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“Learning Ministries - global practices to support organizational learning processes in public administration and Polish experience”

Abstract

The paper concentrates on issues related to organizational learning of public administration. In recent years, organizational learning in public administration has become a very significant issue. The reason for this is the increasing complexity of public affairs and the concomitant need to look for more efficient and effective ways to manage them. The practice of organizational learning is seen as the solutions that can provide professionalization of activities undertaken by public administration. We present assumptions of MUS project (Learning Ministries, Polish: Ministerstwa Uczące Się – MUS) within which broad research was conducted to elaborate model of learning mechanism of public administration. To reinforce learning process in Polish ministries we implemented selected practices use in administrations in different countries in 8 departments of Polish ministries. Department of Control of the Ministry of Transport, Construction and Maritime Economy case study is present at the last section of this paper.

Introduction

Nowadays, in the era of ubiquitous crisis, whose effects spread in almost all areas of societies, the state is subjected to pressures stemming from both its interior and its surroundings. Expectations of citizens towards the state and its functions, especially in terms of quality of supplied goods and public services, improving the quality of life, reducing social exclusion are continuously increasing. At the same time intensively raised public expectations of reduction of public spending, the size of the public administration system and reduction of the number of its employees.

In this context, seeking for reforms and solutions that would improve the functioning of the public administration is becoming a key challenge of modern states. One of the ways to modernize and improve the functioning of the organization in an uncertain and dynamically changing environment is to implement to public administration the concept of the learning organization. The concept itself is not a new issue. Sources of reflection on the theory of learning organizations can be found (reducing the search only to the last century) in the work and publications on the social perspective of learning, the limited rationality, studies on importance of knowledge as an organizational resource, on

knowledge as a mechanism of competition, on the learning process as a mechanism for identifying and correcting errors in the work and others.

Undeniably, organizational learning and knowledge management have a clear positive impact on public sector organizations, which was confirmed by previous empirical studies. Many authors argue that knowledge management plays an important role among others in improving public service delivery processes, supporting effective social participation in decision-making, building social competencies in the field of intellectual capital, developing a competent, knowledge-based civil service, implementing approach of policies based on evidence.

Therefore, the aim of this paper is to present the results of studies that focused on the three research questions:

- What is the mechanism of learning in public administration?
- What are global practices to support organizational learning processes in public administration?
- What is the status of the learning mechanism in the Polish ministries?

Organizational learning in public administration

The concept of organizational learning – and, more broadly, the problem of the acquisition and creation of knowledge by organizations and organizational systems - is not a new issue. It has been widely reported in the literature relating to the management. At first, the difference of the concepts of "learning within organization" (the study of people learning in the workplace), "organizational learning" and "learning organization" must be emphasize. The second concept refers to the learning institution as a whole and has been widely described in the work of Richard Cyert and James March's (Cyert, March 1963) and Argyris and Schön (Argyris, Schön 1978, Schön 1973). The term "learning organization" emerged from the European literature on management in the early nineties (Easterby-Smith, Lyles, 2011b, p 12). However, the role of knowledge and mechanisms of its accumulation was risen much earlier in different studies concerning f.e.: concept of explicit and tacit knowledge (Polanyi 1966), the importance of knowledge as an organizational resource (Penrose 1959), the knowledge as a mechanism of competition (Hayek 1945), the theory of organizational learning (Cyert, March 1963), the theory of action (Argyris, Schön 1978), the theoretical reflection on the learning process as a mechanism for identifying and correcting errors (Argyris, 1982). Undoubtedly, the concept of the learning organization has become significantly popular after the publication of Peter Senge's *The Fifth Discipline*.

Analyzing different interpretation of "learning organization" present in abounding literature, it should be noted that all definitions of this concept are unambiguously positive. Most of them refer to the key attribute of learning organizations: the ability to continuously change. Members of such organizations are capable to identify, critically analyze and (if there are prerequisites to do so) modify their mental models. Learning organizations not only have the capacity to adapt to the environment undertaken actions and behavior, but also are able to perform a significant transformation as a result of the internal pulse. They have the ability to anticipate changes of the surroundings, and even initiate processes of changes (eg, James 2003; Pedler et al., 1997). The sources from which learning

organizations derive their knowledge may be differentiate. Knowledge can arise from own experience, experimentation, information gathered from stakeholders, as well as from regularly critical analysis of own assumptions (Slater, Narver 1995). Experimentation, as well as the balance between exploration of new knowledge/new opportunities and exploiting existing solutions play a significant role in learning organizations. The two most important and relatively oldest models of organizational learning (Senge 1990 and Padler et al.) assume feedback between the three issues that characterize the functioning of the organization learning: (1) interactions and communication (between members within the organization and with stakeholders), (2) taking different perspectives on specific issues, problems, etc., and finally (3) critical, conscious self-reflection, assuming expanding ways of thinking [Olejniczak 2012, p 85].

In recent years, organizational learning in public administration has become a very significant issue. The reason for this is the increasing complexity of public affairs and the concomitant need to look for more efficient and effective ways to manage them. The practice of organizational learning is seen as the solutions that can provide professionalization of activities undertaken by public administration. These practices, are assumed to - on one hand - lead to the elimination of the disfunctions. On the other hand - to increase the capacity of the administration in undertaking activities in social and economic fields. Administration without this ability loses the capacity of creative adaptation to changes taking place in its environment and interior. Losing this capacity, administration ceases to be a way of solving social and economic problems, and becomes to be a barrier to socio-economic development of the communes, regions and countries. The strong need for implementation of the practices of organizational learning in public administration is a consequence of the nature of today's world and societies, which is characterized by a high degree of uncertainty, increased social expectations of the standards of public administration: the availability and quality of public services, the need to rationalize spending and balance the budget in a way guaranteeing respect for acquired rights and privileges of citizens and social groups. In ongoing discourse on the efficiency of the public sector a positive function of organizational learning is taken for granted. Researchers stress that implementation of this concept to public sector management is a response to today's challenges for public authorities.

It should be noted that the idea of rooting the concept of learning organizations in public administration is accompanied by the development of scientific field, the increase in the number of research and activities aimed at promoting a culture of organizational learning in public sector. Increasing interest in the mechanisms of organizational learning and their adaptability to public sector is also related to the growing popularity of "public policies based on evidence" issue that requires from public administration capacity of organizational learning.

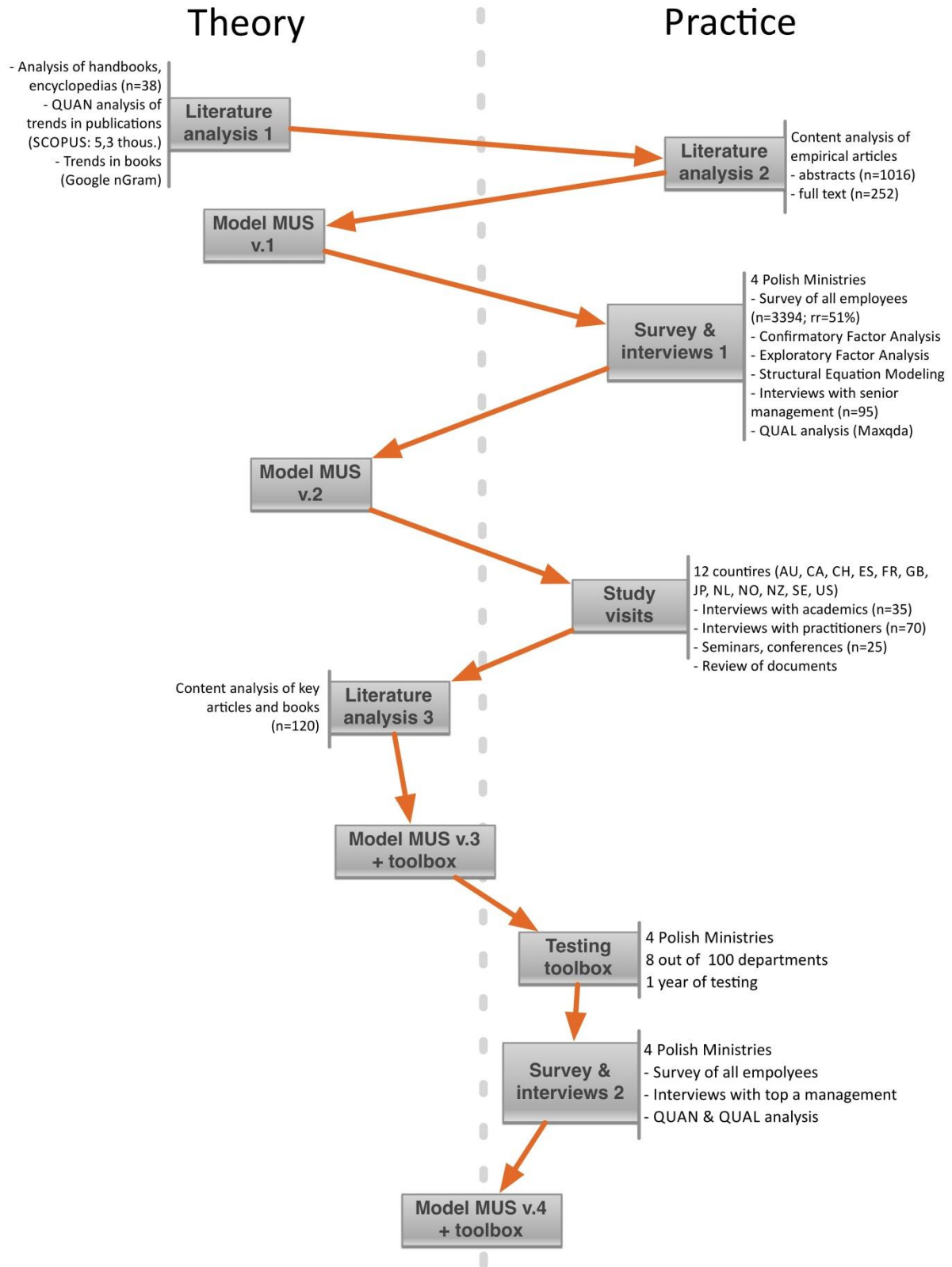
How do the ministries learn? - mechanism of learning in public administration

Overarching role of the central government administration, resulting from exercise key for development of the state functions (ie forecasting, planning and strategic function, economic growth regulator function, the function control - board, in which the state controls and supervises the citizens such as associations and) forces us to ask questions like: how do ministries learn? what are the determinants of effective learning process in ministries? what are the relationships between the elements and processes forming the learning mechanism of ministries? The issue of organizational learning in Polish ministries became a subject of research project "Learning Ministries" (MUS -

Ministerstwa Uczącej Sie), whose main objective is to strengthen the processes of effective organizational learning in public administration. The project is being implemented in 2010-2014, with the support of the European Social Fund under the Human Capital Operational Programme - Priority V "Good Governance".

The research team tried to bring together theory to practice. The study plan based on mixed-method approach, which assumes a systematic triangulation of methods and data (Creswell, Clark 2010, Greene 2007) and even interdisciplinary (Repko 2012). By combining theories from the fields of psychology, management, sociology, quantitative and qualitative analyzes, literature analyzes, Polish and foreign officials' perspectives and experiences, we were able to get more complex picture of the researched reality. First phase of the study consisted in a wide-ranging analysis of the literature, the results of which enable to propose a model of learning mechanism of public administration. The model was modified twice, in accordance with the results obtained within empirical research (survey analyzes and study visits in 12 countries). Finally, we proposed a model (which bases on the theory and practice of learning mechanisms of public administration) and a toolbox (which is a catalog of practices use in the administration in different countries). At this point, the project went through a phase of testing the adaptability and effectiveness of the use of selected global practices in the Polish ministries. After its completion, the conclusions drawn on the basis of experience and observation will allow the final modification of the model of learning mechanism of public administration.

Fig 1. MUS project phases



Describing briefly the main elements of the model presented below, it should be noted that the first part of the mechanism are the processes, which comprises:

1. impulses - all the information and stimuli coming from the outside of the department to its head and staff. The study identified two types of impulses: coming from the environment (conferences and training) and the feedback signals that are the fuel of the learning process, that allow relevant system (in this case the department) to verify the effectiveness of the action taken. It should also be stressed that the more diverse the impulse source, the more objective, realistic picture of the situation.

2. reflection – consists in analyzing the current situation and gathered information and – on that basis - drawing out the conclusions about the performance of the department. We can distinguish two types of reflection taking into consideration who initiates reflection – whether it is inspired by the leadership, or begins as a bottom-up process. Within these two types there is criterion to another division - the object of reflection. Discussions and reflections, both initiated from the top, and bottom-up, may relate to matters of strategic and substantial (discussion on results), or operational and procedural (avoiding errors, searching for solution of current problems).

3. knowledge – concerns specific knowledge and also the ability to act in certain ways. In this perspective, it is not a resource, but a process - information in action. Within the learning mechanism of administration, there are three types of knowledge: knowledge about the context, strategic and operational knowledge

4. adaptation - adaptation of the department to the new conditions and changes in its activities. It may be the result of knowledge gained through internal reflection or simply a reaction to changes in the environment. We may distinguish three types of adaptation: operating, strategic and political.

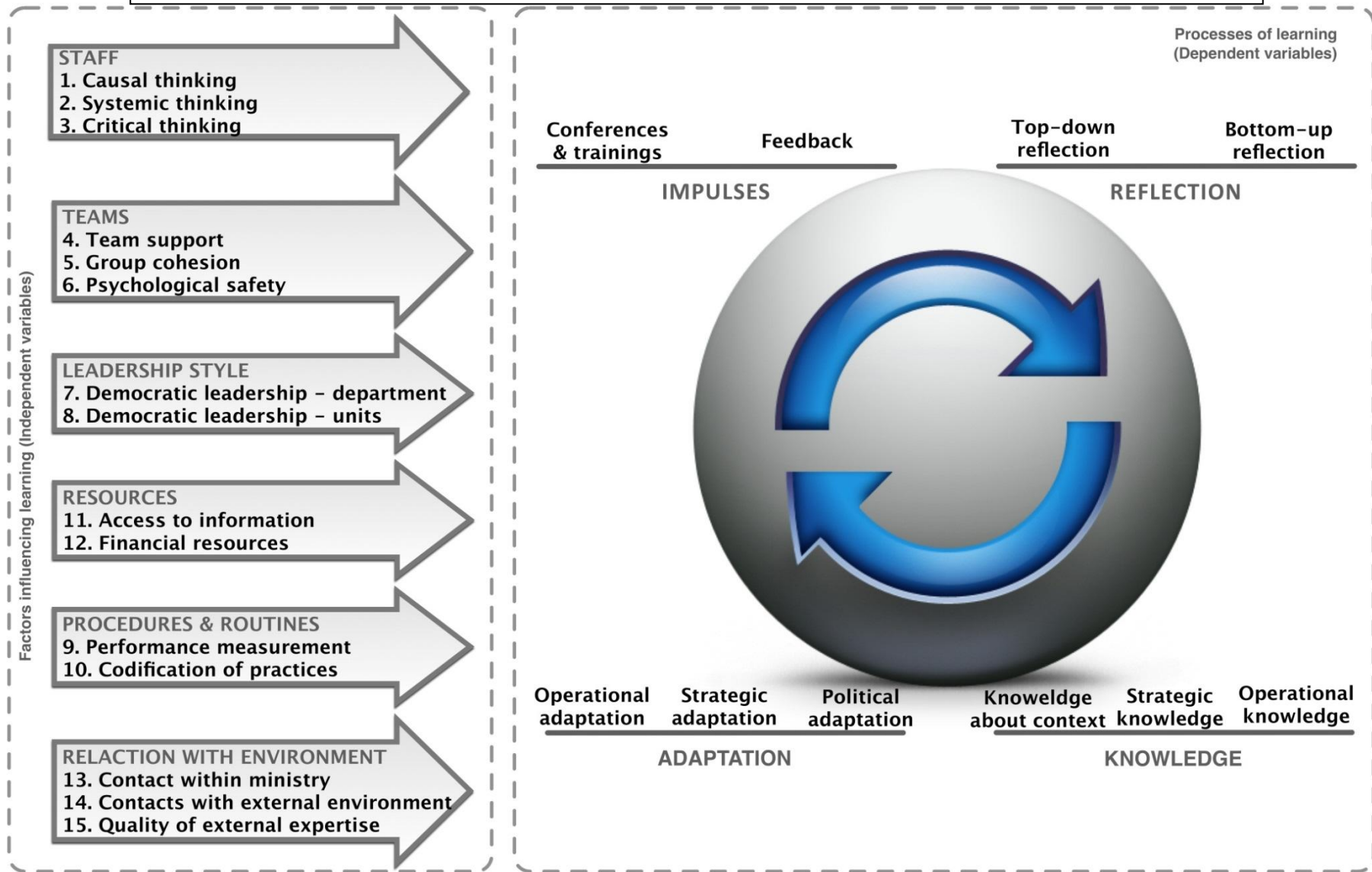
Characterized above processes can be strengthened by certain factors affecting either the way of proceeding or the quality of the process. The model recognized six such factors.

- Staff – perceived as characteristics of the specific skills of employees (thinking about the effects, systemic and critical thinking)
- Teams - understood as the social capital of the organization (mutual trust, understanding, willingness to cooperate, support - impacting on psychological safety)
- Leadership style – consisting of the actions taken by the Heads of Department (democratic management style has positive impact on the for learning).
- Resources – which include access to information (data bases, reports, publications, evaluations), and financial resources.
- Procedures and routines, which consists of a reference system (reference point for the answer to the question "whether the results of our work are satisfactory"; system of information and indicators by which departments monitor the effects of their actions), and

the codification of routines - that is a well-established practice of collecting and using information taking the form of procedures, templates, instructions, or custom.

Relations with the environment - closer (in the ministry) and further (other ministries, academia, experts, consulting firms, think tanks, etc.. It should be noted that both the factors and processes among and between the same processes they interact - which gives the model's present dynamic.

Fig 2. Model of learning mechanism of public administration



Supporting organizational learning in Polish ministries

One of the stages of the research undertaken within the project (prior to the elaboration of the model) focused on identification of valuable solutions in the field of organizational learning implemented in different public administrations. An extensive research was carried out in twelve countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The choice of countries was dictated by intention to include practices existing in different models of public administration. Four systems of public administration (based on various paradigms) were taken into consideration. We conducted research in countries where public administration model (1) bases on the rules coherent to the classical model of public administration (France, Spain, Switzerland, Japan), (2) combines classical model of public administration with the participatory and conciliatory approach (Norway, Sweden), (3) is embedded in a market-oriented new public management (United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand), and (4) combines market-based approach of the management of public affairs with the active involvement of civil society in public affairs (the Netherlands, Canada, United States).

The analyzes of worldwide used learning organization practices based on data collected within study visits. In each country, interviews were conducted with academics dealing with issues of public administration and practitioners - public officers employed in institutions identified as potentially the most interesting. During visits literature analysis and analyses of additional sources of information identified by respondents (websites, government documents, etc..) were also carried out. Ultimately, we selected 88 good practices that support learning mechanisms of public administration in surveyed countries. This selection was dictated by their high degree of innovation and its potential usefulness for improving learning mechanisms Polish public administration. Identified practices include tools that reinforce (described in the previous section) factors, which affect learning in public organizations. Gathered practices refer to different areas of the public administration and concentrate on various factors strengthening organizational learning capacity. We can distinguish practices concerning specific procedures or routines (eg, reflection, After Action Reviews and Hyari-Hatto events database, exchange of experience: Retention leaving employers' knowledge, Communities of Practitioners), use of computer tools for learning organizations (eg Biuropedia, Data base-People-Taxonomies), activities aimed at improvement of quality of organizations' human capital (eg, coaching, Talent management program), measures to improve the processes of information flows: within organization and between organization and its environment (such as the Employees' suggestion program; Public Comment).

In the following sections, we will focus on the description of the next phase of the project: the process of implementation of certain practices in the Polish ministries. As a case study we use Department of Control of the Ministry of Transport, Construction and Maritime Economy, which is one of 8 departments form 4 ministries involved in MUS project. We will try to answer the following questions: what can be expected from the implementation of practices (how a certain practice can affect the learning mechanism of the department?) and what - at this stage of practices implementation - has been achieved in this area?

Department of Control of the Ministry of Transport, Construction and Maritime Economy case study

Department of Control conducts the matters relating to the act on control in governmental administration: it executes planned and summary controls in organizational bodies: offices and units subordinate or supervised by the Minister, units implementing projects supported from state budget and EU funds. The Department contains the unit of internal audit, which operates under separate provisions. The unit implements objectives of internal audit and is obliged to provide the Management with an objective assessment of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of management control. It should be emphasized that scope of duties performed by employees and the structure of the department make it quite specific. The particularity of Department consists of at least three issues: first - in contrast to most other departments - the Department of Control's employees are not engaged in providing services offered directly to citizens. Secondly - the most of the work takes place outside the Ministry as employees execute visits in controlled entities. Thirdly, the fact that the Department contains the unit of internal audit, which operates under separate provisions causes that not all employees know and collaborate with each other. This particularities had to be taken into account during the process of selection and adaptation of practices functioning in other countries' administration.

First step of the implementation of global practices consisted of the choice of the employees who would be change agents. As has been widely described in the literature – the role of change agents in the implementation of innovative solutions is particularly important due to the fact that changes create a notion of uncertainty and resistance among the persons concerned. Hence, change agents must act as experts, advocates and leaders of implemented practices among their colleagues. The tasks that were set for MUS change agents included:

- consultation and selection (together with head of department and MUS team members) practices that fit the needs of employees of the department best, and the implementation of which can have potentially the greatest benefit in terms of organizational learning of department
- development along with MUS team members implementation practices scenario (practice should be adjusted accordingly to the specific needs of the department),
- acting as advisors for MUS team members and head of department management during the implementation process,
- acting as a intermediates between project's team members and employees of the Department,
- encouraging and supporting the engagement to the implementation of the practices among other employees of the department, explain and convince other of the advantages of the implementation practices.

Criteria for selection of change agents (ie the popularity among colleagues, resourcefulness, being open-minded), were presented to the heads of the department who made the final choice. After accepting the role of change agents, two employees of the department, had the possibility to improve their abilities which are key abilities to perform this function during special trainings on mind mapping, change management and critical thinking. Afterwards, change agents with MUS team members analyzed the catalog of practices used in other countries' administration in terms of the merits / possibilities of their implementation in the Department of Control. Three practices

presented in elaborated catalogue were chosen to adopted by the Department. These were: "Mission, objectives, indicators", "Simulation games training" and "People, databases, taxonomies".

The first of the selected practices: "Mission, objectives, indicators" - is very much at one with a broader trend of "performance measurement" (effectiveness based on verification of results). It has been developed in the U.S.'s public administration since the 1980s¹ and in Netherlands and Australia's ones since the 1990s. The process can be divided into four main parts: the construction of the mission, the formulation of the main objectives and operational objectives, defining indicators to measure the performance and verification of results. Importantly, the planning is done from left to right: first the desirable change, effect, or a positive target, towards which the organization strive and afterwards the products and activities that lead to them are defined. The objectives of each department should correspond with the main objectives of the Ministry. This practice directs and organizes the activities carried out by the organization. It provides leaders feedback needed to make evidence based decisions. Moreover, the staff receive clear information about their role in the organization, a sense of mission and work (which is one of the most important motivators). Nevertheless it should be stressed that the implementation of this practice involves three challenges. The main challenge is to provide participation of process of defining these three elements: mission, objectives, indicators. The second challenge is to avoid common in different organizations restrictive approach to indicators (in which they are treated as a rigid tool of control). Third challenge concerns commitment of heads of department and provision of continuity in the monitoring the degree of realization of objectives once defined. Referring to the model of the mechanism of learning administration it should be pointed out that the practice support learning by ordering of impulses (feedback), reflection, strategic knowledge, and indirectly affecting (strategic) adaptation.

The second implemented in the department practice simulation game (decision game) is often used tool for increasing the competence of employees in the private sector. Simulation games are designed to teach participants to make better decisions about difficult questions and problems (VanSickle, 1975). Simulation games are a subcategory of didactic games, the training methods belonging to the problematic didactic methods that organize the content of training in models reflecting certain situations and processes. They are supposed to be identical to those that occur every day in organizations. During the game, the teams are evaluated not only according to the criteria of success, such as: plan, budget, sales, marketing, achievement of objectives, but also according to so called "soft issues" such as the management skills, effectiveness of internal communication, authority, leadership, motivation. The final result depends mostly on the ability to use knowledge and potential of participants, what activates the instinct and willingness to compete with other teams. Games are an excellent tool that enable to test in a "safe environment" theories in practice. Games reinforce three factors identified in our model as important to the organizational learning process: Staff, Teams and Leadership Style. The participants develop their communication skills, cooperation, negotiation, selection of the appropriate arguments, skills of discussion, they may train how to change attitudes and philosophy of thinking, especially facing virtual or real conflicts in the team. This practice seems to be the most important for "Teams" – determinant responsible for systemic organizational learning: mutual support and group cohesion - they impact on better

¹ This practice has been intensively implemented under President G.W. Bush (in the form of the PART program) and it is continued in a slightly modified form by the administration of the current President of the USA (see www.performance.gov).

integration and improved forms of cooperation with the group. For managers, the game gives an opportunity to test different decision-making strategies, allows to overcome the psychological barriers, certain attitudes and habits that help to manage real-life situations.

The third of the implemented practices "People-Base-Taxonomy" was identified during the study visit in U.S. This tool is used by the Department of Labor (DOL) of the Ministry of Labor of the United States and relates to methods for the collection, organization and processing of information generated by the organization. It is about creating a simple system to share files and document templates, usually associated with repetitive standard procedures and processes (eg reporting participation in a conference or training). In addition to templates, examples of completed documents are also available on a webpage. Element of the system is the structure of categories and subcategories, according to which departments organize their data and information. Users of this tool (department employees or stakeholders) may indicate files with labels (tags) to create rankings of most "popular" or useful documents. Utility of this tool bases on its well-thought, proper, 'smart' structure: taxonomy as a tree (similar to the hierarchy of a website showing the structure of the main topics, subtopics, sub-categories). This helps users to find the data they need. In the DOL's "People-Base-Taxonomy" the structure of the main categories remains the same, but from time to time (quarterly) individual subcategories are modified and adapted to the users' needs and intuition. The use of tools support organizational learning by affecting department's Resources, namely: access to information.

Practices implementation and first reflections

"The mission, goals, indicators" have been developed during the meetings of the heads of department, change agents and MUS team members. The scope of duties, responsibilities of employees of the department, and the role and place of Department of Control in the structure of the Ministry were discussed. The relative ease in the implementation of this practice (compared with the other departments involved in the MUS project) stems from two issues. The first one relates to the previously mentioned specificity of the Department of Control, which tasks limit to planned and casual control: task well précised, routine and repetitive. This fact greatly facilitates the identification of specific targets and selection of indicators. Second, the department recently implemented task budget, which provides setting targets and indicators measuring progress in achieving set targets. Therefore, the work on the practice based on primary elaborated material, which was treated as a starting point for discussion on the appropriateness of selected objectives and indicators. The evaluation of implementation of this practice for organizational learning of the department at the moment is unjustified, as it requires continuous involvement of heads of department in the process of monitoring the effects. Effectiveness and relevancy of this practice can be assessed only in the long term perspective (at least few months). However, it can be concluded that the practice at the present stage, strengthened Reflection and Knowledge areas included in our model. This refers mainly to strategic knowledge: during the conversations with employees, we know that work on "Mission, objectives, indicators" increased their knowledge on the objectives set and the expected effects of the activities of the department. This derives from the fact, that defined earlier (in phase of preparation of task budgets) targets and indicators have been treated more as a requirement "imposed from above", rather than a tool that sets directions and helps to verify the effectiveness of the action taken. It should be noted that - as mentioned earlier - the effectiveness of this practice is related to the acceptance and unification of the mission and objectives by the employees. It is also

important to provide the proper use of indicators by resign from treating them as a rigid tool of current control. Further work on implementation of this practice will concentrate on explanation of the role of mission, objective and indicators in effective performance of organization to the department's staff. So far employees identified the document, which set objectives and indicators, as a statutory requirement, an extra, unnecessary bureaucracy.

The second practice was already implemented in the department. Change agents and heads of department analyzed catalog of simulation games and chose the game "The Lord of the Valley". The game is one of a few simulation games addressed to the public sector available in Polish training market. The simulation concerns the territory (valley), in which coexist and cooperate with each other local authorities, NGOs, financial institutions and farmers. To sum up the first impressions of the participants - their statements about the suitability of acquired skills to their work, we can rise to the following conclusions: (1) simulation games should be a part of a wider system of training aimed at improving the quality of Ministry's human capital (such system does not exist at the moment). (2) Simulation games should be designed to support the development of a variety of skills - not only, as was the case with the game "The Lord of the Valley" - soft skills like: selection of arguments, discussion, communication, cooperation, problem solving, etc. Games' topics should therefore be more closely related to the nature of the tasks performed by the department. Unquestionable benefit of simulation games stressed by almost all participants, was the integration of the department, which is particularly important for the Department of control in which operates a separate unit of Internal audit. Games provided an opportunity to meet employees that did not know each other before and to strengthen relationships between staff. The head of the department, who participated in the game with her subordinates, indicated as a benefit of training the possibility of a better understanding of the potential of people working in the department and the acknowledgment of personality traits, talents that were not visible in their everyday work. To sum up the implementation of the practice, it can be said that mostly it affected two factors strengthening organizational learning process: Team (in particular the consistency group), and Leadership style. Improvement of personal skills (Staff area), in the opinion of participants was limited because of the relative distance from the tasks actual performed by the department and themes/objectives of the game.

The third practice requires the most work and commitment from both the department employees, change agents, head of the department, and MUS members. In the first stage, the current system of data collection and data flow within the department was identified and described. In the Department files containing various documents (formulas, the results of some control, etc.) are placed on the internal drive is used to that contains. For data/documents flow staff uses its emails. The next step was to clarify employees' needs, so that the design of "Data-Base-Taxonomy" tools) would best serve them in their daily work. We decided to enhance (respectively to the DOL practice) the function of this tool – so it could become an interactive database. As a result, a document that describes the main functions of a planned tool were evaluated. Those functions include the following:

- ability to share files, templates and documents, usually associated with repetitive standard procedures and processes (templates use for inspection, guidelines, etc) or examples of filled documents

- function which enable collection and proper order of documents created by the department's staff (employee plans, reports, results of inspections, etc)., The tool should be equipped with a browser for quickly find the document;

- staff database with browser for easily find the contact details of persons competent in specific areas (search by a range of tasks, specialization, and not only by name or position).

- database which gathers information important for the work of the department, such as schedule control, information about training and handouts received during training, links to controlled entities' websites, information on who is responsible for that task, project or given issue),

- function that enables exchange of different information by employees, like: experiences, information regarding hotels and transport in cities where the controls take place, information on the Ministry buffet's menu,

- employees' suggestions module (tab "Submit your idea" with the ability to comment on by the heads of the department) that will facilitate communication on the proposed changes.

Benefits of implementing a tool relied to reinforcement of organizational learning mechanism in the Department of control are varied. The main advantages include: support for Resources (improving access to information) which affects Knowledge (Operational knowledge and Knowledge about the context). Also, what is already noticeable during the development of guidelines for the tool, this practice strengthens the department's Team - work on the shape of the tool integrates team, affects its cohesion. Employees work on social networking space shape that will become a place for exchange of information, not just those directly related to their work. This practice will strengthen the Leadership style, as the tool will have the function of collecting employees' suggestion for modifications and changes. As it was emphasized by the staff of the department, although it is not crucial for the process of communication with the heads of the department (staff do not have problems with communicating suggestions to its superiors) it can become a place to create and develop innovative and creative solutions.

Final conclusions and recommendations

The importance of the process of organizational learning in public administration cannot be overstated. The need of continuous learning derives on one hand from dynamic and high degree of uncertainty of environment, limitation in access to data, and on the other hand from the growth of citizens' expectations towards the state and its administration. In the literature, the role of habits, procedures and organizational routines that help better adaptation to environmental changes and better memorization by the organization the ways of effective performing. In a broad scientific discourse, the impact of organizational learning on the efficiency is accepted as unequivocally positive. Hence, search for methods and tools to support effective learning becomes a key issue to all administration units, irrespective of their nature, size or their functions.

Conducted Within MUS project research, based on the principles of mixed-method approach, enable to propose a model describing the mechanism of learning administration. It consists of learning processes, factors supporting organizational learning and ongoing relationship between them. Gathered during study visits practices helped to understand how in different countries (where the administration operates under different paradigms) learning processes are being strengthened.

First reflections on implementation of selected practices in one of the departments of Ministry of Transport, Construction and Maritime Economy are positive and give reason to believe that they should be tried in other public administration units. Nevertheless, there are some issues that potentially might reduce the effectiveness of practices, what has to be borne in mind when planning implementation of those practices in other departments. However, the final evaluation of the impact of implemented practices to learning mechanisms in Department of control must be done in the longer time perspective.

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