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NEW MODELS OF PUBLIC SERVICE POLICIES FOCUSED ON STRENGTHENING HUMAN CAPITAL AND IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF WORKING LIFE

by

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* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of Council of Europe and European Union member States on this issue.

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'Developing human capital for good governance and effective administration:
Sensemaking with moving parts'

Summary Resource Paper
Presentation to 15th Unidem Med Conference
'Public Service Policies- Paradigms for Changes'
17th May, 2022

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Concept – Vision – Implementation - Sustainability

1.0   Overview and Key Questions Posed by the Conference:

Purpose of Paper:

This paper summarises and in some part expands on key content delivered in my virtual presentation to the 15th UniDem Med Conference which took place on 17th and 18th May 2022, delivered by the Venice Commission in association with the General Personnel Council of Palestine, who hosted the physical event in Ramallah, Palestine. This paper is designed to act as a resource to participants who wish to recap on content of the presentation, explore some of the issues in more detail, and access links to resources cited in the presentation. It draws on emerging practice examples from the EU, the Council of Europe, and variously within both contexts, from the island of Ireland (Ireland, Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom).

Introduction and Key Questions:

In preparing the paper and reflecting on best practice issues for the design and delivery of public sector training strategies aligned with administrative reform objectives, I was asked by the Council of Europe's Venice Commission to address the following questions:

- How to ensure the right training at the right time for the right agents?
- How can we develop effective national training strategies that meet the needs of civil servants while respecting the principles of good governance?
- What are the tools to identify needs and ensure greater efficiency of public services?
- How can we retain talent and invest in human capital to develop an attractive and user-friendly public service?

In considering these questions, it is worth acknowledging the key challenges that face public administrative leaders at this particular point in time when we are emerging from a global pandemic which itself has accelerated significant paradigmatic shifts in how we view change in public service and administration – and how we view change as something that can both be sustained and provide learning for improved outcomes in the area of public administration and the related organisation of finite resources.

We are all working within the context of different administrative histories, cultures, and legal traditions. Depending on how our systems have been structured historically, we are now seeing that for meeting the challenges of inclusive growth and delivery to citizens, there may be particular levels of public governance within our respective polities that require capacity building through skills, practice and technical supports. We are faced with the eternal challenge of public service, which is- simultaneously- striking an almost daily balance between maintaining longer-held ambitions for reform and translating these ambitions into strategy and delivery, while continuing to deliver effective public administration and services in the immediate and middle term. We are required to always keep one eye on the horizon.

We are challenged, in our individual contexts, to respond to how the world is changing; to meet the trends towards decentralisation and integrated services with solutions which are progressive and sustainable and which deliver for citizens. We are constantly challenged to ensure better and more effective use of limited resources. We are invited to develop capacity in public services for the practical expression of rights- to equality, health, clean environments, due legal process; we are encouraged to consider how such things can be

achieved within a facilitative value base which enables us to meet new citizen expectations. We have a new interest in delivering on these, as do citizens in how we deliver.

By force of circumstance, we have experienced and embraced a short, intensive period of accelerated change characterised by disruptive innovation- working differently and beyond administrative, cultural, and jurisdictional boundaries. Our world has become vastly more digitalised in a short period- as has our understanding of the delicate balance between climate, health, and economic wellbeing- borne by a reminder of how the health and wellbeing of citizens is one of the single most powerful factors for our economies, our polities, and our collective functioning as international communities. Putting the governance in place for the spaces between things is now a focus for our future. In public service which has repiadly adapted and must sustain some changes and learn from others, we are Identifying opportunities to harness new imperatives and tools for the greater good, including e-government, decentralised public sector workforces, flexible resource planning, and the removal of locational barriers to workforce potential within our wider economies. A key question in the coming years will therefore be how we know that what we are doing is effective, and how will we know? What evidence will we wish to draw on?

In preparing my contribution to the conference, I have sought to provide, first, an overview of framework for public administrative reforms in Europe which includes a summary of the key paradigms which have informed public sector reform in a general sense across the European Union, over the past three decades. The paper then considers the question of evidence and knowledge and refers to the current problematics of identifying best practice on a basis of validated evidence- given that for every public system undertaking reform there will always be a number of factors specific to the heritage and evolution of that particular system, which will influence and determine the degree to which assumptions of 'good' or 'best' practice drawn from other countries will always be subjective to the context in which reforms were attempted and the context and purpose for which any evaluative work on reform has been undertaken. Nevertheless, the paper also points to what might be considered useful models and examples of practice which relate to generic reform, specificity of skills development relevant for emerging public sector and democratisation agendas, and those which provide a degree of useful information by which states may compare themselves against global standards.

The paper the goes on to identify examples of tools (including the Council of Europe Training Needs Analysis Toolkit) and approaches which may be worth considering in the overall context of public sector reform and related strategies for building human capital. The paper concludes with some practitioner observations gained from my own experience and, finally, raises some questions which invite participants to reflect on and consider how to synthesise best practice issues in a translational sense, to orientate and process international learning in a way that it useful for acting in a specific local context.

2.0   Identifying the Paradigms Underpinning EU Public Administrative Reform

As regards an evidence base of good practice in public administrative reform with a locus in the EU, it is first worth outlining the three main paradigms, or driving principles for reform, across which public sector reform can be broadly understood in an international and global context since the 1970s. A useful resource which provides further detail is the 2016 publication 'Public Administration Reforms in Europe- The View from the Top'- a comprehensive overview of the frameworks in which public sector reforms have been

undertaken in the EU and by individual member states[1]. The book also provides a range of case studies of reform drawn from different countries which aims to characterise individual cases of reform within the wider paradigmatic framework set out below, and which also aims to explain or at least describe in more detail the specific dynamics with which reform activity has interacted with legacy systems within individual EU member states.

The paradigmatic framework for public administrative reform and the main characteristics of each accepted paradigm can be summarised as follows[2]:

2.1 Summary of Paradigmatic Framework for Public Administrative Reform

This section sets out the main paradigms for public sector reform in Europe in recent decades, and their main characteristics, below:

Figure 1: Summary of Public Sector Reform Paradigms:

Paradigm:	Main characteristics:
1. 'Weberian' model – transforming patrimonial systems into modern administrations	Legality Hierarchy (constrained approach to human capital development)
2. New Public Management (NPM) – 1980s Europe -	Embedding market-type mechanisms and business management logic into public sector (fragmentation of resources, assets, functions)
3. 'Neo-Weberian' model – combining Weberian and NPM characteristics (also referred to as 2nd/3rd-generation NPM)	Legality, impartiality, neutrality, becoming more responsive to citizens and public demands, combat fragmentation; co-ordination for effectiveness and outcomes

2.1 What can we say is good practice? The problem of evidence

What is partially concluded by Hammerschmid et al, prior to a setting out of attempts to remedy a lack of consistent evidence at an EU level, is that there is in fact very little accessible data about the actual outcomes of public sector reform processes. An academic conclusion might be that there is no evidence. A practitioner conclusion might be that there is, in fact, evidence within the system which is not thought of as evidence of outcomes but which may be thought of simply as operational performance data and not utilised for broader evaluation

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[1] Hammerschmid/Van de Walle/Andrews/Bezes: *Public Administration Reforms in Europe- The View from the Top'* (2016).

[2] Hammerschmid/Van de Walle/Andrews/Bezes: *Public Administration Reforms in Europe- The View from the Top'* (2016).

purposes; and that in order to locate it and understand it you must first understand the purposes for which it may have been gathered.

In an academic sense, however, Hammerschmid and colleagues correctly suggest that evaluations of individual EU Member State public sector reform initiatives or programmes, where they exist, are subjective to the times and not systemic; and that consequently, despite intensive efforts at reform, there was also a dearth of high-quality comparative data across Member States. The authors go on to present the COCOPS[3] project, an ambitious EU-level research initiative for identifying and understanding evidence which can be used to evaluate public sector reforms within a consistent framework and which lends itself to a longitudinal approach to gathering and interrogating evidence. A link to the report is contained in the footnotes to this section.

2.2 Moving from Imported Replication to Government by Design[4]

While the matter of longer-term evidence and evaluative analysis over time remains a challenge and an opportunity for research institutions across the EU and at EU level, Public decision-makers and policymakers have an ongoing need to be able to make informed judgements as to what may or may not be useful evidence to draw on in the design of practical approaches to public sector reform, and to the development of wider human capital necessary for effective citizen outcomes (this includes but goes well beyond skills for public sector workforce to include citizens).

In this sense, a practical need has led to expert synthesis of more concise guiding principles for approaches to public sector reform which are characterised by authenticity, local empowerment and applied judgement rather than by the practice of adopting or replicating out of context (potentially 'clunky', and ethically problematic particularly in post-imperial public sector systems). Just because something has worked in one place does not mean it can or should work somewhere else. The epistemology of experience and judgement derived from an applied knowledge of the context is a vitally important issue. In this sense, there has been a welcome move towards the idea of Government by Design where the consistency of principles facilitates diversity of implementation on the basis that guiding principles have a better chance of visibility in outcomes, than complicated bespoke engineering solutions. A useful guide to the principles of Government by Design has been developed by McKinsey and can be summarised as follows (link to web page is included in footnote):
(1) make better use of data;
2) involve citizens;
3) invest in employees, and
4) collaborate with other sectors.

3.0 Examples of Established Practice from the EU (and Council of Europe Members): Development of Human Capital and Building System Capacity

Any effective public sector reform training strategy needs to take account of both generalist skills and specialist/technical skills development, and needs to pay attention to both quality management and quantitative performance management- different indicators and data are required to evidence progress in each of these fields- but invariably improved quality will

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[3] Link to COCOPS final reportFinal Report Summary - COCOPS (Coordinating for Cohesion in the Public Sector of the Future) | FP7 | CORDIS | European Commission (europa.eu)
[4] Government by design: Four principles for a better public sector | McKinsey

have a positive effect on overall performance and can be the underlying factor which improves performance in a way that quantitative controls or interventions cannot do.

For example, in an acute healthcare setting, the finances of a hospital may be more sparingly managed through deploying less senior clinical staff during out-of-hours periods in areas such as emergency care. However, the risk of delayed decision-making, and inadequate specialist knowledge being used in assessment of a patient's needs and in complex decision making can lead to longer hospital stays and greater use of system resources in a way which can be prevented by investing in greater levels of senior clinical decision making around the clock in emergency departments, as can investing in a greater variety of clinical disciplines working within a single team and pooling their specialist knowledge around a patient's pathway.

Another example would be achieving better integrated spatial development in key regions (arguably an important indicator for inclusive growth) by training planners- particularly those assessing planning applications with either land use and/or environmental impact implications for neighbouring administrative jurisdictions (whether across a domestic or international boundary) – in how the system works on the other side of the boundary, what the neighbouring jurisdiction's planning policy priorities are, and how to develop processes which ensure that there are no unnecessary delays or risks associated with insufficient consultation in the development planning process. A further step might also be to train planners together in understanding ways in which collaborative working can enable them to fulfil specific statutory requirements that they are obliged to meet in their respective jurisdictions, but in a way which adds value to a border territory and which avoids unnecessary wasteage of resources or under-achievement of objectives arising from a lack of joined-up working.

In the sense of both examples above, investing in quality is often a precursor to more efficient use of public resources. Training for quality improvement involves investment in a combination of interdisciplinary/collaborative working skills, as well as specialised professional knowledge within specific categories of worker. Every public administrative system needs to ensure an effective balance between the types of training it is investing in to ensure robustness at a whole-systems level. This in turn leads to better overall system performance and improved outcomes.

This section provides some signposting and links to institutional examples and resources relating to training, workforce development and general capacity building for public administration and, by implication, reform agendas which require a commensurate approach to training and development.

General Skills and Capacity Building- Institutional Examples:

In terms of general skills and capacity building the following provide useful further information and examples of work at transnational and national levels:

- **TAIEX**[5] - TAIEX (europa.eu) - is the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument of the European Commission. This instrument allows for a range of knowledge transfer processes across public sector organisations between member states, including secondment of civil servants for embedded learning. It is hosted by

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[5] Link to TAEIX Website: TAIEX (europa.eu)

the European Commission's Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR).

- The **European Institute for Public Administration[6] -** Home – Eipa **- operates at an EU Level and is a model which also exists at the level of Member States, such as Ireland[7].**
- **NHS Improvement[8] -** NHS England » Our work **- is a** UK national health service platform based in NHS England, and aimed at whole-systems capacity building, training and development catering for all skills and professional groups within a diverse and numerous workforce. In recent years this approach developed on the basis of using a social movement model of human capital development and workforce capacity building which encompassed skills development as well as- importantly- capacity building for cultural and behavioural change, through empowering individuals and teams to take ownership of change processes at local level orientated towards local environments and local needs. The United Kingdown remains a member of the Council of Europe and this example is drawn from its flagship national health service.

Responding to the need for technical and professional specialist skilling:

In terms of effective models which enable specialist knowledge transfer in tandem with building capacity for the use of evidence in public sector planning, programming and change management, an example can be found in two institutions within the EU which have developed particular expertise in combining research and practice in translational formats for implementation and working across boundaries (administrative, sectoral, territorial, jurisdictional). These are:

- Central and Eastern Europe - CESCI CESCI Network - CESCI Network (cesci-net.eu)
- Ireland/Northern Ireland/U.S. -The International Centre for Local & Regional Development (ICLRD) | Maynooth University

Mobilising knowledge in the wider system and drawing it into the public sector:

Mobilising knowledge that is available in wider civil society and can inform public sector reform through cross-disciplinary training is vital for effective public services. It also allows for manageable access to a broader body of knowledge and experience that can be drawn on in developing capacity within public administrative systems for understanding and implementing good practice on key horizontal principles - such as equality and human rights, and environmental/'green' transformation. International networks contributing to human capital for change/benefitting public sector include the following (noting that one in particular focuses on the vital agency of local government as a key component within overall public sector capital for reform and improved citizen outcomes). Examples of such bodies include:

- **ICLEI- Local Governments for Sustainability:** an international NGO which supports knowledge and practice in Local Government for delivering against climate targets and mebedding sustainability into all aspects of public governance and service delivery**:** ICLEI

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[6] Link to European Institute of Public Administration: EIPA - Home – Eipa
[7] Link to Irish Institute of Public Administration: IPA - Institute of Public Administration
[8] Link to NHS Improvement information: NHS England » Our work

- **Equinet- European Network of Equality Bodies:** An NGO and Public Body network which promotes evidence, practice and exchange for the delivery of meaningful outcomes in the area of equality and human rights: Equinet – European Network of Equality Bodies (equineteurope.org)

3.1 Additional Resources:

Some additional resources which may provide useful reading for participants are set out as follows:

Identifying Training Needs:

Council of Europe Training Needs analysis toolkit: NTS_TNA_toolkit_fin (coe.int)

The Council of Europe's Training Needs Analysis Toolkit is a useful tool which can be used at the level of a small team, at divisional or organisational level, or at complex programme level involving different stakeholders working towards shared objectives through multifactorial training processes. The TNA Toolkit provides a framework and process for:
a) running a gap analysis (gaps between the status quo and the desirable state),
b) identifying the reasons behind problems, their consequences and background,
c) identifying the validity of training activities and hierarchy of their importance for the organisation,
- d) identifying the scope and topics of training and possible organisational solutions.
- Full version available here:
NTS_TNA_toolkit_fin (coe.int)

A focus on quality:

EU 2015: Quality of Public Administration Toolbox for Practitioners: Quality of Public Administration - A Toolbox for Practitioners | Shaping Europe's digital future (europa.eu)

Benchmarking:

The OECD Government at a Glance report provides an international overview which can inform benchmarking. As always, with benchmarking, it is important to take into account the variety of local factors which may be relevant to the replicability of performance across different countries and territories, and that assuming equivalence can be a factor which complicates both expectations of delivery and the alignment of ambitions with capacity unless local factors (and obstacles to implementation) are clearly understood.

OECD Government at a Glance : Government at a Glance 2021 | en | OECD

4.0 Government by Design – Combining Vision, Capacity and Evidence to Drive Citizen Outcomes

This section cites examples of emerging good practice which illustrate the enabling effect of working backwards from a vision to develop the right type of training and capacity-building, in the right place and at the right time. It also deals with the matter of evaluation and examples of where good practice from one subsector can hold valuable learning for driving overall improvements in public sector system performance and delivery of outcomes.

4.1 Implementing Joined-Up Government for a Common Purpose – the case of Northern Ireland

In 2016 the OECD published a review of the Northern Ireland public administration with a view to determining the necessary reform and structural approaches required to ensure 'joined-up' Government in a polity characterised by emergence from conflict, challenging socio-economic performance levels, and a growing need to meet both the expectation of delivery for citizens and a complex set of citizen needs across a range of public service and economic sectors. This report was the first time the OECD carried out such an analysis at a sub-national level.[9]

This review was firmly underpinned by a political agreement (the Stormont House Agreement) designed to boost power-sharing devolved Government within the UK and to fulfil commitments made in the context of ongoing North-South and East-West Collaboration between the administration of Northern Ireland and the UK and Irish Governments.

The wider context in which the review took place included the fact that it was a point in time when administrations were emerging post-global-recession; that there were increased fiscal pressures arising from Northern Ireland's over-dependence on a public sector economy, the fact that it has limited revenue-raising powers at regional level, and on its simultaneous dependence on a block grant from the UK Government. Both of these meant doing more with less; the urgency of reform was further concentrated by the need for political stability and outcomes for people on the ground.

The review and resultant reform vision had three themes:

Improving strategic approaches;
improving engagement with people; and
improving operational delivery (to citizens and businesses).
In essence, this review determined that Northern Ireland's public administrative system required more integrated and multidimensional policies and services in order to meet citizen needs and deliver inclusive growth. This would require a shift in approach towards a culture and practice of strategic planning and related multi-annual resource planning (as opposed to allowing a domination of the system purely by a culture of annualised, accountancy-led public resource planning).

Crucially, this review would mean that the Northern Ireland administration committed to change its approach to evaluation in expanding both sense and scope of what indicators would accurately reflect progress- and what kind of evaluation approaches could effectively capture multi-faceted policy outcomes. This has led to an acknowledgement of an emphasis on qualitative as well as quantitative evaluation and performance analysis within and across the system. Out of this have arisen extensive progressive conversations about the nature of data, the degree to which data collected can be accessed, interrogated and aggregated in ways which make it possible to tell the story of how progress can be made towards an integrated vision. The review also implied the importance of evaluation as a tool for reflection on delivery and as something that allows for evidence-informed delivery, rather than being something carried out after-the-fact and for purely academic purposes. 'Working

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[9] **OECD Review:** OECD (2016), Northern Ireland (United Kingdom): Implementing Joined-Up Governance for a Common Purpose- OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris.
http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264260016-en

with evidence' (or an equivalent description) became a core competency which candidates for leadership posts at all levels within the public sector are expected to demonstrate and evidence in the selection posts for roles across the central civil service, the health service, and local government- all three of which have bespoke and connected public service competency and leadership frameworks which feed into the vision for Government. These frameworks guide the planning and allocation of resources for public sector training on an ongoing basis.

Figure 2: Northern Ireland Programme for Government Outcomes Framework:

In operationalising the recommendations of the OECD Review, the Northern Ireland public administrative system's response has included the following key features, related principles and general expectation of value behaviours (against which training strategies, programmes and annualised resource allocations for workforce development are expected to be aligned at all levels within the system):

- **High- Level Outcomes –** policy and direction-setting involves statements of future state (see Figure 2); and the subsequent organisation of planning, resources and performance management on a basis that can allow for optimal achievement of outcomes while also effectively measuring progress and pro-actively managing risks;

- **Strategic planning –** all levels of public administration align plans with high-level outcomes; business operational planning sits underneath this;
- **Building capacity for accountability-** measuring outcomes is different from measuring outputs- the system and workforce are required and supported to develop the ability to translate data sources into a narrative which speaks to the outcomes; this has included mandatory training in methodologies and approaches to outcomes-based accountability, delivered by specialist NGO providers with experience in measurement and iteration of qualitative policy impacts;
- **Competency frameworks- Development and investment in leadership at all levels:** Civil Service, Local Government, Health service; working with others, using evidence, driving innovation, managing performance and quality. Promotion of a culture within ordinary management processes of supporting people to understand how what they do fits into the bigger picture (and -for senior leaders- modelling this awareness themselves);
- **Workforce planning:** alignment with outcomes at system, organisational, team and individual level;
- **Collaborative working and codesign** – within the various public sector workforce skills frameworks, these are regarded as core competencies for integrating services in a way that delivers holistic outcomes for citizens. A specific example of this is the Community Planning process and model which is driven and led by Local Government and which provides the local articulation of a high-level outcomes framework in a way which is combined with evidence of local need, co-designed goals for progress, and which works to effectively capture the right kind of evidence that can ensure accountability for how high-level outcomes are being delivered at local level;
- **Horizontal Principles –** By virtue of the Equality and Human Rights (Section 75 of Northern Ireland Act, which followed the 1998 Peace Agreement), there is a statutory requirement for equality screening of all public sector policies and plans. In Local Government there is also increasing voluntary adoption of screening approaches – developed in conjunction and with the expertise of the NGO sector- which allow for proofing of decisions and resource allocation in terms of their enablement of sustainability, environmental protection and conservation, and delivery on climate targets (emerging).

Public sector training strategies, in general, are organised according to what is mandatory (including what is mandatory in order to comply with statutory functions and key legislation), what is required at an organisational level, and what is optional. The tactical designation of key competencies as mandatory or required is a particular approach, which can be -and sometimes is - taken where possible, to ensure that the skills and aptitudes necessary for change are invested in, resourced, and facilitated to a sufficient critical mass to effect change towards high-level outcomes. This remains an ongoing challenge for leaders throughout the public sector and in the end remains a matter for leaders to model the change they wish to deliver and are required to evidence.

4.2   Evaluating Whole Systems Impacts- Where to find good practice

The question of good practice in approaches to public sector training strategies to support reform is intrinsically linked to the issue of how reform processes are evaluated to have progressed a system from its pre-reform state to a state which is characterised by positive attainment of visionary ambitions. With vision-based integrated outcomes frameworks, and in keeping with the principle of better use of data which needs to be at the core of reform (and skills/aptitude training strategies), there is the question of how best to approach the

evaluation of whole systems impacts. The best place to start is looking at models of evaluation which have been designed to reflect whole systems impacts rather than more bespoke restricted impacts relating to a single-objective function. In this sense international development assistance is an area which has by necessity embraced the challenge of data and evidence capture to reflect a wider set of indicators necessary for the evaluation of intended impacts of this area of public investment.

The OECD Development Assistance Committee has developed a model of evaluating development assistance which includes an evaluation framework; and international peer review of individual Governments' work in the area of development assistance. Further information can be found at this link:
 Encouraging good practice in development evaluation - OECD

Replicable to other areas of domestic public administration – by definition the outcomes intended through development assistance go beyond the system itself and relate to key indicators relevant for citizens and wider economies- not just the state infrastructure but how this delivers for the people and the polity.

An example of where a country has mainstreamed this evaluation approach and applied it to other areas of a domestic public administrative system can be found in the Irish Government's Economic and Evaluation Service, which is modelled on experience drawn from Ireland's membership of the OECD Development Assistance Committee, and which focuses on evaluating multi-dimensional policy/horizontal/sectoral issues across the wider national system: see this link for further information - Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service (igees.gov.ie)

5.0   Applying Learning in Practice: Designing and Aligning Moving Parts

This section provides a range of principles drawn from a review of resources cited in this paper and also from practitioner experience. These relate to the practice of developing public sector training strategies in the wider context of public sector reform, performance and outcomes improvement. These can be summarised as follows:

- Know your vision – political buy-in important. Ideal: When the political and administrative state are in agreement and work symbiotically
- Your system/organisational/corporate vision and objectives become the territory on which you map your approach to building human capital. Invest in the skills that really matter, and the right balance of specialist to broader skills
- Use a mixture of tools to identify and prioritise training
- What outcomes for citizens are intended?
- Who do you need to empower and how best do/can they learn and develop their capacity? (remember not to forget about elected decision makers)? Pay attention to the WHOLE Ecosystem.
- Moving from 'permission to act' culture to one of self-efficacy? Does your system encourage people to use their judgement for achieving positive change and innovation, or simply to act on instructions?
- Identify risks and orientate your risk management framework to enable the vision – and control the risk of not achieving it (ref. Jon Barber presentation on 18th May at this conference.)

5.1   Conclusions: Hot Tips from the Field

In concluding this tour of paradigmatic frameworks, emerging practice examples and examples of how vision-based planning can facilitate more strategically-focused public sector training strategies, I would conclude by offering the following suggestions as a distillation of learning and experience:

- Do NOT go straight from a strategy to performance-managing that strategy. Invest in capacity to deliver. And in culture and behaviour as well as knowledge-based development; emotional and social intelligence matter; empathy matters; beware of scientising these- this can be counterproductive and lead to creation of elitist behaviour which runs directly in contradiction to these same principles;
- As senior leaders and decision makers: model, recognise and acknowledge the behaviours and outlooks you want to see throughout the system; pay attention to your evidence sources as to how values are modelled (e.g. What are the main causes of sick leave and employee absence in your organisation? Are there patterns in departments or areas of operation which need more looking into? What are the trends in the nature of employee grievances or litigation? What can be done to learn from past experiences?)
- Invest in the right kind of training. Adults learn 6/7 times more through practice and feedback; mentoring, learning sets, self-directed learning within robust framework; 360 Degree Assessment tool is also hugely beneficial used in the right way, as is Development Review and Appraisal- again this needs to be used by managers who are trained in the approach and who know how to develop and support staff rather than simply manage performance outputs;
- Train your managers as enablers of people as well as processes; emotional and social intelligence matter; compassion matters; constructive supervision and feedback matter; ensure you have a robust anti-bullying culture as well as policy within your organisation; use 360 Degree feedback and employee survey tools (anonymised) as one method of assessing the quality of management in your organisation;
- Don't invest in accreditation without creating conditions for the practical application of that knowledge (also avoid scientisation and exclusiveness); value creativity (innovation capacity) as much as technical skills, build people up to trust their judgement and interact with their peers in solving problems; encourage ecosystems thinking, not silo thinking;
- Promote the development of an internal locus of control (self-efficacy) at all levels in the system- you'll have better morale and therefore better outcomes; (successful public reforms report high levels of this among public officials)
- Equality and human rights in action: how do different groups within your workforce learn best? What are their development needs and what are their assets? Listen to what your data is telling you- workforce wellbeing, retention, etc. E.g. NHS Menopause Policy; Domestic Violence policies;
- Consider using a social movement approach: udc09_helenbevan_plenary.pdf (Impartnership.org);
- Promote awareness of unconscious bias and gendered social behaviours that have the potential to restrict people from leading to their full potential.

5.2   Next Steps- Key Questions for Reflection

The presentation on which this paper is based offered some key questions for participants to reflect on in planning their own approach to future public sector training strategies aligned with reform agendas. These questions are:

- What is the vision for change in your sphere of influence and operation?
- What are the three biggest challenges associated with delivering this change (what/where are the gaps between current capacity and what you need?)
- Can these be turned into opportunities and how might you approach this?

The methodology of reflective practice used in a public sector leadership context is a particular tool borrowed from the world of clinical leadership. Reflection-in-action, and reflection-on-action provide the individual with a valuable lens through which particular insight can be gained into one's own assumptions, blind sopts, and motivations. Transparency in acknowledging these amongst peers also provides a clear thread via which one's conclusions can perhaps be more clearly understood in context and resonance explained in a way that allows the reader or listener to critically evaluate what they find useful to their own given context. Given that the paper covers some of my own reflections gained in a practitioner and research context, I felt it was important to provide some sense of the personal professional perspectives, and the context in which these have been formed, that have informed my contribution to the conference. This experience can be summarised as follows:

Following graduate training in social scientific research methods and theoretical approaches to research in politics, my early practitioner career involved moving from a public sector policy role (social affairs reform, social protection policy, Northern Ireland peace process) to working in the immediate years following the Northern Ireland Peace Agreement (1998) regional and local government cross-border co-operation on the island of Ireland, within the delivery framework for the EU Interreg programmes, and working with local and regional authorities on both sides of the Ireland/Northern Ireland Border to build capacity for shared programming to address regional economic, infrastructural and social development needs in a context where the region was emerging from conflict.

This was followed by a move into the healthcare sector- again delivering cross-border programmes in healthcare, public and community health with a specific focus on alcohol awareness and prevention of alcohol misuse, design of family support programmes and promotion of maternal, infant and child mental health and wellbeing. Moving from cross-border healthcare co-operation into single-jurisdiction health system performance and transformation management, I was one of an initial cohort of NHS managers in Northern Ireland tasked with design and delivery of an ambitious programme of healthcare system reform and redesign, aimed at refocusing whole systems and resources on better population health outcomes through prevention and early intervention. Delivering the right service in the right place and at the right time, for the individual, and for groups of patients – particularly those with long-term conditions and multiple comorbidities- involved working across primary and secondary care systems, brokering partnerships and new ways of working between clinicians and service systems which transferred specialist knowledge and personalised care 'upstream', which built capacity in primary care systems to deliver the requisite preventative specialist interventions for a population in Northern Ireland whose health profile includes some of the most complex health inequalities in Europe, as a result of social and economic deprivation complicated by transgenerational experiences of political violence and civic conflict. From a role in service redesign and reform performance management, I then moved to operations focused on system governance, risk management and building capacity within a large complex healthcare organisation (with over 13,000 employees) for improved approaches to clinical and patient safety. All of these roles involved capacity building, designing training strategies and programmes, and attention to culture and behaviour as key enablers of important changes that were required in order for healthcare delivery to evolve in a way that met the changing needs of a population.

In addition to these operational experiences, I continue to work as a specialist in the design and brokering of collaborative governance and programming for territorial co-operation and cross-border development- this routinely involves multiple municipalities and includes a flagship model of interjurisdictional co-operation involving national and subnational authorities in Ireland and Northern Ireland. My current work also includes working with the Association of European Border Regions as a technical expert in cross-border co-operation and related governance/capacity building (including on external EU borders) and with the Council of Europe's Centre of Expertise for Good Governance.

Specific roles, relevant for the issue of developing human capital in key areas relevant for effective public sector reform and delivery of outcomes, includes a former role as Chair of the International Centre for Local and Regional Development – an international University Partnership (IE/UK/US) dedicated to Spatial Planning Research and Praxis for building capacity within public sector structures for citizen outcomes, specifically in a post-conflict environment, using the model of integrated spatial planning and co-operation (physical, infrastructural, social, economy and civic) as a template for inclusive growth and development. I currently also provide advisory services in the area of corporate performance and programme management to a range of bodies including cross-border organisations in the field of local government, environmental management and enforcement, and innovation management. I have also recently assisted the Irish National Economic and Social Research Council and the Government of Ireland Shared Island Unit with research identifying next-generation issues for cross-border and transboundary co-operation on the island of Ireland, ranging across the policy spectrum from economic growth, green transformation, health and wellbeing, and structural supports to facilitate long-term co-operation between neighbouring public administrative systems.

My conclusions have, in a sense, also been formed through the lens of experience that comes from working in challenging public sector reform and development processes while- as a public sector employee- also being a mother who worked outside of the home and who worked alongside parents who were doing the same thing. These issues- of equality, diversity, and inclusion matter to public administrative reform strategy, particularly in the context of public sector workforces, the retention of talent, the health and wellbeing of the workforce, and the design of employee environments in the public sector that enable both the sector, the collective and the individual to release their full potential.

Developing human capital for good governance and effective administration: Sensemaking with moving parts

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Cross Border Governance, Collaboration and Policy Specialist

Presentation to 15th Unidem Med Conference

'Public Service Policies- Paradigms for Changes'

17th May, 2o22

Informing perspective – Portfolio of Experience

- Regional CBC programmes management- capacity building and Interreg- local government partnerships- new infrastructure for EU cohesion

- Cross border healthcare programme management (inc. partnership with Local Govt)

- Health system performance and transformation management, governance/risk, capacity building, designing training strategies and programmes

- Regional CB territorial governance models- multiple municipalities inc. flagship in NW Ireland/NI- Green Transformation, Economic Growth- template for Shared Island initiative (IE)

- Intergovernmental policy arena (IR/UK)/peacebuilding diplomacy/1990s onwards

- EU & External borders CBC policy work with Association of European Border Regions

- Chairing ICLRD- IR/UK/US University Partnership- Spatial Planning Research and Praxis for building capacity for citizen outcomes (esp. as post conflict tool)

- Corporate performance and programme management- intergovernmental co-operation IR/NI/UK (territorial and environmental co-operation)

- Research to inform next-generation CBC (2021- NESC Shared Island research; leading DG SANTE/AEBR Patient Mobility Study)

- Lived experience

- Parent

Key Questions:

- How to ensure the right training at the right time for the right agents?

- How can we develop effective national training strategies that meet the needs of civil servants while respecting the principles of good governance?

- What are the tools to identify needs and ensure greater efficiency of public services?

- How can we retain talent and invest in human capital to develop an attractive and user-friendly public service?

Structure:

1. Overview of framework for public administrative reforms in Europe- key paradigms;

2. The question of evidence and knowledge;

3. Useful models: examples of good practice

4. Tools (inc. Council of Europe Training Needs Analysis Toolkit)

5. Practitioner perspective: what works?

6. Translating – identifying your vision and investing in it.

Challenges for Public Administration Right Now:

1. Different administrative histories, cultures, legal traditions;

2. Multiple levels of governance require capacity building;

3. Maintaining longer-held ambitions for reform; translating ambition into strategy and delivery; continuing to deliver in the immediate term;

4. Responding to how the world is changing; decentralisation and integrated services; better use of limited resources; expression of rights- to equality, health, clean environments, due legal process; new values, new emphases, new citizen expectations, new interest in delivering on these;

5. Working differently and beyond boundaries (administrative, cultural, operational). Putting the governance in place for the spaces between. Identifying opportunities to harness new imperatives and tools (e-government, decentralised workforce, flexibility, removal of locational barriers to workforce potential);

6. Building with citizens. How will we know how we are doing? The question of evidence- what to measure?
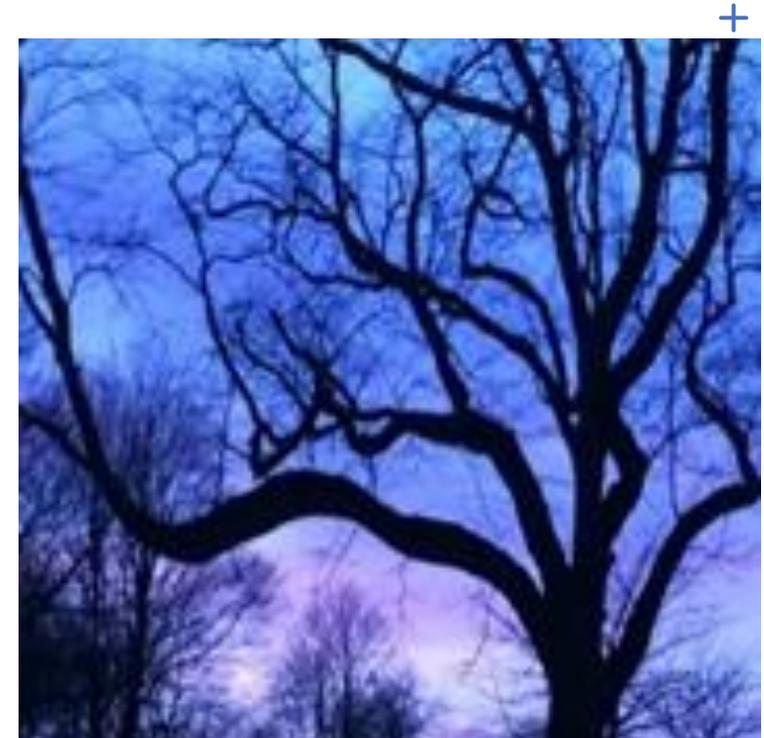
Public administrative reform in Europe: navigating the paradigms:
Ref: Hammerschmid/Van de Walle/Andrews/Bezes: *Public Administration Reforms in Europe- The View from the Top'* (2016).

Paradigm:	Main characteristics:
1. 'Weberian' model – transforming patrimonial systems into modern administrations	Legality Hierarchy (constrained approach to human capital development)
2. New Public Management (NPM) – 1980s Europe -	Embedding market-type mechanisms and business management logic into public sector (fragmentation of resources, assets, functions)
3. 'Neo-Weberian' model – combining Weberian and NPM characteristics (also referred to as 2nd/3rd-generation NPM)	Legality, impartiality, neutrality, becoming more responsive to citizens and public demands, combat fragmentation; co-ordination for effectiveness and outcomes

Evaluating Impacts of Public Administrative Reform, (in which training strategies are an essential component):

- Very little data about actual outcomes

- Evaluations, where they exist, are subjective to the times and not systemic;

- Dearth of high-quality comparative data (COCOPs project attempts to address this- longitudinal approach required- [Final Report Summary - COCOPS (Coordinating for Cohesion in the Public Sector of the Future) | FP7 | CORDIS | European Commission (europa.eu)](#))

- Making sense – experience of engagement in an applied context (see next slide).

- Shift from replication out of context (potentially clunky) to Government by Design (ref. McKinsey [Government by design: Four principles for a better public sector | McKinsey](#) 1) make better use of data, 2) involve citizens, 3) invest in employees, and 4) collaborate with other sectors
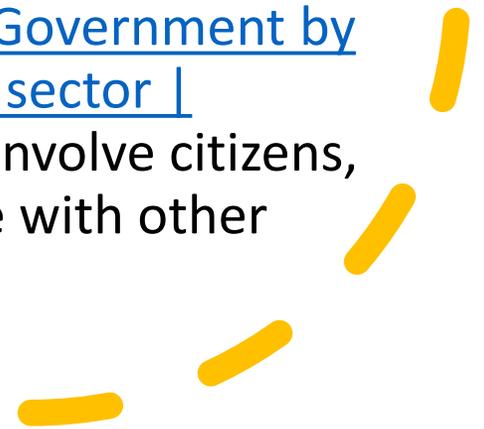
Developing human capital-institutional examples:

Skills and capacity building:

- **TAIEX** is the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument of the European Commission.

- **European Institute for Public Administration** (EIPA - Home – Eipa)

- **National Institutes for Public Administration** (e.g. Ireland: IPA - Institute of Public Administration)

- **NHS Improvement –** UK national health service platform for whole-systems capacity building, training and development- social movement model NHS England » Our work

Specialist knowledge transfer –translation for implementation and working across boundaries (administrative, sectoral, territorial, jurisdictional):

- Central and Eastern Europe - CESCI CESCI Network - CESCI Network (cesci-net.eu)

- Ireland/Northern Ireland/U.S. -The International Centre for Local & Regional Development (ICLRD) | Maynooth University

Mobilising knowledge in the wider system:

International networks contributing to human capital for change/benefitting public sector:

- **ICLEI- Local Governments for Sustainability:** ICLEI

- **Equinet- European Network of Equality Bodies:** Equinet – European Network of Equality Bodies (equineteurope.org)

Resources

Identifying needs:

CoE Training Needs analysis toolkit: [NTS_TNA_toolkit_fin (coe.int)](#)

A focus on quality:

EU 2015: Quality of Public Administration Toolbox for Practitioners: [Quality of Public Administration - A Toolbox for Practitioners | Shaping Europe's digital future (europa.eu)](#)

Benchmarking:

(Remember: equivalence can be a problem- handle with care)

OECD Government at a Glance : [Government at a Glance 2021 | en | OECD](#)

Getting started:
Council of Europe Training Needs Analysis Toolkit

Useful framework and process for:

a) running a gap analysis (gaps between the status quo and the desirable state),

b) identifying the reasons behind problems, their consequences and background,

c) identifying the validity of training activities and hierarchy of their importance for the organisation,

- d) identifying the scope and topics of training and possible organisational solutions.

- Full version available here:

NTS_TNA_toolkit_fin (coe.int)

Implementing Joined-Up Government for a Common Purpose – the case of Northern Ireland

- **OECD Review:** OECD (2016), Northern Ireland (United Kingdom): Implementing Joined-Up Governance for a Common Purpose- OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264260016-en

- **Underpinned by political agreement (Stormont House Agreement)**

- **Context: post-global-recession; fiscal pressures (doing more with less); need for political stability and outcomes for people.**

- **3 Themes: Improving strategic approaches, improving engagement with people improving operational delivery (to citizens and businesses)**

- **More integrated and multidimensional policies and services- meet citizen needs and deliver inclusive growth**

- **Shift approach to strategic planning**

- **Change approach to evaluation- what will tell us that we are making progress- evaluation approaches that can effectively capture multi-faceted policy outcomes (emphasis on qualitative as well as quantitative).**

Operationalising a Whole-Systems Vision: the case of Northern Ireland

- **High- Level Outcomes –** statements of future state; **Strategic planning –** all levels of public administration align plans with high-level outcomes; business operational planning sits underneath this;

- **Build capacity for accountability-** measuring outcomes is different from measuring outputs- ability to translate data sources into a narrative which speaks to the outcomes;

- **Competency frameworks- Leadership at all levels:** Civil Service, Local Government, Health service; working with others, using evidence, driving innovation, managing performance and quality. Understanding how what you do fits into bigger picture;

- **Workforce planning:** alignment with outcomes at system, organisational, team and individual level;

- **Collaborative working and codesign –** core competencies** for integrating services in a way that delivers holistic outcomes for citizens. Integrated community planning- interagency, designed with citizens. ** Role of local government.

- **Horizontal Principles –** Equality and Human Rights (Section 75 of Northern Ireland Act- legal requirement for equality screening of all policies and plans); sustainability/environmental impact/delivery on climate targets (emerging).

Northern Ireland Programme for Government Outcomes Framework

OECD Development Assistance Committee: have developed a model of evaluating development assistance – evaluation framework; international peer review of individual Government's work (development assistance) Encouraging good practice in development evaluation - OECD

Replicable to other areas of domestic public administration – by definition the outcomes intended through development assistance go beyond the system itself and relate to key indicators relevant for citizens and wider economies- not just the state infrastructure but how this delivers for the people and the polity.

E.g. Irish Government (OECD DA Committee member- DFAT Irish Aid). Mainstreamed: Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service – evaluating multi-dimensional policy/horizontal/sectoral issues: Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service (igees.gov.ie)

Designing- and Aligning the Moving Parts

- Know your vision – political buy-in important. Ideal: When the political and administrative state are in agreement and work symbiotically

- Your system/organisational/corporate vision and objectives become the territory on which you map your approach to building human capital. Invest in the skills that really matter, and the right balance of specialist to broader skills

- Use a mixture of tools to identify and prioritise training

- What outcomes for citizens are intended?

- Who do you need to empower and how best do/can they learn and develop their capacity? (remember not to forget about elected decision makers)? Pay attention to the WHOLE Ecosystem.

- Moving from 'permission to act' culture to one of self-efficacy?

- Identify risks and orientate your risk management framework to enable the vision – and control the risk of not achieving it (ref. Jon Barber tomorrow)

Hot tips from the field:

- Do NOT go straight from a strategy to performance-managing that strategy. Invest in capacity to deliver. And in culture and behaviour as well as knowledge-based development;

- As senior leaders and decision makers: model, recognise and acknowledge the behaviours and outlooks you want to see throughout the system;

- Invest in the right kind of training. Adults learn 6/7 times more through practice and feedback; mentoring, learning sets, self-directed learning within robust framework;

- Train your managers as enablers of people as well as processes; emotional and social intelligence matter; compassion matters; constructive supervision and feedback matter;

- Don't invest in accreditation without creating conditions for the practical application of that knowledge (also avoid scientisation and exclusiveness); value creativity (innovation capacity) as much as technical skills, build people up to trust their judgement and interact with their peers in solving problems; encourage ecosystems thinking, not silo thinking;

- Promote the development of an internal locus of control (self-efficacy) at all levels in the system- you'll have better morale and therefore better outcomes; (successful public reforms report high levels of this among public officials)

- Equality and human rights in action: how do different groups within your workforce learn best? What are their development needs and what are their assets? Listen to what your data is telling you- workforce wellbeing, retention, etc. E.g. NHS Menopause Policy; Domestic Violence policies

- Consider using a social movement approach: udc09_helenbevan_plenary.pdf (lmpartnership.org)

Key Questions for Discussion

- What is the vision for change in your sphere of influence and operation?

- What are the three biggest challenges associated with delivering this change (what/where are the gaps between current capacity and what you need?)

- Can these be turned into opportunities and how might you approach this?

Thank you for your attention

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