

## ***Strengthening Sub-National Government: Technical Assistance and In-Service Training in Ukraine***

Brian Tutt and Aidan Rose<sup>1</sup>

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This paper examines approaches taken by a British Government sponsored project to assist the development of In-Service Training (IST) for public servants in Ukraine. It considers how technical assistance programmes address the key issues of sustainability and transferability of techniques and expertise. It argues that successful assistance needs to be based on appropriate training and learning. Traditional pedagogical approaches were found to be inappropriate. Instead programmes aimed at public servants need to be based upon learner centred methods which enable the acquisition of skills and competences.

In-Service Training is increasingly acknowledged as a key element of the public administration reform process. The effective professional updating and re-skilling of public servants to meet the changing requirements of public sector organisations is recognised as an important determinant of improved public service performance (Jabes and Meininger, 1998, Chlivickas et al, 2002). This recognition has been reflected across East and Central Europe in the expansion of educational provision in public administration, both by the existing University sector and through the creation (under various names) of state academies dedicated to the training of public servants (Verheijen and Nemeč, 2000).

Many of these state academies have a two tier approach to education in public administration: First, the establishment of Masters in Public Administration courses, intended to create a cadre of “change agents” within the public sector, trained in the latest western public management techniques, and equipped with a range of relevant skills. Second, the design and delivery of a range of short courses aimed at specific groups of public servants responsible for particular policy and administrative areas.

This paper focuses on the second category of training and education, and analyses the experience of the Institutional Strengthening Project (Ukraine) (ISP(U)) at London Metropolitan University (formerly the University of North London) in partnership with the Ukrainian Academy of Public Administration (UAPA) in providing training and technical assistance to in-service training departments within local government in Ukraine. It draws some lessons from this experience (and from that of the other strands of the work of the ISP(U) programme) on the role of education in enhancing the capacity to govern, and the role of technical assistance within this.

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<sup>1</sup> Brian Tutt is Senior Lecturer in Politics and Aidan Rose is Reader in Public Management, Department of Law, Governance and International Relations, London Metropolitan University, 62-66 Highbury Grove, London N5 2AD, United Kingdom. [B.Tutt@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:B.Tutt@londonmet.ac.uk) and [A.Rose@londonmet.ac.uk](mailto:A.Rose@londonmet.ac.uk)

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## ***The Institutional Strengthening Project (Ukraine)***

The University of North London (now London Metropolitan University) has managed the Institutional Strengthening Project (Ukraine) since 1994. This programme, funded by the British Department for International Development (DfID), aims to support the Ukrainian Academy of Public Administration in strengthening its capacity. The first phase of the project (1994-1996) focussed on supporting the course design and validation of the Masters in Public Administration offered by the Academy in Kyiv as well as the development of the Academy's infrastructure (Hague, Rose and Bojcun, 1995). Phase Two (1997-2000) and Phase Three (2001-2003) have broadened the range of the work of the project to take in the work of the regional institutes of the Academy in Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, Lviv and Odesa. This work has four key strands:

1. to support on the continued development of MPA provision, including course design, curriculum development, provision of learning resources, validation and the organisation of an internship programme in the UK (see Polianskiy, 2000).
2. to facilitate the creation and organisation of an "Urban Management Network", aimed at creating a forum for research and exchange of best practice in urban management in Ukraine. A journal is produced and distributed to all local authorities.
3. to provide support for the In-Service Training work of the Academy.
4. to support for the creation of a Distance Learning capacity within the Academy, both in relation to the MPA and IST courses (see Andretta, Rose and Shelley, 1999).

Across all four components, the focus is on strengthening the capacity of the Academy through staff development so as to ensure the sustainability of these initiatives beyond the life of the Project. A second key consideration is the question of transferability - to work collaboratively with colleagues in the Academy to determine which aspects of western experience in general (and British experience in particular) are appropriate for transfer to Ukrainian conditions. A good example of where questions of sustainability and transferability are particularly relevant is the case of distance learning. Rather than focusing on the production of distance learning materials as outputs *per se*, the project focused on equipping staff from the Academy with the skills to work in teams to develop the capacity to produce distance learning materials. This approach enabled staff to take responsibility for all stages of the process from inception through production to review. This involved making key decisions about transferability of the British experience including choices about the appropriate methods of delivery and use of technologies.

### ***In-Service Training in Ukraine***

As a successor state to the former USSR, Ukraine has faced particularly acute dilemmas in its attempts to create a modern and effective system of public administration. Ukraine has been characterised as attempting a "quadruple transition":

1. Political transition - from single party authoritarian rule to liberal democracy.
2. Economic transition - from a command economy to a market economy

3. Institutional transition - from an Soviet Socialist Republic to an independent state.
4. National transition - from a Soviet / Russian to a Ukrainian national identity and culture (D'Anieri *et al*, 1999, pp 1-6).

A key theme here is the view that Ukraine has a tradition of poorly developed state structures, a legacy of Soviet centralisation, and that this has greatly complicated attempts to modernise since 1991. In the field of public administration, this legacy included the “lack of a developed civil service system, with the adequate numbers of appropriately trained and motivated personnel that implies”, resulting in “an acute administrative capacity shortage”(D'Anieri *et al*, 1999, p. 98, 113).

The Ukrainian government has recognised this, and has sought to institutionalise training and professional updating within the public service. There is a legal obligation on all public servants to undertake refresher courses in relevant skills at least every five years (Navrusov 2001, p. 140). The body with overall policy responsibility for the training of public and civil servants in Ukraine is the Directorate General for Public and Civil Service (DGPCS). Responsibility for the provision of training has been divided and subject to significant variation across the country.

For the most senior civil servants, IST support is the responsibility of the Institute of Continuing Education at the UAPA in Kyiv (Poliansky, 2000, p. 296). The primary training providers for middle and lower ranking public servants are the Oblast IST centres. Four of these are located at the Regional Institutes of the Academy (in Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, Lviv and Odesa) have dual subordination to the DGPCS and the Academy, and are financed by the central government budget. The remaining 23 oblasts have dual subordination to DGPCS and to the relevant oblast administrations, and are financed by local budgets (and therefore are less well resourced). The Regional Institutes therefore do not have authority over the remaining 23 oblast IST centres, although they do tend to work closely with those in their immediate region. However, the 23 oblasts receive methodological support from the Institute of Continuing Education at the UAPA in Kyiv.

Until recently, the oblast training centres had significant autonomy over the content of the training offered, much of which was negotiated between the training centre and particular public bodies. In the last few months, supported by TACIS, the DGPCS is working towards the creation of a unified IST strategy, involving a common core curriculum to be offered across the oblast centres. It is proposed that this will include such subjects as: the history of Ukrainian state building; the analysis of socio-economic problems; public administration and public service; the legal framework of public administration, and humanities and social sciences for public administration. There will also be scope for a range of elective courses, on topics such as regional economic development. It is anticipated that this core curriculum will be available both through both traditional classroom based delivery methods and also through distance learning.

### ***Analysis of the context in which training occurs***

This section of the paper draws on the experience of focus group discussions involving British participants, partner staff at the UAPA, and trainers working in oblast IST centres from across Ukraine. In the space available, it is not possible to provide a full analysis, but some key

findings can be identified, in particular, some of the constraints on the enhancement of the quality of training and therefore the level of capacity development within Ukrainian local government.

1. Perhaps the major problem lies in the mechanisms for recruiting and promoting staff in Ukrainian local government, which provides little incentives for participating in training despite a legal obligation that all civil servants should do so. In particular, IST is not as yet firmly embedded into the HRM strategy of the public sector as a whole - there is no formal systemic process of identifying organisational needs and providing training to equip staff with the skills the organisation requires. Some form of staff appraisal mechanism is required to make an explicit linkage between training and career advancement.
2. Trainers identified some cultural problems leading to reluctance on the part of both trainers and trainees to adopt new pedagogic methods (see below for a discussion of this).
3. Prior to the current move towards a national curriculum for training, the training work of the oblast centres was significantly shaped by the demands of particular agencies within the region who would commission training from the oblasts.
4. Trainers working in the oblast IST centres suffered from severe resource problems - inadequate budgets, poor infrastructure, a lack of modern teaching materials, and limited opportunities for staff development.

It was within this environment that the ISP(U) sought to strengthen the training capacity of the UAPA and oblast centres.

### ***ISP(U) and In-Service Training***

The primary focus of the In-Service Training work of ISP(U) from 1999 onwards was to strengthen the training capacity of the UAPA in general and its Regional Institutes in particular, and through them, to assist in the development of the oblast training centres. This was to be done through the training of trainers in modern adult learning methodologies, and in the production and dissemination of a range of training materials. In this, the ISP(U) worked closely with training experts from the British Civil Service College using a comprehensive model of training delivery used with United Kingdom public servants.

A programme of work was agreed after consultation with the Deputy Directors responsible for IST at the four Regional Institutes. They were responsible for selecting teams of staff from within each Institute who were actively involved in IST work and would benefit from the training we were to deliver. These teams typically included both IST managers / administrators and academic staff involved in the substantive content of training courses.

The training programme involved a number of stages:

1. A needs analysis of existing training provision in the UAPA and oblast IST centres.

2. Training in methodologies of training (led by the Civil Service College). This involved an intensive five day seminar on the whole process of training:
  - needs analysis
  - formulation of learning objectives
  - course / session design
  - teaching and learning theory and methods
  - assessment and evaluation of training.
3. A series of pilot seminars seeking to implement the methodologies discussed above. Participants included academic experts, and trainers from both UAPA and oblasts.
4. Evaluation of the pilot seminars.
5. Competition for five places on a study visit to London.
6. Study visit to London. Involved training at the Civil Service College, the Department for Education and Skills, the Local Government Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) and the Cabinet Office.
7. Arising from this visit were:
  - A Summer School in Odesa on training methodologies for trainers from oblast training centres. A book of exercises, case studies and other pedagogic material was produced following the event, and distributed to oblast IST centres.
  - Pilot seminars on recruitment and selection techniques in the public service, and on regional economic development. Both used as the basis for training packs to be disseminated to oblast trainers.
  - The conversion of core IST modules into distance learning format.

### ***Andragogy - an emerging technology for adult learning***

The project's experience of developing in-service training provision, taking account of the core principles of sustainability and transferability led us to focus on the issue of andragogy. Andragogy is seen as the adult equivalent of pedagogy and is the prevailing approach to adult training (see Knowles, 1970). It argues that effective adult learning demands the employment of different teaching methods from those applied in the teaching of university students. The key features of andragogy include:

1. a shift from an emphasis on the expert teacher to a models of mutual learning based on the expertise of the members of the group:

2. a change in the role of trainees from passive recipients to active learners, taking responsibility for their learning;
3. a shift from an emphasis on the transmission of information to the enhancing of skills;
4. a shift from a dominant lecture model of teaching to the employment of a variety of different learning methods;
5. a step change from a formal to a more informal learning environment.

This approach downplays the use of lectures, and instead advocates the use of interactive methods and the application of theory to real - life situations. Such an approach would involve role plays, a range of group activities, the use of case studies and other exercises.

This model, now the prevailing orthodoxy in the west, is of relatively recent origin. A United Nations publication “Training in Public Administration” stated the traditional pedagogic stance:

“Lectures are the traditional method of instruction and for the presentation of general principles there is no good reason to depart from a procedure which has long demonstrated its value and utility... More novel training methods, such as role playing as well as the use of film and other visual aids should be adopted with caution” (UN, 1968).

The adoption of an andragogy based approach to training poses a particular problem in Ukraine and other USSR successor states as it runs counter to the prevailing pedagogic culture of the former Soviet Union. This culture, which still influences attitudes amongst both trainers and trainees, includes:

1. a producer based culture in which educational institutes and academics lacked responsiveness to the requirements of the recipients of education.
2. a ‘productionist’ approach, where the quality of education and training was measured through the quantity of output, rather than on the quality of content.
3. an emphasis on the highly qualified expert as the fount of knowledge and information.
4. a tradition of rote learning rather than of the development of skills in critical analysis.

Public sector trainees, the majority of them educated in the Soviet system, displayed at times a resistance to active learning methods. Some felt that group based learning was not “proper training”, arguing that they wanted to be informed by experts rather than to discuss with their peers. Usually this reluctance was temporary, as trainees saw the benefits of interactive methods. It was notable that reluctance to participate in group activities seemed to increase with the age and status of the trainee.

Andragogy also poses challenges for trainers. As professional educators, they were used to taking a dominant role in the training process, and considered the lecture to be the most effective method of teaching. It required a considerable cultural shift to relax control over the trainees, and to prioritise exercises and discussion over trainer-led input. They needed convincing of the

educational advantages for trainees of a more interactive approach. The design and facilitation of effective group work exercises also required considerable training for trainers, as what was originally perceived as an easy option was acknowledged to make considerable demands on the skill of the trainer.

We were fortunate that the group of trainers which we have worked with, both from the UAPA and from the oblasts, not only accepted andragogic approaches, but became positively enthusiastic advocates of them. It has been notable in recent seminars that both the Soviet and andragogic models are sometimes employed within the same event, with specialist trainers making effective use of a wide range of interactive methods, whilst the subject specialists (typically from local Universities) have still been wedded to teacher-centred approaches. Indeed, at one seminar in 2002, a relatively young and highly qualified expert gave a 90 minute lecture in which she refused to take any questions from the participants, justifying this with the statement "I am an authoritative lecturer. I do not answer questions". Interestingly enough, a number of the trainees were not happy with this approach, and whilst they grudgingly accepted the expertise of the lecturer, they criticised her rigidity and argued that whilst her method may have been appropriate for undergraduates, it was less suitable for training professional adult learners.

With regard to continuity the project was fortunate that, with a handful of exceptions due to promotions, retirements or transfers, the majority of the staff members of the UAPA who started the programme in 1999 are still active within it. This allowed for the development of good personal relations, effective partnerships between Ukrainian and British participants, and assisted in the development of a body of highly skilled trainers able to cascade their experience down to oblast level.

On the question of sustainability, the development of a group of highly skilled trainers in UAPA, and the production of materials (especially training packs, methodological materials and distance learning courses) means that the project will have an effect beyond the end of funding in December 2003.

## **Conclusions**

The In-Service Training work of the Institutional Strengthening Programme (Ukraine) has sought to build capacity through the delivery of the following principles:

1. Partnership: we seek to facilitate learning by developing partnerships between the UAPA and oblast level training centres: between academic research and professional training: between Ukraine and other countries.
2. Innovation: we are supporting the development of expertise in the use of innovative training methods within IST work. In particular, we are supporting UAPA staff in the use of interactive and learner-centred techniques of training, and in involving users in the design, delivery and evaluation of training events.

3. Relevance: training topics and methods should be relevant to the requirements of Ukrainian public administration reform, and should be based on the assessment of needs within particular areas of the public service.
4. Transferability: expertise in IST design and delivery should be disseminated from Academy trainers to those responsible for training within local and regional governmental organisations through training events, collaboration and dialogue. This also involves the generation of training materials in distance - learning format for wider dissemination.
5. Sustainability: the programme seeks to support the development of a body of experts and expertise in training methods with long - term sustainability.

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