

# CHANGES IN THE SCHOOLS – WHO MANAGES THE CHANGE?

Horriyah Saab<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> West University of Timisoara, horiya@walla.co.il

**ABSTRACT:** Changes in education in general and schools in particular are our part in the last decade. This article will be reviewed the trend of change in the school and its essence. The school change will be defined as episodic change, which must occur through change agent who is outside the system – the organizational consultant. There will be review organizational consultant's work at school.

**KEYWORDS:** organizational consultant, organizational change, episodic change, change of the education system.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

More than five decades there are made in the world and in Israel, intensive and comprehensive attempts to change the face of the school. The discussion of the nature of the contents and their purposes are justified, but this will require a different analysis. We can see that the attempts to change the school include many fields: teaching methods, organizational structure of the education system, the organizational structure of the school, the self-management of the school, school autonomy, teaching technologies, training of teachers and the like these.

The school is affected by the environment and changes in it and therefore in the education field there is now a confrontation between two forces, one is the world that goes towards a postmodernism, in the world of globalization in which economic and employment changes are very quick, and our pupils live in a reality of careers that vary in accordance with the changes that occur in the global economy.

Even the school as an organization should adapt itself to the rapid changes, pressures of time and place, a variety of cultures, complex technologies, the lack of national security and the lack of scientific clarity. And the second modern school with a strict set of rules continues to follow the unclear purposes that are not adjust to the new world [2], that is under the revolution of relativism according which there is no one truth, everything is relative and is the sequence of horizontal values. In the absence of clear limits and agreed criteria, lead to a sense of chaos and disorientation that pushes the school to try many change processes that are adjust to the world where we live [1].

## 2. THE CHANGE IN THE SCHOOL

Schools are organizations that act largely from the power of inertia; the inertia is defined as the inability of the school to vary as quickly as the environment varies. Power of inertia in organization has different causes, such as its basic structure (the scope of the management mechanism) routine behaviour patterns (kind of communication between people), point of blindness (the perception that "with us all ok and there are no problems"), determinations of the management (senior manager who is a manager for two decades), necessary to maintain the school identity ("our graduation party has a reputation because our pupils prepare everything themselves") and the like these. All these constitute our thinking framework and should be taken into account during the episodic change in the organization. Episodic change means the organization is maintaining of the power of inertia [10].

## 2.1 The Change in the School as Episodic Change

If we will look under overall view of the flow of events in organizations in general and schools in particular, we will accept a picture of ceaseless repetition of certain activities and routines that occasionally accept randomly changes. From closely looking at the micro level, we can see that ongoing actions of adaptation and adjustment to reality take place constantly. Some believe that also if these actions are seemed small in their scope; they are frequent and usually persistent, which means they may change structures and strategies at the school. For example - change of break ringing that were changed in melodies, the addition of a computer room, the adoption of new teaching programs instead of old, change in the form of pupils assessment, and the like. These adjustment actions are defined by some researchers as the essence of organizational change [8]. In contrast, other researchers believe that most of the small and ongoing actions of adaptation and adjustment are merely different forms of the same thing, the same beliefs and the same perceptions. "Do more of the same thing". Which all together are actions that are originated ultimately at the same starting point, and their impact on the organization based on the strengthening of the interdependence of its parts without causing a fundamental change in its role [7]. I.e., this is actually regarding to the episodic changes, and not significant changes of new learning, new understandings or changing in the patterns of thinking and behavior.

If we analyze the process of episodic change, there is proven that it takes place by replacing something with something else. I.e. one subject (e.g. new curriculum in literature) takes the place of another subject or replaces it [10]. It is possible to define the process of change in such case as a series of events where people (1) decide or tendons what exists now - for example load of material in literature (2) decide or define what is needed to replace what exists (e.g. more fiction and less plays) (3) begin to act to remove the existing through the intensive professional training, guides at the school, published booklets and etc. (4) adopting the substitute [3]. The meaning of this process is the replacement of something to another thing. And it does not achieve the purpose of changing because it reduced the thinking for change to dichotomous thinking - or this or the other - as the only way to change the existence of something is to put in its place a substitute [5]. Episodic changes happen at the school rarely. However, the increasing speed of changes in the environment outside of the school increases the rate of occurrence of episodic changes also within the school. However, the episodic changes that occur at school and the episodic change in the environment outside the school are not related to each other. They usually occur by virtue of any need or problem, so they are a disturbance or deviation from the balanced situation that was prevailed before. They are not fundamental changes, which are in order to change the entire system and to connect its parts. Furthermore, it is possible to say that when there is an episodic change occurs at school, it is generally perceived as evidence of failure in adaptation of the school to the environment or to the changing demands [3].

According to the theory of Kurt Lewin [6, pp 65] for the purpose that the change will occur, it is necessary to break the equilibrium of the existing balances and beyond to creation of the change of the equilibrium and other balances. An example of breaking the equilibrium is when it turns out from the results of international tests that the achievements of the pupils in the country are lower than in other countries in the world, or when there is discovered a significant gap in the results of the tests between the center and the periphery. Usually the process is related to the change that was planned outside the organization and the organization and is dictated to the organization members according to a permanent schedule.

The premises that are formulated by Kurt Lewin fifty years ago about the change are seemed at first are relevant also today [5] and they are the theoretical basis for episodic change. The assumptions are: a - an advanced change in the linear line change from one step to another over the time. b - A change is from a given situation to the better situation. c – A change is aimed at for and ultimate and defined purpose. d - A change requires a violation of existing balances and e - a change is planned and managed by people outside the system.

The emphasis, for which we have to pay attention, is in the fifth assumption of Lewin [6], that the change is planned and managed by people outside the system. From this is undertaken that change agents that will enter to the school system from the planners. The role of the change agent in the case of episodic change is to provide an impetus in activation of the change. Such a change agent in the field, in industrial and commercial organizations that do not engage in education is an organizational consultant. Researchers in the field of organizations point out that what characterizes the change agents in organizations during the last two decades, as distinct from the period before them, is that they treat with changes in increasing scale, come into contact with large groups of people, notes as agenda for a long list of actions for mediate performance, and plan them for short periods of time [10]. Weick & Quinn [10] argue that the most important tool of a successful change agent is the ability to speak completely different from that the members of the system accustom to hear, in the terms of basic concepts, contexts, interpretations, nicknames, the common perceptions and the like. Changing of the language was become the consumer need in the process of creation of the episodic change in the organization [5]. The reason for this without the change of language the people do not identify new ideas that were presented to them. Indeed, as the agents of change of various reforms and programs, the organizational consultants, show great creativity in invention of a new vocabulary, which they voice to the ears of the teachers and the principals in order to minimize the resistance to change [3].

### **3. THE ORGANIZATIONAL CONSULTANT AS CHANGE AGENT**

Organizational consulting, as is clear from the different definitions of organizational consulting that can be found in the literature can engage in processes of change and organizational growth and to assist and / or to intervene in crisis situations in the organization, in order to improve the organization at various levels (<http://www.ippa.org.il>). According to French & Bell [4] organizational consulting is "a long series of efforts in order to improve problems solution in organization and innovation of the processes, especially through effective and inclusive management of the organizational culture by the agents of change and the use of theory and technology of behavioral sciences, their implementation includes action studies [4 pp. 14]. Other researchers [9] argue that this is "planned interventions in the work system, which is based on behavioral sciences, which are aimed to improve the functioning of the organization and the developing of individuals in the organization" [9 pp. 721]. The change agents, the organizational consultants, are a new phenomenon in Israeli schools, from the nineties year of 20th century. The organizational consulting as a change agent comes to provide a response to various pressures with which the school principals cope with the desire purpose of increasing students' motivation and and the experience of the learning process. The program was to improve teachers' teaching methods in five learning subjects. The next stage was inducting and instructing teachers for the new program. The results of the study indicated that teachers worked according to the program. A year to respond to its surroundings. For example, following the opening of registration areas there was created a competition among schools to register pupils. Principals remain with the possibility to choose one of two strategies: to accept the environmental requirements and to activate the schools in accordance with these requirements; to affect the environment with the wording "I believe", "school vision" and to propose the school and its trends to the environment. In order to perform this it there is a need of organizational vision. During the planning of a change in the school it is advisable to request the assistance of an organizational consultant in the early step of planning. Principal who uses organizational consulting service will learn about the effectiveness and the methods of an effective activation of the staff with maintaining of a positive climate within the organization.

In a case study that was set in a high school in Israel, included seven hundred students (Shaha, 2007) checked the intervention of an organizational counsellor for the later, a feedback that was passed among students showed that students reported positive experiences regarding teaching methods, while their motivation also increased (Shahar, 2007)

Organizational consultant role characteristics are:

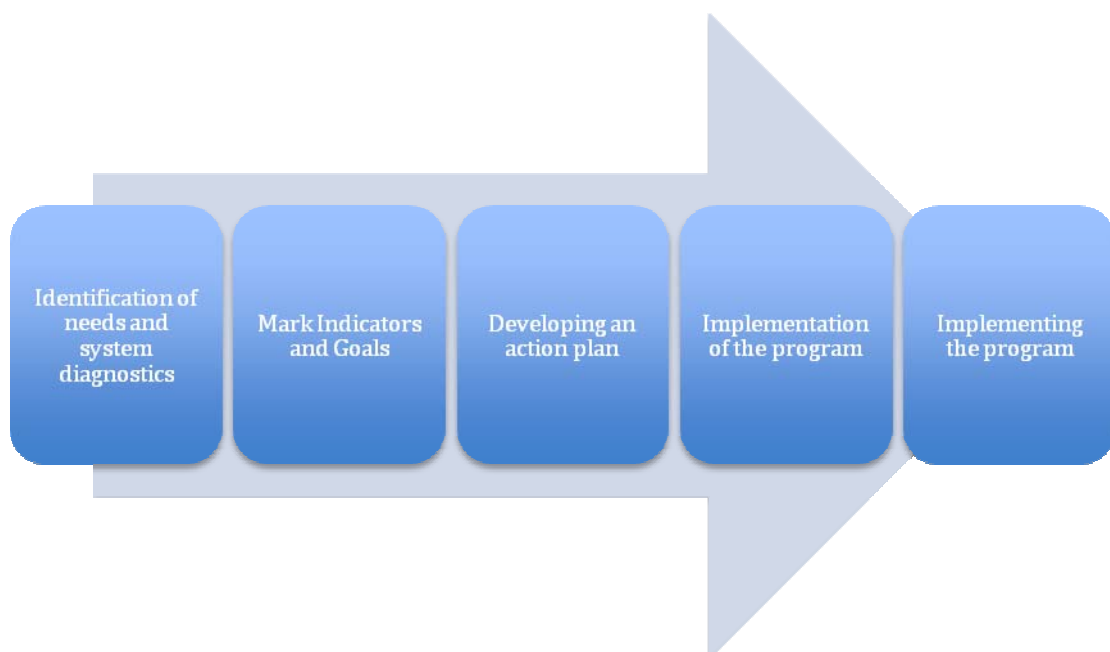
1. Organizational Consultant is a professional from the field of organizational behavior, organizational sociology or organizational psychology. The background to his/her work is from the field of consulting in industrial factories with advanced technologies.
2. The organizational consultant is a person outside the system, who is not subordinate to any formal "educational" factor except of the entity that funds it. The school principal is considered to the customer who buys the service.
3. His/her role is limited in the time, usually up to three years.
4. Most of his/her work is carried out with the management staff and with teachers, and has almost no contact with the pupils.

On the systemic level therefore it should be enabled to all principals and staff of the school to promote the process on the basis of detection of the self needs, setting goals and construction of a program to achieve them- every school that will fulfil the parameters of: commitment and taking a professional and leadership, determined and caring position, we have to allocate proper budgetary and professional resources.

The work of the organizational consultant, as a change agent should include the following steps (see **Figure 1**):

**Step A:** Detection of needs and systematic diagnosis – The first step is detections of the needs. To identify "what works" in the school, meaning actions that bring good results and high level of performance, and what "does not work", i.e., actions that bring low performance and achievement levels or critical actions that are not carried out because there is "no time", "no resources" and so on. In this step it is essential to identify according to the theory of systems "the leading constraint", the same factor that is in low/poor level of functioning, and limits the possibility of growth. Certainly there can be detected several "leading constraints".

On the base of learning in which participate the all educational staff, relevant factors that support the educational and managerial staff and for success, and create a "snapshot for right now". From it is there is cut out the developmental objectives. The results of diagnosis are delivered to the management of school there is a discussion and approval of findings. Already at this diagnosis occurs already dynamic process of learning, communication, nurturing of expectations, hopes and possibility to recruit option to leave out of the stagnation for the breakthrough through "heat engines".



**Figure 1.** Working Dogs organizational consultant

**Step B:** marking of developmental achievable objectives under agreed schedule. The management staff at the school marks to where they want to go as a measure of their satisfaction. The intention to create a broad consensus in the management staff and in the staff room regarding to where they want to reach and in what timeframe do reach this. This is done by marking of the 'milestones' (a specific and measurable result or can be evaluated at a given time). This step is very significant, because the setting of milestones and goals itself, creates a clear intent is clear and the will to achieve them. The clarity of objectives enables to the manager and to the management staff that works at this step as “leading staff or “steering staff” to educational, pedagogical and managerial breakthrough, to take responsibility for the preparation of an action plan to achieve them, rationally and systematically. Setting of goals and releases the management staff and the teachers of educational staff from the stagnation of the frustrating thoughts for the stagnation and its emotional impact, and enable them to recruit their mental and emotional ability to the motivation of a breakthrough process. At the end of this step there is created a professional agreement between the consultant/coach for management staff. There is created a clear commitment and promise of the leading staff is to activate integrity, with dignity, with determination and perseverance to task that have to performed.

**Step C:** Developing of an action plan to achieve the objectives of the plan of action for organizational developing, there is required to cope with a very complex issue. The school acts under a highly structured and rigid plan of action that is so-called jargon "the schedule". Each teacher works at the school with a structured teaching program, almost inflexible, which must be done every day, although the absences of teachers, the unexpected needs, the unexpected changes in the workday program. This condition makes this very difficult to introduce a new commitment as well as the time of teachers and sometimes of the principals is often drawn into routine of the current immediate needs. This situation of need of investment of a long-term developing stands in conflict with the need of the school staff to respond to the daily needs. So there is required careful meticulous planning working about the topic of availability and references of the staff to engage with the developing and implementation of a new model. On the background of previous disappointment from initiative for the developing of different fields in the school (frustration from experiences: "Burns of insight and emotion") in which there were invested the effort of thinking and investing of time and money, appears in "passive resistance", that is expressed in avoidance, lack of enthusiasm, expressions of distrust and in ability to change, expression of low feeling of capability, anger on the requirement to spend above and beyond the job and that is not rewarded properly. A common example of a frustration and anger is "It is too bad that so many are invested about the something that only blabbers take our time with the family, and in the end nothing came of it ....., Except the guide who earns a lot of money on us" ... After the all coping with the human objections, the relevant staffs go into the process of developing of an action plan for achieving the milestones, with combination of the maximum professional, financial and organizational resources that are available to the school. Each staff prepares a plan of action that is based on learning and profound familiarity with the content and the process. Each staff which was responsible for achieving of the objective puts its plan to open discussion, for acceptance of feedback and consent for implementation. The discussion and the approval of the plan are held as part of the stock of tasks of management of the school routine. The action plan is presented by the staffs themselves for the all teachers - and considers all inviting of leadership of the parents.

**Step D:** Implementation of the plan with learning under the approach – the learning organization - implementation of the plan of organizational developing in the school takes place according to the agreed schedule, with recruitment of the commitment to creation of meaningful learning of the teachers and their empowerment in the process. In fact a parallel process takes place: practical implementation of the plan with control of the results, at the

same time a process of learning lessons in managing of the process. This process is called the language of the organizational behavior: *a learning organization*. It means learning that is based on the experience and accumulated experience. The implementation of plan for the achievement of the objectives that were determined and the rate of progress are made during the control and formative and continuous evaluation.

**Step E:** Implementing of the norms and the working methods at the school and assimilation the new order, the new norms, new work methods, all of this is done during daily action and progress in the educational staff for its objectives. This process is implemented by creation of a constant personal commitment of the principal of the school and the management staff that leads the process. Completion of the organizational and educational developing process is agreed in advance on the opinion of the Management of the School, the financing entity (the inventing factor such as the Ministry of Education, local authority, association and etc.) and the consultant of organizational developing.

The duration of the organizational developing process depends greatly school in the essence of change. If it comes to episodic change, the consulting process will usually be limited to three years. It should be remembered that in the early steps there is required intensive effort, to adjust the conduct of principals and teachers at the school or in the education system to the new order, and in the second step the effort is largely more extensive for its implementation, with improvement of performance and learning through the implementation.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

The school as an organization need to adapt itself to the rapid changes, pressures of time and place, a variety of cultures, complex technologies, the lack of national security and the lack of scientific clarity [2]. The using of the principal or employees of the education system as change initiators and its leaders will be expected to fail because there is a need for change agent outside system. As is suggested by the fifth step of the model of Kurt Lewin – the change is planned and managed by people outside the system. The organizational consulting began to be integrated in the schools in the last decade, and is an agent of change of professional outside the education system. Organizational developing process in the education systems is essential for all school with desire of life, which wants to cope successfully with the social, moral and educational environment, and to have capacity of competition to grow and to be developed with the teacher staff, the pupils and the parents.

#### 5. REFERENCES

1. Algbraih, A., *Training of Arab Teachers in Israel in Israel – Equality, Recognition, Participation*. In Kfir Drora (ed.) *Fatal Search – The Society in Israel Seeks Good Teachers*. MOFET Institute (School of Research and Developing of Education and Teaching Staff in Colleges Training Programs – RADP), (2001).
2. Duncan, A., *Teacher Preparation: Reforming the Uncertain Profession – Remarks of Secretary Arne Duncan at Teachers College*. Columbia University, (2009).
3. Fisher, G. & Michaeli, N. *Change and Improvement in the Education System*. Branco Weiss Institute of Thinking Nurturing, Jerusalem, (2010).
4. French, W. L., & Bell, C. H., Jr., *Organization Development: Behavioral Science Interventions for Organization Improvement*, 2nd Ed., Prentice Hall. Upper Saddle River, NJ, (1978).
5. Levy, A., *Management and Leadership – Change and Innovation*. Ramonim Publishing, Ramat Gan, (2008).
6. Marshak, J. (1993) Lewin meets Confucius: A review of the OD model of change. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, Vol. 29, pp. 393-415.
7. Nadler, A., Shaw B. & Walton E., *Discontinues Change*, Jossey- Bass, San Francisco, CA (1995)

8. Orlikowski J., Improvising Organization Transformation over Time. A Situated Change Perspective. *Information System Research*, Vol. 7, pp. 63-92, (1996).
9. Porras, J. I., & Robertson, P. J., *Organizational Development: Theory, Practice, and Research*. In M. D. Dunnette & L. M. Hough (Eds.), *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*, 3, Rand McNally, Chicago (1992)..
10. Shahr H. *School counseling system: Theory, Research and Practice*. Ramot at Tel Aviv University, (2007)
11. Weick, K. & Quinn R., Organizational Change and Development, *Annual Review of Psychology*, Vol. 50, pp. 361-387, (1999).