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**How to become an entrepreneur Step-by-Step, the story of a visionary project.**

*“The business success of the STEPS graduates is the indicator of our success”*

Ph.D Dumitru Porojan, Project Manager,  
President of IRECSO

**An international conference on human resources, in which participated a series of specialists and consultants from many countries, was to mark the beginning of a long-term collaboration between two redoubtable teams; collaboration whose purpose is represented by the STEPS programme of training and consultancy in entrepreneurship, addressed to all the people with private initiative who intend to transform it into viable businesses.**

The reunion of the Romanian business and human resources specialists, belonging to the Romanian Institute for Economic and Social Research and Polls (IRECSO) and British specialists, belonging to the global consultancy provider, MSK Global Training – would have remained a memory of the past if neither the first nor the latter had noticed each other's professionalism proved on that occasion. „We were very impressed by the level of expertise and by the dynamism of our British colleagues and realised it was this kind of British know-how that Romania needed for stimulating real entrepreneurship, based on initiative, vision and courage.”, said Prof. Dumitru Porojan, PhD, President of IRECSO, recalling the moment of the meeting.



The official startup of the STEPS project has taken place in Bucharest, last year's spring.

The institute he is leading had marked the pioneering era of business in Romania, by organizing entrepreneurship, human resources, finance, accounting and marketing courses, ever since 1991, by ranking among the first private companies whose business was the stimulation of entrepreneurial spirit. Once the business environment matured, the needs of those who consider that long term businesses cannot be held without solid management knowledge also evolved, and the crisis that emerged at the end of 2008 has converted this conviction into an axiom. The hundreds of thousands of small and

medium-sized enterprises' disappearing overnight, as well as the bankruptcy of a series of important companies, have given an important signal: the time of frauds and of businesses done „by ear” is on the verge of passing and the tough, even restrictive conditions on the internal market, which has gradually become dominated by redoubtable competitors, are resulting into the fact that survival and success depend on the entrepreneurial know-how and on the personal and business relation system (networking) of the entrepreneurs.

### **A Necessary Change of Paradigm**

As a 100% Romanian company, we perceived within our own turnover this change of paradigm and realized it is as vital to other companies as it is to us to adapt to the rules of a full changing game. Then we looked attentively toward the labour market and the human resource within the national economy. The changes are dramatic here, too: large scale dismissals, professional reorientations, the search for new ways in the professional life. Corroborating the two aspects, we realized the opportunity and had the vision of a firmly socially anchored project, a captivating and innovative project that we intend to make the starting point for successful entrepreneurs, Prof. Dumitru Porojan said.. Thus, the idea of the project „How to Become an Entrepreneur Step-by-step” was born; a complex business training and consultancy programme in which the trainers from MSK Global Training have been co-opted, as important providers of entrepreneurial knowledge. The financing was available at the right time and is provided from a European component – the European Social Fund, by means of the Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007 – 2013, Priority Axis 3.1 –”Promoting Entrepreneurial Culture”, to which the co-financing provided by IRECSON is added.

### **MSK Global Training – A Good Choice**

A first argument proved to be decisive in the process of selection of the international partners in the project: the relative similitude between the business media in the two countries. Great Britain is a market economy with strong features of neoliberalism, which we encounter in our economy, too. Moreover, Great Britain is one of the European economies (in which the private sector has continued to develop even during the crisis. According to the official data, in full economic recession, a 1,1% growth of the number of small and medium-sized enterprises has taken place each year, while the turnover has increased by 5,8%. So, the economic crisis, regarded as a middle and long term success and earning opportunity, may be considered a good moment for starting and consolidating small and medium-sized businesses, whose freedom of maneuver on the market is increasing, as a result of the great companies' hard time in adapting themselves to the change.



The British consultant team from MSK Global Training

A second argument in our choice regarding the project partner was the internationally acknowledged expertise. Due to the fact that the skills as business trainers of the MSK Global Training specialists were already known and their business card was impressive, the selection was simple. The client portfolio of MSK Global Training includes, besides the government of Great Britain, a series of multinational companies and government organizations, whose presence certifies the value of the provided services (Unilever, Vopak, Fluor, Shell Oil and United Nations Organization), as well as numerous organizations of civil society.

The third argument, equally important as the other two, is the concrete business personal experience of the MSK Global Training team. Just like the IRECSON team, the latter have own businesses, are entrepreneurs, which guarantees the concrete applicability of the knowledge transferred to the students.

## The national network of multipliers

### The STEPS entrepreneurship teachers are models of success in business

Entrepreneurship means vision, initiative, creativity, appetite for risk and, last, but not least, realism. Regardless of the nature and size of the business, regardless of the activity field or the throw of the business vision of each person, of the victories or defeats experienced, the common denominator of all those who have taken their destiny into their own hands implies self trust. The lecturers and business consultants of the project „How to Become an Entrepreneur Step-by-step”, reunited as the STEPS Network of Multipliers, your entrepreneurship teachers, are, from this point of view, real models. As specialists in various areas of activity , from marketing and management to social economy, having a solid professional experience behind, all of them, almost without exception, have decided, in a certain moment of their existence, to enter the private environment and initiate their own businesses. They own, therefore, practical experience within the real economy, know what it means to do business in Romania, but, as well, have the entrepreneurial knowledge required for ensuring the success of a business. From this position, the STEPS lecturers have improved their private entrepreneurs skills, by means of a valuable transference of entrepreneurial know-how, realized in collaboration with the British consultants of the company MSK Global Training, and are prepared to share with you the knowledge and techniques necessary to business success.



London: A series of Romanian trainers and experts with solid practical experience in business management, reunited under the patronage of the Romanian Institute for Economic and Social Research and Polls – IRECSON, are participating in the training sessions organized by the British provider of consultancy services, MSK Global Training.



Bușteni: The good practices and British know-how transference sessions for the multipliers of entrepreneurial knowledge (see Mrs Paris).

The members of the STEPS Network of Multipliers will be involved in the following stages of the project, as follows:

- ▶ As experts (speakers) within the briefings for promoting entrepreneurial culture: 4 seminars/region, totally 32 seminars;
- ▶ As trainers within the courses for the development of entrepreneurial and managerial skills: 6 course groups/region, totally 48 groups;
- ▶ As consulting experts within the assistance and consultancy sessions for the improvement of business planes and of the initiation of independent activities: 84 consultancy hours/region, totally 672 hours.

## The awarding of the STEPS diplomas

**After passing the final exam, the first class of graduates of the business training programme with British know-how received the diplomas for entrepreneurship training.**

The diplomas for the graduation of the entrepreneurship courses with British know-how organized by the Romanian Institute for Economic and Social Research and Polls IRECSON in partnership with the business consultancy company MSK Global Training, from UK, have been awarded within the awarding festivities that took place in Bucharest, Iasi, Calarași, Constantza, Craiova, Târgu Mureș, Cluj-Napoca and Reșița.

The events throughout the whole country have marked the debut as private entrepreneurs, licensed by the the Ministry of Labour, of a number of 215 persons - the first class of graduates of a pilot programme of training in entrepreneurship in which the practical business experience of a series of Romanian lecturers interlaced with the so much-needed interpersonal relationship skills (soft skills), destined to transform any business relationship in a profitable experience for all partners.



The STEPS awarding festivity, in Reșița and Târgu Mureș.



## Complimentary business advice for the STEPS entrepreneurs

**The graduates of the programme will receive consultancy until 2013**

The STEPS graduates, motivated by the support and knowledge acquired during the first cycle of entrepreneurship training, are launching their own businesses with the aid of the consultants involved in the programme.

An important component of the complex entrepreneurship training programme “Development of Entrepreneurial Competences by Means of a Trans-national Transference of Good Practices and by the Professional Training of the Entrepreneurs in Romania – STEPS” began to run once the first cycle of courses was finished. It is about the business consultancy services, offered by the STEPS experts and lecturers to the graduates who intend to start businesses or already are private entrepreneurs and want to expand their activity in other areas than those in which they are currently working.

Under specialized guidance, they are going to make their first concrete steps in acquiring the status of an entrepreneur (legal advise for drawing up the required documents for the registration of the firms, and for completing the business plans) or to develop strategies for a successful approach to the new activity areas. Once they become private entrepreneurs, or when the new business start, they will further receive punctual support from the consultants, depending on the problems they will need to solve.

## Entrepreneurship information seminars

The STEPS caravan will travel, in 2012, through all the development regions

Information about the status of the private entrepreneurs in Romania, debates on the chances of success in entrepreneurship, talks on financing sources and viable business opportunities - this is what the STEPS information seminars offer of their participants. A series of renowned businessmen, representatives of financial and banking institutions, of employers' associations and entrepreneurship accociations will share experience and information with the guests - persons who are planning to start their own business or already have one and are searching for solutions for making it viable or developing it.

The STEPS information seminars caravan has passed, since the beginning of 2012, through Ploiești, Constantza, Iași, Bistrița, Craiova and Târgu Jiu (see photos).



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