeconomic core of the beginning of the present century:

- *Work Market going through a profound mutation*

After a period characterized by a work force abundance, all the prognoses published today announce a lack of competence in many European countries (massive retirement of the professionals, demographical problems etc.) together with a high unemployment rate are persistent in European countries.

- *Multiple limitations for enterprises*

The managers of the enterprises are most exposed to a social responsibility concerning their employees and the economic environment of the enterprise. He has to use different methods of prevision; it implies both managing the previsions of new work posts and maintaining the existing skills and competences.

- *The new expectations of the personnel*

Nowadays we can observe an evolution of work relationships, both from the point of the new generation, which doesn't pay so much attention to the work values and from that of all the employees, attracted by the successive social plans.

- *A new vision of time and space*

International common dimensions are affirmed today in the development of an international work market, but also a market of formation, but especially in the space of a common European or even universal environment of education, professional formation and studies.

- *O variety of actors reacting under the "balance of power"*

In the last few years the state intervention in the formation, especially in the professional formation was constantly growing. The competence of the regions has also increased. Chambers of Commerce and Industry have their place in this process. That is why it's so important nowadays to interpolate the whole spectre of actors, involved in redefining their role and place within the state.

After an analysis of the Chamber Organization practice we can see that the activity of formation can be unfolded in several forms:

- a) *Higher Education*

The best examples, in this aspect, in our opinion, are the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of France. More than 26,800 students at the levels Bac+2 – Bac +5 graduate the counselling institutions of higher education in France. Among the institutions we will mention the prestigious "École supérieure de commerce du Paris" (HEC), together with the other 2, also located in Paris High School of Economical and Commercial Studies (ESSEC) and the Superior School of Commerce in Paris (ESCP), as well as the 29 Superior Schools of Commerce, located in the regions of the country (ESC). We also would like to add here the 7 Superior Schools of

double competence: scientific and managerial (ESDC), 7 Management Schools (EDM), 16 Engineering Canceling Schools, 30 Schools of Management and Commerce (EDC), 18 Schools of commerce and Distribution (ECD), etc. (Puaux, P., 2003, pg. 166).

All these institutions, certified by the local authorities, issuing diplomas, corresponding to the French National System of Education, are provided as services, integrated in the range provided by the Chamber, or on a separate basis, provided by several associations, under the provisions of Law from the year 1901, the fee per year can vary, in average, from 3,800 to 6,000 Euros per year (Puaux, P., 2003, pg.166).

b) *Apprenticeship (Professional Formation)*

This is about initial formation through alternation (technological, theoretical and practical instruction) with the purpose of gaining professional qualification, in other words, of gaining skill.

From the beginning of their operation in the field of formation, Chambers of industry and Commerce created relations between schools and enterprises, in order to:

- Organize integrated courses of practice;
- The studying of cases on the basis of real situations, as well as scientific studies, as a part of the process of education;
- To have a high/skill academic body and teachers, the majority of which would be practitioners.

As to the apprenticeship or “professional development”, its organization concerns all the actors of the economical and social, as well as of the public and private life, even though the “balance of power” and the distribution of responsibilities differs from one country to another and it changed dramatically in the last 20 years:

- The State, first of all. The Missions of State in the field of professional formation refer to the 1950s, but there has to be mentioned that he has suffered significant changes since then. Today the State remains the Garant of equal access of the citizens to formation. At the Same time the State ensures the normative function as well as the function of control and supervision in the field of formation.

- Regions. The missions of the regions in the process of professional development (for example “The Regional Plan of Development of Professional Formation” in France) are significant elements in the regional policies in the field of formation.

- Social Partners, in several countries the associations were limited, becoming pretty narrowly connected to applying into practice of the professional development, but especially of the continual development.

- As to the specific of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, their mission in the field of professional formation is that of providing consultation, they are not obliged to open schools in order to meet the needs of the entrepreneurs. (France, Germany, Austria, Moldova).

c) *Continual Formation*

The organization of continual formation represents one of the special means of adaptation of the development of rapid mutations of the economic and/or technological environment, especially during crisis. Furthermore, in order to meet the needs of the time, the employees and the managers have to develop themselves through the entire active professional life, trying to become as professionally mobile, as possible. Chambers of Commerce and Industry have a pretty large experience in this field evening courses (schools, centres for the professional development of the staff, centres of enterprise etc.), as well as courses of professional development for managers and in the field of foreign languages.

Among the activities of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry we can find “continual formation”, especially if it regards: different posts within the enterprise (directors, administration, secretariat, management,) general professional formation and especially studying foreign languages, etc. Chamber organizations of several countries (for example France) provide continual professional formation in “third” sectors (communication, hotel services, restaurants, etc.)

Analysing such activities, operated within several European Chambers of Commerce and Industry we can point out 3 different kinds of organization of the continual professional formation:

1. Within **different structures** (sections, departments) of the Chamber, in other words, within a particular structure or organization (Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Moldova);

2. Within one of more than one of the **particular structures** (sections, departments) of the Chamber, provided as services within the Chamber;

3. **Organizations, institutions, on self-administration** (schools, instructional centres, institutions, etc.) ex: France.

As one can see, Chambers of Commerce and Industry are present at different stages and their impact takes different forms in the process of human capital development. Directing these programs towards the development of competences and skills, oriented to create a sustainable

society, which would be able to mould the economic and social systems in such a way that the natural resources and other systems supporting the life activity would be maintained, is a very important task of the entire chamber system.

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