



MANAGEMENT TRAINING AND EDUCATION

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MANAGEMENT OF TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Work-related learning can be defined as the systematic instruction or practice of helping individuals learn how to do their jobs and how to do them well. The broader definition of training is: „All organized occasions designed to foster the development of individuals and/or organizations.“

Along with training, there are many opportunities for education. An employee who receives a detailed agenda for a meeting, observes a good chair in action, and receives accurate minutes a few days later learns far better how to conduct meetings than he or she would from a course on „effective meetings“ or from what is written on the subject.

Training is sometimes perceived as the magic answer to all problems in the civil sector. Unfortunately, short courses, no matter how good, cannot convey the large volume of information, ideas or skills to people. All they can do is present new ideas and offer basic knowledge and skills that the trainees can then develop.

Training cannot solve problems arising from poor management, inadequate policies or procedures, or lack of resources. But it can make people understand how to recognise and overcome these problems.

Learning cannot be fully effective unless it takes place in a learning organization where individuals and teams strive for continuous improvement, learning from each other and from their mistakes, and evaluating opportunities for change.

Training cannot be a substitute for management. A training session is not an appropriate venue for managerial decision-making, although it can give participants time to reflect on situations and suggest ideas that can then be implemented in appropriate decision-making structures (such as team or board meetings). Assuming that decisions need to be made in the context of 'preparation', it may be more appropriate to think of facilitation or consultation (see Resource Material 5).

Good training makes people more confident and more competent. Poor training or education, with unrealistic goals, can leave people confused or without hope of resolving issues.

This Resource Material discusses:

- the types and purposes of training and education opportunities;
- how to develop a training policy;
- training needs analysis;
- where to find information about training;
- how to develop internal training and education opportunities;
- training to achieve qualifications.

Types of training and education

Training can be conducted within the organisation (in-house), outside the organisation or jointly with other organisations. Trainers can be people from within the organisation or external.

The training includes:

- Introduction of new staff, volunteers and Umbrella Board members;
- on-the-job training;
- practical demonstrations;
- Opportunities to work with a mentor or work with an experienced staff member in the organization or in another appropriate;
- transfer to other jobs to learn new knowledge and skills specific to the position (see Resource Material 22);
- briefing or opportunities to discuss the work with experienced staff;

- training to master or improve specific skills;
- supervision (see Resource Material 10);
- seminars and discussion groups;
- practical training where participants learn from each other;
- lectures or recording of meetings; conferences or events at the place of residence, for educational purposes
- visits to or from other organisations;
- one-off training sessions, lasting from one hour to several days;
- linked or modular courses consisting of several sessions over a period of days, weeks or months;
- courses lasting a year or more;
- official reading program;
- distance learning opportunities.

People learn best from the combination of hearing it, seeing it, being able to read about it, and being able to practice it. Everyone has their own way of learning best suited to them, but good learning involves all approaches.

Functions of training

Implemented correctly, training can help employees or board members learn more about:

- their specific job titles or tasks so that they can do their current job and do it well, or take on new tasks as the business or organisation changes;
- the history and philosophy of the organization;
- the political, social and economic environment in which the organisation operates;
- legislation and other external requirements;
- organisational and management skills to self-manage, manage their work and the organisation (this includes, for example, chairing meetings, taking minutes, time management, goal setting, team working, managing staff);
- policy development and strategic planning so that they can develop, implement and manage changes to the organisation's policies or work plans;
- personal skills and understanding to enable them to act more effectively as individuals and therefore work more efficiently (this includes, for example, training in self-affirmation, stress management, communication and presentation skills);
- interpersonal and group skills and understanding so that they can more tangibly and effectively work for their community.

Training can also play a major role in the career development of individuals, enabling them to progress in the organisation and in their careers.

Staff Development Policy

Regardless of the size or type of organisation, there should be a clear and consistent staff development policy that includes supervision, appraisal, support and other learning opportunities. This will determine how much should be budgeted for training and other areas of staff development. The amount determined will, in turn, influence policy decisions on how to spend it.

Objectives and priorities

This section of the staff development policy deals with why the organisation provides training opportunities and what is expected as a result. This should include:

- learning objectives;
- how it relates to the overall objectives of the organisation;
- what are the principles of budgeting;
- how individual training needs are assessed;
- how group, team or organizational training needs are assessed;
- who sets the priorities and what criteria are applied;
- who determines how much time can be devoted to training and other learning opportunities;
- who determines who has to go through certain sessions or courses, or who has access to mentors or instructors;
- who determines how much can be spent on training;
- who sets the learning objectives and who evaluates whether the objectives have been met.

Access to training

This sector of training policy addresses:

- whether internal training and education opportunities are available to people who are not paid staff (e.g. long or short-term volunteers, board members, members of the organisation, service users or people external to the organisation);
- whether people other than paid staff should go on external courses or have access to other training opportunities.

Ensuring equal opportunities

Equal opportunities include:

- whether and how opportunities will be provided to paid staff, volunteers, board members or others who typically have fewer training opportunities, for example women, people from minority ethnic groups and people with disabilities;
- how training and other educational opportunities will help individuals and the organisation understand diversity and overcome marginalisation and discrimination.

Internal training and education

It is useful to include internal and external training separately in the staff and volunteer capacity building policy as different people may be involved in decision making. Policy issues include:

- who decides what training and education opportunities are offered in the organisation;
- who sets the goals;
- in different trainings, who determines whether to use an internal trainer or someone from outside who discusses and maintains contact with the trainer and who determines who should attend;
- what happens if all staff expect to attend a training event (does the organisation stop work, are substitutes provided);
- who determines what other training opportunities are provided, for whom and by whom, and if appropriate, who determines what happens to people's work while they are away;
- who determines whether or how job performance or behavior is expected to change as a result of the training or other educational opportunity and who evaluates whether they change.

External training and education

The staff development policy should include information on the following issues:

- who collects and reviews information about trainings, conferences, and other educational opportunities and how the information is provided to paid staff, volunteers, the board, users, and members;
- who decides whether an employee can participate;
- whether there is a limit on the number of days or the amount of money each employee can receive for training and educational opportunities each year;
- Who arranges for the replacement while the employee is absent;
- who reviews applications and other documentation;
- who pays for transport, food, accommodation and (if necessary) childcare;
- how external courses, conferences and other events should be evaluated;
- who determines whether and how job performance or behavior should change and who evaluates whether those changes occur;
- how the learning is shared with the team or the organisation; whether the materials, e.g. books, belong to the employee or the organisation.
- Long or long-term training

Some organisations allow their employees to attend courses over several months or longer. These may be part-day or evening courses for which leave (paid or unpaid) is provided, or full-day courses using unpaid leave or on non-working days. The policy should include:

- in what circumstances employees may take leave to attend a long term course;
- whether the course should be directly related to the job;
- whether leave should be paid or unpaid;
- whether the organization will pay for the fees and/or for the course materials;
- whether the organisation pays for a course or allows paid leave, whether the employee is obliged to stay working for the organisation for a certain period of time and what happens if she or he does not meet this deadline;
- whether educational leave, paid or unpaid, will be allowed for employees who attend courses in their spare time.

Training needs analysis

A training needs analysis is a systematic attempt to discover what individuals, teams and the organisation as a whole need or want to learn.

Most needs are identified through good supervision and screening procedures (Resource Material 10). Others are elicited through different types of questionnaires, for example, where staff are asked to list training they think is important for themselves or the organisation and rate it from 0 (not interested) and 1 (interested but not essential) to 5 (very essential).

The training needs analysis should include:

- skills (knowing how to do something) to help the employee do their job and do it better;
- knowledge (knowledge about something) to help the employee do his job and do it better;
- personal development courses (e.g. on stress management or self-affirmation);
- self-management courses (e.g. time management, basic administration);
- management training;
- training to develop understanding towards the needs of specific groups;
- topics that the team needs to know more about;
- topics that the organization as a whole needs to know more about;
- education that can contribute to future development as a team or organisation;
- education that can contribute to an employee's career development.

It is important not to create high expectations in people. People need to know that decisions will be made on priorities and that there are limits to what can be offered.

Information about trainings and conferences

Information on courses and conferences specifically for the civil sector can be found on the NGO Information Portal in Bulgaria (<https://www.ngobg.info/>). Information on courses and conferences should clearly state the objectives, content and intended participants. There is usually little point in attending a course if these details are not given; it may be a sign that the training or conference organiser and the speakers or instructors have not made it clear who the event is for and what can realistically be achieved.

The information should also indicate who the teachers or lecturers are and what experience they have. Particularly for events organised by commercial institutions, it should be checked that the content is appropriate for civil society organisations and that the trainers or presenters are well versed in the civil society sector.

Opportunities for organizational learning

Organizational training ensures that all attendees have equal access to information and equal experience, the session to be conducted according to the specific needs of the organization or team. If several employees need the same or very similar training, it is usually cheaper to organize training in-house than to send them to external courses.

When planning the training, it is important to clarify why it is needed, what employees are expected to understand or do as a result, who should be involved and the time, facilities and resources available.

Individual learning opportunities such as exchanges, supervision, counselling/coaching, exchanges with colleagues or transfers to other organisations, group learning opportunities such as peer groups or action learning groups can be tailored to the needs of individuals and groups. It is very important to be clear about the overall objectives and the time and resources available.

Partial information on trainers (civic organizations, agencies, and/or freelance educators) can be obtained from the organizations listed above and the directories at the end of Resource 5.

When contacting trainers or facilitators, explain what the organisation does, what kind of training or preparation is needed and why, who it is for, how long it is scheduled and when it should take place. Then explore:

- are interested in this work;
- What other similar work have done for whom;
- their approach to this type of work;
- how they will ensure equal opportunities and respect for diversity in their work;
- what the fees are, whether there is an extra charge for preliminary meetings, how the costs are calculated and whether VAT is charged.

Unless it is a regularly scheduled course, the instructor will usually arrange a meeting to discuss the course content and objectives in more detail and to agree on fees, start and end dates, procedures for reproduction of materials, equipment needed, special accommodations for participants with special needs, and evaluation procedures. In a few days, the instructor should provide a draft course syllabus.

People invited to be mentors, consultants, facilitators or similar roles should also know the objectives and expected duration of these relationships.

Some tutors provide a formal contract detailing fees, dates and times, and other basic information. If the tutor does not do this, the training and preparation organiser must confirm these details in writing.

Vocational education and training

Increasingly, formal education and other types of education are being linked to vocational education and training (VET). Unlike traditional education, VET is not based on what people know, but on what they can do as part of their job. People can obtain a degree qualification by demonstrating competence in certain work activities.

Professional qualifications are nationally recognised and are the same for the private, public and civil sectors. They are intended to be equivalent to qualifications in other EU countries.

They have four degrees:

Grade 1: Mainly everyday and familiar activities, or building a broad base.

Grade 2: Broader and more labour-intensive activities requiring greater personal responsibility.

Grade 3: More complex and unusual activities requiring, in some cases, the competence of a supervisor.

Grade 4: Complex, technical and professional activities involving supervision or management.

You can find out more about the degrees here.

Vocational qualifications are based on competencies and national occupational standards for different sectors or occupations, which are monitored by the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training (NAVET, <https://www.navet.government.bg/bg/>).

Vocational qualifications are issued by various Vocational Education Centres (VECs), which are licensed by the NAVET following the Vocational Education and Training Act (VET Act). A register of VET centres can be found here.

Other qualifications

Some universities have developed or are developing preparatory, degree and postgraduate level courses specifically for civil servants and people who want to work in the civil sector.

Information on such courses can be provided by colleges and universities, local Education and Skills Councils and university course guides.

Adherence to reality

Opportunities for training and education do not exist in isolation. They should be part of an all-round staff/volunteer development policy that includes introduction (see Resource Material 9) and regular supervision, support and formal appraisals (Resource Material 10).

Training and education opportunities cannot work miracles. They can hardly help employees or board members today perform brilliantly duties they could not do the day before, or change deeply held positions or beliefs, or turn people who hate management into capable leaders. However, they provide a starting position.

Training is not the same as facilitation or consultation, which focus on specific situations or problems in the organization and look for ways to cope. Resource material 5 looks at these in detail.

List of Questions for Managing Staff Development

Does the organization have a budget for training and other educational opportunities?

Is there a clear policy setting out how decisions are to be made about the training and other educational opportunities available, for whom they are provided, what they are expected to achieve and how their impact is evaluated?

Are training and education opportunities accepted as part of a holistic approach to training that includes introduction, on-the-job training, a variety of training opportunities, observation and appraisal?

Are there clear procedures for checking that individual learning is shared with the rest of the team or organisation?

Is training tracked to assess its impact on the way the team and/or organization performs its work?