

Selected national approaches for achieving global standards in public administration . Education and training

Polya KATSAMUNSKA

PhD, Professor at University of National and World Economy, Sofia, Bulgaria

E-mail address: polya_katsamunska@yahoo.com

Abstract

The new reality of modern world places greater pressure on governments to put in place effective programs for education and training of public administrators. Indeed, this is the way to achieve greater excellence in public administration education and training, which has a main purpose to provide public administrators with the competencies and capacities to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life. This context outlines the focus of the article to examine and provide interesting insights into various national approaches for the delivery of public administration education and training from selected countries in the Americas and Europe. These countries have been chosen basically for two reasons; first, they represent traditional practice in their regions and second, they have excellent programs in public administration education and training for which they have had no major difficulties in seeking to reach the international standards of excellence in public administration education and training.

Keywords: public administration programs, standards of excellence, national approaches for public administration education and training.

1. Introduction

The modern world requires more effective education and training of public administrators, who will have to be sensitive to new approaches to governance and have ability to meet new and more complex challenges and the reason is that better governance is fundamentally related to more effective preparation of public administrators. This means that public administrators should be of the highest level and skill and preparation in order to perform highly. The institutions that educate and train these people play a crucial role in this process and they must always strive for excellence.

Recognizing the critical problems facing the increasingly complex public sector since the beginning of the new century the most prominent international organizations in the field have started to pursue many strategies as an effort to enhance the quality of the education and training provided by their member institutions. An example of such a strategy is the development of the Standards of excellence for public administration education and training by UN/IASIA Task Force in 2008 [1], which represents a major step forward. It is also an important development in global public service and in the support of institutions that seek to improve it. At the same time it is hardly possible to expect that the proposed set of Standards of excellence, as well as the criteria by which to assess them, may be uniformly applicable or equally relevant in all situations. But it should be highlighted that there is a firm belief and a dominant understanding that most of them are relevant in most situations and can be useful instruments both for evaluating excellence in public administration education and training and for facilitating public sector performance through providing the highest quality of public servants.

Any research of public administration and training around the world makes it clear that there is no single model of how to organize and provide activities for public administration education and training. The point that becomes evident in any review is that there are many different variations upon several commonly used approaches. In each country many factors in different ways play important roles in producing a national approach to public administration education and training. For this reason it is useful to look at and examine the national approaches of several key countries throughout the world. The selected countries in this paper serve to represent traditional practice in their regions of the world and are useful examples of different approaches to the provision of public administration education and training services.

Such formulation of the topic clearly indicates the following basic tasks of the paper: first, to outline the role of public education and training around the world and to explain the development of international standards for public administration education and training; second, to examine national approaches to organizing public administration education and training of different countries; and finally, to provide useful examples for the delivery of excellent programs in public administration education and training from the countries of the Americas and Europe.

A systemic approach has been adopted and different research methods and instruments are used in the paper: literature review, comparative analysis, documents and a bank of longitudinal data on the strategic issues of public administration education and training, personal observations and discussion panels.

2. Development of international standards for public administration education and training

The issue of achieving excellence in public administration and training has been of crucial importance for all involved in the preparing of public administrators, since public administration emerged as an academic discipline more than a century ago. In the 21st century this issue is being addressed very often by individual scholars, institutions and international associations in the field. Public administrators face more complex tasks in today's world and the key demands to deal with the most pressing crises and the growing challenges require not only the most skilled of public administrators, but also creative leadership on the part of both government officials and civil servants. It is G. Bertuci, who argues that it is not sufficient to have in place a democratic system, because the government institutions need to be based on clear and widely accepted rules; to have committed leaders and qualified people to undertake appropriate reforms in the economic and social spheres; to be able to mobilize resources and manage expenditure; and to operate in the most cost-effective way possible by making use of new information technologies [2]. Given this extremely complex reality, it is widely recognized that education and training is an important precondition for effective public administration and governance, the impact of which is a long-term rather than immediate.

All researches and reviews based on analyses of national approaches to public administration education and training clearly demonstrate the significant relationship that exists between public administration education and the quality of governance. In general

terms, in those countries where public administration education and training is the most advanced, the quality of governance is the most highly developed. Nevertheless, it is very clear that there is no country in any region of the world which can be fully satisfied with the quality of its governance. Another point to be taken into consideration, when the role of public education and training around the world is examined, is the diversity of administrative cultures and national approaches. Among the basic guidelines suggested by scholars and researchers in the field is the one that requires each country to be open-minded and to look at all the potential solutions to its own problems by developing a direction for its public service based on its own country's history, environment and position in a global world in a realistic manner. However, the realities and situation in many countries, including the ones that are in process of transition to democratic governance or to a market economy, or both, illustrate that there is a great need to improve the quality of education and training for governmental officials and public administrators. In response to this crucial need, in July of 2005, the Division of Public Administration and Development Management (DPADM), Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) of the United Nations (UN), in partnership with the International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration (IASIA), initiated the Task Force on Standards of Excellence for Public Administration and Training. The goal of the Task Force was to establish standards that could help guide the development of education and training institutions and consequently could have a significant impact on the development of effective leadership and transparent governance throughout the world.

The Standards of Excellence were created by experts drawn from throughout the world and were designed to be relevant on a worldwide base as a means to enhance the capacity of public administration schools and institutes. The Task Force completed its deliberations and issued a report in the Spring of 2008, which was accepted by UN/DPADM and by IASIA at its annual conference in July of 2008 in Kampala, Uganda. The report included the Standards themselves, proposed criteria by which one might assess an institution's progress towards achieving excellence, and a checklist that individual institutions could utilize in working with these Standards. In its introduction to the Standards, the Task Force noted that it believes that the criteria for evaluating excellence in public administration education and training should facilitate public sector performance through providing the highest quality of public servants. The Task Force also noted its belief that the purpose of public administration education and training is to provide public administrators with the competencies and capacities to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life, especially for the most economically, socially and politically disadvantaged members of society. As established by the Task Force, Standards of Excellence for Public Administration and Training focus upon the following eight themes:

- Public Service Commitment;
- Advocacy of Public Interest Values;
- Combining Scholarship, Practice and Community Service;
- Faculty is Central;
- Inclusiveness is at the Heart of the Program;
- A Curriculum that is Purposeful and Responsive;
- Adequate Resources are Crucial;

- Balancing Collaboration and Competition.

Subsequent to the release of the Task Force Report, the UN/DPADM undertook a variety of initiatives to both publicize and encourage the utilization of the Standards throughout the world. This included organizing workshops on the Standards and their use in Kampala, Uganda; Rome, Italy; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Warsaw, Poland; etc. UN/DPADM also initiated further efforts to promote the Standards through the United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN) and publicized the Standards of Excellence at a number of UN-sponsored and organized conferences in many parts of the world.

In addition, other individual institutions found themselves drawn to the Standards of Excellence as a vehicle to carry out their own self-assessment activities. The School of Public Administration of the University of Pretoria, South Africa both used the Standards for its own self-assessment and encouraged their use throughout that country. The National Institute of Public Administration of Finland drew upon the Standards of Excellence in its efforts to help the governments of Namibia and Tanzania to establish national training organizations in their countries. The Chinese Academy of Governance utilized the Standards of Excellence as themes for conferences convened involving the leadership of public administration education and training institutions from throughout China and Asia more generally. This, in turn led, to the translation of the final report of the UN/IASIA Task Force into a variety of languages including Arabic, Chinese, French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Turkish and its publication on the UN website [3].

The recent publications on this topic reveal that despite the diversity of approaches to providing public administration education and training activities, the goals, policies and procedures reflected in the UN/IASIA Standards of Excellence for Public Administration and Training are integrated and captured in the programs of schools and institutes of public administration throughout the world.

3. Delivery of public administration education and training in selected countries in the America and Europe

Examining the national approaches to organizing public administration education and training of different countries it is made quite clear that there are many different ways by which countries provide such activities. Indeed, there is no single dominant model of organizing the delivery of public administration education and training activities, because in some countries there are specialized national institutes of public administration, in others there are multiple types of organizations that provide public administration education and training services. In fact, the more diverse the country, the more diverse the approaches to providing public administration education and training seem to be. In the research done by N. Kolisnichenko, it has been suggested that at the national level there is no single typical system for the provision of public administration education and training and that no system can be recognized as a model one. In her opinion, there are many different variations upon several commonly used approaches. In addition, there are also many factors such as national size, wealth, tradition and cultural diversity that play significant roles in producing variation in national approaches to public administration education and training [4].

To understand national approaches to public administration education and training it is important to underline that different countries throughout the world have different ways to prepare both current and future public administrators. In many countries the typical public administration education and training represents professional education and training at general universities or designated institutes and colleges prior to or following one's employment in public administration. In most cases universities offer academic degree programs (Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degrees) in public administration. There are countries, where non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, employee workplaces or even private sector organizations provide training after joining public administration; and other countries, where educational centers or specialized institutes are operated by ministries to provide training for the employed in public administration. In many countries the process of public administration education and training involves higher educational institutions and non-governmental organizations together with government training institutions. In general, around the world there are significant differences between national organizational arrangements for public administration education and training and they are shaped by several factors and key dimensions. Consequently, it is hardly possible to identify a most prevalent or dominant national pattern and no system can be recognized as a model one.

In order to get a better understanding of the considerable variety that exists in education and training for public administration, it is useful to examine some key countries throughout the world, which represent traditional practice in their regions and are useful examples of the various national approaches and excellent programs in public administration education and training.

The countries of South and North America differ greatly in their education and training activities in the field of public administration, because they are different in size, wealth and level of economic development. Any review on this topic clearly demonstrates that the larger of size and more wealthy countries like Brazil, Argentina, Mexico and the United States have both the more diverse and more extensive activities in the field, while public administration education and training is rudimentary in the poorer countries. In addition to this reality, in small countries public administration is virtually non-existent in the local universities and training activities are very limited.

A large country like Brazil is a typical example in terms of its diversity. It has a national institute of public administration which offers training in public administration, although a large part of the public administration education and training is carried out through the university sector and state governments, which have established their own public administration training institutes to offer both degree programs and training. So, a key dimension of the Brazilian situation is that both public and private higher education institutions play important roles. An important point to add is that training activities are carried out at all three levels of government – national, state and local – through several major agencies, which operate their own training institutes and contract out to universities and non-governmental organizations for training programs.

The most important public administration education and training institution in Brazil is the [Fundação Getulio Vargas \(FGV\)](#) [5], which is a private, free-standing, not-for-profit institution, founded in 1944 with an initial goal to prepare undergraduate students, who will become leaders in the fields of public administration and private business in Latin America. Since then it has expanded its activities further to encompass graduate and undergraduate programs in economics and law. Few years ago, FGV was ranked by the New York Times among the top 100 universities in the world, as selected by chief executives and chairmen from leading companies in 10 countries [6]. Domestically, FGV is the country's leading think-tank for providing key information to government officials and organizations countrywide and abroad.

FGV is made up of eight schools, five of which are located in the city of Rio de Janeiro, and three in the city of São Paulo. One of the five schools in Rio de Janeiro is EBAPE – Escola Brasileira de Administração Pública e de Empresas (Business and Public Administration), while in the city of São Paulo it is the school of EAESP (Business and Public Administration). The Brazilian School of Public Administration (EBAP) was founded in 1952, but since 2000 has been called The Brazilian School of Public and Business Administration (EBAPE). The School has been a pioneer in the field of Administration in Latin America, as it was the first institution to offer higher education in Public Administration in Brazil. Indeed, graduate studies in public administration in Brazil only began in 1967 with EBAPE's Master's in Public Administration [7]. This program aims to train and develop highly qualified professionals, and is revered for its academic rigor, curricular innovation, critical approach and practical relevance. As the first graduate program in public administration promoted by the school, it has been dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, and the dissemination of knowledge in the field. At the current stage the organization of the program is driven by the eight Standards of Excellence, elaborated by the CIAPA Task Force, for which in 2014 it was accredited by the Commission on the International Accreditation of Public Administration Programs (CIAPA) of the International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration (IASIA).

Another country of the Americas, which represents a highly decentralized and complex system in terms of public administration education and training, is the United States. The basic education in the United States of America is offered by the nation's colleges and universities which offer a wide range of programs for education in public administration including all academic degrees. Today there are about one hundred, sixty universities in the US that offer a Bachelor's program in public administration and approximately 300 institutions that offer the Master's degree in Public Administration and about 100 that offer the PhD degree in Public administration. As for training activities, they are provided by a much more diverse array of institutions, most of which are supported by the state and local governments in the United States. This is the case with in-service training programs, which are provided by diverse array of institutions - public and private colleges and universities, executive training institutes, in-service training units, public and non-profit agencies and private companies at all level of government – national, state, county, municipal and special district.

In contrast to many European countries, in the US the degree programs, especially the majority of Master's degree programs in public administration, have been accredited by the US National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration [8] (NASPAA). The organization was founded in 1970 for promoting excellence in education and teaching for public service by developing appropriate standards for educational programs through its Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation and engaging in activities which raise the standards in public administration education and training. Thus, through its Commission NASPAA acts as a nodal agency for the accreditation of public administration professional Master's degree programs in public affairs, policy and administration in the United States.

The first academic institution in the United States to offer professional education in public administration is the Maxwell School of Syracuse University, New York. Beginning in 1924, the Maxwell School offers a multi and interdisciplinary approach to social science through a combination of theory, policy and practice. For R. Emas, Master in Public Administration program of this school is well known for its "three-pronged interdisciplinary curriculum which works to ensure that all graduates understand the political, economic, and social context of public administration; achieve substantial competency in organizational design and analysis as well as in management and administrative techniques; and gain experience in applying qualitative and quantitative analysis of public policy issues" [9].

Among the other best degree programs in public administration are the ones offered by the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, Boston, Mass., the Sol Price School of Public Policy at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California, and the School of International and Public Affairs at Florida International University, Miami, Florida. Based on the evaluation of the U.S. News & World Report annual survey of "America's Best Colleges" it is the FIU's graduate program in public administration, designed to prepare students for public service at local, state and national levels and in a variety of policy fields, that is ranked among the top 10 percent in the country [9].

As for the situation in Europe, throughout much of the continent the basic public administration education occurs at public or private universities. It is suggested by several sources that in the European context there are three categories of programs in public administration representing three different European models – English, French and German. This identification of public administration programs can be clearly recognized in the development of own systems of civil servants and training in most of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The reason is that countries from CEE took one of the West European models as their base system and adapted it to their historic national factors. Using the best examples from West Europe served to make the new national systems of CEE civil servants education and training resemble those of the West and it could be explained with the underlying desire of CEE to integrate to EU and to implement the administrative reforms. Although the reforms of higher educational system in CEE countries started shortly after the beginning of the transition in 1989, the reality now reveals situation, which is far from meeting some of the most important qualities that are highlighted in the "Standards of Excellence of Public Administration and Training",

prepared by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration.

As suggested by T. Verheijen and J. Nemeč in West European countries one can clearly differentiate the following three types of public administration programs: the first one is based upon social science and is very characteristic for Northern Europe; the second one is based mainly upon the management sciences, while the third type is heavily connected with legal subjects [10]. In this part of Europe, public administration education and training has been provided basically through existing universities or new specialized educational institutions. In addition, to encourage in-service training in many European countries there were established the nation's national schools, institutes or colleges of public administration. These institutions and organizations can be independent, non-profit, public legal entities funded by multiple sources or they can exist as a part of the governmental structure as it is the case with the majority of the EU countries. Examples of such organizations can be found in Austria, Belgium, Germany, the United Kingdom, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, etc. A similar type of institutes also exists in Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and Ireland.

In France, the most prominent institution for providing both pre-service and in-service education for civil servants is the Ecole Nationale d'Administration (ENA). It is not an educational institution within the French university system, but it plays a very important role in public administration education and training. The graduates of ENA find employment in central administration at very high positions and most of them go into politics. For over half a century the ENA alone has produced over 5,000 graduates. In total the ENA has provided the Fifth Republic with two of its five Presidents and six of its 14 Prime Ministers and this very strong influence of the French institution for long explains why the graduates of the ENA were once described as 'princes who govern us' implying that they constituted a network, something like a spider's web stretched over the map of France, comprised of people who had been formed by the School and imbued with a particular and shared view of government and the role of the State [11]. It should also be noted that today there are many business schools and business programs at universities but private employers still prefer to recruit for the most senior private sector appointments members of the French great corps, because the private sector values highly the quality of their education and intellectual ability. Recently the syllabus at the ENA has been modified in order to cover contemporary management techniques as information systems and performance evaluation.

Looking at organizations that provided training for regional and local self-government employee's education in France, there are two very important institutions such as the Centre National de la Fonction Publique Territoriale [12] (CNFPT) and its in-house Institut National d'Etudes Territoriales [13] (INET). As a national public institution CNFPT was created by the law of 1987 to help local civil servants to improve their skills via training. At this stage, INET is set up in Strasbourg and manages the program for initial training of directors in local government administrations. The training program is based on two main lines. First, to ensure that the trainee directors acquire the skills they need to direct teams and, second, to contribute to the management of local public actions. The program includes

three stages - integration, professionalization and specialization - alternating training periods with internships in local government administrations. This program of INET is a benchmark for training government administration executives, using an interprofessional approach. This approach develops hands-on skills to ensure that civil servants with responsibilities not only become experts in local administrations, but also executives able to take into consideration all factors in their political, economic, social and environmental context in view of local, sustainable and participation-based development. Without question, the key dimensions of the training program, managed by INET meet the global standards of excellence in public administration, for which in 2017 it was accredited by the International Commission on Accreditation of Public Administration Education and Training (ICAPA).

4. Conclusion

The issue of public administration education and training is one that is becoming even more critical to the future of good governance, because it is out of doubt that the future of governance depends on the ability to develop knowledgeable, skillful, active and effective public administrators. It has become a necessity for public servants to learn leadership skills, strategic planning skills, effective decision making capacities, professionalism and integrate technology towards enhancing the effectiveness of delivering goods and services to their clientele. Consequently, it is a great challenge for all those who are involved in the delivery of public administration education and training to show and demonstrate their commitment to excellence in public administration education and training. Without question, international standards in public administration offer value, as well as create both challenges and risks in achieving them. In any case, the international standards of excellence for public administration education and training, achieved by the UN/IASIA Task Force is an extraordinary first step and an important tool for enhancing the quality of education and training in the era of globalization and technologization.

Indeed, it is very hard to draw any specific conclusions regarding commonly used national approaches, because the overview of the delivery of public administration education and training in the selected countries provided in this paper illustrates that there is a great diversity among both countries and individual institutions within countries. It seems to be very clear that the national approaches and arrangements for the provision of public administration education and training services vary greatly and depend upon different factors such as country's size and the economic level of development, the degrees of centralization and decentralization, the nature of the government service, the nature of public administration and training system.

In summary, it is hardly possible to identify a single dominant pattern for the delivery of public administration education and training activities. In some cases there are national schools or institutes that play an important role in encouraging the development of high quality of public administration education and training, in other cases there is a network of organizations. Or there are countries where no principle national institute or school exists, but there are various institutions offering equally good quality of public administration education and training. One final point to add is that in some countries institutions providing public administration education and training activities are heavily dependent and

controlled by government, while certainly there are countries where these institutions rely heavily upon non-governmental or private sector organizations.

References

- [1]Task Force on Standards of Excellence for Public Administration Education and Training (2008), Final Report – United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/ International Institute of Associations and Schools of Administration
- [2]Bertuci, B. (2006), Strengthening Public Sector Capacity for Achieving the Millennium Development Goals, In: Excellence and Leadership in the Public Sector: The Role of Education and Training, (eds.), Rosenbaum, A. and J. Kauzya, United Nations & IASIA, Slovakia: NISPAcee.
- [3]Rosenbaum, A., M. Brintnall and P. Katsamunská (2018), Governmental effectiveness and political culture: insights from the work of Todor Tanev", In: - Where are we going to? Jubilee collection in honor of prof. Todor Tanev, (eds.), El. Kalfova & S. Petrov, published by Sofia University publishing complex "St. Kliment Ohridski"- Sofia.
- [4]Kolishnichenko, N. (2015), Multiple Systems, Multiple Approaches: National Organizational Arrangements for the Delivery of Public Administration Education and Training, In: Quest of Excellence: Approaches to Enhancing the Quality of Public Administration and Training, 2015, (ed.) A. Rosenbaum, United Nations, Division for Public Administration and Development Management, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York.
- [5]<https://portal.fgv.br>
- [6]<http://www.nytimes.com/imagepages/2011/10/20/education/20iht-SReducEmploy20-graphic.html?ref=education>
- [7]<http://ebape.fgv.br/programas/map/apresentacao>
- [8]<http://www.naspaa.org/>
- [9]Emas, R. (2015), Public Administration Education and Training Around the World: Selected Institutional Case Studies, In: - Quest of Excellence: Approaches to Enhancing the Quality of Public Administration and Training, 2015, (ed.), A. Rosenbaum, United Nations, Division for Public Administration and Development Management, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, New York.
- [10]Verheijen, T., J. Nemeč, (eds.) (2000), Building Higher Education Programs in Public Administration in CEE Countries, published by NISPAcee.
- [11]Chandler, J.A., (ed.) (2000), Comparative Public Administration, Routledge.
- [12]Centre National de la Fonction Publique Territoriale (CNFPT) at <http://www.cnfpt.fr/>
- [13]Institut National des Études Territoriales (INET), In Centre National de la Fonction Publique Territoriale (CNFPT), France at www.inet.cnfpt.fr