



Stage 1 - LEADERSHIP FOR ORGANISATIONS

Module 1 – GOOD LOCAL GOVERNANCE

The Leadership Academy is a learning and action programme for mayors, senior officials and elected representatives of local government.

January 2017



Centre of Expertise
for Local Government Reform



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1 MODULE OVERVIEW

1.1 BACKGROUND

- The Council of Europe (CoE) adopted the 12 Principles of Good Democratic Governance at Local Level (ref. Section 4) to implement what stated by the Charter of Local and Regional Self-Government¹. In fact, the Charter provides the foundation for a robust legislative framework for local government, but does not contain the tools that can guarantee an effective delivery of Good Governance at local level.
- The whole of the Leadership Academy aims at providing participants with the learning and tools that are needed to underpin the achievement of the 12 Principles in their own organisations.

1.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To gather an in-depth understanding of the 12 Principles for Good Democratic Governance and their relevance for their organisations' activity.
- To gather an understanding of the competences needed for local government leadership.

1.3 LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Participants are familiar with the 12 Principles and the challenges in their implementation.
- The 12 principles are acknowledged as standards of performance to monitor local government actions.
- Participants become acquainted with some of the competences needed for local government leadership.

1.4 DURATION

- 115 minutes

¹ Council of Europe. (1985, October 15). European Charter of Local Self-Government. ETS no 122. Strasbourg.

2 MODULE STRUCTURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

- The 12 Principles are introduced as a tool that can be used to monitor standards and improve performance.

2.2 GROUP EXERCISE 1– IDENTIFYING CORE CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING THE 12 PRINCIPLES

- Participants work in small groups (3-4 people per group) to identify the core challenges in implementing the 12 Principles in their organisations.

2.3 FEEDBACK AND DISCUSSION 1

- Participants are facilitated into a feedback session on the identified challenges in

order to cluster them in thematic group per principle.

2.4 GROUP EXERCISE 2 – IDENTIFYING KEY ACTIONS TO OVERCOME THE IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES ON THE 12 PRINCIPLES

- Participants work in groups to identify key actions that their organisations should deliver to overcome the challenges and implement the 12 Principles more effectively.

2.5 FEEDBACK AND DISCUSSION 2

- Participants are facilitated into a feedback session on the identified key actions.

3 WORKING DEFINITIONS

3.1 ORGANISATION

For the purpose of LAP 'organisation' means Local Authority" (LA) in its widest sense, interpreted as directly or indirectly elected public governing bodies at sub-national level possessing within a given territory, as defined by law, a degree of autonomy from the central government and a set of competences to deliver public goods and services to citizens. They encompass a large variety of public governing bodies at various levels i.e. municipalities, communities, districts, counties, provinces, regions etc. As defined above, LAs vary across a range of dimensions, including population size, number of tiers in the local government system, urban vs. rural, mandates and functions, human and financial resources, linkages with customary institutions, degree to which they are downwardly accountable and representative, and their financial arrangements.²

3.2 GOOD GOVERNANCE

Governance can be broadly defined as the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes (a) the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; (b) the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and (c) the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them³.

For the purpose of LAP Good governance is a multi-faceted concept, drawing on the 12 Principles (see section 4), rules and practices as defined by the Council of Europe.

²Definition by the European Commission - https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/index.php/Local_authorities

³ Kaufmann, D. et al. (2010). The Worldwide Governance Indicators: Methodology and Analytical Issues, World Bank, Brookings Institution, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank - <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/pdf/WGI.pdf>

4 KEY CONCEPTS

4.1 GOOD LOCAL GOVERNANCE

In 2005, the Heads of State and Government of the member states of the Council of Europe meeting in Warsaw for their Third Summit, declared that “effective democracy and good governance at all levels are essential for preventing conflicts, promoting stability, facilitating economic and social progress, and hence for creating sustainable communities where people want to live and work, now and in the future”.

Good governance is a requirement at all levels of public administration. At local level, it is of fundamental importance because local government is closest to citizens and provides them with essential services and it is at this level that they can most readily feel ownership of public action⁴.

4.2 THE 12 PRINCIPLES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

The Principle benefit organisations as standards of performance and as monitoring tools for local strategies and policies.

Moreover, the 12 Principles can be used as a tool to advocate for:

- (at local level) improving standards of performance and to deliver good local governance;
- (at central level) furthering decentralisation, and design appropriate legislative changes empowering local authorities through fair allocation of resources.

4.2.1 Principle 1 - Fair Conduct of Elections, Representation and Participation

- a. Local elections are conducted freely and fairly, according to international standards and national legislation, and without any fraud.
- b. Citizens are at the centre of public activity and they are involved in clearly defined ways in public life at local level.
- c. All men and women have a voice in decision-making, either directly or through legitimate inter-mediate bodies that represent their interests. Such broad participation is built on the freedoms of expression, assembly and association.
- d. All voices, including those of the less privileged and most vulnerable, are heard and taken into account in decision-making, including over the allocation of resources.
- e. There is always an honest attempt to mediate between various legitimate interests and to reach a broad consensus on what is in the best interest of the whole community and on how this can be achieved.
- f. Decisions are taken according to the will of the many, while the rights and legitimate interests of the few are respected.

4.2.2 Principle 2 - Responsiveness

- a. Objectives, rules, structures and procedures are adapted to legitimate expectations and needs of citizens.
- b. Public services are delivered, and requests and complaints are responded to, within a reasonable timeframe.

4.2.3 Principle 3 - Efficiency and Effectiveness

- a. Results meet agreed objectives.
- b. Best possible use is made of the resources available.
- c. Performance management systems make it possible to evaluate and enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of services.

⁴ Council of Europe. (2007). Extract from the Valencia Declaration 15th Conference of European Ministers responsible for local and regional government (Valencia, Spain, 15-16 October 2007) - Appendix I - http://www.coe.int/t/dgap/localdemocracy/Strategy_Innovation/Strategie2007_en.pdf

- d. Audits are carried out at regular intervals to assess and improve performance.

4.2.4 Principle 4 - Openness and Transparency

- a. Decisions are taken and enforced in accordance with rules and regulations.
- b. There is public access to all information which is not classified for well-specified reasons as provided for by law (such as the protection of privacy or ensuring the fairness of procurement procedures).
- c. Information on decisions, implementation of policies and results are made available to the public in such a way as to enable it to effectively follow and contribute to the work of the local authority.

4.2.5 Principle 5 - Rule of Law

- a. Local authorities abide by the law and judicial decisions.
- b. Rules and regulations are adopted in accordance with procedures provided for by law and are enforced impartially.

4.2.6 Principle 6 - Ethical Conduct

- a. The public good is placed before individual interests.
- b. There are effective measures to prevent and combat all forms of corruption.
- c. Conflicts of interest are declared in a timely manner and persons involved must abstain from taking part in relevant decisions.

4.2.7 Principle 7 - Competence and Capacity

- a. The professional skills of those who deliver governance are continuously maintained and strengthened in order to improve their output and impact.
- b. Public officials are motivated to continuously improve their performance.
- c. Practical methods and procedures are created and used in order to transform skills into capacity and to produce better results.

4.2.8 Principle 8 - Innovation and Openness to Change

- a. New and efficient solutions to problems are sought and advantage is taken of modern methods of service provision.
- b. There is readiness to pilot and experiment with new programmes and to learn from the experience of others.
- c. A climate favourable to change is created in the interest of achieving better results.

4.2.9 Principle 9 - Sustainability and Long-term Orientation

- a. The needs of future generations are taken into account in current policies.
- b. The sustainability of the community is constantly taken into account.
- c. Decisions strive to internalise all costs and not to transfer problems and tensions - be they environmental, structural, financial, economic or social - to future generations.
- d. There is a broad and long-term perspective on the future of the local community along with a sense of what is needed for such development.
- e. There is understanding of the historical, cultural and social complexities in which this perspective is grounded.

4.2.10 Principle 10 - Sound Financial Management

- a. Charges do not exceed the cost of services provided and do not reduce demand excessively, particularly in the case of important public services.
- b. Prudence is observed in financial management, including in the contracting and use of loans, in the estimation of resources, revenues and reserves, and in the use of exceptional revenue.
- c. Multi-annual budget plans are prepared, in consultation with the public.
- d. Risks are properly estimated and managed, including by the publication of consolidated accounts and, in the case of public-private partnerships, by sharing the risks realistically.
- e. The local authority takes part in arrangements for inter-municipal

solidarity, fair sharing of burdens and benefits and reduction of risks (equalisation systems, inter-municipal cooperation, mutualisation of risks....).

4.2.11 Principle 11 - Human Rights, Cultural Diversity and Social Cohesion

- a. Within the local authority's sphere of influence, human rights are respected, protected and implemented, and discrimination on any grounds is combatted.
- b. Cultural diversity is treated as an asset, and continuous efforts are made to ensure that all have a stake in the local community, identify with it and do not feel excluded.

- c. Social cohesion and the integration of disadvantaged areas are promoted.
- d. Access to essential services is preserved, in particular for the most disadvantaged sections of the population.

4.2.12 Principle 12 - Accountability

- a. All decision-makers, collective and individual, take responsibility for their decisions.
- b. Decisions are reported on, explained and can be sanctioned.
- c. There are effective remedies against maladministration and against actions of local authorities which infringe civil rights.

5 EXERCISES

5.1 EXERCISE 1 – GROUP EXERCISE 1 – IDENTIFYING CORE CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING THE 12 PRINCIPLES

Principle 1. Fair Conduct of Elections, Representation and Participation	Principle 7. Competence and Capacity
Principle 2. Responsiveness	Principle 8. Innovation and Openness to Change
Principle 3. Efficiency and Effectiveness	Principle 9. Sustainability and Long-term Orientation
Principle 4. Openness and Transparency	Principle 10. Sound financial management
Principle 5. Rule of Law	Principle 11. Human rights, cultural diversity and social cohesion
Principle 6. Ethical conduct	Principle 12. Accountability

5.2 EXERCISE 2 – GROUP EXERCISE 2– IDENTIFYING KEY ACTIONS TO OVERCOME THE IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES ON THE 12 PRINCIPLES

Principle 1. Fair Conduct of Elections, Representation and Participation		Principle 7. Competence and Capacity	
Challenge:	Action:	Challenge:	Action:
Principle 2. Responsiveness		Principle 8. Innovation and Openness to Change	
Challenge:	Action:	Challenge:	Action:
Principle 3. Efficiency and Effectiveness		Principle 9. Sustainability and Long-term Orientation	
Challenge:	Action:	Challenge:	Action:
Principle 4. Openness and Transparency		Principle 10. Sound financial management	
Challenge:	Action:	Challenge:	Action:
Principle 5. Rule of Law		Principle 11. Human rights, cultural diversity and social cohesion	
Challenge:	Action:	Challenge:	Action:
Principle 6. Ethical conduct		Principle 12. Accountability	
Challenge:	Action:	Challenge:	Action:

6 REFERENCES

- Council of Europe. (1985). European Charter of Local Self-Government. ETS no 122. Strasbourg
- Council of Europe. (2007). Extract from the Valencia Declaration 15th Conference of European Ministers responsible for local and regional government (Valencia, Spain, 15-16 October 2007) - Appendix I - http://www.coe.int/t/dgap/localdemocracy/Strategy_Innovation/Strategie2007_en.pdf
- Council of Europe. European Committee on Democracy and Governance (CDDG), Compendium of the most relevant Council of Europe texts in the area of democracy - https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=0900001680649228#Good
- European Commission Civil Society Homepage - https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/index.php/Local_authorities (last accessed 2017)
- Kaufmann, D. et al. (2010). The Worldwide Governance Indicators: Methodology and Analytical Issues, World Bank, Brookings Institution, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank - <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/pdf/WGI.pdf>