

In-service training of public servants in Croatian local self-government: between old habits and new ideas

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Abstract

Previous empirical research in the field of human potentials management in the local self-government (LSG) of the Republic of Croatia shows that in many areas of civil service relations, elements of traditional, administrative personnel management prevailed. In addition, managers have identified several legal shortcomings and gaps that have opened up space for political and/or discretionary decisions, which is a feature of the pre-Weberian, political model of personnel management. Among them is the area of staff training, which was not conducted in accordance with a well-thought-out human potentials' development strategy and organizational needs, but ad hoc, according to uneven and discretionary criteria without elements of a managerial or integral model.

Given that the field of public servants in-service training in LSG administrative bodies is relatively poorly researched, this paper seeks to determine whether Croatian local units have recently adopted some new methods of in-service training in line with modern trends which are characteristic of integral (and partly managerial) model of human potentials management (such as human potentials planning, development of managerial skills and abilities, team work skills, development of competency models, etc.). These methods have been used for a long time in the public administration of many other countries and are gradually being introduced in the Croatian civil service.

In terms of methodology, the research question will be studied based on an analysis of the legislative framework, official websites, official data of the State School of Public Administration on implemented training programs for public servants and officials in LSG, reports on local budgets and a questionnaire sent to HPM department in Croatian cities. The conducted analysis enables the adoption of recommendations for the improvement of the in-service training system in Croatian local units.