

# Establishing a Training and Technical Assistance Partnership

Kaunas, Lithuania

## Background

Lithuanian local government officials lacked skills and experience in management and public administration techniques including decision-making, consensus and team building, organizational development, and budgeting. To address the training needs of local governments, the Kaunas University of Technology (KTU) and the Lithuanian Association of Local Authorities (LALA) concluded an agreement in 1994 to train local government officials through the Municipal Training Center (MTC).

## Innovation

The training agreement grew out of a successful cooperative effort by KTU and LALA to assist communities to develop their first independent annual budgets. KTU offers a certificate in public administration and has a faculty and cadre of visiting U.S. professionals who teach public administration. LALA members are the eight incorporated cities and 44 regional governments in Lithuania. LALA is recognized by the national government as the official representative of local government.

The MTC was established by KTU and the U.S. Baltic Foundation and is financed from university resources, grants from international organizations such as PHARE and USAID, and service fees. The MTC and LALA jointly plan, sponsor, and conduct training programs for local government officials. The objective of the training provided by MTC and LALA is to provide local governments with affordable training opportunities tailored to the Lithuanian political culture and communities' special needs. The training is provided free or for a nominal charge.

In addition to the training activities, the MTC has conducted organization development studies for local governments in Kaunas, Alytus, Anyksciai, and Panevezys. It has worked closely with the World Bank, PHARE, and the National Democratic Institute. For example, using the available pool of talent in the KTU public administration program, MTC programs have supported the National Democratic Institute's efforts to assist Lithuanian communities to develop and institutionalize citizen participation opportunities.

## Results

The MTC functions as the training arm of LALA and has provided training to local governments on a variety of topics including budgeting, personnel management, citizen participation, strategic planning, and economic development. The joint venture arrangement between MTC and LALA prevents duplication of effort and enables LALA to take advantage of the skills and resources available through MTC. The arrangement also provides local governments with easy access to consulting services. For example, MTC is facilitating the work of two major work groups, one studying proposals to amend the current Law on Local Governments, the other consisting of city administrators who wish to find ways to professionalize the position of city administrator.

## Summary

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