

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF CIVIL SERVANTS FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEMS IN ROMANIA

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ABSTRACT

This article presents an analysis of professional training of civil servants from the environment and public health systems in Romania.

The diagnosis was done through the survey method using the questionnaire as a tool, a method that allows rapid data collection on an expanded population. The questionnaire survey is used to obtain information from the direct beneficiaries of the training program.

The target group comprised 629 persons in the system of environmental protection (206 from central level - Ministry of Environment, the National Agency for Environmental Protection and the National Environmental Guard, 423 at their local bodies - Environment County agencies and County Environment Guard) and 470 persons in the public health system (48 from central level - Ministry of Health and the National Center for public Health Statistics and Informatics, 422 territorial level - County public health directorates).

Keywords: civil servant, initial training, continuous training, training needs analysis

1. Professional training of civil servants

Training of human resources is a set of processes through which, after following specialized programs, the employees enrich their skills, knowledge, habits, behaviors and working techniques for which they already have a basic qualification in order to achieve the objectives and their tasks at a higher level. *So through training the improvement of already existent professional capacity is aimed (IER, 2016).*

The principles of the system of quality improving for professional training of civil servants are:

- efficiency - the principle according to which public authorities and institutions are required to achieve the objectives of training with a rational consumption of resources;

- effectiveness - principle according to which beneficiaries have the right training to achieve superior results than the allocated resources;

- consistency - the principle according to which the rules are generally applicable to the process of respecting the right and fulfillment of initial and continuous professional training of civil servants;

- equal treatment - the principle according to which the contracting training services, contracting parties have the obligation not to discriminate between categories of beneficiaries, and between the categories of training providers;

- decentralized management of the training process - the principle according to which public authorities and institutions have full competence in training planning, procurement of training services, monitoring and evaluation of civil servants training;

- free access to training services - the principle according to which training providers have free access to the procurement of training services, in competitive and equal treatment conditions in relation to training beneficiaries;

- planning - the principle according to which public authorities and institutions are required to initiate annually the process of identifying training needs of civil servants and to prioritize the procurement of training services, based on identified training needs and available resources;

- transparency - the principle according to which public authorities and institutions are obliged to make available to all interested parties public information related to the training of civil servants

2. The Romanian education / training system for civil servants

Education and training for civil servants very much depends on the nature of the civil service system in a certain country. The latter, in turn, depends on administrative culture and tradition but also on more tangible elements such as political-administrative institutional design (IIAS Working Group on Administrative History Crfu, 2014).

The Romanian Constitution regulates in *Art. 52 the improvement of professional training: The right to education is ensured through compulsory general education ... as well as through other forms of education and training.*

Also, the Romania Labour Code (Law 53/2003), stipulates in Art. 190. (1) *that employers have the obligation to ensure participation in training programs for all employees. So, every person has the right to pursue forms of professional training, right transposed into an employer's obligation to create the conditions for achieving it.*

Regarding the civil servants, Law 188/1999, republished, on the statute of civil servants regulates in the 3rd Section of Chapter V the *Professional development of civil servants*, mentioning in Art. 50 that *civil servants have the right and obligation to continuously improve their professional skills and knowledge.* This right entails the obligation of the state and local communities to create the legal, institutional framework and to ensure resources necessary to ensure its materialisation.

In 2008, in order to implement the provisions of the aforementioned legal act, came into force the *Government Decision no. 1066/2008* for approving the rules on the training of civil servants.

According to article 5 of the GD 1066/2008, the modalities of training of civil servants are:

- a) training programs organized and run by training providers, finalized with participation certificate or, as appropriate, graduation diploma;
- b) training programs organized and conducted or, where appropriate, approved by the employers within public authorities and institutions;
- c) training programs organized and conducted within the implementation of projects with external financing;
- d) other types of training provided by law

The identification of training needs within public authorities and institutions is covered by Art. 69 of Law no. 188/1999:

(1) Assessment of individual professional performance of civil servants is made annually;

(4) In the process of performance appraisal of civil servants, training requirements of civil servants are established.

According to Art. 16 et seq. of GD 1066/2008, in order to ensure respect for the rights and fulfillment of continuous improvement of skills and professional training, annually during the individual performance appraisal, in the evaluation report are identified fields where the civil servant requires additional training in the next period.

Training needs identified are supplemented, where appropriate, with the necessary training resulted from legislative changes in areas of civil servants competence, as well as from any relevant changes in the job description.

Civil servants occupying management positions shall report on the training needs of subordinate staff, identifying priority areas and criteria underlying the identification of priorities.

The centralization of these reports occurs within the structures responsible for human resources, the draft action plan on training of civil servants within the authority is elaborated and forwarded to its management, together with the annual training plan for civil servants for the following period and funds needed to be allocated by the authority or institution budgets for this purpose. After approval, the documents are sent to the National Agency of Civil Servants. At the end of the budgetary year, the annual report on the training of civil servants will be drafted at the Authority level.

Summarizing the normative documents mentioned, we conclude the following (Ministry of Environment, SIPEVAL, 2015):

- ✓ The training of civil servants is organized and conducted usually in relation to each of the institutions and categories of civil servants

- ✓ The priority areas in which training programs for civil servants are organized are established by the Order of the President of the National Agency of Civil Servants.

- ✓ To ensure an efficient training process at public authorities level, the annual training plan is developed, which includes measures concerning training of civil servants within that authority and, within subordinated public authorities and institutions. The annual training plan is approved by the head of the authority and forwarded to the National Agency of Civil Servants.

- ✓ The application of the training measures of civil servants is monitored in the human resources departments of public institutions and quarterly reports on progress in achieving the planned measures are prepared.

- ✓ For each civil servant in order to ensure continuous improvement of skills and training, in the annual individual performance appraisal, the fields in which the assessed civil servant needs additional training in the following period are recorded in the evaluation report.

3.Improving the training of civil servants in environmental systems and public health in Romania

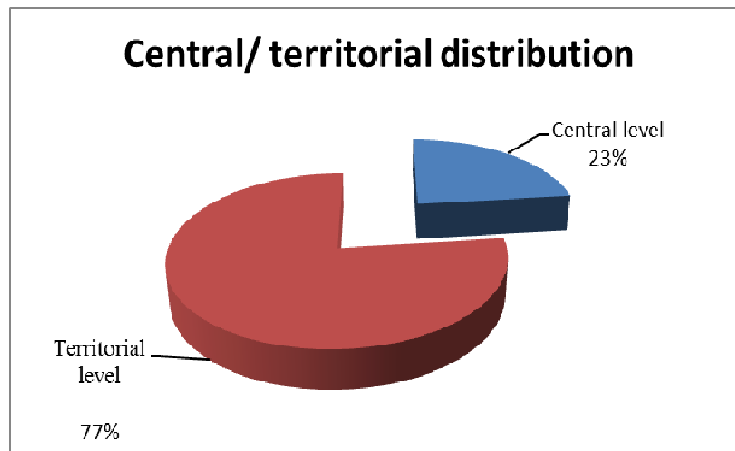
3.1. Target group

In the period May-June 2015, we conducted a study on the training of civil servants in environmental and public health systems from Romania.

The target group comprised 629 persons in the system of environmental protection and 470 persons in the public health system

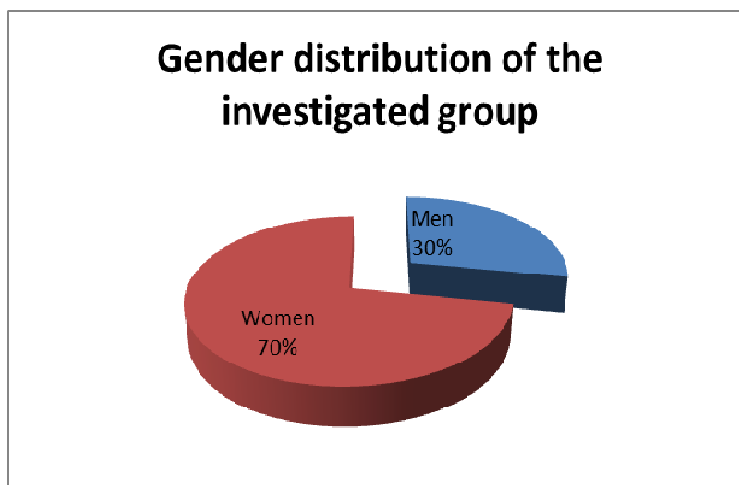
The result is, the next distribution central / local level (Chart no.1):

Chart no.1 central / territorial distribution of the target group



The target group consists of employees of institutions of the national system of environmental protection and health, management and execution civil servants, the group with the following characteristics:

Chart no. 2 Gender distribution of the investigated group



The gender distribution of the investigated group is natural for public institutions in Romania (where the ratio is 70% women and 30% men).

Regarding the ratio of management and execution positions, there is a 25% of management positions and 75% of execution positions (Chart 3).

Chart no. 3 Management positions / execution positions ratio

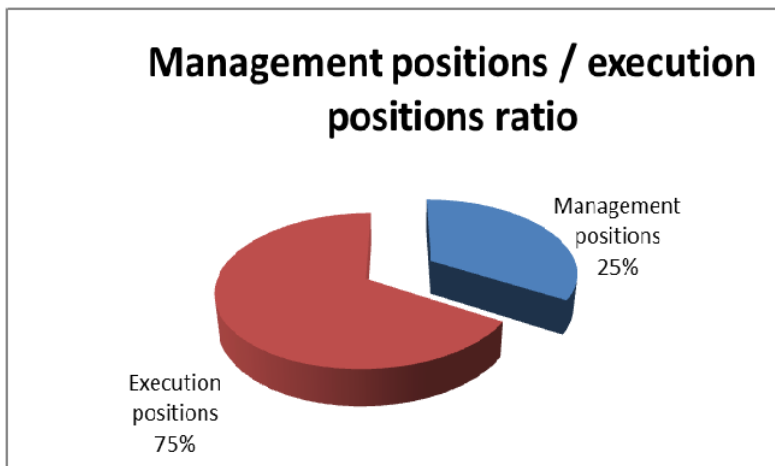
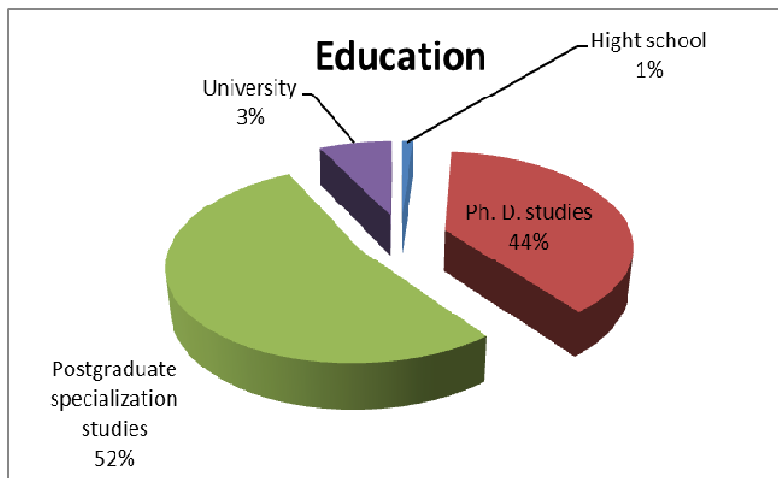
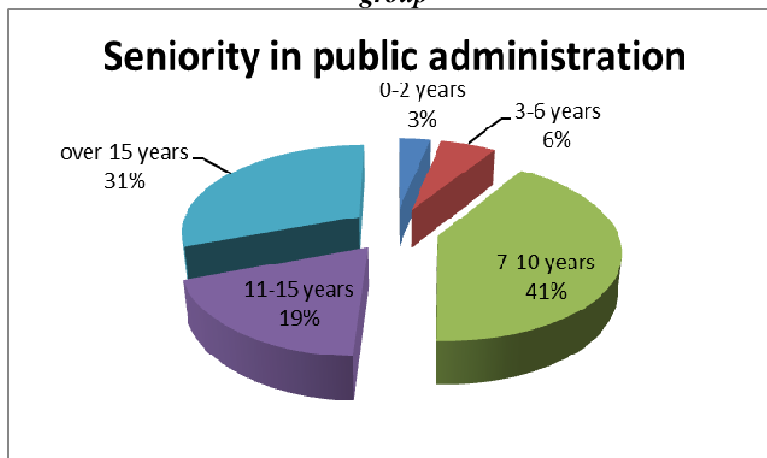


Chart no. 4 Distribution by the last school graduated of the investigated group



It is found that 55% are postgraduate and Ph.D. studies. From this perspective there are premises for activity performance, quality, **but as well for risk of discontent generated by the mismatch between education level and complexity of tasks performed or career development prospects.**

Chart no. 5 Distribution by seniority in public administration of the investigated group



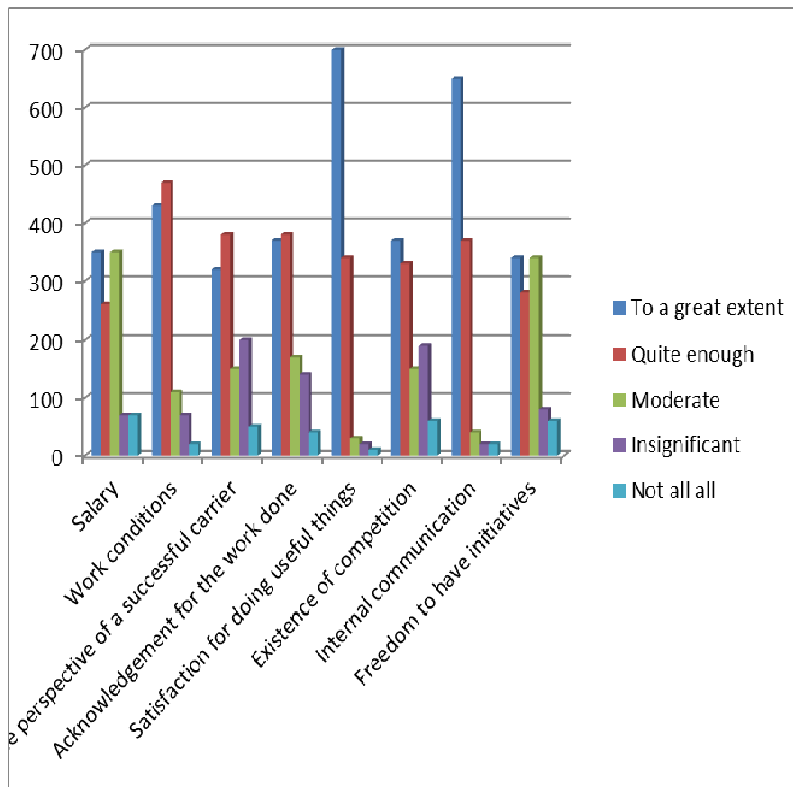
50% of persons surveyed have over 10 years experience in public administration, so from the perspective of experience of work and studies there is a great potential for activity performance.

3.2. Sources of motivation of the target group investigated

Motivation as a psychological process is represented by "all the dynamic factors that determine an individual's conduct" (Sillamy, 1996). Persons can have different reasons to address a specific type of behavior; personality, social conditions, experience, group influences or other factors may have an impact on motivation.

For the group analyzed the overall satisfaction of doing useful things and **internal communication** are the main motivating factors, leading to the need for objective assessment and **maintaining/ creating a favorable internal environment** (positive organizational culture) that encourages communication. **It notes that the biggest complaints are related to the lack of a career prospect (Chart 6).**

Chart no. 6 Sources of motivation for the current work place



3.3. Professional training of personnel in environmental protection and health systems

Although professional training is a right and an obligation of civil servants, currently Romania's public administration is facing some constraints, the most important being the shortage of resources, in parallel with the growth and permanent diversification of citizens' demands and of economic and social environments.

Currently, the primary responsibility on the training of civil servants lies with the National Agency of Civil Servants.

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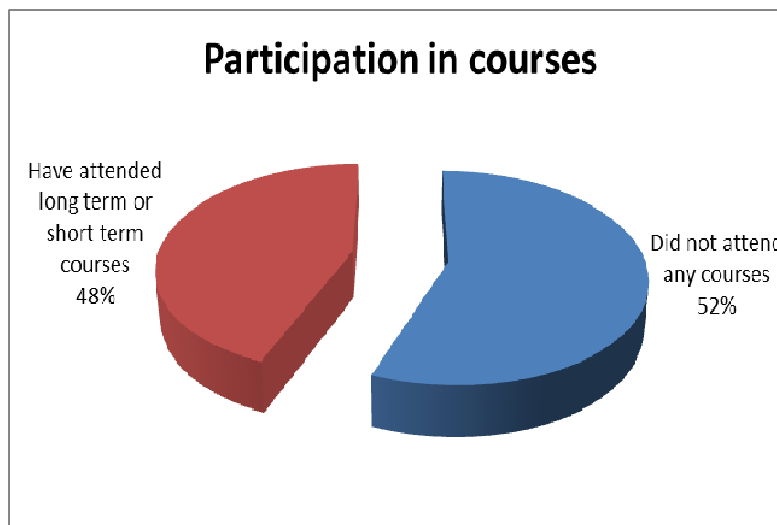
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In the project Increasing the administrative capacity to manage the processes of recruitment, selection and evaluation of civil servants in the context of increasing the accountability framework for the management of public office (2011-2014), a study at

the level of administrative systems was undertaken, whereby **93.57% of respondents participated in the last two years in a training program.**

In the case of employees from the national system of environmental protection and healthcare systems, there is a significant percentage of persons who have not received any training course (and it comes to five years) - 48% (Chart no. 7) denoting either their hostile attitude towards learning, **or the lack of objective criteria for designation needs education / training. Equally, lack of financial resources can justify this. However the right and the obligation of civil servants to improve through training are regulated.**

Chart no. 7 Participation in education / training activities of the target group



According to the Report on the training of civil servants in 2014 (www.anfp.gov.ro) training areas resulting from the centralization of plans submitted by public institutions were: management, communication and transparency in decision-making, personal development, law and EU community legislation, public services and resources, information technology.

For this study, (Chart No. 8) it appears that most employees were trained in project management, ECDL, civil service management, communication and public procurement, complying with the areas from the national results.

Chart no. 8 Topics of courses attended



Course participants estimated that there were large and very large effects on their work, aspect difficult to verify under the conditions of non-existence for further evaluation forms. **However, over 26% of those who took part in various forms of training, they had no effect, leading to the conclusion that in these cases it is a waste of resources.**

Chart no. 9 Effects of participation in courses on the activity of respondents

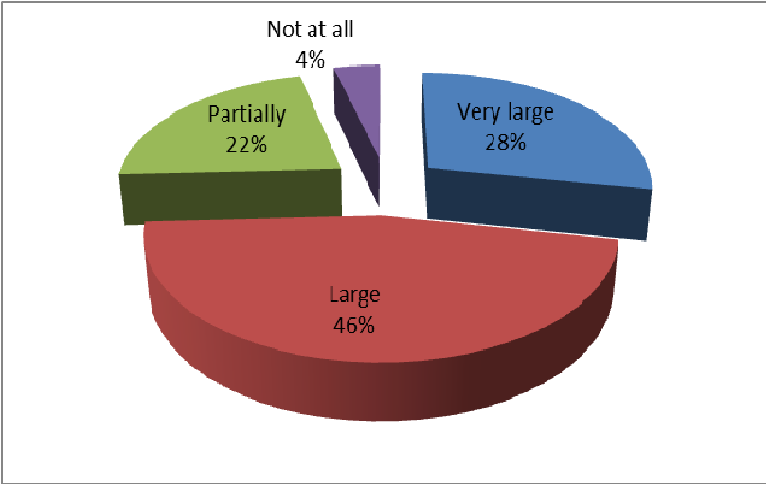
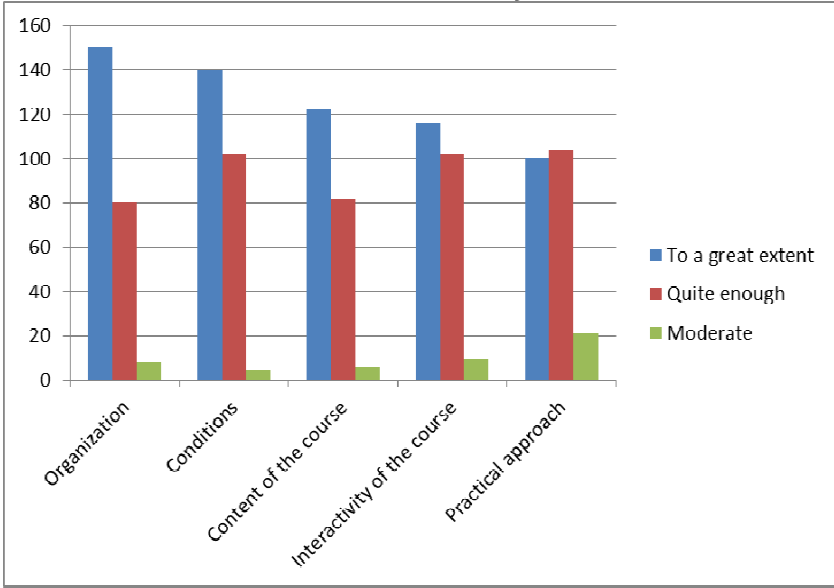
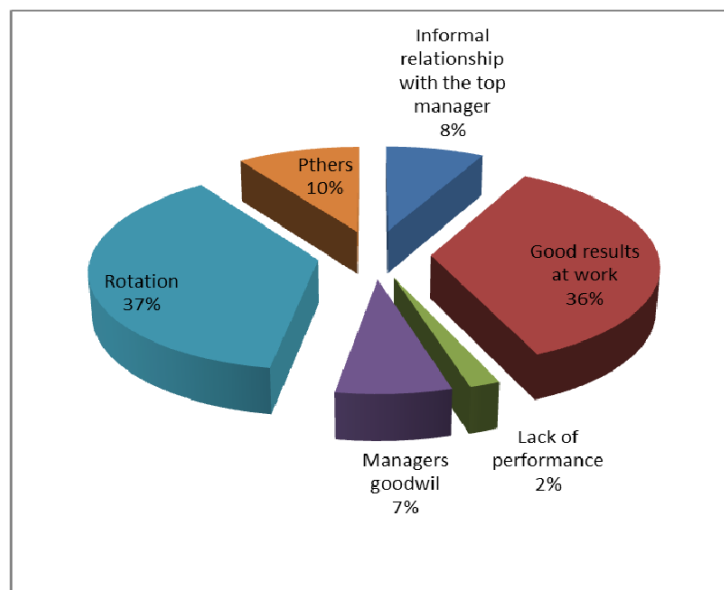


Chart no. 10 Assessment of courses



Courses (Chart no.10) were interactive, conducted in optimal conditions, but there was no sufficient practical approach, which shows that the effects for the institution were reduced. Also, it is noticed that the main **appreciations are related organization and conditions**.

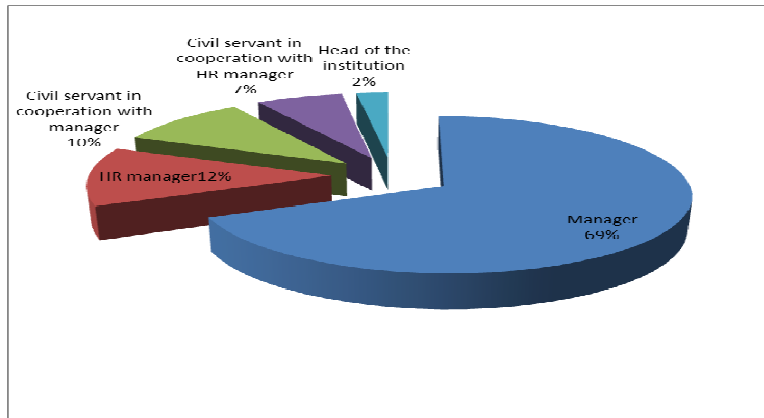
Chart no. 11 Criteria used to designate participants in training courses



Regarding the **Criteria used for designating participants in training courses** there is a wide variety of responses which shows the inexistence of clear criteria used in the training process. Courses are mainly used as a motivational tool; there is a high degree of subjectivity in the designation of participants. Rotation in no way represents a performance criterion. If we consider the results - rotation 37%, 7% goodwill of managers, 8% informal relationships with the top manager - an image of training as provided by law, with no concrete effects for the institution is emerging.

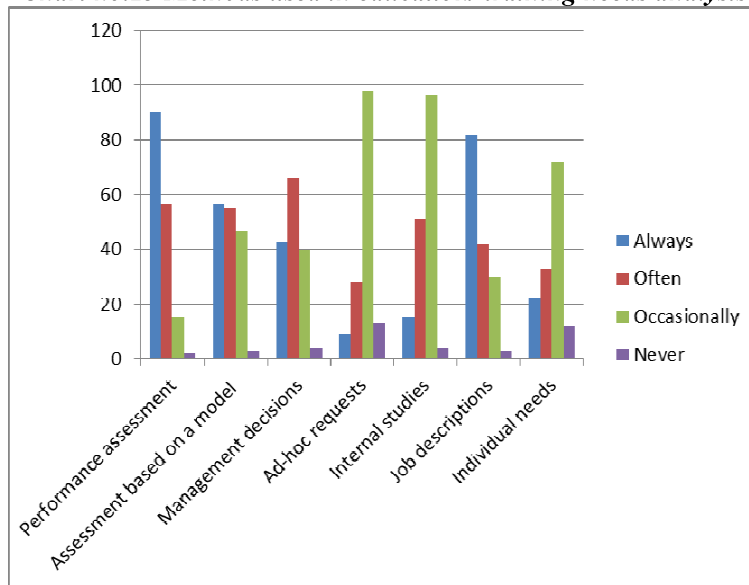
By analyzing responses (Chart No. 12), a greater role for management civil servants in identifying / determining training needs is highlighted, which shows the absence of formalized procedures for establishing and updating their training needs or, literally **the procedure is unknown to most employees**. In determining needs four actors must intervene: employer, direct manager, HR manager and head of the institution with approximately equal contributions and **increased authority for the HR manager**.

Chart No. 12 Roles in the (continuous) identification / updating of training needs



The methods and instruments used in education/ training needs analysis (Chart No. 13) are mainly performance assessment and job descriptions.

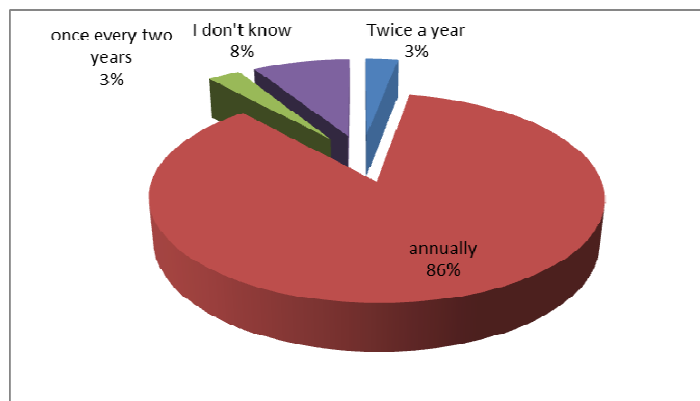
Chart no.13 Methods used in education/ training needs analysis



Responses to this question are close to ideal: the use of performance assessment, duties and competency model as models in determining education/ training needs, but there is still a significant percentage of mentions for ad hoc requests from employees.

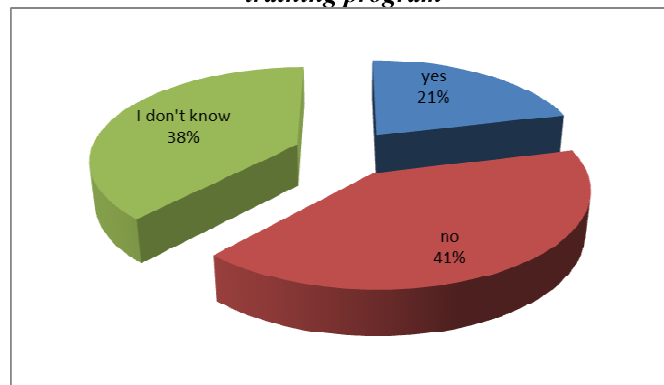
Regarding the realization of the education/ training needs assessment (Chart No. 14), it is observed that in most cases it is done annually (86%), according to the current legal framework.

Chart no. 14 The education / training needs assessment process



From the legal point of view, the correct approach is the annual training plan, but from the perspective of utility and opportunity a multiannual approach is desirable, especially that in a year not all employees manage to undertake various forms of professionalisation.

Chart no. 15 Employees post-evaluation and impact assessment after attending a training program

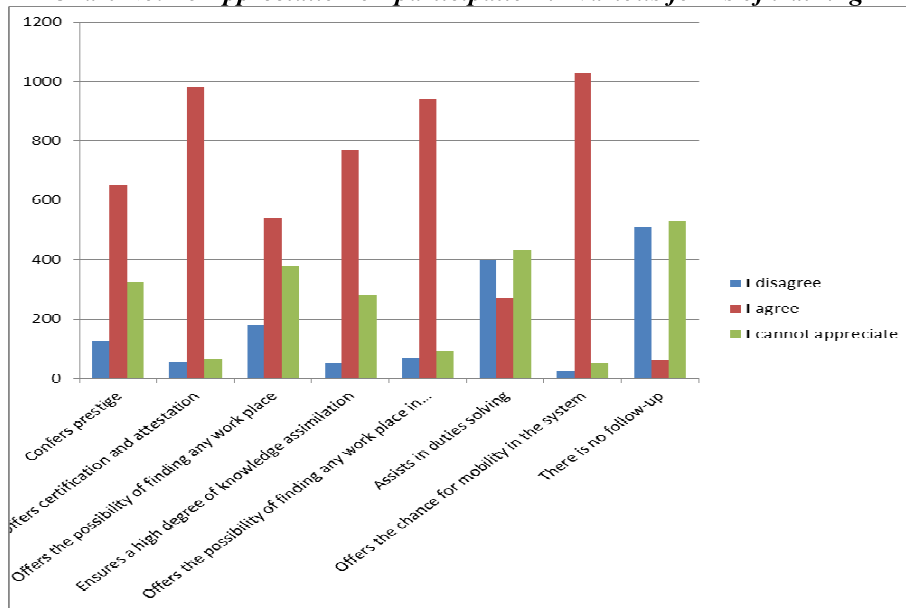


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Answers to the question related to *employees post-evaluation and impact assessment after attending a training program* (Chart no. 15) highlight the inexistence for preoccupation of impact assessment for participation in various forms of training. Persons attend to courses, but there is consideration whether they were useful or if there are benefit for the institution or even on a personal level. Neither those who claimed that post-evaluation is made could not mention how this is done: discussions with colleagues (represents dissemination and not impact assessment) assessment report, testing, evaluation sheets (probably for the course) questionnaire, changing the job description etc.

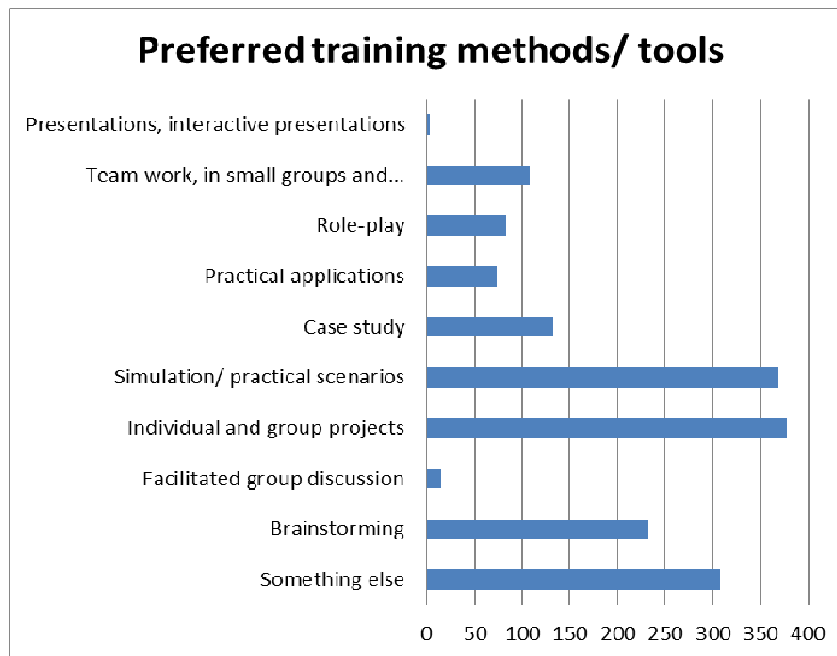
However, most of those surveyed (Chart No. 16) consider that participation in various forms of training can help them to better solve job duties or to gain new knowledge. **However, it is observed that many see these forms of training only through the possibility of obtaining a certification or as a tool that supports the mobility of the public administration system.** Surprisingly, there is a significant number of respondents who can not appreciate upon these aspects and also an important category of employees who appreciate the types of training will be useful in the private sector (*more than those who said they would migrate into the private sector*).

Chart No. 16 Appreciation on participation in various forms of training



Regarding expectations for methods / tools for education/ training to be used in the future, persons who answered the questionnaire prefer practical applications, case studies and interactive presentations (Chart no. 17).

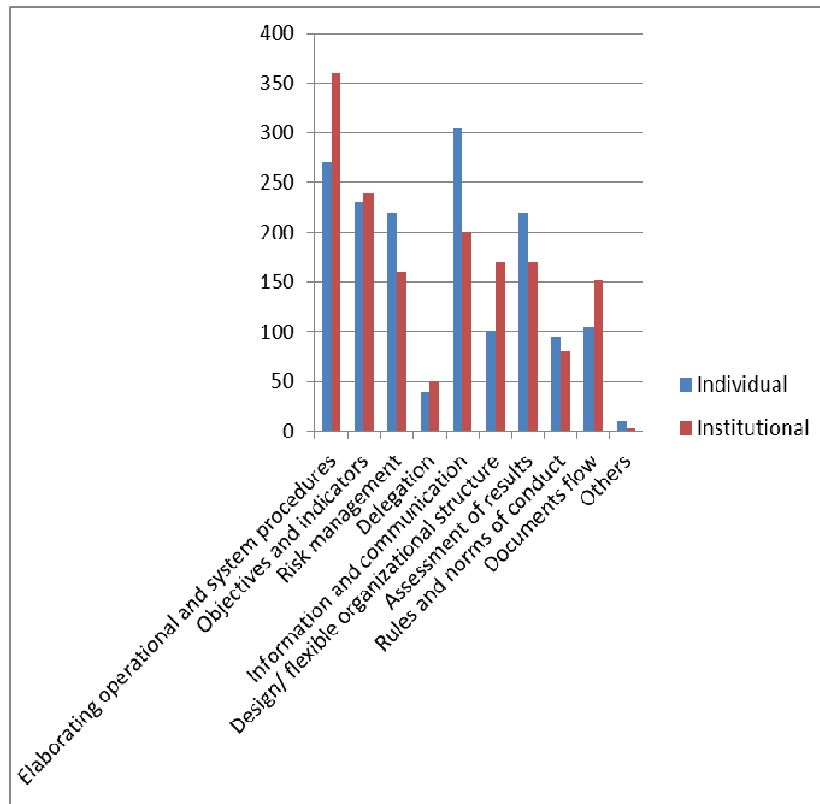
Chart no. 17 Preferred training methods/ tools



From the perspective of expectations of future education/ training (Chart no. 18), at individual level it is considered that the most important education/ training are the **communication, operational and system procedures, objectives and indicators**. It is estimated that at the institutional level are useful programs to develop operational and system procedures, setting objectives and indicators, communication.

We found the existence of common training issues at individual and institutional levels, issues concerning mainly internal organizational component.

Chart no. 18 Expectations for the future - topics of education/training



Conclusions

In the two analyzed systems there are premises for performance in activity favored by age, education and average seniority in administration of the investigated group. There is a very high proportion of employees with postgraduate and Ph.D. studies, which **generate a high level of expectation on career and complexity of tasks to accomplish**, but there is a limited concern in the system for employees training compared to other system components of the Romanian administration, as demonstrated by the relatively low percentage of employees who have participated in various training programs.

Civil servants understand the role and importance of professional training process and they want to improve their level of knowledge.

In this context, it is required to **elaborate human resources strategies at the level of each institution** which include aspects of planning, motivation, career, training, generalization of education/ training needs as the the foundation for the use of resources for training at each institution level; a new approach to training and implementation of equal opportunities in this activity; strategic management skills development, planning; organization of education/training programs for management staff (for programming area, forecasting, organization and evaluation); development of individual and institutional self-evaluation activities.

In terms of identifying priorities for professional training, it is necessary to develop a set of institutional criteria correlated with the strategic objectives of the public organizations and of the reform programs. Training must precede and prepare the implementation of reforms, and it must become a support for performance and less a motivational tool.

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