

A decade in the activities of Working Party F (Training)

H. Springer (ARD/ZDF – SRT)

D. Kopitz (EBU)

1. *The beginning – The “EBU Training Heads”*

The heads of three training institutes met in London approximately 20 years ago and discussed possible cooperation between broadcasting training centres within Europe. Those attending this pioneering meeting were Harry Henderson (BBC, United Kingdom), Rolf Skoe (NRK, Norway), and Hans Springer (SRT, Germany). From this meeting grew an informal group, known as the Heads of Technical Training Centres (the “Training Heads”).

The first objectives were to exchange information on:

- broadcasting training and retraining;
- broadcasting jobs, jobs–names, duties and requirements;
- changing jobs in a broadcast environment which itself is changing, and the training implications;
- the impact of new technology on broadcasting training.

One special topic, prompted by a paper presented by Harry Henderson at IBC 1972 related to the ever more–reliable, but complex, broadcasting

EBU Working Party F has officially been active for just over ten years, although its roots go back a further decade to the early 1970s.

The Working Party is facing many new challenges: the radical evolution in broadcasting methods in the 1990s which require new approaches to broadcast system management, the specialized requirements of the EBU’s new Member–organizations in Eastern and Central Europe, the rational exploitation of new computer–aided training tools and distance–learning techniques, and many more.

The experience gained by the Working Party in its formative years will serve as a solid foundation for its work in the years ahead, ensuring that the EBU can continue to contribute effectively to international and national training initiatives in all areas of sound and television broadcasting.



equipment which was then being purchased. It stimulated several technical documentation meetings, discussions with manufacturers of broadcasting equipment and eventually an EBU Technical Recommendation setting out guidelines for the presentation of handbooks for broadcasting equipment [1, 2].

This document attracted the attention of the EBU Technical Centre. Indeed the event was unusual in EBU circles, since a group which, officially, did not exist, had produced an output. The Director of the Technical Centre, Rudi Gressmann, succeeded having the informal group converted into an EBU Working Party. It was given the code-letter “F”, standing for the French word “Formation” (training)¹. This conversion into an EBU Working Party happened in the period 1979–1981.

At the last meeting of the Training Heads at Cesme, in 1981, the founding procedures of Working Party F took place with the first elections of a Chairman (Aidan Folan from RTE, Ireland), a Vice-Chairman (Hans Springer) and a Steering Committee of up to seven members.

■ 2. EBU Working Party F

■ 2.1. The Working Party

Members of the Working Party are nominated by the EBU Member organizations, where they should be responsible for training. Originally the members were, more specifically, the heads of the *technical* training services, but this has since been modified.

As experience was gained during the first activities of the newly-created Working Party, Terms of Reference have been developed and revised and internal rules lay down the procedures for the work to be carried out and for the programme of work, the structure and membership, the election of Chairmen and the Steering Committee members etc. The more-general framework is laid down in the Guiding Principles governing the activities of all the Working Parties of the EBU Technical Committee.

Since 1981 Working Party F has met every second year for a Plenary Meeting. The preparation of Plenary Meetings is carried out by the Steering Committee.

1. There was already a Working Party T in existence dealing with Transmission.

■ 2.2. The Steering Committee – in principle and in practice

The Steering Committee is formed from the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Working Party and up to five members of the Working Party. They are elected by the Plenary Meeting for a four-year period.

The main tasks of the Steering Committee to date have been to implement the agreed “Programme of Work” in between the Plenary Meetings. The structure was changed in 1989 to include Ad-hoc groups; these are set up by the Plenary Meetings to perform the work and they report to the Steering Committee and, when a step forward has been achieved, to the Plenary Meeting of the Working Party. This change was introduced mainly as a means of involving more members in the Working Party’s work.

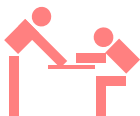
The Chairman of Working Party F reports twice a year to the Technical Committee and its Bureau, and the reports on the Steering-Committee meetings and the Plenary Meetings of Working Party F are forwarded to the Technical Committee for approval – but they form only a very small proportion of the paperwork which these bodies have to handle.

■ 2.3. Not just Technical Training

Working Party F was formed officially in 1981, but a number of changes have taken place since then which necessarily have an impact on the way in which Working Party F needs to function, and the subjects it must examine. The most important of these changes have been:

- In many EBU Member-organizations the training department or training organization has been moved to the staff administration area, and is responsible for more than just technical training.
- The technical training organizations have themselves changed, in recognition of the fact that technical training is concerned with other matters besides technology; technical training has to include general knowledge on broadcasting and it may be used to modify the attitudes of staff towards their respective organizations, towards new technology, etc.

As a result, the name of the Working Party F was changed from “Technical Training” to “Training”, to reflect the wider implications of training and the fact that many members of Working Party F are responsible for *all* fields of broadcast training in their organization.



This change has been fully accepted by the EBU Technical Committee, which has shown considerable flexibility and sympathy with the aims and the development of Working Party F.

■ 2.4. *The role of Working Party F*

The reports of Working Party F to the EBU Technical Committee and the discussions during its meetings have significantly affected the attitude of the members of the Technical Committee towards training. They now accept that training is an essential component of broadcasting management and they understand the role and importance of training when thinking about new technology, its impact on programme making and changes of jobs, job-responsibilities and organization.

To extent further this understanding of the importance of training, regular contacts are maintained with other EBU Working Parties. In particular, the Chairman of Working Party F is an ex officio member of Working Party V (New systems and services) so that Working Party F can identify as soon as possible the training implications of new technologies when they come under consideration for use in broadcasting.

Working Party F also acts on behalf of the EBU with regard to the attribution of the EBU Training Fellowship in the technical field. At the present time the objective pursued is the organization of assistance for people responsible for training in the

broadcasting organizations of the new Members of the EBU in Central and Eastern Europe, on the basis of the “train the trainers” principle.

■ 2.5. *Cooperation with broadcasting managers*

Working Party F has supported and encouraged the growing awareness of broadcast managers of the fact that training is a long-term investment in staff and that it can have a very positive role as a management tool. If it is to be effective, therefore, training needs careful planning and implementation.

In addition, trainers have a responsibility to advise management on matters concerning staff training and development. This may include, when appropriate, suggesting other measures instead of training if it would be more effective in certain cases (e.g. handbooks, built-in test equipment, ...). The EBU Training Code, a guide for the cooperation between managers and trainers in the field of staff training, is an example of this way of thinking [3, 4].

■ 2.6. *Training and the development of human resources*

The development of human resources is a large complex subject having training as one component.

Training on its own is not sufficient; it will not succeed if it is not embedded into a development

Participants in the Plenary Meeting of Working Party F, Lisbon, 1991.





concept which is often called “organizational development”. At the core of such a system each employee should be seen as a composite individual, with all his or her motives, emotions, thinking and experiences.

Thus training should be understood as an interactive process which requires that certain conditions should pre-exist in the organization. These will include:

- a vision (or a statement of objectives) which might be seen as a lighthouse, an aid to aligning one’s own decisions and work according to the general objectives of the broadcaster;
- a training strategy which guides line managers and trainers along general lines to be followed, albeit flexibly – in training: objectives, incentives, promotion, staff development, etc.;
- a training climate which stimulates personal as well as job-related development;
- an awareness of managers and staff members of the need for, and results of, permanent organizational development and training in order to adapt the organization to changing individuals, environments and markets.

To earn a return on the investment – for both employees and broadcasters – training needs to be embedded into a flexible system of staff and organizational development. It is necessary to offer incentives for training–results and innovations; as long as promotion is mainly based upon seniority there will be no motivation. The classic automatic increase of salary (every year or every second year as in public administrations all over the world) has proved to be not at all to be motivating; it is counter-productive as regards learning and performance. It would be better to have a system where salary is linked to personal performance, how difficult it might be to measure personal performance in broadcasting.

An organization’s self-awareness, its efficiency and working climate can only be developed by the top management. The training of broadcasting managers is therefore one of the most urgent needs.

■ 2.7. Management training

The preparations for the MANTRA management training project date back to October 1989. At a meeting of Working Party F held at Helsinki, the need for such a programme was identified, and a project group, under the chairmanship of Dr. Ismo Silvo (YLE) started to explore the requirements of several EBU Members which had shown immedi-

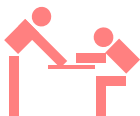
ate interest. In 1991, an invitation to tender was launched, in association with the YLE and the BBC, in a number of European newspapers, to invite management consultants to propose a tailor-made management course for broadcasters, based on the identified requirements from the MANTRA project group. From the 25 offers received, a British consultancy consortium, Mercer Management Consulting (London), was finally given the contract for the development of the course material and the running of the courses. The contract covers twelve courses and one pilot seminar, over a period of three years, aiming at the training of some 300 managers. Each course lasts four days, followed by project-group work and a one-day debriefing seminar during which the project work undertaken by the participants is evaluated. Additional management consultancy services will be available to the EBU Members, on request.

While examining the requirements for these courses, the MANTRA project group discovered that:

- most organizations had carried out initial strategy formulations, and that this had also determined management training needs;
- the competitive business environments faced now by European broadcasters were similar;
- the international training programmes available from European management training suppliers did not adequately address the needs of broadcasters – and especially those in the public sector;
- the development of existing human resources has been recognized as predominant, since management recruitment has become more difficult throughout Europe.

In responding to these observations, EBU Members may welcome the opportunities offered by the MANTRA project. These are the following:

- an opportunity for managers from broadcasters of different countries to work together, on a personal level, and share their experience with managers facing similar problems which are set in a wider context than the borders of nations;
- an opportunity to demonstrate that European broadcasters value European collaboration;
- greater understanding of cross-cultural differences, leading towards more extensive and more genuine collaboration and co-production;
- the recognition and experience of combined management development needs which enhances the aims of the EBU;



- enhanced learning by participants with a focus on real management issues encountered in the broadcasting business.

The following core areas will therefore be covered by the courses:

- Present and future broadcast strategies in a changing competitive environment.
- Application of knowledge about audiences, audience segments, markets and customers to the processes of strategic planning and building a public service.
- Resourcing broadcasting in a modern specialized organization, i.e. challenges of recruiting, developing and motivating creative, innovative and skilled people.
- Structuring and organizing broadcasting to enhance the innovative and creative nature of programme-making for both national and European audiences.

■ 2.8. Use of micro-computers for training

Since the early days of Working Party F, the use of computers to assist in training has been discussed and there has been a continuous exchange of experience gained in this field. There would be considerable economic advantages if the EBU Members could exchange software related to computer-assisted instruction and so it was felt that it would be useful to standardize the hardware recommended

for use in the broadcast training environment. Consequently, in 1988, IBM PS/2 compatible micro-computer equipment was recommended as the basis for such applications in training [5].

■ 2.9. The Training Information System development project

Many years ago, Working Party F compiled the “EBU Training Directory” [6] giving details of the training departments operated by EBU Members, contacts, course material available for exchange, courses for students from overseas, etc. This booklet was updated several times, and it contains a wealth of information. However, with the progress made in the use of personal computers in the training environment it was felt that this form of publication no longer responds to the requirements of a modern source of information. It was therefore decided to replace it by a new Training Information System (TIS) which will shortly be developed within Working Party F.

The new system will make use of a database on floppy disks that can be consulted interactively after transfer to a hard disk. It will be accompanied by a conventional print-out in a form resembling the original publication. The majority of training departments represented in Working Party F nevertheless expect to use only the floppy disk version, and they will take care that this system develops into a database containing all useful up-to-date references about professional broadcasting training in Europe and elsewhere. Other

Dr. Hans Springer (right) completed his studies in physics at Kiel University in 1957. From that year until 1963 he worked at the Institut für Rundfunktechnik (IRT) where he was concerned with television measurement techniques: vertical-interval test signals, CRT picture display quality, etc.

In 1964 he was appointed Head of the Schule für Rundfunktechnik (SRT), which is the radio and television engineering training centre of the German public-service broadcasters; he still holds this post.

Hans Springer is one of the founders of the group of “Heads of technical training institutes of European broadcasters” which later became EBU Working Party F (Training). He has been Chairman of Working Party F and of its Steering Committee since 1985.



Mr. Dietmar Kopitz (left) graduated as Diplom-Engineer in telecommunications at the Technical University of Berlin (West) in 1967. He then joined ARD/SFB where he worked in the sector of broadcast equipment planning from 1967 to 1971. In 1971 he joined the EBU Technical Centre in Brussels where he was first responsible for coordinating the EBU's activities in the field of frequency planning and spectrum usage. In this context he was involved in collaborating with the ITU, and the CCIR and IFRB in particular, and also in the development of the Radio Data System, RDS.

Later he assumed responsibility for coordinating the activities of Working Party F (Training). At present he holds the position of Chief Engineer in the EBU Technical Department in Geneva. He is a frequent lecturer at international meetings held all over the world.



broadcasting unions have already begun to take interest in the development of this system.

■ 2.10. *The EBU Training Workshops*

EBU Training Workshops are intended as a forum in which trainers from the training centres of EBU Members can exchange their experiences, discuss common problems and start cooperation for the development or production of training materials. The response to each of the five Training Workshops held since 1984 has been extremely positive, with typically 100 or more participants on each occasion.

The first two Training Workshops took place in Antwerp (1984, 1986) with very strong support from BRTN/RTBF; the third Workshop, in Madrid (1988), was organized and strongly supported by RTVE and its training institute OIRTV. The 4th Workshop was also in Madrid (1990) and the 5th Workshop, held in Copenhagen (1992), was jointly organized by the group of Nordic broadcasters.

At the Workshops considerable discussion took place between broadcasting managers and trainers on the general theme of training as a management tool which demands close cooperation between managers and trainers. However it was felt that it would in future be more effective to invite managers to the Plenary Meetings instead of the Training Workshops because the large number of participants made it difficult to discuss effectively with the managers during the short duration of the Workshops.

The next Workshop will be held in October 1994 at INA, near Paris, and be hosted by the French broadcasters.

■ 2.11. *The EBU Newsletter on training and human resources development*

The workshops are being held only once every two years, so an additional means is required to involve the trainers in a more-permanent communication process. To this end, a special newsletter was created. It will be issued twice per year and distributed to all staff involved in human resources development and training within the EBU Members. The purpose of this communication is to highlight

European collaboration in the sector of training and explain the origin and nature of certain European projects such as Media, Eureka Audiovisual, Vision 1250, Media Investment Club etc. Books and video tapes available for training will also be reviewed. The newsletter was issued first in September 1992, and the next issue is planned for April 1993.

■ 3. *The future*

As the end of this year, the present Chairman, Hans Springer, will retire and consequently at the forthcoming Plenary Meeting of Working Party F, which will be held in October 93 in Turkey, a new Chairman will have to be elected. In the meantime, a lot of effort will be put into developing new relations with those responsible for training in the broadcasting organizations of the new Members of the EBU in Central and Eastern Europe.

This process will undoubtedly add many new members to Working Party F and it may be necessary to arrange for some of them to join the Steering Committee, to ensure that their needs are catered for satisfactorily. One thing is however certain at this stage: Working Party F has functioned well within the past ten years. Many collaborative projects have been pursued, and all those that have participated within the Working Party feel that they have benefitted greatly, for the work that they were carrying out in their national environments.

■ *Bibliography*

- [1] EBU Recommendation R29–1982: **Design of handbooks for broadcasting equipment.**
- [2] EBU document Tech. 3239 (1983): **The design of handbooks for broadcasting equipment.**
- [3] EBU Recommendation R30–1982: **Training requirements associated with projects dealing with broadcasting equipment.**
- [4] EBU document Tech 3255 (1986): **EBU training code.**
- [5] EBU Recommendation R51–1988: **Micro-computer hardware for training purposes.**
- [6] EBU document SPB 288 (1989): **Broadcasting training directory.**