

RESTRUCTURING OF THE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING OF ADULTS

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Abstract

Profound restructuring registered particularly by the economies of developing countries were caused by speeding up technical progress and increasing competition. Structural adjustment programs in these countries have led to radical reorganizations, of large scale with a serious social impact, affecting large groups of employees who, left without work had to be reintegrated into work. In this context was strongly reaffirmed the need for state intervention or private organizations in the process of solving problems of available employment labour resources.

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Two conflicting features define the situation of the transitional period in our country in training the adults: despite some serious incompatibilities in the market training for adults Romania faces a very low degree regulation, of operational order, regarding the intervention of secondary factors. From this point of view, we can determine the characteristics of adult training market in Romania in the last two decades:

- despite implementation of projects with non-repayable external financing or co-financing, which had the effect of accumulation of positive experiences, the developments were not generalized, but only punctual and temporary, and the results poorly recovered;
- although it worked and continues to work that number of structural elements mediating between demand and supply for training (economical agents, training centres for unemployed, education institutions, non-governmental organizations), their frequency of manifestation is sporadic and, when it takes place, to very low parameters;
- another obvious contradiction specific to the market training for adults in Romania is its monopolistic nature despite the fact it is closely related to other markets by which is influenced and that influences.

Despite the growing influence of radical liberal economic philosophy (*orthodox*) especially in the early years of transition, economic and social pressures, tensions accumulated in the labour market and in other market segments in the states in transition to market economy have determined the growing appeal to state intervention, including in the market training for adults.

Interventionism should facilitate the synthesis of positive experiences into coherent concepts contributing to the development of new institutional forms whose mission would be mediation training for adults.

A number of *developing* countries in Central and Eastern Europe (in the last decade), Central America, Africa and in Asia actively intervened in the effective building process of market training for adults. It became widespread the establishment of *regional centres for adult training*, both the institutions subordinate to the central administrative structures, regional or local, and as independent organizational structures created and funded by state up to the performance indicators when they can go on self-financing.

Taking as a model the experience accumulated in the U.S. institutions, Canada and Western Europe, regional centres for adult training pursue specific goals determined both by the requirements of this market segment and by state intervention embodied in the policies and appropriate strategies. Institutional restructuring in this area envisage a series of complex activities with the following purposes:

- increasing the flexibility of demand and supply of adult training that contribute concretely to increase employment of labor;
- introducing a system of indicators to quantify the training needs of adults;
- training of trainers able to initiate training activities appropriate to market requirements;
- adoption of standards, working methods and techniques to meet operatively and efficiently the requirements regarding quality in the training and assessment training for adults;
- labor incentives in decision making so that the solutions adopted meet the needs of performance in economics but also social peace;
- stimulating the competitive spirit, aimed at increasing economic efficiency and normalization process of the adult training market.

We also mention here the fundamental principles of the system objectives pursued in the institutional restructuring process, impregnated principles of pragmatism, namely:

- the decisive role is due to specialists who are best able to describe or define their job;
- generally, work can be characterized effectively and sufficiently by the tasks the specialized workers carry out in the respective occupation;
- all tasks have direct implications on knowledge and attitudes that workers must possess in order to meet the task correctly.

The new institutional structures are based on a number of new ways of working for the development of training programs for adults, as follows: exchange ideas followed by their real and effective reevaluation, constructive suggestions developed in a more intimate, less formal work and analysis.

Specific key-words used are not always new: stages of work, responsibilities, job analysis, job tasks, task analysis, etc. Novelty take the increased pragmatism vision and the formalism and superficiality reduction of these institutions, the adopted solutions being direct, prompt and effective in meeting the demand for adult training. In this respect, the training process itself is considering:

- previous work experience and professional knowledge gained are underlying the acquisition of new skills that enable the deployment of new types of activities required in the labour market;
- the light of past experience is expected a superior ability of adult communication and understanding of concepts and specialized terms in preparing a market expanding in the context of European and international labor market;
- priority attention be paid to fostering entrepreneurship spirit inhibited to a great extent before 1989, adults being thus initiated into the deployment of some activities on their own;
- specific reassessment for both preselection and during the adult training process;
- alignment with national and international standards requirements concerning the certification of training quality.

The network centres for the professional training of adults established in recent years in Romania is a true catalyst for market formation that targets areas becoming wider areas of activity but also an increasing number of competitors in a market of vital interest to the human factor of production. Among adult professional training centres established since 2002 we list those in Călărași, Craiova, Cluj, Râmnicu Vâlcea, Turnu Măgurele, based on a project financed with external credit provided by the World Bank. Modern conception underlying the organization and operation of regional centres began to influence market training for adults by the degree of openness of these institutions to all forms of learning, by promoting new teaching methods and techniques and interpersonal communication, by considering the quality of training as a priority in the training process, by training specialists and instructors for adult education, and by providing facilities with equipment at the highest level in support of training. As the network of such regional centres will expand, techniques, modern working methods and procedures will enter into both the activity centres for the qualification and re-qualification of unemployed and traders, institutions or non-governmental organizations, which have as main activity the professional training of adults.

Institutional restructuring achieved by establishing regional centres for the professional training of adults reevaluates capital investments on the line of market consolidation for the professional training of adults.

Profound restructuring registered particularly by the economies of developing countries were caused by speeding up technical progress and increasing competition. Structural adjustment programs in these countries have led to radical reorganizations, of large scale with a serious social impact, affecting large groups of employees who, left without work, had to be reintegrated into work. In this context was strongly reaffirmed the need for state intervention or private organizations in the process of solving problems of available employment labor resources.

Interventionism is the way by which such policies are promoted by virtue of state monopoly on financial resources established at the budget level especially to boost employment and social protection of people looking for a job. An important role in reducing the monopoly have the international financial commitments by which the

International Monetary Fund and World Bank intervene positively, this time, in macroeconomic stabilization strategies.

In this context we shall present further a series of measures and targets, which will have the effect of market liberalization for the professional training of adults, as follows:

- limiting state intervention in the relation between demand and supply in order to stimulate demand and supply of training by sustainable and coherent macroeconomic policies and strategies for the professional training of adults;
- self-financing gradual stimulation through progressive reduction of budgetary subsidies or of another kind;
- performance criteria to ensure quality of training to be the single criterion of indiscriminate accession to funds for training of adults;
- ensuring an adequate legislative framework to discourage unfair competition;
- recognition of domestic and international labor certification after raising the level of quality standards used in preparing the current market requirements for the training of adults;
- devoting the continuous character for the training of adults.

Restructuring itself, regardless the nature of the institution being involved in such a process, implies a technical part aimed at reorganizing production, some social restriction on the number of staff and a financial part regarding financing expenses with the retraining.

Solving highly complex problems in this area means in fact other jobs, other activities, other conditions and not least other professional knowledge, skills, abilities. Only thus can be understood the fundamental role of training in the efficiency of labor employment process.

In connection with the emphasis, at least temporarily, on the decisive role of state intervention, whereas employment is a consequence of public and private investments, becomes essential to know the investment process in volume, structure and impact on demand for training. On the other hand, it is also important to know the offer of training in terms of its compatibility with current and future technical requirements reflected in the appropriate occupational standards.

Decrease by removing automatism, routine and negative conservatism – as far as they are obstacles that are inaccessible to the process of assimilation of new occupations or activities for adults – depends on a number of activities, such as vocational guidance, career counselling, selection, recruitment preceding adult education. One of the effects followed by continuous training of adults is increasing the supply of training, increasing flexibility and mobility.

Intermediaries, also, play an important role to ensure contact between demand and supply training, naturally provided by educational institutions, specialized traders and non-governmental organizations. They focus all human and material resources that have traditionally been mobilized to respond to the offer of training.

Efficiency of mediating factors (institutions) action of professional training on the training market for this segment of population is expressed by the normality of such

relations, subject itself to compatibility and communication opportunities between demand and supply for adult training.

Traditional educational institutions have not been able to adapt operatively to the new requirements for adult training, showing a relatively high degree of stiffness. Thus, vocational education, secondary, post-secondary and specialized higher education has not the necessary flexibility to receive and respond “on the fly” to the transformation rhythm of knowledge society of the early era called New Age.

Necessary links between demand and supply for adult training, given the characteristics and particularities of this type of market are facilitated by identifying the mechanisms of a new type of socio-economic environment and its structural elements. If in the countries with a developed economy such structures exist, have seen evolution and involution influenced by market demands, in countries with transition to market economy they are in early stage either as a result of play of market forces or as a consequence of strategies and policies promoted in this area.

Given that the target population able to work, adult training, as an independent activity, confronts with the inherent problems in education and training spread out over a **wide range of** ages, respectively from the completion of a form of education until retirement, characterized by:

- different degree of retention of knowledge acquired during initial specialized training;
- different degree of information and improvement of training during professional life;
- different receptivity of knowledge that are required to be assimilated from other professions and specialties, leaving the routine and involve training in an active process of learning;
- increasing resistance to change;
- low resistance to fatigue and competitive climate, as ageing;
- the need for performance and increased efficiency in carrying out trade as a result of the training process;
- difficulty assessing the training of adults.

Based on these realities, in countries with advanced market economies, were established organizational structures, and have been promoted and improved methods of growing pragmatic appropriation of knowledge in the adult training. They have primarily focused on theoretical part, practical training, balance between practical training and theoretical training as well as methods of evaluation and certification training. To these were added continuously at least two essential conditions:

- distribution of the modules in the volume of knowledge that are required to be learned;
- times when the assessment of the degree of assimilation of knowledge must be ensured so that the occupation or profession acquired following the process of training, be successfully applied.

Economic decline registered in Romania, after 1989, adversely affected the training of adults which was and is increasingly marked over worsening gap between demand and supply for training.

If traders are the basic factors of demand and people who want and intend to change their job or profession, or to raise their level of specialized training, are the basic factors of supply market training for adults it is certain that, to the extent that between them appear incompatibilities, there is a series of secondary factors influenced differently depending on the nature and intensity of relations between basic factors.

It is important to note that secondary factors, in turn, intervene in the relation between demand and supply, to the extent required by incompatibility. Their intervention is subject to the legal regulations but also the policies and strategies promoted in the training of adults area. The degree of regulation is higher the freedom of action of the basic factors of demand and supply on the market training is more restricted.

The contradiction between the need for state intervention, respectively the regulations and the need to increase the freedom and initiative degree hinders in turn the rhythm of removing the new traders from the institutional initiator trusteeship. To this it is also added the reduced flexibility of these new mediators concerning the acquisition on the fly of innovations aimed at increasing the attractiveness of permanent training activities.

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