

## Chapter 2

# The Function of Planning and Programming

**Abstract** The success of management in a typical organization (and hence a school unit) demands effective planning and programming. Planning and clarifying the school goals, and determining ways that these goals can be achieved, are the main responsibilities of the school leader. Indeed, plans are the basis for coordinating and directing school activities so that the school can succeed in achieving its goals. Taking into consideration that, today, schools function within a very complicated and competitive environment, then planning and programming is the most necessary of managerial functions. This chapter:

- Briefly analyses the terms “plan”, “purpose” and “strategy” and emphasizes the significance of planning and programming in a typical organization.
- Examines the basic elements (procedures, techniques) of planning and programming and refers to factors which influence the determination of a program, both positively and negatively.
- Presents, in a practical way, the procedure for planning and programming at the school level.
- Examines the necessity of, and the procedure for, strategic management in modern organizations and summarizes aspects of strategic planning within the educational field.
- Presents the strategic changes in education and summarizes key aspects of programming and good time management that we should expect of school leaders. Relevant case studies are also presented.

### Key Chapter Concepts

- A strategy is not merely a set of rules or guidelines but a comprehensive plan that an organization implements so as to respond to its mission and reach its vision. It is, therefore, a declaration of intentions that map out where we want to be in the future, and how we can get there.
- Strategic management requires the use of more substantial ways of planning and programming that aim to ensure the creditable use of an

(continued)

organization's capabilities over the long term. It is a new managerial philosophy that primarily aims to develop a strategic plan which integrates policies, visions and targets and elaborates on how they can be implemented/achieved.

- Strategic management differs from “general management” in terms of the time frame in which each plan is implemented and acted upon. General management is concerned with the daily activities of an organization and is exercised by managers of all hierarchical levels. On the other hand, strategic management is concerned with the long-term orientation of an organization and is usually exercised by managers of the upper hierarchy.
- The role of a school manager is crucially important in introducing and implementing new ideas in decentralized education systems. On the other hand, school managers in centralized education systems do not have the flexibility/freedom to function autonomously because they have to act within a legislative framework that requires them to function more as executive organs of the school's management and less as school leaders.
- Any significant change in the field of education should not be used as a periodical magical therapy but as part of a long-term strategy, the success of which depends on governmental support, the choice of planning model, educational members' attitude and perceptions, financial support and certainly the abilities and experience of the decision-makers in the education system.

## 2.1 What Do “Design” and “Programming” Mean?

Many people think that planning and programming is one of the most important managerial functions since it more or less describes what we know about a managerial executive: programming, organizing and controlling. In reality, however, planning and programming are routine daily activities, something that we all do continuously and effortlessly in our personal and professional lives. We all, in the way each of us understands, talk about plans, programs, etc., in such a way that there is no doubt that we all mean planning and programming. So, what is it?

*Planning* in the broader sense refers to a general conception of the aims of a future effort. It is about an expectation we all want to achieve in the future in relation to resources we have decided to commit for this aim. In general, we may say that planning helps the managers of an organization to think about the bigger picture and to develop a managerial strategy that is more proactive than reactive.

On the other hand, *programming* defines the general framework of a specific activity or set of activities and the training tools for the execution and adaptation of an organization's contingency plans. Through programming, organizational managers are able to predetermine, down to the smallest detail, all the objectives,

methods and actions involved as well as the time and location for executing each task.

From the above, it is clear that planning has a wider context than programming because the former is based on aims that are general and non-specific, while in programming the aims and action tools tend to be defined in greater detail.

## **2.2 Definition of the Basic Terms in Planning and Programming**

### **What Is a Mission?**

A social organization (e.g. a university, hospital or enterprise) establishes rules for achieving their mission. With the term “mission”, we mean the way in which an organization chooses to achieve its purpose. Within this framework, the mission of an organization expresses a basic function or duty that a society has assigned to it (Daft, 2007; Koontz & Weihrich, 2010; Koontz, O'Donnell, & Weihrich, 1982). Although the relevant literature (such as Hill, Jones, & Schilling, 2015; Papoulias, 2002; Zavlanos, 2003) sometimes makes a distinction between the terms “mission” and “aim”, in this book these terms will be considered as synonymous, and we will be using them interchangeably. Thus, the aim of a university is to teach and conduct research, and the mission of a school is to offer education that will satisfy educational needs, mainly of the young. Similarly, the aim of a hospital is to provide effective health-care services to citizens. In simple words, the mission of an organization could be taken as the reason for its existence in society (Daft, 2007; Hill et al., 2015).

Based on the above examples, the term “mission” seems to answer basic questions that shape an organization's existence:

- Who are we?
- What are we?
- What do we want to achieve?

The mission of an organization should be clear and succinct because, through this, the management develops its objectives and goals. This would certainly be difficult if they did not know what they wanted to achieve. Indeed, while an organization's mission may be a general concept, it is a very crucial one as it forms the foundation of the organization's strategies and policies that shape all their activities.

### **What Is a Plan?**

The goal of the planning process is to produce plans which map out the execution of a specific task (or tasks). “Planning is an intellectually demanding process; it requires the conscious determination of courses of action and the basing of decisions on purpose, knowledge and considered estimates” (Koontz et al., 1982, p. 156).

Based on the above, we may say that plans are a series of steps, the connection of which creates problems in the achievement of aims especially if some elements (policies, procedures, budgets, etc.) are lacking. We will see later in this chapter that action plans of a typical organization can be grouped into different categories.

### **Is There a Difference Between “Aim” and “Objective”?**

The terms “aim” (purpose) and “objective” are not same. A purpose refers to a general intention of the organization, while an objective is more specialized. For example, the purpose of a school head is to ensure the smooth functioning of the school—an intention (desire). An objective towards the smooth functioning of the school unit could be to reduce the number of accidents in the school yard during a school year without increasing the number of educators in the school yard. In this example, the purpose has been turned into a specific goal.

### **What Is Strategy?**

The term “strategy” has its roots in Ancient Greece, and in the past the term was regularly used by military writers referring to the art of war (Georgopoulos, 2006; Papadakis, 2007). The “art” of generals was to find the right plan that would overcome the enemy power and hence win the war. Or, as an ancient Chinese philosopher put it, the ultimate type of strategy is to cancel out the enemy’s plans (<http://www.Classics.mit.edu>, p. 22).

But what is a strategy? Hill et al. (2015) define strategy as “a set of related actions that managers take to increase their company’s performance” (p. 3). Within this framework Hill and Jones (2012) see a strategy as a set of actions that managers take to increase their company’s performance relative to rivals (p. 2). Silbiger (1993), Koontz and Weihrich (2010) and Dubrin (1997) see it as a full plan of what the organization wants to be.

Other researchers define the term “strategy” as a dynamic that includes aims, organizational plans and an action plan for achieving them in a competitive environment (Kanellopoulos, 1995, p. 86). So it examines not only the organizational aims but also the tools.

Based on the above definitions, a strategy is not simply a set of rules or programming guidance, but it is a plan that an organization implements in response to its mission and to attain its vision—a declaration of intentions that defines where it wants to be in the near future.

## **2.3 The Significance of Planning and Programming**

Planning and programming are significant for the following reasons:

- They are the prerequisite for the other managerial functions—decision-making, organizing, direction (leadership) and controlling. In particular, planning and controlling are two directly interrelated managerial functions since planned

action without control produces random results. Similarly, control without a plan produces aimless results.

- It helps managers to make decisions for the future from a broader perspective.
- Prediction helps to anticipate future activities and actions according to present and future elements (Daft, 2007; Hill et al., 2015; Kotler & Rath, 1984; Schermerhorn, 2011). It is the basis for planning and programming since in the initial phase of this function, data is gathered and measurements and calculations are made, leading to the estimation of where we will be according to the current situation. However, what is predictable and what is not is a very difficult question. Certainly, accurate predictions for the future are rare since there are uncontrolled factors that could interfere even in relatively short time frames. However, as Mintzberg (1987) stated, to engrave someone a direction in unexplored waters is the perfect way to fall on a snow-covered mountain (p. 26). Despite the uncertainty that a prediction creates for the future of an organization, Fayol (1949) considered forecasting to be a principle of each managerial activity since it provides the basic guidelines (direction) of planning and programming. Otherwise, the unplanned action of an organization is simply a random action with no productivity at all except chaos (Goetz, 1949, p. 63). If you want to try your talent in forecasting, keep a diary today by writing down all your predictions about what will happen in your work, policy, stock market, etc. next year. At the end of next year, you may compare what you have written with what actually happened.

## 2.4 Basic Elements of Planning and Programming

### 2.4.1 *Process of Planning and Programming*

The process of planning and programming is linked closely with the decision-making process since this function determines what should be achieved and how this will be done in the future. It is about a function that consists of some phases or stages (Daft, 2007; Hill et al., 2015; Hytiris, 2006; Kanellopoulos, 1995; Koontz et al., 1982; Schermerhorn, 2011).

*Determination of the organization's Aims* The first stage of the planning and programming process is the determination of the organization's aims—what should be achieved for the organization to not only survive but also to develop.

*Determination of the organization's Current Situation* In this stage managers assess the current situation of the organization by examining not only the internal possibilities but also all the influences coming from the organization's external environment.

*Drafting of Alternative Solutions or Proposals* The third stage of the planning and programming process leads to the study of all the available resources and the

writing of alternative proposals that can facilitate the fulfilment of the organization's aims.

*Choice of the Best Alternative* This stage includes the assessment of all alternatives by estimating the pros and cons of each alternative, and then, based on managers' judgments, the best solution for the organization is chosen.

*Implementation of Action Plan* Managers at this point call for the implementation of the chosen action plan.

*Assessment of the Results* In this last stage, managers initially assess the results of the action plans so as to conclude whether or not the initial aims have been achieved and consequently to analyse the new data for the best possible implementation of the organization's future plans.

### 2.4.2 Basic Types of Plans

In the first chapter, we mentioned that the result of the planning and programming process is a plan (or plans), which is (or are) linked with the execution of a specific task. These plans may be ranked into three basic categories. According to the scope of the aim, the plans may be divided as follows:

- *Strategic plan*: determines the long-term plan and the position of the organization within its environment. As we will see further in this chapter, this type of plan is for the future and is made by managers in the upper level of the managerial hierarchy.
- *Operational plan*: made by managers in the middle and lower levels of the managerial hierarchy and provides details of how the strategic plan is implemented. This type of plan focuses on the internal function of the organization and has short-term and specific aims. For example, a school head can, within only a few minutes, plan their weekly activities if they consider the following:
  - Objectives. What results do you want to achieve by the end of this week? Write them down and rank them according to priority.
  - Activities. What should be done to achieve the aims and objectives? Write down the necessary activities and place them in order.
  - Time: how much time do you need for each activity? In order for planning and programming to be realistic, give yourself more time than you think you may need. Thus you will be better able to deal with unpredicted problems and still stick to your time plan.
- Plan your programme: by carefully examining your diary, you will be able to decide when you can do each activity.

The majority of people underestimate the contribution of the plan, but you will succeed less if you do not plan the ongoing process of things (Daft, 2007; Dubrin, 1997; Kotler & Rath, 1984).

Regular/operational/business planning and programming is a process through which we decide—quantitatively, qualitatively and timewise—the actions that should be taken and the tools that should be used so as to define short- and long-term targets that are measurable. The basic target of functional programming is the budget, which in fact is the economic expression of aims, actions and tools. It is worth mentioning that functional programming stems from the materialization of strategic programming and is the reason of its existence (Bouradas, 2001; Daft, 2007; Hill et al., 2015; Schermerhorn, 2011). Indeed, there is a direct correlation between strategic and functional programming since the latter is the agent through which the former determines the future direction of the organization.

Based on the criterion of duration, programmes and plans can be categorized as follows:

*Short term*—these have a time frame of between one and 3 years, the duration of which is determined by the long-term perspectives of the organization.

*Long term*—these have a duration of three to 10 years and address (among other things) how to confront unpredictable and potentially disruptive situations. The main purpose of a long-term plan is to define the organization's goals and to outline the distribution of resources required to achieve them. According to Georgopoulos (2006) the basic idea of the long-term plan is to predict possible environmental tensions and define the goals for the right guidance of organizational function and actions of all people involved in the process. However, the situations that exist mainly in the organization's external environment often frustrate managers as these situations tend to confound their forecasting. Hence, managers are increasingly using more efficient tools to predict situations such as tension analysis and regression models using a PC and relevant software. In this way they will be partially successful with some improvements, but in many cases it is not enough.

Despite the weaknesses and uncertainty of long-term planning and programming, it does improve the effectiveness of strategic decisions. It helps managers to consider the long-term impact of decisions and think of the possible consequences of environmental tensions for the organization, early enough for appropriate (evasive) action to be taken. All the issues addressed in the long-term plan help to facilitate decisions that are right for the organization and thus enhance its competitive position in the long term.

The success of long-term planning depends on certain conditions such as a high rate of development, easily predictable tensions, etc. If these conditions are not met, then the planning will lose its effectiveness.

Plans are also distinguished according to the criterion of elasticity:

*Inelastic plans* are clearly defined and fixed, with little room for readjustment. In real situations, however, it is doubtful whether a plan (particularly long-term) can remain inelastic due to the high levels of uncertainty.

*Elastic plans* offer more general guidance, allowing for the opportunity to adjust the plan according to any variations in environmental conditions. Undoubtedly, having a plan that could be changed without requiring any extra cost would be of great value. However, in practice, elasticity is possible only within certain limits (Koontz et al., 1982, p. 184).

Based on the above:

- Plans in all categories are closely linked with the organization's general and specific targets.
- Managers at all hierarchical levels should be responsible for determining and implementing the relevant plans.
- Long-term plans (mainly) should, due to environmental uncertainty, have a relative degree of flexibility to allow the organization to deal with any unexpected problems.

### ***2.4.3 Conditions for Effective Planning and Programming***

Effective planning and programming requires certain conditions that include the following:

*First*, foresight is the first basic condition of planning and programming because, through this, managers attempt to clarify the internal and external factors that will facilitate or hinder the achievement of the desired goals.

*Second*, the planning and programming process needs to determine with sufficient clarity the aims and the powers of each organizational department because (a) people can be more productive when they know what is expected from them and what the extent of their authority is, and (b) there is a closer correspondence between the real and the desired result at the end of period.

*Third*, planning and programming is a product of the contribution of all managers at all hierarchical levels since plans are formed based on an information framework in which all managerial levels are involved. To establish such a framework, the general organizational policy should be determined by the upper hierarchical levels. This, however, does not mean that managers of the lower managerial levels should not participate in the formation of organizational policy. On the contrary, their contribution is crucially important: first, because managers at lower levels have experience and special knowledge to share with the upper levels, and, second, by participating in this process, they will be better motivated to implement the action plan(s). In any case, plans are generally better implemented when the people expected to implement them have participated in the process of their development.

*Fourth*, planning and programming ought to derive objective, sufficient and flexible plans and programmes whose implementation is based on the human and material resources available for the given time frame and on the potential to adjust to unpredictable circumstances. Certainly, elasticity does not have to be in conflict with the orientation of the organization's activity.

*Fifth*, planning and programming is closely linked with the decision-making process since upper management calls to choose targets and available tools so as to implement action plans among alternatives that were created based on certain criteria.

*Finally*, planning and programming require good coordination for the efficient implementation of the main plan since it is based on a cluster of interrelated actions, plans and programmes.

It is worth mentioning that it is extremely difficult for managers to recognize and write down all the future factors that will influence the organization's environment. For this reason managers are usually restricted to securing those conditions which, according to their opinion, are essential for carrying out their plans and programmes.

#### ***2.4.4 Limitations of Planning and Programming***

According to the relevant literature (Koontz et al., 1982; Zavlanos, 2003), in many cases, the planning and programming process is influenced negatively by internal and external organizational factors such as:

*Uncertainty of the organization's Environment* The uncertain and unstable environmental conditions that characterize our era have a negative influence on the function of planning and programming. This impact could be greater in long-term plans. And this is because managers cannot foresee the organization's future environment with any reasonable accuracy. The lack of accurate foresight could be attributed to continuous changes (e.g. technological, social, economical) taking place in the organization's environment.

*Lack of Time and Increase in Expenditure* Planning and programming is a rather complicated procedure that requires adequate time and resources. However, managers often do not have sufficient time nor are they granted adequate resources in order to work thoroughly and systematically to form long-term plans. For many organizations the cost of researching into, and coordinating, the various plans is restrictively high.

*Resistance to Change* Another limiting factor in planning and programming is the psychological inelasticity of employees, that is, their internal (negative) reaction to new ideas and processes. This can stem from several issues: they may have either developed specific thought and behavioural tendencies that are difficult to change (Koontz et al., 1982, p. 298), or they may be aware that the effective

implementation of plans and programmes requires new procedures and knowledge and a greater effort on their part, or because they did not participate in the decision-making process or perhaps they have not been properly informed about the organization's future activities. Besides, people tend to fear the unknown—a fear which in most cases leads to suspicion and ends in resistance to every planned change. Those obstacles can be overcome with the substantial participation of employees in the decision-making process, the timely distribution to employees of information on developments, and the ability of leadership to convince managers at all hierarchical levels of the benefits of the proposed changes.

*Influence of External Organizational Factors* Some of the most important external factors that can prevent planning and programming include political climate, where the national government determines economic and social policy, the nature of technological changes and the reaction of unions; these and other factors can cause completely inelastic situations.

## 2.5 Planning and Programming in School

Bringing all the above thoughts into the working school environment, we may underline that for the school head to be effective, they have to achieve results. This requires them (together with the educators) to determine targets that are both sufficient and credible. A powerful way of ensuring educators' commitment is to encourage them to propose their own targets. In particular, a school head who is responsible for the smooth functioning of the school unit and the coordination of school life at the beginning of the school year should:

- First, investigate and plan future school activities in such a way that it will lead to the implementation of the school unit's targets.
- Second, call for a meeting of the teaching council to make decisions concerning the rational distribution of teaching and non-teaching duties to all educators of the school unit.
- Third, call for the teaching council to reconvene after a few days in order to make decisions (based on the educators' reports for their classes) on general school matters such as the weekly timetable, the planning of school excursions, visits, parents' meetings, and activities that will give students a better understanding of society and civilization at local and national level.
- Fourth, to determine, according to the decisions made by the teaching council, an action plan regarding the organizing and functioning of the school unit for the whole school year.
- Finally, on a weekly basis, to determine a timetable for exercising duties.

## **2.6 Modern Managerial Approach: Strategic Planning in Education**

Prior to any analysis of strategic planning and programming, it is worth looking into what strategic management means.

### ***2.6.1 Meaning and Necessity of Strategic Management***

There has been a lot of discussion about the term “strategic management”. Like in most cases, there is no convergence regarding the meaning of the above term.

One perspective on strategic management is the managerial perception that considers the organization’s problems combined with the total general economic situation of the existing environment (Papoulias, 2002). From this perspective, strategic management is perceived as a competitive advantage by organizations that strive to create strategic programmes and certainly have the motivation to implement them effectively. The latter is very important, especially if we consider the fact that the general environment is extremely competitive and that we are living in an era of great uncertainty, increased complication and interrelation (Papoulias, 2002, p. 19).

From another perspective, the key role in strategic management is for the “managers to use all their knowledge, energy and enthusiasm to provide strategic leadership for their subordinates and develop high-performing organizations” (Hill et al., 2015, p. 29). Hence, it is a shaping process that strives to achieve company’s long-term targets and thus sustain a competitive advantage (Hill et al., 2015; Schermerhorn, 2011). Here, strategic management is perceived as the process by which managers express and implement strategies (Glueck & Jauch, 1984).

There are researchers that define strategic management as the set of decisions and actions that result in the development of a strategy that achieves the desired targets (Georgopoulos, 2006, p. 32). It should be noted that these decisions concern the general environment in which the organization is functioning. They presuppose that the organization has sufficient resources and that there is an interrelation between the environment and the resources.

From the above, we may say that strategic management substantially involves various ways of planning and programming and is mainly concerned with the appropriate use of the organization’s capacities. It is about a new philosophy that is primarily concerned with strategic programmes that establish policies, visions, targets and their means of implementation. Or, as Georgopoulos (2006) put it, strategic management is the most difficult and important challenge that an organization may face (public or private). Given the present competition for survival and sustainability, it lays the foundations for the organization’s future direction (p. 31).

As necessary as strategic management is, no matter how systematically developed the strategic planning may be, its successful and effective implementation is

dependent on maximizing human resource effectiveness, on the available resources and on the ability to overcome the dangers of (and exploit the opportunities presented by) the external environment (Hill & Jones, 2012; Pearce & Robinson, 2011; Sarsentis, 1996). Furthermore, the radical developments in the economic and technological sector dictate the need for a competitive working environment, and thus managers must be constantly aware of the developments in their organisation's broader environment. Hence, it is crucially important that they are able to make rational and timely decisions. This requires managers to be capable of thinking and reacting strategically, to be able to analyse each situation and then, based on their intuition (most of the time as a result of their accumulated experience), to be able to try to make the most effective strategic decision for the future good of the organization (Georgopoulos, 2006; Hill & Jones, 2012; Hill et al., 2015; Koontz & Weihrich, 2010; Pearce & Robinson, 2011). This perception underlines the necessity for strategic management in organizations.

Therefore, strategic management differs from general management, specifically in terms of time frame, but more generally with regard to the people who implement it. General management concerns the daily action of an organization and is implemented by managers at all hierarchical levels. By contrast, strategic management concerns the orientation of the organization in the long term and is implemented by managers from the upper hierarchical level. This implementation is based on strategic decisions that have fundamental and long-term influences on the whole organization.

### ***2.6.2 Basic Elements of Strategic Management***

According to the relevant literature (Georgopoulos, 2006; Hill & Jones, 2012; Hill et al., 2015; Koontz & Weihrich, 2010; Pearce & Robinson, 2011; Sarsentis, 1996; Schermerhorn, 2011), the elements of strategic management are:

*Strategic analysis* according to which managers gather all possible information so as to be able to take rational decisions. This phase is critical because the quality of information regarding aspects of the organization is bound to influence managerial decisions and consequently the future path that the organization will take.

*Strategic choice.* After gathering the necessary data and keeping in mind the mission and the aim of the organization, the responsible managers consider various strategies to help them make the best possible strategic choice.

*Strategic implementation* according to which managers inform the relevant agents about the chosen strategy so as to proceed with its implementation and to adapt it in order to conform with any change in conditions and with the other organizational activities.

### ***2.6.3 Process of Strategic Management***

*The engraving of strategies* is shaped by a number of elements such as the environment in which the organization functions, the resources that are available, etc. It is also a specific approach according to which the management proceeds to actions that support the achievement of specific targets. For the latter, the organization should balance the strengths and weaknesses of the internal environment with the prevalent opportunities and threats of its external environment. This balance refers to the organization's desired strategy through which the process of strategic management ends in a carefully thought-out strategy which is then implemented (Georgopoulos, 2006; Hill et al., 2015; Pearce & Robinson, 2011; Schermerhorn, 2011).

Focusing on the process of strategic management (Hitt, Ireland, & Hoskisson, 2005; Liedtka, 2000; Schermerhorn, 2011), this includes analysing the organization's environment, shaping the strategy, implementing the strategy and assessing and checking the results. In this process we may include the rational model of strategic management, a basic data analysis tool for decision-making which focuses on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of/facing an organization, known as SWOT analysis (Table 2.1).

### ***2.6.4 The Nature of Strategic Planning and Programming***

Planning and programming as a managerial function includes all those managerial activities that determine an organization's targets and appropriate tools with which to achieve those targets. These managerial actions result in the implementation of the organization's functional programmes (to which we have referred in previous sections). Furthermore, this function also includes strategic planning and programming (Georgopoulos, 2006; Hill et al., 2015; Naylor, 1999; Pearce & Robinson, 2011; Schermerhorn, 2011).

Hence, strategic planning and programming can be considered as a plan that fulfils the main organizational targets, policy and actions within a consistent framework (Quinn, 1980, p. 7); or as a development function of strategic planning and programming with a long-term horizon that includes the orientation of a mission, strategic organizational targets and a grid of strategies that will contribute to the achievement of targets after the organization's position in the external environment is assessed (Petridou, 1998, p. 99); or as a process through which the organization shapes its mission, vision, long-term targets and strategies (Bouradas, 2001, p. 51). Based on the above definitions, strategic planning includes all those actions that:

- Direct the organization's functional activities
- Allow the organization to reconsider its strategic position and situation in the context of its environment

**Table 2.1** SWOT matrix:  
Analysis of the organization  
position.

|             |                      |                      |
|-------------|----------------------|----------------------|
|             | Internal environment | External environment |
|             | Current situation    | Future situation     |
| What is it? |                      |                      |
| Good        | Power                | Opportunities        |
| Bad         | Weakness             | Threats              |

Focusing on the significance of strategic planning, it is clear that the basic target of strategic planning is attained through foresight and includes consideration for the potential impact of changes in the variables of the external environment. As a result, uncertainty and risk are limited, and future opportunities are better exploited, all within a framework whereby the organization effectively manages its responses to changes (Petridou, 1998, p. 199). Certainly, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to accurately foresee the future (Stylianidis, 2008).

To focus the above thoughts, we may support the view that in the case of strategic planning and programming, the interest of managers is to focus on the changeable external environment of the organization, to recognize any need for change in the organization's direction, to develop the capabilities of all organizational members and to create competitive advantages—a challenge made more difficult due to possible radical social, economical and technological changes in the organization's external environment. It is rational to assume that management in modern organizations forces to a greater use of the process of strategic planning and programming and hence to a more dynamic approach to planning.

It should be mentioned that the result of planning and programming is the development of strategic programmes that will determine future long-term targets and orient the organization's position in its environment. These programmes are determined by the managers at the upper hierarchical managerial levels. Strategic planning is favoured over other programmes for the following reasons (Hill & Jones, 2012; Hill et al., 2015; Kefis, 1998):

- It recognizes the organization's problems; it offers basic qualitative information on strategic issues that help with rational decision-making.
- It contributes to the collaboration of different organization agents for the achievement of the organization's objectives and targets.
- It reduces the uncertainty surrounding the future direction and process of the organization.
- It is a document for democratic leadership.
- It is the appropriate tool for the organization's timely preparation when faced with environmental challenges.

To conclude, all the above advantages are positive elements for the organization's sustainability under the condition that the whole process of strategic planning and programming (this will be analysed later) is systematic, methodological, continuous, structured and collaborative so as to get the best out of the organization's members.

### 2.6.5 *Process of Strategic Planning and Programming*

In the previous section, we mentioned that strategic planning includes activities that lead to the determination of targets and the choice of strategy for their achievement. The establishment of these strategies is actually the organization's destiny. Hence the result of the process is the development of strategic programmes.

In the sphere of strategic reality, when an organization obtains a strategy, management proceeds with the development of a programme that implements the specific strategy.

The formulation of a strategy and a strategic programme is not a matter of following a specific recipe or certain stages but is mainly a matter of rationally organizing knowledge and information in the direction in which the organization can be moved with continuous interventions (Papoulias, 2002). According to Papoulias (2002) there is not just one way of creating strategic programmes and strategies but many:

- First, because strategic programmes and strategies, by their nature, need to be adjusted to the needs and to the specific characteristics of the organization.
- Second, because if it were a straightforward procedure, it would simply be a recipe and not a strategy (p. 168).

However, in this book we may support the view that the rational formulation of strategic planning is based on five stages (Dubrin, 1997; Kanellopoulos, 1995; Naylor, 1999):

- *Investigation of the external environment.* Based on the systemic theory, we may claim that the external environment of an organization supplies resources (human and material) that will support it, independently of whether or not the organization is public (e.g. a school unit or enterprise). In the exchange of these resources, the organization ought to provide services and goods to the environment at affordable prices and good quality (Kanellopoulos, 1995). In order for this to happen, the organization's management needs to monitor any developments (social, ecological, etc.) that occur in the environment. In simple words, the management ought to gather, on a continuous basis, all the elements and knowledge that are necessary in order to properly organize the planning and programming. It is a continuous effort in the creation and development of strategies and strategic programmes (Papoulias, 2002, p. 164).
- *The mission.* Determining the organization's mission is a fundamental element of planning and programming (Daft, 2007; Koontz & Weihrich, 2010; Petridou, 1998). Considering that the external environment can change rapidly, it is rational that management reconsiders the mission according to the new environmental elements. Therefore the mission is a long-term vision relative to the one the organization is trying to attain (Kanellopoulos, 1995; Pearce & Robinson, 2011; Schermerhorn, 2011).
- *Targets of the organization.* This answers the question "what do we want to achieve?" An organization's targets stem out from the analysis of the first stage

of the planning procedures, namely, from an investigation into the challenges and perspectives of the external environment and the consequences of confronting the organization's strengths and weaknesses. In the practical sense, this means that an organization's targets should be actual and hence realistic, measurable and clear (Hill et al., 2015; Pearce & Robinson, 2011; Petridou, 1998).

- *Strategies of the organization.* After formulating the mission and targets, it is rational for the management to know where they are going. For this reason, the management develops a general plan that facilitates the organization in reaching its target. This plan consists of the organization's set of strategies (Hill et al., 2015; Kanellopoulos, 1995). According to Kanellopoulos, the role of strategy in strategic planning is the recognition of general approaches that the organization wishes to use so as to achieve its goals. In this process the organization's main direction is also determined (p. 107)
- *Formulation of strategic programmes.* At this stage of the process, the management proceeds to develop strategic programmes which are long term and are formulated by the upper management hierarchy. An example of a strategic programme is the school curriculum of a country. According to Dubrin (1997) there are four elements through which strategic programmes are turned into actions: *functional programmes, policies, procedures and rules.*<sup>1</sup> At this point it should be mentioned that for the proper management of an organization, whether public or private, all the organization's members are collectively responsible for the creation of functional programmes that must be harmonized with the strategic programmes. There is a direct relation between strategic programming and the programming formulated by all levels of the managerial hierarchy.

### 2.6.6 Strategic Programming and Implementation of Changes in Education

#### Definition of Change

Modern organizations (and hence schools) are obliged to carry out substantial changes concerning the manner in which they function in order to respond to the changes that occur in the external environment. Planning and programming in any change is part of upper management's activities regardless of the organization's mission.

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<sup>1</sup>*Operational plan* determines short-term activities for the implementation of strategic plans (Schermerhorn, 2011).

*Policy* is the general direction line that should be followed for the decision-making and actions of an organization (Dubrin, 1997).

*Procedures or rules* accurately describe actions that should be implemented and followed in particular situations (Schermerhorn, 2011).

But what is change? From time to time, there have been several definitions about the term “change”. But there has been no convergence in defining what constitutes change in an organization.

For Gareis (2010) “change has a strategic dimension” (p. 315). According to the same researcher, in order for change management to be facilitated, there should be a powerful variable such as the dynamics of an organization to control the environmental powers that will allow to reduce complexity.

Papalexandri and Buradas (2003) define organizational change as the transformation of the current situation into another (p. 442). Within this framework, change includes not only the meaning of the transformed organizational elements (such as structure, culture, etc.) but also the meaning of the transition from the current to the new situation. Daft (2007) defines organizational change as the adoption of a new idea or behaviour from another organization (p. 444).

From the above, we may say that organizational change is a subconscious dynamic process that incorporates ongoing changes to an organization’s current situation in order to arrive at a more desirable situation. This transition is in fact a process of adjusting and reconsidering the different elements (structure, procedures) of an organization in the light of new information to enable that organization to function in a more effective way.

### **Reasons that Enforce Change**

Social organizations (and hence educational units) are forced to change due to a variety of factors. These organizations are established and operate within a complicated and changeable environment in which conditions can change radically. Hence, such adjustments become necessary so as to ensure an organization’s survival.

Factors that cause changes come from both external and internal environments. The external factors are mainly the following (Beer, 1980; Kefis, 2005; Mitchell, Dowling, Kabanoff, & Larson, 1992; Papadakis, 2009a, 2009b; Zavlanos, 2003):

*Political/Legislative Sector* For example, changes in the legislative framework that govern the staffing of school units, or indeed any educational institution, could impose changes. Also, a reduction in the budget for education due to a negative economic climate is likely to provoke a series of changes in school units.

*Scientific and Technological Sector* The pace of change in this sector is extremely high. As such, if an educational system intends to remain modern and effective, then it should be open to emerging tools and services in the external environment that could help achieve this. For this reason the central administration in education ought to be informed on a continual basis of relevant new educational and technological developments that are economically viable and then train educators accordingly so that the new technology/tool/service may be readily adopted in the school system.

*The internal factors* that may provoke change are mainly the following (Hill et al., 2015; Papadakis, 2009a, 2009b; Zavlanos, 2003):

- *Structure of the organization's system.* Control systems (e.g. the recruitment and resignation/retirement of educators as well as the flow of information) can influence the thinking of educational managers concerning the improvement of the school unit's performance.
- *Human capital.* The appointment of a new school head with a personal vision, or the appointment of new teaching members with innovative ideas, can be factors that will bring about changes in a school. Certainly such changes would be facilitated if they were accompanied with radical changes in educators' attitudes.

Based on the systemic theory, both external and internal factors which lead organizations to change are not independent but very often are interrelated since each organization is a subsystem of a wider one. In practice, this shows the complication of organizational changes but underlines the need for a global confrontation of the issue since a one-sided approach to change could result in the organization's failure.

### **Resistance to Change**

The only way for an organization to have any certainty about the future is through continuous change and its ability to keep up with those changes by introducing new technologies, procedures, personnel, etc., where appropriate. The planning and programming of these changes depends to a large extent on their recognition. A frequent phenomenon concerning change is that its necessity becomes more and more apparent in periods of crisis as organizations adjust to their new environment in order to address their needs more optimally. Although change is a necessary part of life within an organization, most of the time, an organization's staff members are resistant to change. The main reason for this resistance is "the doubt concerning accuracy and the fear that this will create more problems" (Papadimitropoulos, 2008, p. 18). Hence, as Fullan (2010, p. 120) indicated, the reluctance to adopt something "new" stems mainly from the fact that "Along with a blind sense of urgency is a mounting 'pressure' without the means to act on it. This is pressure without a theory of action. It shows the failures and the goals but no way of getting there... Pressure without means can make for ridiculous goals". Independently of whether or not the change is gradual or radical, limited or strategic, nevertheless it tends to generate some resistance.

An organization's staff members may resist for a variety of reasons. Among the most significant are the following (Papalexandri & Buradas, 2003; Zavlanos, 2003):

*Personal Level* At this level, resistance is at its roots in basic human characteristics that include the fear of the unknown; any change will lead to a new set of circumstances so it is rational that people may have difficulties in perceiving the consequences that will result. Change creates in people a sense of uncertainty, and this in turn generates a feeling of fear that makes people resist change. Certainly such resistance from individuals does not occur for all changes, since there are cases (such as an increase in salaries, a reduction of working hours, etc.) that are clearly in favour of staff members.

- *Fear of losing established rights.* It is not only uncertainty that will cause resistance but also the feeling that valuable rights are being lost which brings job satisfaction, such as power, income, etc.
- *The force of habit.* Habit leads to an inertia that resists change. For example, changing the timetable of educators will possibly provoke resistance.
- *The loss of control.* Employees resist change when they believe that the change will diminish the control, responsibilities and duties they have concerning their work.
- *Fear of increased workload.* People react negatively to change when they believe that it will increase their workload. In their new set of circumstances, perhaps they will also need to develop new skills, methods, etc. The resistance of many employees towards technological change is characteristic in this regard.

*Group Level* At this level, resistance stems from groups (formal or informal) that are usually outside of the decision-making process, or they do not trust the central administration of the organization, or perhaps they see the change as a threat to economic interests, etc.

*Organizational level.* At this level the factors that account for resistance are (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Papadakis, 2009a, 2009b; Payne, 1993, 1995):

- The organization's structure (with a vertical lean)
- Operational reconsideration of the organization (job description, reward systems, training, etc.)
- Inaction of groups
- Organizational culture
- Threats (through the redistribution of power)
- Resource distribution

Focusing our interest in the field of education, West-Burnham (1990) mentions factors that generate resistance in the field:

- *Conservative tendencies.* Schools are conservative organizations. And this is because educators have the ability to assimilate changes in such a way so as to maintain their existing working methods. This happens not only in the classrooms but also in schools in general. The negative attitude of educators towards changes could be attributed (among other things) to the power of habit and current sense of security, as well as to the fear of losing power or status and an increased workload (Nadler, 1983, pp. 551–561).
- *Resources.* A change requires, among other things, the necessary economic resources for its implementation. Unfortunately, a frequent complaint among educators is that the demand for changes to be implemented is rarely accompanied by the necessary resources (Iordanides, 2006, p. 96).
- *Weakness of school leadership.* Many researchers in education have made a list of key factors for the effective functioning of schools, among which is school leadership. It is generally accepted that the quality of leadership behaviour is an important aspect of the school's effectiveness in the process of adapting to regular changes—a process considered necessary for their survival. Hence,

schools that fail to respond effectively to the introduction and implementation of important changes possibly do so due to poor leadership (Iordanides, 2006, p. 96).

Undoubtedly, the role of the school head in introducing and implementing new ideas is important, especially in decentralized educational systems. By contrast, in centralized educational systems, school heads do not have the power to operate freely and autonomously because they are functioning within a limited legislative framework that requires them to act more as executive organs and less as educational leaders.

### **Basic Elements for Successfully Adapting to Change in Education**

In relevant literature, Kotter (2012) claims that "...the much bigger challenge is leading change. Only leadership can blast through the many sources of corporate inertia. Only leadership can motivate the actions needed to alter behavior in any significant way. Only leadership can get change to stick by anchoring it in the very culture of an organization" (p. 33). Hence leadership is accompanied by a high quality leadership since it is "leadership that has a set of process and creates organizations in the first place or adapts them to significantly changing circumstances" (Kotter, 2012, p. 28). Therefore, it is useful to emphasize in this section the basic conditions for effectively adapting to change in the field of education. Besides, it should not be forgotten that education does not only have a social and civil purpose but also has economic value since its contribution to increasing productiveness and production is crucially important (Saiti, 2013a). Due to the sensitivity of the educational sector, any change needs to be carefully interpreted and strategically planned so as to be properly implemented in a timely manner. The impact of the change on the system also needs to be assessed so as to provide a measure of the progress made. Indeed, the main purpose of a change is to bring qualitative improvements to the educational system, and in order for this to be achieved, there has to be equal emphasis on both the quantitative and qualitative elements of change in order to promote the initiatives and innovation of the system (Coburn, 2003; Elmore, 1996; Fullan, 2006, 2008, 2010; Hargreaves, 2002; Levin & Fullan, 2008; McLaughlin & Mitra, 2001; Saiti, 2013b).

The positive development of an educational system is determined by different factors, the starting point of which is the shaping of coherence around targets and techniques for strategic planning (Levin & Fullan, 2008; Saiti, 2013b). In particular, the basic elements that can contribute to the success of educational change are:

#### **2.6.6.1 High-Quality Leadership**

A key element in the introduction of change is the quality of leadership which, according to Kotter (1995, 2012), determines the future path of an organization, orients the staff members to this vision and motivates them to work towards it. In practice, a manager who leads an organization ought to have a global approach to

problems, to have new ideas and to suggest changes within a clarified ideological framework, within which the changes can take place.

Ideas provide new ways of bringing improvements to certain aspects of an organization, whether it be something general (e.g. a vision) such as creating a new image for the school in the eyes of society or something specific such as an improvement in educational services, etc. However, in general, these ideas do not have any hope of succeeding if there is not a sense of urgency to change. Despite the visible difficulties, a leader of change can overcome any resistance and create a sense of urgency so that all members understand and appreciate the need for that change. And this is because a leader is an individual who develops the vision and the strategies for adapting to changes that demand such a vision to be established. They also direct staff members towards that vision and, through words and actions, steer staff members in the direction that they should all follow so that their cooperation is ensured. In this way, all obstacles can be overcome (bureaucratic, organizational, etc.) through the satisfaction of basic human needs (Kotter, 1995, 2012).

By contrast, if a leader of an organization decides that a number of educational changes are needed and demands that the educational members just accept them, such an effort would lead to failure for at least two reasons: (a) because there was no substantial participation of educators in the decision-making process and (b) because educational changes are generally implemented by a variety of administrative and educational staff members and those who favour such changes tend to vastly outnumbered by those who oppose them. Therefore, central administration in education should keep in mind that the enforcement of educational policy in such way is completely inappropriate, especially in the present-day environment of interdependency. If this attitude does not change, then the consequences will undoubtedly be a disaster for the social and economical development of the country. Furthermore, the decision-makers in education should accept the fact that the days when the central administration was only needed to make decisions, and the educator was needed only to execute them, are over. Since educational changes cannot happen overnight, there should be a stable strategy that moves towards a philosophy of continuous improvement in all elements (subsystems) and procedures of the educational system.

From the above, it is clear that the effective implementation of an educational change requires qualitative leadership since only this type of leadership can, through national strategy and actions (that modern management defines), overcome all sources of inaction and resistance that exist in the educational system.

### **2.6.6.2 Constitution of a Powerful Group of Leaders to Manage Change**

Education is a large and complicated sector and hence cannot be transformed by a single leader. Many people have to assist in the execution of administrative duties. Thus, in the sphere of administration, this means that there should be a powerful group of leaders to manage change, consisting of excellent scientists from different

disciplines who are knowledgeable in matters of education. And this is because (a) education is a sensitive sector in society and (b) the political establishment in developed countries has shown that, at least in educational matters, it is not ready for substantial changes. The members of the particular group should be ready to take critical decisions after an extended research study and to transfer the idea of change into plans and action programmes. In this way, any proposal of the group would be adopted much more easily by the educational community because the whole process would have been carried out on a scientific basis, and most importantly the political cost for the government and the chance of manipulation by the opposing political party(ies) would be minimized.

Hence, as Saiti (2013b) indicated, the planning, programming and implementation of an effective change are a result of a system of roles and responsibilities that educational members undertake as agents of change (p. 6). Rationally, the success of a particular change depends on the way the various groups or agents play their role. That said, time must be taken to motivate the relevant groups and make them understand the importance of change and ultimately to “assume ownership” of the change (Fullan, 2006, p. 13). Only then will the result be successful and be of benefit to the system (Borko, Wolf, Simone, & Uchiyama-Pippin, 2003; Fullan, 2005, 2006, 2006, p. 10; Fullan & Miles, 1992; Hargreaves, 2002; Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006; McLaughlin, 1990; Willis, 2010).

Within this framework, the particular group that manages change ought to:

- Act in a global and effective way in the implementation of research for the educational issues in order to realize the real weaknesses and shortfalls of the educational units. The planners of changes in education are obliged to consider the fact that the formation of educational policy does not constitute an isolated organizational and administrative procedure. On the contrary, it is part of the wider structural changes that take place at the societal level. Hence, a change in education should be based on a systematic approach, especially if one considers that the success of a change is based, among other things, on the linear, harmonized and coordinated elements of the educational system (Papalexandri & Buradas, 2003).
- Create a communication network for at least three purposes: *First*, to reach an agreement across the educational community on the content of the change in a timely manner through a substantial dialogue between the group members, educators and students in order to develop arguments for the benefits of change, to confront reactions and to facilitate practical issues for the implementation of the change. *Second*, to properly organize the procedure for the implementation of the change. Group members should define the lower hierarchical levels, what exactly should be done, how and when it should be done and by whom it should be implemented. *Third*, for the group members to have continuous feedback on the process as well as the results of the action programmes executed and, if needed, to proceed with any corrective steps.

The best possible effort should be put into altering employees’ attitudes towards change. And this is because the existence of positive organizational culture is the

basic component for the achievement of common decisions or values which will be shared or accepted by the central administration of education and the largest part of educators. Certainly the culture of an organization (and hence of an education institution) is directly linked to possible changes since:

- They include emotional and psychological elements, as the aim is to change situations and human relations that have existed potentially for many years.
- They are difficult since they demand fresh efforts for change in scientific fields, involving new types of collaboration and new commitments.
- They influence, on a personal level, the working environment and conditions.

Therefore, group members should create a climate for dialogue, free expression, creative critique and disagreement and, most importantly, reward the innovative and creative ideas of the educational staff members. They should not forget that in the educational field, there are no magic recipes and that education does not change with laws and rules but through conscious attitudes. However, there will be no significant changes in education in the long term if there is no change in attitude and educators remain unconvinced.

### **2.6.6.3 Stable Administrative and Economic Support**

It was mentioned in previous sections that changes in education need to move forward based on a well-designed long-term strategy. According to this perception, and given that the duration of political decision-makers is rather short, the effective implementation of changes in education requires the management to be devoid of political interests for there to be a stable reform effort in education and continuous administrative support from each political party.

Apart from administrative support, the effective implementation of a change also requires the necessary budget to be secured because without adequate financial support, the change merely remains a statement of intention.

Based on the above, we may say that an important change in the educational field does not have to be approached as a sort of periodical act of magic, but as a long-term strategy, the success of which depends on governmental support, the design model, the behaviour/attitude of the educational members, the financial support available and certainly the abilities and experience of the decision-makers.

## **2.7 Planning and Good Time Management**

The achievement of an organization's targets (and hence a school's targets) requires, among other things, good time management. Unfortunately many school heads tend to be in a state of panic; they are late for meetings, forget things and never seem to be available when needed. Others, on the other hand, seem to have a well-organized life, both personal and professional. Why? Simply because they

manage their time in a more appropriate way (Burt & Kemp, 1994; Claessens, van Eerde, Rutte, & Roe, 2007).

Good time management means:

- Writing your activities on a daily, weekly and monthly basis
- Ranking your issues in order of priority/significance
- Assessing the amount of time that each action demands
- Acting according to your diary

### **But How Should We Put Our Issues in Order of Significance?**

Try this exercise: Based on the figure, identify the important and urgent issues of your school. The characterization of an issue as “important” or “non-important” and “urgent” or “nonurgent” is a managerial choice. It is good to rank issues according to criteria. This means that a manager should question:

- Why is this important? Because. . .
- Why is this important and urgent? Because. . .
- How much time is needed for the handling of the issue?

Hence, the time and the importance of the issues are two basic and crucial criteria for the implementation of our programme on a daily, weekly, etc. basis. The programme is implemented on condition that there will be no urgent matter to obstruct it. Hence, due to future uncertainty, school heads should set aside time on a daily basis for unexpected occurrences.

Distribution of time according to the nature of the duty

|             | Urgent                                               | Nonurgent                                      |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| Important   | Crisis and problems: Give as little time as possible | Personal development and achievement of target |
| Unimportant | Do not give any time at all                          | Do not give any time at all                    |

It is important to note that urgent and important school matters should be solved as soon as possible for two reasons (Bouradas, 2013; Burt & Kemp, 1994; Kotter, 2012; Payne, 1993, 1995): (a) the avoidance of a possible danger or other negative consequence and (b) more time for important but not urgent issues.

## **2.8 Techniques of Time Saving**

Given that (a) being delayed often becomes a matter of habit which is then difficult to break and (b) the work of a school head is complicated and difficult, then it is good to be aware of certain practices that facilitate time saving.

Some of the practices in this direction are as follows:

- The school head should learn to say “no”. The “open door” policy may be theoretically well intended, but in practice it means that a lot of time is lost due to frequent work disruptions. There are school heads who accept every

interruption and never say “no” to their colleagues. And then there are school heads who always say “no” and insist on this practice. Clearly, the latter category of school heads always complete their work, but their colleagues accuse them of a lack of understanding and collegiality, and colleagues generally avoid them. These two types of behaviour are due to completely different reasons, but they are equally wrong! So it is good to decide which of the above two “sins” you are committing (Blanchard & Johnson, 1982 (cited by Claessens et al., 2007); Drucker, 1967). Of course the above scenarios represent the two extreme cases, and the ideal scenario would be a compromised approach: Do not say “no” in all cases, but when you do have to say “no”, say it but in a constructive way. Even when one of your colleagues presents you with a very serious problem, try to reconsider your programme in order to help. However, you should check that your colleague’s situation is indeed very serious and is not simply a false panic at work. If the problem is not serious and urgent, you should always explain why you cannot respond to their needs; this means you should explain the significance and urgency of your work. For the above reasons, the school head should “teach” educators not to interrupt them for no good reason and at the same time to convince them that they will make themselves available at particular times.

- School heads should confront uninvited visitors (e.g. parents) “skilfully”. In times of very heavy workloads, a manager wants to be alone so as to work without any disruptions. Unfortunately, though, in some difficult administrative moments, there might be unexpected and uninvited visits, and consequently the manager (in this case, the school head) might get confused and frustrated. The way a manager feels in these times is difficult to describe. . . you might have been in this position, and perhaps you may have said silently, “Oh no! this is just what I need right now. . .”. So if they come, they take a seat in front of you, and at that moment you know a conversation is about to begin that will go on for ages! The difficulty is when the visitor starts to talk, and you don’t have any idea how important the topic of conversation is. If it is important or urgent, then there is no problem—the disruption was worth it. But what will you do if the unexpected visitor wants to discuss about their holidays when you are desperately hurrying to prepare a presentation for your school, and it has to be ready the next day? The answer to this question is: do not allow them to get “comfortable” until you decide that their visit is absolutely justified. Do not offer chairs to visitors. . . you might try this: by the time you see that someone is coming. . . stand up. People are reluctant to sit while you are standing. Then you may say, “Good morning, what can I do for you?” From the answer you will understand what you need to know. Then you can offer them a chair or arrange a later meeting (Lakein, 1973 (cited by Claessens et al., 2007)).
- School heads should delegate duties to educators. Many school heads consider the delegation of duties/responsibilities to educators a difficult task since they feel either that they are overburdening their staff, or they may not be confident that the work will get done. Undoubtedly, when duties/responsibilities are delegated to inexperienced educators for the first time, you might discover that

you will need more time than you would have needed to do the job on your own. However, during the learning process, as you grow in confidence about the job your employees (educators in this case) are doing, you might consider that, in the not-too-distant future, your time will be freed up for you to handle other school administrative issues.

- Finally, school heads should organize their office appropriately, since a lack of organization consumes time “searching” for things. Furthermore, we should emphasize that the school head’s office is a place where many educators and students visit on a daily basis. Moreover, it is known that in order to achieve the best possible performance and result, it is crucially important to create the appropriate conditions that will allow us to work comfortably. For this reason (and this reason alone), whether the school head’s office is large or small, it should always be impressive, clean and well organized. In this way, time delays are minimized. Indeed it is worth noting that many school heads lose effectiveness because their office is untidy. They spend time searching for things and then neglect to read important documents. The drawers of the office should be organized in a way that directly facilitates the work. Also, special care should be given to the lighting in the office because this will facilitate to a large extent our alertness and concentration.

Therefore, maintaining an organized and tidy office should be a top priority for the school head which, together with all the above factors, aims to create a favourable natural environment that consequently facilitates the administrative work.

## 2.9 Case Studies

### **Case Study 1: Resistance of Educators to Changes Suggested by the School Head**

Mr. F has been a school head in a secondary school for more than 12 years. The school has 25 educators, out of whom 10 are from the same area in which the school is located. Some of those educators were students in the same school together with Mr. F when they were young since Mr. F grew up in the same area.

Last June, Mr. F and three of the educators left the school to retire. Ms. P was appointed the new school head, and, at the beginning of September, three new educators were appointed to the school.

During the first 4 months, as the new school head, Ms. P thought that the school needed some changes as regards students’ discipline, school-family relations and the introduction of new innovations to the school, among other things.

After a series of meetings with the teaching staff and parents’ council, Ms. P believed that the changes she suggested could be implemented. However, the teaching staff strongly resisted implementing any of the changes. In fact, one

educator with many years' experience in the same school supported the view that "the school is functioning just fine, so why do we have to introduce changes?"

When this final meeting with the teaching council ended and she saw the educators leaving the meeting room, Ms. P had the impression that her colleagues' lack of cooperation was attributed to the influence of an informal group of educators that she suspected had been unofficially governing the school for years.

Now, based on the above, ask yourself the following questions:

1. For what reasons did the members of the teaching council reject the suggested changes?
2. Why has Ms. P attributed the rejection to the influence of an informal group of educators?
3. How could Ms. P win the educators' "commitment" to implementing the suggested changes?

### **Case Study 2: Good Time Management**

Last Thursday a school head, Mr. A, invited all school heads of the educational district to his school for a meeting. During this meeting many school heads had the chance to exchange views about the problems they faced at their schools.

Among the numerous exchanges, there was a discussion between Ms. M and Mr. K in which Ms. M raised the point of a lack of time.

"Unfortunately", Mr. K replied, "we (as school heads) do not have much time because our time tends to belong to everyone else!"

"And how do you stay on top of everything at your school?", asked Ms. M.

"At the beginning", Mr. K said, "I had many difficulties. Later, however, I happened to read the book entitled *The Effective Executive* by Peter Drucker, and after reading the book, I came to the conclusion that without time planning, it is very difficult for school heads to respond effectively to their duties".

"I agree", continued Ms. M, "if we can't manage time rationally we can't manage anything else!"

Now, based on the above, ask yourself the following question: If you were Mr. K, what advice would you give Ms. M in order for her to make better use of her time?

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Secrets

Saitis, C.; Saiti, A.

2018, XVII, 219 p. 7 illus., 3 illus. in color., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-47276-8