TRAINING EDUCATORS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

INNOVATIVE TRAINING COURSE FOR TRAINERS:
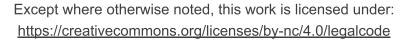### COURSE CURRICULUM AND DESCRIPTION

LSPA , KSAP, HAUS
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INTRODUCTION

Within the framework of the EU's Erasmus+ Programme, the Latvian School of Public Administration (LSPA), in partnership with KSAP – the Lech Kaczyński National School of Public Administration in Poland; and HAUS – the Finnish Institute of Public Management Ltd., has designed a sample Course for trainer educators and trainers that stimulates innovative and interactive approaches to training and learning in the public sector.

In this context, the Project Team bringing together the three institutions has selected, tested and described learning activities and methods that will encourage innovation and leadership development in the public sector, going as far as to propose and present a Course framework that provides for their effective delivery. As noted above, the key beneficiaries here are **trainer educators** in the public sector, whose fuller support the Team has worked hard to achieve through both training design and training delivery. The further intention has been for the Course developed, and its materials, to serve as a source of ideas and inspiration for any and all **trainers** or subject-matter experts training in the public sector.

This Course Description presents the background and core ideas relating to the Course the Team have envisioned, outlines a Course curriculum, and indicates potential approaches to its implementation, thus providing guidance for what is potentially a broad spectrum of interested individuals or organisations wishing to make use of part or all of the designed Course, as they adapt it to their own context. The Description is therefore fully augmented by detailed Course Guidelines covering the suggested learning content, methodological approaches and delivery of learning activities, as these have been developed by the Team. Indeed, the partner organisations have tested most of the learning/training activities described in the Guidelines, by way of workshops they have run in their own countries.

All Course materials are freely accessible online at the websites of the three partner organisations, and can be used by individuals and institutions to implement the proposed Course Programme, design their own training programme, or run a workshop using our Project's materials.

1. COURSE RATIONALE

The idea of the Project is that of the LSPA, with the demand for it appreciated thanks to needs analysis following on from a survey conducted by the Latvian School prior to Project initiation.

The 2017 survey (70 participants, i.e. 90% of all LSPA trainers) made it clear that, while LSPA **trainers** actively engaged in training public-administration employees are typically subject-matter experts, they very often fall short when it comes to full insight into andragogy (adult teaching) or training methods. This inevitably acts to ensure that the traditional lecture is their most common means of subject delivery. That means a largely non-interactive approach not involving **participants** in the learning/training process at all actively.

Nevertheless, the survey revealed that **trainers** were eager to plan their professional

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development strategically, so as to both acquire new insights into training methods, and to sustain their inner motivation to engage in the training of adults in public administration.

The LSPA's partners on the Project – Finland's HAUS and Poland's KSAP – were naturally much intrigued by its concept, as both institutions so heavily involved for so long in the training of public administration likewise appreciated the lack at either, of regular opportunities for professional development by which **trainers** might themselves be trained further and more fully. In general, in Latvia, Poland and Finland alike, further professional development and the pursuit of lifelong learning have seemingly been seen – above all – as the responsibility of each individual **trainer**. Thus, while national policies in education ensure that most teachers in the formal education system must collect a defined number of credit points by attending professional-development courses, the **trainers** in the adult-education sector are under no such obligation. In the sphere of public administration, the three partner institutions themselves seem to have focused mainly on their target audience of **participants** – i.e. civil or public servants – with their **trainers** appraised carefully both before and after training is given, but still apparently left to their own devices when it comes to their responsibility to upskill and develop professionally.

2. OUR NOVEL TARGETING

In the light of the above, our Course has been aimed specifically where it is capable of making the most difference, i.e. at the **trainer educators** tasked with capacity development among the less-experienced **trainers** typically seeking to impart skills and knowledge they possess to **participants** who are public-sector employees. It is this group whose needs and aims have been focused upon as the Project Team has strived to select learning content, and to come up with the optimal Course delivery programme proposed here (see Section 5).

At the same time, the Course materials have been developed and assembled in such a way as to enjoy broad accessibility. That means a further targeting, beyond the above-mentioned **trainer educators**, at the people they would be working with, i.e. the **trainers** themselves, who are experts on their subject matter (of course far more so than the **trainer educators**), but have little or none of the training experience and know-how that would help them get that across more effectively. It seems likely from needs analysis that such **trainers** will appreciate their deficiencies in certain skill-related areas and be looking to improve their training skills. And, while it is only fair to suggest that upskilling will be greatest where **trainer** comes face-to-face with **trainer educator** in a workshop context, a "do-it-yourself" approach with many or most of the Course materials is also possible, and very likely to prove worthwhile.

Bearing all this in mind, descriptions in the Course Guidelines at the level of the individual Activity are marked for their level of difficulty, a signal in this way being given about the amount of previous experience, knowledge and preparation likely to be needed if any given Activity is to be delivered. Part of this reflects whether that Activity is designed to serve the needs of the **trainer educator** specifically, or can be applied in a wider range of public-sector training contexts. The Course materials may well prove useful to **training staff working with adult learners** in any other branch or sector.

It will be clear from the above that a further key element in this hierarchical structure is the public-service **participant** on training. Potentially huge in number, these **participants**

are not targeted by the *Course in a direct way*, given the core assumption that they will be training in knowledge and/or skills related to a given area of subject-matter specialisation important to them in their posts, and well-known to the **trainer**. The word **participant** is therefore used here advisedly, in the expectation that thousands who get to participate more actively and innovatively in training can be ultimate beneficiaries of this Project, as they spend quality time with **trainers** fully prepared and motivated thanks to some or all of the approaches presented and tackled by our Course.

3. COURSE GOALS

Keeping all the above in mind, the main goal of the developed Course and materials is **to provide public-sector trainer educators and trainers with ideas and tools that would equip and encourage them to deliver effective, innovative and interactive training sessions**.

While it is quite typical to find the training solutions and novelties well known in the private sector adapted for public-sector use, feedback from **participants** shows that such training may fail to grasp the specific nature of public institutions. Equally, there are many cases in which the public sector does keep up, including at least as many training innovations as may be found in the world of business. This is true, not only of training-course methods, but also of learning content. However, the sectoral differences still at times existing may prove frustrating. First and foremost, ideas applicable to the private sector do not necessarily match the specifics of the public institution, with its more-hierarchical structure and greater procedural constraints. Doubtless these are among the reasons for a slowed-down process ushering in innovation. So, thus perceived as more dynamic and agile, the private sector inspires public administration in terms of the approaches, tools and methods potentially available for **trainers'** use.

The Course developed here therefore brings in various creative approaches used widely in the training courses run by business organisations, albeit as adapted to the needs of trainers operating in the public sector.

And, as our Course materials may interest **trainer educators** or **trainers** that do have past business-sector experience, but are now ready to switch their attention to public-sector participants, it may well be worth emphasising:

- ◆ **differences in goals and interests** (while the private sector is primarily profit-oriented, the public sector is called upon to provide public services and manage the common good with the necessary financial moderation);

- ◆ **the time perspective** (the implementation of innovations in public institutions can prove a lengthy process, so a patient approach to a claim that "implementation needs time" is advisable, especially given the way that amount of time is many cases a good indicator of quality of change);

- ◆ **possible inertia** (trainers may see public institutions as less eager to change; but what differs is rather the time frame than the actual striving for change, hence a further dose of patience and tolerance for claims of the "that will not happen in the public sector" kind, and the potential usefulness of efforts to ask participants what benefits of change they might see, and about the structural or procedural possibilities for that change to happen);

- ◆ **the mind-set** (the impression may be gained that public-sector employees, and

especially their leaders, are hiding behind procedures – there may be reasons for this, but best not to get it wrong; and a way to inspire even the most procedure-oriented mind-set can always be found).

4. COURSE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

The Course comprises seven Modules:

1. **Effective Trainer** – covering such topics as the different roles of the trainer; trainer competences; assumptions underpinning a trainer's work; active listening and adult-learning principles.

2. **The Planning and Delivery of Training** – *inter alia* encompassing target-audience analysis; the setting of objectives for training and learning; the understanding of macro- and micro-learning; ways of delivering learning content; interactive learning; learning at the place of work and flipped learning.

3. **Design Thinking for Training** – dealing with essentials if training is to be great; the planning of learning using instructional design approaches; design thinking to help learn about learners and tools used in design thinking (User Profile/Persona, the Customer Journey Map).

4. **Interactive Ways of Working with Groups** – addressing participatory methods; leadership development; principles for effective group facilitation and Open Space Technology.

5. **The Digital Dimension** – covering such matters as the understanding of the digital dimension; digital learners; the specifics of planning and delivering digital training and the trainer's approach.

6. **Role Plays and Games** – considering the specifics (and the pros and cons) of using role plays and games in learning; as well as the use of metaphoric cards and the Barnga game.

7. **Professional Development and Inspirations** – extending to topics like the introduction of WOOP (Wish-Outcome-Obstacle-Plan) as a self-development strategy; Mastermind Groups; challenges during training and building resilience in difficult situations.

As each Module is created – and can be delivered – as a stand-alone seminar, the Course takes a jigsaw puzzle approach, in line with which users may select Modules most interesting, useful and/or appropriate in regard to their specific goals and audience; and in this way create an individualised programme of training.

Each Module has its theoretical input, leading on to practical learning/training Activities described in detail in terms of their delivery, and often accompanied by ready-made worksheets or handout templates. Just as users may be selective at the level of the Module, so even more may they choose the Activities included in each that suit their purposes best.

The training content selected by the Project Team should indeed prove of great potential use, not only to **trainer educators**, but also to **trainers** working on their given subject-matter courses. The objectives representatives of each of these target groups have will obviously do much to define the extent to which it is the fully-developed Course

programme that is applied, or particular materials. For example, it is possible for **trainer educators** to run the proposed Course in full, while **trainers** giving a subject-matter course might confine themselves to Activities readily and effectively utilisable in their own training work.

5. THE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Both the classroom methodology and that applied at the Course development stage enshrines and applies **the participatory approach**. Indeed, this approach is to be advocated whenever workshops or seminars come to be designed in any country or institution. Apart from its clear connotation that people will be participating actively, the approach also implies that Activity selection and implementation will link up intimately with the institutional and individual needs of the given **trainer educators/trainers/participants**.

As **continued reflection and awareness** should be central to the learning process, as well as to workshop or programme design, the Course encompasses several Activities that are in essence mindfulness techniques, or ways of helping users achieve an enhanced level of awareness as to their own essential training-related beliefs and assumptions. Following such Activities, trainee reflection and feedback should receive special attention, as genuine learning will prove hard to achieve without proper reflection.

Transformative learning theory underpins both Course content and engagement in Activities. That assumes impact in dimensions that are **psychological** (as self-understanding changes), **convictional** (as beliefs and assumptions about training and learning change) and **behavioural** (as actual delivery of training changes, along with the way life in general is perceived).

As any related training event or workshop is put into effect, it is highly advisable that account be taken of **adult learning (andragogy) principles** – most especially those relating to:

◆ **self-directed learning** – by which participants get to express their needs and wants;

◆ **a high level of genuine participation** – with theoretical input planned to constitute 30% of overall learning, while practical activities account for 70% of workshop / seminar / programme time; and **participants** also find themselves "in the shoes" of **trainers** if at all possible;

◆ **experience** – the entire learning/training process is based around what participants actually go through, hence a need to reflect regularly on what is actually being experienced at a given time, as set against past experience, and with an assumption that certain skills will be practised in a **hands-on** way.

◆ **innovation** – with training anticipated to involve (and encourage the further development of) innovative techniques, and (in our case) with both practice and exercises showing clear, ongoing adjustment to the needs of public administration.

◆ **the learning cycle of American educational theorist David Kolb** – seeing learning as knowledge creation involving the transformation of experience, and hence predicating learning effectiveness upon a person's progress through a four-

stage cycle comprising **experience, reflection, conceptualisation** and **testing.**

Where classroom-based techniques are concerned, **trainers** are encouraged to apply **participatory/interactive** techniques, such as interactive presentations, case studies, discussions, buzz groups, pair work/group work, etc.

6. THE APPROACH TO COURSE DELIVERY

The Project Team designing this Course are promoters of an individualised, as opposed to a one-size-fits-all, approach to training programmes. They thus encourage potential users of the Course materials to pick and choose parts that work best for them. The Team has nevertheless come up with a proposed optimal scenario for a Programme of training that **trainer educators** can run to equip participants (i.e. groups of less-experienced **trainers**) with key knowledge, skills and attitudes as outlined below. This Programme would be of three days and six Modules, and would provide extra time in between for reading, as well as space for individual tasks and homework. This optimal scenario foresees six most-appropriate Modules from the Course being selected, along with the most appropriate Activities within each. Timewise, the delivery of each Module would take 3 hours (i.e. two 90-minute working sessions), plus breaks.

It is advisable that **trainer educators** interested in delivering the Course should perceive its outline and Guidelines as useful resources, yet still invest in detailed planning and adaptation of the material, to meet the needs of their own, individualised training programme or session.

AN OPTIMAL PROGRAMME OF TRAINING

Pre-training activities	Training Day 1	Training Day 2	In-between training activities	Training Day 3
Distance learning	*Face-to-face learning*	*Face-to-face learning*	*Distance learning*	*Face-to-face learning*
Online interaction (questions about learners' needs, motivation, experience, etc.). Reading list.	One of the Modules	One of the Modules	Homework, further reading, etc.	One of the Modules
	One of the Modules	One of the Modules		One of the Modules

Summarising, we can view Course delivery as being founded upon the principles of:

- **flexibility** – with Course design allowing **trainer educators** to adapt to their own context, needs and audience, as they select Modules and Activities for delivery;

- **an individualised approach, as opposed to one-size-fits-all** – with a flexible and needs-driven approach fostering individualisation, in a way that caters for the specific needs of the group the **trainer educator** is working with;

- **the blended learning approach** – with learning/training taking place both face-to-face and online. The **trainer educator** thus selects appropriate videos and other materials made accessible before and during training, if possible also running a webinar and organising learning to optimise the use of new technologies.

7. LEARNING OUTCOMES

The three following questions offer a good guide to the main learning outcomes for **trainer educators** or **trainers** that are likely to accompany the Course Programme:

What do effective trainers do?

- develop a full understanding of what **competencies** are critical,

- identify their own **strengths** and **areas for development** in their work as trainers,

- understand both the various **roles** a trainer may play during the training process, and the factors influencing the deployment of one role or another,

- recognise what their own **approaches** to training are,

- understand the importance of **peer-support** and **partnership** in learning,

- develop the skill to **self-assess**,

- recognise the need for **continuous professional development**, and seek insights as to how their own **motivation** can be maintained, and **growth** in the role promoted.

How to plan and deliver training?

- by fully appreciating the significance of **key elements** characterising the training / learning process, i.e. the trainer, the target audience, the training goals, the learning content, the methods and approaches to teaching and learning, and the learning environment, facilities and resources,

- by setting clear and relevant **objectives** for a session of training,

- by engaging in **planning** and **preparation** that considers multiple aspects/ concerns,

- by analysing a **target audience**, assessing its needs, and learning ways in which those needs can be best catered for,

- by understanding what drives **learner motivation**, and picking up techniques that ensure trainee **engagement**,

- by selecting appropriate **means, approaches** and **methods** of delivery,

- by **evaluating** a course of training,

- ◆ by understanding the specifics of training activity for **adult** learners.

What approaches to training may be regarded as up-to-date or cutting-edge?

- ◆ those that apply **Design Thinking methodology** to the design of a course of training, and understand the importance of the user's perspective,

- ◆ those grasping the essence of **interactive** and **participatory methodology**,

- ◆ those understanding and applying **Open Space Technology** and/or **Mastermind** Group activity in the learning process,

- ◆ those appreciating the effective use of **gamification** and **role-playing** in learning.

The Course emphasises both the professional and personal development of **trainer educators** and trainers. Indeed, the Project Team from the LSPA, HAUS and KSAP are unanimous in stressing how crucial it is that those wishing to train successfully have a good understanding of themselves, their motivations and strengths in the role, as well as areas for improvement.