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*Coauthors:* -

*Paper:*                                    **Overview of the Public Service Executive Training System in Hungary**

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**Abstract:**

The Hungarian national public administration training system providing continuous, lifelong further training to some ten thousand executives in public administration was launched in 2014, adding skills and competency development to the previous training solutions which had a mainly legal and professional approach. The executive training system is being continuously developed, since tackling the existing qualitative and quantitative challenges calls for the introduction of novel, innovative solutions. With a gap-filling character, this study presents in brief the last ten years of system of executive training in public administration, supported by the outcomes of the author's empirical research, makes suggestions for the possible directions of its further development. Through this article the reader may obtain an overview of the current Hungarian civil service further training system, its institution system, the method of its application, its target groups, its results, and its development prospects. By reading the article the reader will get acquainted with the good practices of the Hungarian civil service further training system.

**Points for Practitioners:**

In each branch of the Hungarian public service (public administration, law enforcement, national defence, public employees, judicial, prosecution organisations) there are separated further training systems functioning. They pay attention in addition to professional knowledge also to the competence development. Instead of the traditional lecture focused educational forms, in the recent years the use of the practical personal training, e-learning and blended-learning methods started to be spread. At the same time, the introduction of several of those training methods are still in their initial phase, with the aid of the integration, development of which the performance of the executives working in the civil service organisation may be increased, and through this the performance of the organisation itself may be also significantly increased.

- The study presents to the international reader audience the further training and the executive training systems of the Hungarian civil service occupation systems in the areas of public administration and its' good practices. The structure of the Hungarian civil service further training systems, the studying of its institutional and methodological solutions may serve as good practices for the researchers working in this professional area.
- The task of the system of executive development in public administration is to produce a set of tools among which each leaders can find the pieces of knowledge required for their individual development and apply them in the long run, consciously, with a need for self-improvement. It is in this way that executive training can become an integrated function of human resources, which supports and maximizes organizational efficiency.

- Leadership training is constantly evolving and its offerings are expanding, so the research findings can be utilized directly in the development of the system. The research can contribute directly and provide inputs to this. The publication of the results hopefully draws attention to the importance of the issue.
- The presentation of the findings can provide an opportunity for professional debates, for a contact and dialogue between the peers, which can enhance the formation of public human resource development and adult education policies.
- In a broader perspective the aim is to contribute to the necessary change of attitude in the field of public service human culture, to its renewal and its continuous development.

**Keywords:** leadership development, lifelong further training, teaching methodology

## **1. Introduction, aims of the article**

The civil service further training systems has been paying an increasing attention to the development of competency in the recent decades in addition to the professionalism of the civil service. Practical training and e-learning methods have become widespread replacing the traditional, frontal educational methods. By reading the article the reader will get acquainted with the good practices of the Hungarian civil service further training system. This article introduces to the reader the development practice of the Hungarian civil service human resource, focusing on the institution system, on the methodologies, and on the good practices of executive training. It introduces the development policy of the civil service human resource development in Hungary, and within this the current situation of executive development. The article also introduces its good practices and its development trends.

### **1.1 Conceptual foundations and antecedents of civil service continuing education and leadership training**

It is necessary to define what exactly we mean by further training/continuing education of civil servants. We do not find a uniform definition of the term in the Hungarian literature. Therefore, summarizing what has been read, as well as relying on Lajos Lőrincz's wording, the following definition can be given: Civil service further training: is related to the status of a civil service official, specifically part of the career of a civil service official.<sup>1</sup> Mandatory continuing education can be required by law for advancement (e.g. basic exam, professional exam), or the public administration or central body obliges the official to participate in it. This type of training is predominantly practice-oriented, and in terms of its content, it specifically concerns general administrative and special knowledge content. These are typically short-term special trainings outside the school system, beyond the diploma. Their aim is to maintain and develop constantly outdated professional competences, administrative technical knowledge and personal competences.

Continuing education can be grouped according to a variety of criteria. Next, a collection of my own, according to the most classic aspects (not exclusive).

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<sup>1</sup> Lajos LŐRINCZ: Basic institutions of public administration. HVG Orac, Budapest, 2005.

categories	school system	outside the school system
training network	centralized	decentralized
timing	prior to employment	after starting work
training period	longer	shorter
obligation	obligatory	optional
knowledge content	informative	refresher
development area	knowledge transfer	skill development
requirements	exam	not an exam, other
method	lectures focus	participants focus
form	presence, offline	distance learning
consequence	there is direct	not direct

*Figure 1.: A possible typification of continuing education (source: own editing)*

There have been central regulations for the further training of leaders in recent decades in Hungary, but the further training of neither leaders nor subordinates has been implemented systematically before 2014. Until recently, each organization decided for itself when, how much and in what form it spends on equipping its staff with new knowledge. Typically, within the organization, the individual organizational units researched the further training available on the training market themselves, and organized internal courses to prepare for various major legislative changes. In the past more than twenty years, there have been frequent (political) conceptual changes and changes in the organizational framework of human resource development. Frequent reorganization for the purpose of more efficient and economical performance of tasks does not necessarily achieve positive goals, because it eliminates an important factor, the creation of a stable institutional base. Frequent changes cause uncertainty in all actors of organizations and break the curve of developments, slow them down, tasks and useful information are lost, which results in a lot of "idle work". Perhaps this is one of the main reasons why the role of administrative leadership development has remained marginal. Due to other political, social, regulatory and budgetary problems, those elements that should have been the essence of the career system could not be developed into a functional system (e.g. further training, advancement and compensation, performance evaluation).<sup>2</sup>

The former relative uncertainty of the field is also demonstrated by the diversity of management training solutions in public administration in recent years. Grouping of ways of thinking about Hungarian public administration leadership trainings:

- a) Lectures that prepare for the challenges of Hungarian state governance, mainly based on knowledge transfer and not competence development (e.g. public administration examination from the 1990s).
- b) Management courses with a school system similar to the "business management" courses known from the 1990s aimed at training senior managers.
- c) Classic short term leadership development trainings with a "standard" content from 2000s.
- d) E-learning and blended-learning techniques from the 2010s.
- e) Tailor-made leadership competence development trainings (sporadically from 2018).

<sup>2</sup> Gábor SZAKÁCS: Strategically based, integrated human resource management in the public service. Public Service Human Mirror 2013 (sectoral summary study). Budapest, 2014., pp. 4.

- f) Individual coaching in leadership development (sporadically form 2018).
- g) Competence measurement systems in leadership development (sporadically form 2019).

It can be seen that several forms of leadership trainings have coexisted in recent decades: professional knowledge exams, school-based training, e-learning training, and "boxed" training. These can be considered as smaller-scale actions aimed at training. The complex approach did not gain ground, and the systematic training of public administration leaders was not implemented.

## **1.2 Brief overview of the Hungarian public service continuing education system**

The national level public administration further training system operates on the bases of the University of Public Service (UPS) since 2014. It is a training model, procedure regime, methodology and asset system, which is unprecedented so far in the area of domestic and international civil service adult training. This novel centralised training system uses modern methods and approaches. It may serve as a good practice and operation model in the entire area of adult training. Approximately 100,000 persons are being continuously trained here, including app. 10.000 in leadership position thorough the country. The national training system providing continuous, lifelong further training to some ten thousand executives in public administration was launched also in 2014, adding skills and competency development to the previous training solutions which had a mainly legal and professional approach. The executive training system is being continuously developed, since tackling the existing qualitative and quantitative challenges calls for the introduction of novel, innovative solutions.<sup>3</sup>

The Statute Act imposes a training obligation arranged into four-year training cycles for civil servants. It determines when and which trainings they have to undergo, as well as by whom this process is to be organized, supervised, and controlled.<sup>4</sup> For government officials the further training is also important and defined by a government decree. The bodies themselves can determine the amount of study points to be completed based on the continuing education obligation for the current year.<sup>5</sup>

The full-scale direction and supervision of the institutional system is performed by the Minister of Internal Affairs. It is operated by the University of Public Service. The sector-specific management of the further trainings is assisted by the College of Further Training in Public Administration (KTK) as a professional advisory and reference body. This body determines the further training programmes in public administration and their set of requirements. It is here that the certification of the programmes takes place (any institution of higher education, or even an organization itself, can hold internal trainings, which the University of Public Service enters into its register). A given programme can be added to the list of further training programmes after a programme certification procedure which guarantees the conformity of the programme, or after a simplified registration procedure. The transparency of the system and the monitoring of the completion of further trainings is aided by a credit based study points system. During the training terms, officeholders have to collect study points of an amount specified in advance.

The further training system is no longer aimed only at updating knowledge about legal regulations and training in expertise in the given field, but it has set off in the direction of a complex skills development. As to its methodological solutions, it is now extended beyond the training form with a lecturer in the centre. They include

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<sup>3</sup> Csilla Paksi-Petró - Georgina Stréhli: Recent coaching trends in the civil service sector -a comparative international analysis focusing on Hungary, *Journal of Arts & Humanities* November 2021., pp. 69.

<sup>4</sup> Act CXCIX of 2011 on Civil servants

<sup>5</sup> Act CXXV of 2018 on government administration

transformation into a training system of a type which focuses on the development of skills and on practice which are necessary for a more attractive career and for a higher efficiency in public administration and for an increased performance. E-learning, blended-learning and public administration-specific training methods have started to be applied to promote experiential learning.

Training selection is aided by a state-of-the-art IT platform, Probono (<https://probono.uni-nke.hu/nyitolap>), which enables the production of annual further training plans for the staff, programme search, access to all useful information regarding the training, and the e-learning videos (and tasks) are also accessible online.<sup>6</sup> The development and maintenance of the IT system is performed by UPS. Performing the tasks with one's own device enables reasonable and cost-efficient operation. The operation of the further training system is currently provided by a so-called standard contribution to be paid to the University of Public Service by the public administration bodies for those officeholders employed by them who are liable to undergo further training.

We can distinguish between middle-level executives (e.g. head of division, deputy head of department, head of department) and top-level executives (e.g. the topmost leaders of public administration bodies and their deputies, secretaries of state, deputy secretaries of state, etc.) programmes, which is justified by the different training needs of these two levels. In the case of middle executives, subjects which belong to the sphere of general managerial skills development include executive self-knowledge, communication, conflict management, negotiation techniques, group collaboration, leadership style, knowledge in the field of humanities, etc. Executive training offers two types of programmes: classic, two-day training programmes in small groups, arranged into four main subjects (strategy and leadership, leading people, executive communication, managerial skills, leadership personality) with an e-syllabus element (blended learning). Generally, 16 hours of physically attended training are supplemented by 4 hours of an e-learning syllabus. The other type represents a group of purely e-syllabi. These are electronic syllabi presenting a top-priority managerial subject or area of competence. Their characteristic learning load is 8 hours.<sup>7</sup> In the case of top executives, skills development built on personal interaction takes priority. Problem-oriented help, which can be integrated into their daily schedule, is a useful item for them. Trainings which bring innovations in their methodology were launched for top executives in the second half of 2014, e.g. so-called action learning courses which originated in the USA, top executives' media communication courses, managerial integrity training, all of which work with special syllabi and methods.<sup>8</sup>

Let's look at the main data of the last four years (2018-2022) of continuing education.

There were 2488 programmes in the list of further training programmes at the end of 2019, from which 576 programmes were civil service further training programmes developed and provided by NUPS.<sup>9</sup> The civil service executives could choose in 2019 from 12 blended learning executive training programmes, 6 types of attendance-based and 1 e-learning program. The blended learning type of trainings are started with getting acquainted with one introductory e-learning content, which is followed by a 2-day (16-hour) practical training program, and finally the program is closed with acquiring an e-learning training material part that summarises and systematizes what

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<sup>6</sup> <https://probono.uni-nke.hu/>

<sup>7</sup> Csilla Paksi-Petró - Georgina Stréhli: Recent coaching trends in the civil service sector -a comparative international analysis focusing on Hungary, *Journal of Arts & Humanities* November 2021., pp. 70.

<sup>8</sup> Csilla Paksi-Petró - Georgina Stréhli: Recent coaching trends in the civil service sector -a comparative international analysis focusing on Hungary, *Journal of Arts & Humanities* November 2021., pp. 70.

<sup>9</sup> Report on the public service further trainings implemented in 2018, and on the execution of the annual further training plans, April 2019, pp. 7.

has been learnt. The attendance-based type of trainings are based on a practical training methodology (2 days, 16 hours). On these programmes altogether 1096 persons participated in year 2019.<sup>10</sup>

At the end of 2020, the number of programs included in the list of civil service continuing education programs and which can be planned is: 1575. In 2020 there were 182 qualified civil service further training program provided by UPS. There were 1393 registered internal training programs provided by the public administration organizations.<sup>11</sup>

As in 2020, the coronavirus pandemic also affected UPS's training organization activities and the completion of training in 2021. In the first half of the year, in view of the epidemic situation, attendance and blended learning trainings were carried out online, via the MsTeams platform, and from the second half of the year, the officials could actually return to the training rooms of UPS. In 2021, the public service continuing education programs completed by officials were largely programs with an e-learning methodology. In 2021, significantly fewer officials chose and completed attendance and blended learning methodology training than in previous years.<sup>12</sup>

At the end of 2022, the number of programs included in the list of civil service continuing education programs are 1542. Qualified civil service further training program: 308 of them, e-learning: 193 units; blended learning: 28 pieces; attendance trainings: 87. Internal training program: 1234 units.<sup>13</sup>

The purpose of the renewal of the further training system in years from 2021 is to stimulate the voluntary learning of the officers, to wake up their own motivations, to form their attitude instead of transferring static knowledge, and value orientation. To provide self-development opportunities and the adventure of learning in order to eliminate the negative experience of the mandatory character, the examination orientation and impersonality of teaching.<sup>14</sup> In addition to the existing colourful e-learning and training choice it would be practical to integrate into the system the coaching methodology related offers.

### **1.3 Objectives, research methodology, research questions**

In our fast-paced digital world, *the frameworks of learning are widening*. *Lifelong learning* is a basic requirement, which requires *continuous self-cultivation*. One of the reasons for the success of outstanding organizations is the fact that *leadership development is part of their organizational strategy*. Leadership challenges have become so complex by now that they cannot be handled with traditional forms of education.

In the past decades, a competency-based development system for *the training of public administration professionals* with focus on the individual (job-related) needs has not been introduced. A significant step in the human resources development of the public service sector was the establishment of a unique training model for training of public administration professionals, including *leadership development*, in 2014. The entire public administration should attend regularly a certain number of training programs, which are provided by the University of Public Service. The system has been catching up with the use of modern forms of development. Besides the

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<sup>10</sup> Report on the public service further trainings implemented in 2018, and on the execution of the annual further training plans, April 2019, pp. 7.

<sup>11</sup> Report on the public service further trainings implemented in 2019, and on the execution of the annual further training plans, April 2020, pp. 21.

<sup>12</sup> Report on the public service further trainings implemented in 2021, and on the execution of the annual further training plans, April 2022, pp. 23.

<sup>13</sup> Report on the public service further trainings implemented in 2022, and on the execution of the annual further training plans, April 2023, pp. 18.

<sup>14</sup> Report on the public service further trainings implemented in 2018, and on the execution of the annual further training plans, April 2019, pp. 8.

former, mainly legal education, the focus has been shifted towards competence development in form of training and e-learning methods. But *their effectiveness can and must be supported*, because *several quantitative and qualitative challenges* could be identified. Some of these challenges could have already be handled or partially handled during the ten years (2013-2023) constant evolution of the continuing education system.

- a) *The program offerings*: There are a great amount of programs in leadership development, but they do not provided a coherent, basic management and leadership knowledge system. The range included many important skills, but several others were missing. This case was partly handled by the talent management programs from 2022. This point will be discussed in detail in a subsequent section.
- b) *Customization*: Individual development needs are not identified. The trainings have a "standardized" and not a personalized character. It is not guaranteed that the leaders take part in training courses, which are the most appropriate and necessary ones for them. This problem was partially handled in 2019 by the competency test system, although the self-evolution is optional.
- c) *Self-development and self-knowledge*: At the beginning of its operation the training system does not encouraged continuous self-development, which would support successful lifelong learning and becoming a learner's organization. Successful self-development is based on a high degree of self-knowledge and self-reflection, which are hardly present. This case was also handled from 2021 with the self-development platform of the Probono.
- d) *Harmonization*: There is a constant need for developing new training alternatives (time-saving, practical, practice-oriented), which suits the daily routine and lifestyle of the executives of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the 21st century, it is necessary to develop a new educational philosophy and a new andragogic methodology that meets the needs of the adult student age group. The redefining and development of the instructor's role and the stimulation of training motivation aim at achieving a more efficient and uniform quality training level.
- e) *Training motivation*: The success of the training depends on the commitment of the participants. Generating and the maintaining motivation of the participants cause currently difficulties. Continuing education has no guaranteed legal consequences for advancement.<sup>15</sup> Another fundamental problem related to the continuing education system is to be found in the motivation of those involved. If the motivation of the participants is low, the training efficiency is also lower. There are several reasons for lower motivation level, the workload of the employees, the lack of workplace infrastructure and the organizational attitude can also play a role in this. Since the goal is the development of officials and not the ticking off of trainings, in order to achieve results, it is necessary to approach from a different direction. At the beginning of the process, you have to try sensitization and conscious attitude formation. Managers are key players in this. The development of the need for self-improvement in individuals must be consciously encouraged.
- f) *Effectiveness measures and quality management*: The training effectiveness criteria are only partially defined and the long-term return on training is not measurable. In addition to the need to develop a functional system for the entire staff of the public administration, increased care is required to create learning of a suitable standard. Only training that meets the expectations of the participants can lead to

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<sup>15</sup> Zoltán HAZAFI – Dávid LUDÁNYI: To the Margins of an Unfinished Law. Development Framework for HRM in the Public Service. Pro Publico Bono – Public Administration 2022. 1. pp. 82.

satisfaction. The quality and adequacy of the continuing education programs is ensured by a comprehensive quality management system. The activity is carried out according to a comprehensive protocol, in accordance with the principles of the PDCA cycle. Careful expert examination of qualified continuing education programs, regular on-site inspections, organized demand and satisfaction measurements among the target groups involved in the training system (officials, instructors, employers, training officers, etc.) are ongoing.<sup>16</sup> According to experience, the most comprehensive and largest number of feedbacks is provided by the official satisfaction measurement built into the training process. But the improvement of the quality of training courses would be unthinkable without a system of student feedback. After each training, the participants evaluate the continuing education programs on a complex satisfaction measurement data sheet.

- g) *Unforeseen circumstances:* Like during the COVID-19, most of the trainings were canceled, while a smaller part of them were transferred to the online space. This required a revision of the trainings originally designed for the attendance type. The characteristic was in this period (2020) that the majority of the officials waited for the on-site trainings, while a smaller number showed interest in the online trainings.<sup>17</sup> After the end of the pandemic, the online training option will be suspended for the time being.

This article examines these main challenges and it would like to find as adequate answers to them as possible. The central issue of the article is *how to increase the effectiveness of public service leadership trainings?* Identifying and managing the above mentioned expected quantitative and qualitative challenges of the training system requires the search for new methods. The article is *partly descriptive and synthesizing*, requiring extensive, comprehensive knowledge and systematization of domestic and international literature and legislation. One can form his/her own opinion and make a concrete proposal based on these and the relevant literature. In this respect, the article *includes explanatory and reconnaissance parts* as well.

## **2. System of the Hungarian public administration continuing education**

The Hungarian nationwide network of providing the systematic further training is exemplary in many ways. On the one hand, it supplemented the previous training solutions, mainly with a legal and professional knowledge approach, with skill development, catching up with the use of modern, international educational methods. On the other hand, it is interesting to examine more deeply the public service continuing education institution network as a training model, which is a unique, innovative formation of its kind.

### **2.1 Legal base and structure**

For civil service the Legal Status Act stipulates a training obligation organized into four-year continuing education cycles of a specific duration. The continuing education system was effective in January 2014 after two years preparation from 2021 and the "test period". A uniform legal framework describes when and what trainings civil servants must attend, as well as who organizes, supervises and manages this process. The rules are laid down in 273/2012. (IX. 28.) Government decree on further training of civil servants.

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<sup>16</sup> 26/2017. (XI. 16.) BM-MvM joint ministerial decree on the uniform quality management regulations for the further education of state officials and the further education of the civil service

<sup>17</sup> Ágnes KREPELKA: Report on the results of the survey among the participants of the online workshops that took place in November-December 2020. UPS, 2021. pp. 1.



The full management and supervision of the institutional system is provided by the Minister of the Interior. It is operated by the University of Public Service covering the whole country. This institution performs the organizational, development and implementation tasks related to continuing education.

The sectoral management of continuing education is facilitated by the Public Administration Continuing Education College (hereinafter: KTK) as a professional advisory and review body. The KTK is a professional advisory and review body that assists the Minister of the Interior in his tasks related to continuing education, and is made up of representatives of experts invited by the Minister of the Interior.<sup>18</sup> Currently, the membership consists of representatives of ministries, regional administrative bodies, and professional associations. This body determines the civil service continuing education programs and their system of requirements. This is also where the programs are certified (any higher education institution or the organization itself can hold internal training courses, which are registered by UPS). A specific program can be added to the continuing education program list after a program qualification or simplified registration procedure that guarantees the program's adequacy.

The transparency of the system and the monitoring of the completion of continuing education are supported by a study point credit system. Officials must accumulate a predetermined number of credit points during training periods.

Regarding the further training process, the first step is the preparation of individual (officials) and organizational annual further training plans, which is the responsibility of the respective public administration bodies. After the development of individual and institutional level plans, UPS prepares the national annual continuing education plan by March 31 of each year. Then follows the implementation of the plans, on which the public administration bodies send a report to the UPS in the spring of the year following the current year. Based on this, the UPS will prepare a report on the implementation of the national plan by April 30, and then send it to the Minister of the Interior.

## **2.2 Educational methods**

The participants' motivation basically determines the willingness to learn, the learning experience and the final evaluation of the training. Training institutions typically take the issue of motivation seriously and use all available means to encourage learning. Most of the time, the positive return of further training in public administration is "just" the newly acquired knowledge and experience. The training courses are usually (1) mandatory (2) and do not even come with salary raise, (3) advancement benefits or obligations. With this combination, it is not easy to arouse and maintain the interest of the participants with traditional means. Since there is a lack of a real motivational base, the evaluation of the training depends mostly on the personality of the official who uses it. A more open and optimistic personality is happy to complete the programs. The jaded official, on the other hand, just wants to get over it. Both the instructor and the training institution have an elementary interest in encouraging the participants, which can mostly be achieved on the one hand with traditional means (e.g. reward, advantage) and on the other hand with the right attitude and teaching tools.

It was necessary to create a set of tools that can be applied cost-effectively in case of large number of participants, which needs relatively little validation and organization.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://kti.uni-nke.hu/kozszolgalati-tovabbkepzesek/kozigazgatasi-tovabbkepzesi-kollegium> (26.15.2023.)

<b>learning formats</b>	<b>in organized format</b>	<b>learning goals defined</b>	<b>length of learning</b>	<b>independent learning of participants</b>	<b>developing expert</b>	<b>learning autonomy</b>	<b>number of participants</b>
<i>training method</i>	yes/no	yes	short	in groups	yes (trainer)	middle level	groups of 10-15
<i>individual coaching (supervision)</i>	yes/no	yes	middle	both, with expert and individually	yes (coach)	high level	1 pers.
<i>team coaching (supervision)</i>	yes/no	yes / partially	short	in groups	yes (team-coach)	middle level	3-6 pers.
<i>action-learning</i>	yes/no	partially	short	in groups	yes (moderator)	high level	4-7 pers. /small group
<i>e-learning</i>	yes	yes	short	individually	no (but tutor possible)	middle level	unlimited

Figure 2.: Comparison of characteristics of teaching-methodological models (source: own editing)

The basic question is how and with what methods can the goals and functions of the further education of the target group be effectively implemented? The scientific field of andragogy provides adequate answers to this.

The new continuing education system no longer only aims to update legal, professional, or management knowledge, but has started in the direction of complex skill development. In terms of its methodological solutions, it went beyond the lecturer-centered form of training. The transition to a more attractive career path, to a skill-building, practice-oriented training system necessary to increase public administration efficiency and performance, has begun. In order to provide experiential learning, e-learning, blended learning and public administration-specific training methods have been used. Various forms of using the public service training courses developed by UPS have been developed in order to:

- time management should be efficient (the learning time frame can be reconciled with the time requirements and schedule of work and working time-private life);
- adapt to technological possibilities (introduction of modern information technology solutions, but at the same time maintaining a traditional form of presence that enables personal interaction);
- ability to fulfill learning load and assessment requirements (compliance with work);
- economies of scale (the continuous training of thousands of people would be unfeasible with only small-group education, mass use opportunities had to be created - via e-learning).

Taking into account the above mentioned aspects the main types of the programs are the following:

1. *Group of programs for developing basic leadership competencies:* The development must cover all levels of leadership. The longer-term but timesaving learning process and its continuous support must be implemented. Shorter, 1-2-day leadership competency training during a multi-month development process (e.g. to lay the foundations for mid level executives at least 12 attendance courses are necessary). The key leadership

competencies can be developed by the combination of attendance and e-learning. Development of basic leadership competences can be achieved in a modular system after identifying the desired competencies.

*2. E-learning programs:* The e-learning materials are available on the Probono interface. These are short, usually 4-8 hour learning time materials, available online, experiential learning materials. The main types of e-learning course materials are:

- a) New video presentation e-learning material (modern technical solutions: two-screen display, picture-in-picture function, etc.).
- b) Complex e-curriculum - The backbone of the curriculum is the display of stories (storytelling), which present the values and thinking patterns related to the topic, and facilitate the recall of what was previously learned. The stories can be comics, live-action films, animations - supplemented with text e-learning material, narrated video or video presentation.
- c) Educational film – An information carrier consisting of scenes arranged in an appropriate didactic structure, connected in content and appearance, a visual tool for teaching, the basic effect of which is based on visuals. It uses manipulation mechanisms that affect both reason and emotions.
- d) Simulation – A set of short, complex skill-building video scenes built on a permanent cast and set in a frame story, taking place online, as well as expert feedback assigned to the corresponding choice options. It models the solution of real decision situations in electronic space; by going through several simulation paths based on the individual shaping of the story, it enables the knowledge learned in theory and practiced in the training to be deepened to a skill level.

The e-learning materials - regardless of their methodological type - are supplemented by a knowledge base (specialist material, concept and law base) in the majority of training courses, and several courses end with a written online exam generated from a question bank.

The choice of training is served by a modern IT interface, ProBono ([probono.uni-nke.hu/nyitolap](http://probono.uni-nke.hu/nyitolap)), on which it is possible to prepare annual further training plans for the staff, search for programs, access all useful information related to the training, and e-learning videos. and assignment list) are also available online, so from January 1, 2015, the continuing education process is fully electronic. The educational technology framework of the civil service continuing education system is created by UPS's self-developed digital learning and teaching portal, the ProBono system. The result of the development of the last years is that the ProBono system is one of the largest distance education portals in Hungary, which, in addition to 80,000 officials, serves about 20,000 users with different roles (instructor, training organizer, training referent, etc.). In recent years, thanks to the system's wide range of services, the number of visitors to the ProBono system has averaged 31,753 per month. (Maximum visit value 52,739, minimum visit value 13,181 (January). Distributed over the 365 days of the year, it means an average of 1,058 visits, if only working days are taken into account, this value is 1,588.<sup>19</sup>

### **3. Detailed structure and recent development of the leadership development programs**

Based on the legislation of the University of Public Service is responsible for the operation of the continuing education system for government officials and civil servants. This includes supporting the further training of officials from planning to implementation, from curriculum developments to the development and operation of the

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<sup>19</sup> Report on the public service further trainings implemented in 2022, and on the execution of the annual further training plans, April 2023, pp. 49.

framework (ProBono) online system. In addition to professional training in public administration, the training system also places great emphasis on the development of personal and leadership competencies.

The UPS implement the trainings in several types of training: attendance training, e-learning training, blended learning training - combining the previous two forms - as well as further specialized training. In 2022, a total of 26 new civil service training programs were developed.<sup>20</sup>

In 2023 the university pay special attention to management training in the training portfolio. There are currently 30 training programs specifically for managers available for the development of leadership, 24 for the development of personal competencies, 18 for digital skills and 3 for improving personal efficiency. Thus, in addition to professional training, leaders working in public administration can choose from 75 special continuing education programs for which we pay. 7 competition simulations are also available to them, where they can try themselves in real leadership situations. It is unique among the further training systems in Hungary that only in the further training of officials is there an opportunity to test themselves in simulations in different situations.<sup>21</sup> The annual continuing education program publication - similar to the previous years - includes those continuing education courses that are specifically for managers, making it easier to choose between programs (Public Service Continuing Education Portfolio 2023.).<sup>22</sup>

### **3.1 Talent mentoring programs for leadership talent and leadership supplement**

Developing the Talent Mentor Program, it is focused on future leaders and leadership talents. The goal is to providing support both in the development of the leadership competencies of leadership talents and in the preparation of the mentors accompanying them. During a two-day training session for the talent mentors, the trainers specifically prepare them for their tasks in the program. In this context, they can learn about the relevant aspects of competence assessment, goal setting and task design, as well as gain experience in the practice of goal-oriented communication, questioning techniques, feedback and mentoring conversations. I. and II. for “On the road to leadership” programs were created specifically to support their competence development.

The aim of the programs is to develop the most necessary leadership competencies, regardless of the content of the individual talent development plans, - or, where appropriate, closely supporting them - covering all three of their components – knowledge, skills, attitude. In the development, therefore, knowledge transfer and knowledge expansion, practical skill development, and the formation of attitudes related to the use of competence are present in an appropriate proportion.

Both "On the road to leadership" programs consist of an e-learning and a training module. In the e-learning part of the program the most necessary foundations of management theories are presented: management schools, leadership styles and roles. From e-learning, mentees can learn about the DISC personality typology, which provides them with a useful tool for both self-knowledge and understanding the behaviour of their colleagues. In addition to these, the program also deal with the topic of motivation, including the motivational needs of DISC personalities. In the training that follows the e-learning, the participants can deepen their practical application of

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<sup>20</sup> Report on the public service further trainings implemented in 2022, and on the execution of the annual further training plans, April 2023, pp. 19.

<sup>21</sup> Presentation of the leadership training programs of the University of Public Service. From management talent to support for senior leaders. UPS, 2023. pp 3.

<sup>22</sup> Public Service Continuing Education Portfolio 2023. [https://kti.uni-nke.hu/document/vtkk-uni-nke-hu/Tov%C3%A1bbk%C3%A9pz%C3%A9si%20portf%C3%B3li%C3%B3\\_2023.pdf](https://kti.uni-nke.hu/document/vtkk-uni-nke-hu/Tov%C3%A1bbk%C3%A9pz%C3%A9si%20portf%C3%B3li%C3%B3_2023.pdf) pp. 11.

DISC, and by expanding their self-knowledge, they can come closer to discovering their personal goals, strengths and areas for improvement.

On the Road to Leadership II. by studying the program's e-learning, talented colleagues will acquire the knowledge necessary for managerial communication, assertiveness and team building. In the subsequent training, they have the opportunity to put these topics into practice, by trying different solutions and using constructive feedback.

The Talent Mentor and On the Road to Leadership I-II. the professional content of the programs has been developed by UPS experts with decades of experience in the subject, and the training sessions are held by the best members of our training team.<sup>23</sup>

### **3.2 Competency test**

Since 2019, on the Probono Learning-Competency measurement website, officials and managers have had the opportunity to self-assess and/or measure professional, leadership, and personal competencies in order to ascertain their level of proficiency in a given competency. In the competence measurement system, self-assessment is possible in 129 competences of 36 competence groups of 3 competence types, 11 competence areas. They can start measurements in 24 of the 129 competencies.

The self-assessment/measurement process is as follows: The official first performs a self-assessment in the selected competence. For self-assessment, participants can read the descriptions of the six levels of competence one after the other until you feel that the description fits. Then the participants get a self-assessment level. The system then asks if the participant want to measure with tasks whether they are really at the level they think they are. If the participant answer yes, the system will give they tasks related to the level that they have to solve. A level will be completed if the participant have been able to solve all the tasks of all the requirements associated with it. With the measurements, they can verify whether they are really at a level corresponding to their self-assessment in the given field of expertise by solving practical tasks adapted to the specific competence and its six levels, as well as the requirements of the levels. If not, the competence measurement system recommends training programs from the training portfolio to the student so that he can further develop his specific competence.<sup>24</sup>

Self-assessment is possible for managers in the area of leadership and personal competencies. For managers, the system is supplemented with a management simulation, which helps students solve certain management situations in a playful way.<sup>25</sup>

### **3.3 Development of management training programs**

The development of leadership training programs are based on the management competencies included in the competence system and their requirements. Leadership competencies are organized around two major themes: conscious leadership; leadership roles.

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<sup>23</sup> Presentation of the leadership training programs of the University of Public Service. From management talent to support for senior leaders. UPS, 2023. pp 4.

<sup>24</sup> It's experiential through learning. Civil service continuing education last decade (2012-2022) UPS. 2022. <https://kti.uni-nke.hu/document/vtkk-uni-nke-hu/Bros%C3%BAra-online.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> Presentation of the leadership training programs of the University of Public Service. From management talent to support for senior leaders. UPS, 2023. pp 5.

In conscious leadership, the programs support leadership decision-making, managerial self-direction and the management of people with training programs. In the case of management roles, we prepare materials for strategic, operational and project management activities.

Since 2019, the UPS have consciously and methodically developed the training programs for managers so that they receive as much support as possible for the performance of managerial activities. Most of the leadership training programs consist of an e-learning and a training module, so that the leaders can try out what they have learned in the e-learning programs in practice in the protected environment of the trainings, and thus gain their own experiences in the given topic.

The leadership training programs are about coaching-type leadership, stress management, time management, effective leadership, time management, change management, assertive leadership, feedback, motivation, incentives, performance management.

The trainings are held by UPS own excellent trainer staff with extensive administrative experience. In order to bring the management trainings as close as possible to the target group - keeping cost-effectiveness in mind - UPS will also organize trainings at the headquarters of the county government offices from 2022. In this way managers who cannot take advantage of the Budapest courses for other reasons will be able to attend these further training courses.

The simulations formulate leadership dilemmas and challenges, and the situation is shown with a short film scene. The student takes on the role of one of the characters and makes decisions about the given situation. The simulation present the leader with decision-making situations, and after they decision, we give them feedback on the consequences of the given decision for the organization and subordinates. In a simulation, there are 16 decision points, from which the student encounters four situations according to his chosen decision. The program also help students with readings and literature recommendations if they want to delve deeper into the subject. The simulation is available and can be viewed again at any time on the Probono Learning/Self-Development page.

Those interested can find management simulation in the following topics:

- performance management – definition of performance goals, performance evaluation, performance monitoring -;
- cooperation, trust building;
- team building, group norms;
- awareness of leadership role;
- incentive management, personalized incentives.

In the year 2023, the repertoire will be expanded with another simulation entitled - supporting the leadership decision. The UPS expand the number and topics of simulations every year, so that managers can find a handle on as many topics as possible for their daily activities.

The simulations teach the students in a playful way in a protected environment, they can be repeated at any time, so they can familiarize themselves with all the decision situations and possibilities. The leadership training programs support managers in the areas of time and performance management, motivation, incentive and change management, cooperation and conflict management, problem solving, decision making, communication, negotiation techniques, feedback, work organization, but they can also learn about the basics of coaching-type leadership, for example. In the development of their personal competences, managers can come across communication, presentation techniques and numerous training programs for the development of self-awareness.

In leadership training programs the UPS focuses primarily on the development of personal competencies - soft skills.<sup>26</sup>

### **3.4 Other support tools for the development of leaders**

The Probono Learning/Self-Development website is open to all officials, including leaders, where they can access all e-learning materials included in the training portfolio, even if they are not included in their training plan. The Groups, Channels menu can be found on the self-improvement page. Here, it have created a professional community specifically for managers, where, with the help of psychologists and organizational development moderators, UPS provide useful tips and ideas specifically for management as an activity. Everyone can join the leadership channel with a single click - by subscribing - after that, the subscriber can access all articles, recommendations, and podcasts appearing in the channel, ask questions, start a professional discussion, or comment on the articles. By definition, by subscribing, you will also be informed about the publication of new content. In the channel, interested parties can read articles and listen to podcasts about the timely issues of management, the latest trends and challenges of management.<sup>27</sup>

## **4. Results, conclusions**

We can summarize the main findings and the conclusions of the article followed by a brief summary on further development possibilities.

*Public service human resource management* is currently in a transient, contradictory state in Hungary. The objective is the implementation of the strategic human resource management, the interconnection and the integrated operation of human processes, which are the preconditions of efficient organizational operations. Strengthening HR activity and positioning it in a strategic role could provide a solid foundation for human resource development culture. HR and attitudinal development in public administration leaders are essential.

*Searching for novel teaching methods in adult education are more and more required.* Universities or other training centres working with a traditional education model face a double challenge. One of the challenges is the labor market demand of digitized and virtualized workplaces, the other is the multimedia, colourful, smelly, seductive world of the information and entertainment industry. With the rise of the digital age, it has become a fundamental question in adult education how to reconcile training goals with motivating participants and maintaining their interest? Conferences, textbooks, and studies deal with the issue of how to teach different generations in the second decade of the 21st century. The challenge is perceived by instructors in all adult education, since participants have moved radically and quickly along with technological development. The digital, accelerated world of the 21st century demands from us the ability of continuous renewal and adaptation to change, creativity. Individual quality can only develop in an appropriate medium, which is either supported or not by the adult education system. The classic model of adult education was out of date many decades ago. As a result of the rapid technical development affecting the world and the generational changes, the role of the instructor is also undergoing continuous change. In addition to the traditional educational role, a more nuanced, more humane and

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<sup>26</sup> Presentation of the leadership training programs of the University of Public Service. From management talent to support for senior leaders. UPS, 2023. pp 6.

<sup>27</sup> Presentation of the leadership training programs of the University of Public Service. From management talent to support for senior leaders. UPS, 2023. pp 7.

closer to life ideal of a teacher is developing.<sup>28</sup> Leadership training is a continuous innovation; the integration of novel training methods is a must. One has to find the ideal combination of classic and participant oriented techniques for adult training. The andragogical expertise of adult training instructors must be improved. New strategies for training motivation and efficiency measurement must be developed in the near future.

Regarding the *content of the leadership development programs*, should be a close connection between them with *modern leadership philosophies*. The main motives are giving the useful skillset (human and developmental focus, emotional intelligence, self-knowledge, self-reflection etc.) and also the proper mindset for supporting the work of those in leadership position. The planning of leadership trainings should be based on with regard to the lessons learned from modern management philosophies and trends and mixed with specialities of public service area. Leadership development methodology should be built on leadership philosophies, but every person and every situation is so unique that the "fine-tuning" of leadership work can only be based on self-knowledge-based individual needs.

On the base of the UPS, a complex, national, centrally managed system of administrative training has been developed since 2014, which is founded on a stable institutional and legal basis and focuses both on professional and competence development. Its training model, its methodological and technical tools are also novel, catching up with international educational methodological trends. In addition to classical knowledge transfer methods; participant centred and even more e-learning based techniques play an important role. There is a lack of development of core management competencies and the integration of individual development needs. Challenges are generated in terms of quality, participant motivation and efficiency measurement. It is an important task to convince the leaders and develop the mindset because public administration leadership trainings are not a stable part of the organizational culture yet. It is necessary to create awareness, the need for self-development and to build trust.

The main question at the beginning of the article was *how to increase the effectiveness of public administration leadership trainings?* Based on the literature and the empirical studies the comprehensive, analytical examination of the system of public administration training and leadership training was not in vain. It can also be stated that responding to the quantitative and qualitative challenges of the training system requires new and novel methods for which the dissertation has come up with adequate answers.

The public administration leadership training system novel from a methodological and technical point of view catching up with international teaching methodological trends. At the same time, due to the quantitative and qualitative challenges presented, it is necessary to improve the quality of the training system, to support participant centred teaching techniques and self-directed learning as the foundations of lifelong learning. Development of basic and special leadership skills should be accessible at all levels of leadership. The complex methodology enhancing directed self-development could promote awareness of management activity and the continuous development of individual leadership competencies by supporting training efficiency.

The objective of public administration leadership development is to provide a learning environment and a set of tools in which each leader can find the knowledge elements necessary for his/her individual development and is able to apply them consciously for the sake of self-cultivation. In this way, lifelong learning and the transformation of public administration organizations into learning organizations can be supported. Thus, leadership training can

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<sup>28</sup> KRAICINÉ SZOKOLY–CSOMA: Introduction to the theory and methodology of andragogy. Budapest, 2012., pp. 84.



become an integrated human resource development function that increases the competitiveness of public administration.

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