

# **Designing Human Settlements Training in European Countries**

## **Volume 1: Case Study**

**HS/246/95E  
ISBN 92-1-131269-8**

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## FOREWORD

Owing to the rapid pace of urban growth in the developing countries and the scarcity of resources, the need for competent managers rises dramatically each year. For this reason, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) has, for more than a decade, been offering training programmes for urban managers aimed at closing the skills gap and promoting new approaches, methods and techniques. The need for training, however, far exceeds UNCHS (Habitat)'s capabilities. Further, many local training institutions are not used to and, in some cases, are reluctant to design training programmes that respond adequately to the emerging requirements of human settlements managers. The problem is compounded by a general absence of information about designing training programmes that promote learning - programmes that, therefore, have high potential for bringing about the needed changes in work performance.

This publication, in two volumes, is intended to close the training information gap. *Designing Human Settlements Training in European Countries* was written by Fred Fisher and David W. Tees of the International Development Institute for Organization and Management (IDIOM), in collaboration with UNCHS (Habitat) Training Section staff and with Professor Laszlo Lacko, Ms. Nora Horcher and Ms. Agnes Bohonyey who assisted in preparation of the European version of the manual. The training materials were produced within the Settlements Management Training Programme Capacity Building Project funded by the Government of the Netherlands and were field-tested in the UNCHS (Habitat) training courses in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America.

This manual is a contribution to human-resource development and institutional capacity-building needed to facilitate best practices in settlements management and development, one of the key objectives of the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) held in Istanbul in 1996.

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## INTRODUCTION

This case study and the accompanying tool kit are based on many assumptions about training (or what we like to call facilitated learning) and related matters such as management and organization development. While most of these assumptions will become clear, as you and others use the case study and "tools, we want to comment on a few we believe are fundamental to the design of effective training interventions.

First, experiential learning designs (those that provide an opportunity to learn from and through experiences) are almost always effective, and they tend to be effective regardless of the cultural context in which they are applied. People the world over learn, in one way or another, through experience. Unfortunately, this piece of conventional wisdom seems to escape the attention of many trainers when they sit down to design a training event.

Secondly, training can be a very effective management tool. While most training is not designed to be carried out in-house, or with work teams, it is a practice to be encouraged. This case study is written around the needs for, and opportunities related to, in-house training. It will rigorously pursue the opportunities to learn on the job. In so doing, it will make the potential of training as a management strategy increasingly clear.

Thirdly, there are a lot of myths, about what works and doesn't, when it comes to designing and conducting training. These myths can get in the way of our efforts to design more effective learning experiences. The best way to demystify these myths is to expose them to experience.

Finally, when designing training programmes, it is important to trust your instincts and experience - and, of course, to be willing to take a few risks. To paraphrase C.S. Lewis, *"A trainer with good instincts and experience is never at the mercy of a few participants with only theory at their command"*.

### **What -- another training manual?**

Good question, and it deserves an answer before we go any further. First of all, there's a lot of dull, mediocre, and ineffective training being conducted around the world, and we might add, at a horrendous expenditure of human and financial resources. We must all strive to achieve more with the resources we have available. For trainers, this means being more diligent when we design learning programmes for our clients. All too often, the blame for mediocre, dull and unsuccessful training can be attributed to bad design.

We suspect nobody starts out to produce a bad training design. They, most likely, result from a lack of awareness, knowledge and skills on how to design more dynamic, client-centered, results-driven learning experiences. This case study and the companion tool kit are all about increasing your awareness about, and knowledge and skills in creating contemporary training designs.

The design of training events doesn't happen in a vacuum. It's simply one step in a long train of events that determine how successful your training interventions will be. For example, if you don't have well defined training objectives, it's nearly impossible to design a well-targeted training programme. *"If you don't know where you are going, a good design probably won't get you there."*

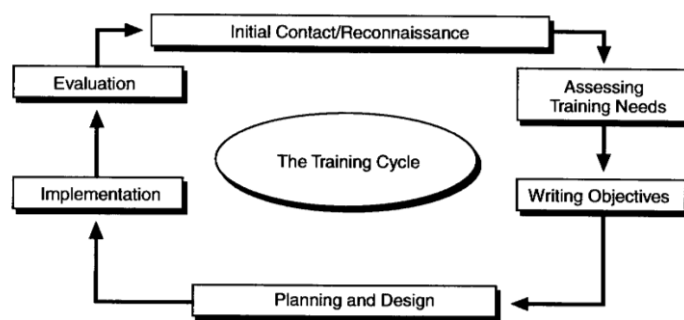
Another factor that affects training designs and training objectives is the absence of any training needs assessment data. If you don't have reliable information on training needs, it's almost impossible to know what kind of objectives to write. And without needs assessment information, you can't design training interventions that will achieve objectives based on real needs.

In training design and implementation, everything is tied to everything else. Well, almost everything. Or, to say it a bit differently, training is systematic. Just about every aspect of training is linked to every other aspect. We try to convey this message in this case study. Not all training design publications make the connection.

To help you think systematically about training, we have included a graphic representation of the training cycle. The cycle is shown with six phases that correspond to the major events in planning and carrying out a training programme.

We also believe training designs must have a conceptual anchor, an anchor that is firmly placed in learning styles and adult learning theory. Again, we have tried to act upon this belief.

Finally, the design of training interventions is a behavioural act, based on the application of training design skills. In other words, training design is a skill-oriented behaviour that can be learned. This case study and the accompanying tools can help you and others learn these skills.



### ***A quick tour of the case study and tool kit***

This set of materials is a bit different from most. It has a story line. It tells a tale of training. As we thought about how to write a manual about training design, we realised it needs to be more than just a tool kit of various devices that one takes out and applies to a training challenge. While each tool in our kit comes with instructions for its use, the case study attempts to help you, the reader, decide which tool or tools to reach for, as you take on the design challenge.

To pound a nail, you need a hammer. But to build a house, you must have a full complement of tools. And, it helps to have a set of blueprints. So it is with training. You can't build an exciting training programme if all you have in your tool kit is a set of lecture notes.

### ***The Case Study***

The case study is a blueprint of sorts. And "Peter" and "Eva," who play prominent roles in the case study, are the architects. They provide us with a set of plans. The case study (our story line) is interrupted from time to time with questions. We would like you to ponder and answer each of these questions for your own learning enjoyment. We also have provided some thoughts of our own - what we call commentary - to explain at times what is happening to our training colleagues at GTI (the mythical institute where Peter and Eva work). To the extent possible, we have cross-referred the case study with the tool kit.

Another aspect of the case study, to keep in mind as you read it, is the shift we make from a more conventional approach to training design and delivery (e.g. workshops) to activities that focus on institutional development. The case study, in the beginning, provides a thorough review of the Training Cycle, as experienced by the trainers. The initial work of our trainers is focused, more or less, on conventional requests for training, although the responses are not necessarily conventional. Once they have mastered the basics of good training design and delivery, we thrust them into a new challenge, helping their client develop both the work organization and an in-house training capacity. Given this change of focus, the trainer's attention, in the case study, shifts from individual skill development and specific problem solving - to some fundamental aspects of organization development. When this shift is made, we spend little time or effort on addressing the steps in the training cycle, although they continue to be important in the design of organizational interventions. We have made the assumption that both you and our case study trainers have internalized these basics by this time and are applying them without being reminded of their importance to the overall process.

### ***The tool kit***

The tool kit is just that, a set of tools that will help you build successful training programmes. The tools have been arranged in such a way that you will know which one works best for what task. On the other hand, we also recognize that some tools can be used to perform a wide range of tasks. So, don't be fooled into thinking that each performs only one function.

We haven't, of course, included every training design tool on the market. Our tool box and your patience as a reader aren't big enough for that. In fact, we have limited the tools to a few basic ones that seem to work well in a wide variety of situations. The challenge is to get to know all of them well and adapt them, when necessary, to meet your specific needs.

### ***Who should use this material?***

This manual has been written for a diverse audience

- New trainers who may still need a tool kit handy when they design
- Seasoned veterans who feel they've worn a rut to the lectern and want to get out of it
- In-house training teams who might want to rethink how they design training ventures and decide to use the manual as a Friday afternoon study guide; or,
- A group of trainers, convened by an institution such as UNCHS (Habitat), who would attend a five to 10-day workshop, focused on the training design task.

### ***When should it be used?***

If this manual/tool kit is any good, it should be pulled from the shelf rather frequently: as a guide for quick reference; as a reminder of what to do next; as a workbook that forms the basis for a residential workshop; or any time you think it might help you and your colleagues design a more exciting, relevant training experience.

To summarize, we have written these materials to help you become a better trainer and to assist you when a mental block stands between you and your next training programme. It also provides an in-depth look at how design fits into the training cycle and how the training cycle is a vehicle for taking you into some new ventures as a trainer. As we have said before, the training cycle starts from the initial indication from the client that your services might be needed and ends with the impact these services have on individual and organization performance.

## **THE TRAINING CYCLE**

### **1. INITIAL CONTACT/RECONNAISSANCE**

#### ***Case Study***

***17 July, 3:30 p.m.***

Victor Nicolae, the town secretary of Oltenia, put down the phone, leaned back in his chair and smiled. The call was from a Scandinavian donor with whom he had been negotiating for some months. The donor finally agreed to provide funds to upgrade Oltenia's municipal markets. It was part of a low-income housing improvement programme on which the city had embarked during the previous year.

As usual, there were strings attached or "conditions precedent," as donors like to call them, but then, he thought, there are always conditions precedent, aren't there? The donor wants to see changes in the operation of the markets before the grant is finally approved. One was a 15-percent increase in market revenues in the next 12 months. Shouldn't be too hard to accomplish, Nicolae thought to himself.

Then, there was the Market Vendors' Association -that group of women vendors who were always wanting something from the city. The donor had talked about collaboration with them -maybe a community- development programme. Well, Nicolae thought, our market officers and revenue collectors have never been very effective when it comes to working with citizens. Maybe, we should consider sending them off for some community-development training.

***18 July, 9:21 am***

The next morning, Nicolae called the Government Training Institute in Judet. GTI was just eight kilometers down the road, and some of the city's, administrative secretaries had been trained there. The town secretary had also lectured at the institute a few times.

The principal was not in. Nicolae asked for the head of Local Government Training. He was not available either -- off on some long-term training course in the United Kingdom. Finally, he reached a young man by the name of Poszmik, Peter Poszmik, a relatively new lecturer on the local-government training staff. "Peter this is the town secretary of Oltenia, Victor Nicolae."

"Yes, Mr. Nicolae, what can we do for you?"

"We need to train some of our market officers in community development. What can you do to help?"

"Well, sir, we have a six-month programme scheduled for late next year. It's primarily for social workers but includes several sessions on community development. I think it might meet your needs."

"Next year! We can't wait that long, and we certainly can't send our market people off for six months. We've got a donor who wants some action now! They may even be willing to pay for the training. Can we count on you or not?"

"Nu e nicio problema, Mr. Nicolae. No problem. We can put together a programme for you. Community development, you say?"

"Community development - or something like that. Anyway, something short -- can't spare these officers for long. Why don't you send me a proposal? Can I hear from you by next week?"

"No problem."

"Thanks. I'll expect to hear from you."

### Questions to reader

- What has Peter learned about the town secretary's training needs?
- What does Peter need to know that he didn't find out during this initial discussion with the town secretary?
- What would you have done differently in discussing this training request from the town secretary?

### Commentary

*"I keep six honest serving-men (They taught me all I knew);  
Their names are What and Why and When;  
and How and Where and Who".*  
-- Rudyard Kipling\*

\*Famed late 19th and early 20th century British novelist, short story writer and poet. The quoted verse is taken from "The elephant's child," one of several fantastic children's tales published together as "The 'Just-So' Stories" (1897).

Kipling's serving men can also serve the trainer well, particularly in the initial contact with a potential training client. Peter's discussion with the town secretary was full of missed opportunities to: (a) become informed about what the town secretary wanted; and (b) put Peter in a position to serve the town secretary and the city of Oltenia.

By calling on Kipling's "six honest serving-men," Peter could have learned from Nicolae many of the basic facts about the situation. Here is a brief look at the kind of information Peter could have got from the discussion by asking a few probing questions.

#### **Who?**

All Peter knows from the brief conversation he just had with the town secretary is that Nicolae wants some market officers trained in community development. Who are those market officers? What do they do? What are their duties and responsibilities? How many officers are to be trained? These are all legitimate who questions. Any of them would have helped define clearly the parameters of the training request.

#### **Why?**

Why does the town secretary want these officers trained? About the only clue Peter has at this point is that a donor "wants some action now." But why? This is not enough information for Peter to sit down and design a training programme for them.

The "why" -- type questions quickly lead to a discussion of what - what the training might ultimately cover in terms of content.

#### **What?**

On this aspect of the training request, Peter is also in the dark. Nicolae mentioned "community development," but what does this mean? As we shall learn later in the case study, the town secretary was referring to a very specific situation he believed could be addressed through "community-development" training, but "community development" means different things to different people. When words or phrases tend to be ambiguous, it is useful to probe further - to find out what the client means and to resist the temptation to give such terms our own interpretations.

#### **When?**

The town secretary opened the door for another of Kipling's honest serving men, but Peter declined the invitation to have him enter. "We've got a donor who wants action now!" What does "now" mean? Tomorrow? Next week? Also, Nicolae said he could not wait until next year to train his officers but Peter neglected to find out what timeframe would be acceptable to Nicolae - yet, such information is important. If GTI and its staff are fully booked for several months, it may be impossible for them to deliver the training. At this point, Peter has only a vague notion about the time parameters within which the town secretary is willing to accept the training.

#### **Where?**

Where might the training be held? While this query is not as important as others, it is useful information to have in the initial stages of planning. For example, Peter may be thinking in terms of residential training at GTI. Nicolae, on the other hand, may have in mind some kind of in-house, on-the-job training programme. If their unspoken assumptions about training locations are this far apart, there could be misunderstanding later. It's best to clarify these assumptions early on. Location affects many things in training - cost, logistics, staff availability, timing and, not the least, training design.

#### **How?**

The only question that is not always germane at this time, from the trainer's perspective, is "How?" Yet, the client can and should make such inquiries. The town secretary, in this case study, could have asked Peter about his approach to training. "How would you go about training a line officer, like our market manager? Would it involve mostly lectures? Or, skill-development exercises? Or, some other approach? I've seen too much academic training in my career in local government and it's just not effective. So, I'm interested in how you might go about training our officers." As consumers of training, managers have as much right to ask about how the training will be delivered as how a piece of machinery they are planning to purchase works.

From the trainer's perspective, the how question, at this point in the contact, needs to be answered philosophically - or from a set of values about how to train and how individuals learn - and not in detail about the training design. The how of training is a function of several variables, including:

- a. The need for training as identified through some systematic assessment process
- b. The constraints placed upon the training (e.g., finances, time)
- c. The number of people to be trained, their skills, job positions, experience etc.
- d. The learning objectives or outcomes to be achieved through the training. These aspects of the training situation, and more, will ultimately answer the "how" question.

We have spent considerable time just now talking about Peter's first telephone conversation with the town secretary, more about what was not said than what was said. This discussion points out the importance of the initial discussion with the training client. Not only does it provide the trainer with an opportunity to gain valuable insights into the circumstances surrounding the training request; it also provides an opportunity for the trainer to establish his or her credibility with the client. Part of this credibility is knowing how to ask the right questions.

The initial discussion might also represent the decision point of "go/no-go." No training institution is equipped to meet all training needs. The trainer, in the initial contact with the training client, should try to determine whether the resources he or she and the training institution represent are compatible with the potential client's needs. If clearly not, a suggestion should be made on alternative sources of training which are appropriate to the client's needs.

If you, as a trainer, decide that you and your organization can be of service, given the training needs expressed by the client (e.g., the town secretary in this case study), it is important to get as much general information as possible during the initial contact. The more you know about the client and his or her expectations, the easier it will be to establish a working relationship later and to get ready for any follow-up, training-needs assessment and design.

Rudyard Kipling and his "six honest serving-men" are good companions to take along to the initial contact with a potential training client - their names are **What** and **Why** and **When** and **How** and **Where** and **Who**.

### ***Later that morning***

Peter was anxious to get some new programmes going at GTI - some he could claim to be his own - but now he began to worry. How could he put together a programme in such a short period of time and on a subject he didn't know much about? His background was in public administration and finance - not community development. Peter thought aloud, "Maybe I could line up some guest speakers." He went across the hall to talk to Eva Metzinger, one of his colleagues. She

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