

Chapter 3

Evaluation Highlights

- Good pedagogy, support for implementation of learning in the workplace, and adequate targeting all drive successful training.
- Bank training is often too short to meet capacity-building goals, underutilizes practical exercises, and lacks follow-up.
- Targeting of training is the most important design factor for successful training.
- WBI and project-based training perform equally well on pedagogical design of training, but WBI training performs much more poorly on targeting of training and support for workplace implementation of learning.

What Training Works: Training Design

Effective training design for capacity building takes into account not only how best to achieve learning goals, but also how best to ensure that trainees can apply learning in the workplace and that training content responds to organizational or institutional needs. As such, good training design is important for success along the entire length of the training results chain.

Table 3.1 presents the three design factors and seven associated training procedures needed for successful training. Each design factor is associated with a link in the results chain. **Good pedagogy** is needed for successful learning outputs. **Adequate support** for transfer of learning to the workplace is needed for individual workplace performance outcomes. **Adequate targeting** of training to

organizational and/or institutional needs is necessary if performance change is to have an impact on development capacity.

The field reviews and six-country survey of participants assessed these three factors, and seven associated training-management processes, according to the following parameters:

Table 3.1: Design Factors for Successful Training

| Factors for training efficacy | Associated training processes |
|--|--|
| Good pedagogy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional curriculum design matched to training needs • Didactic methods are varied and appropriate for participant-level and training goals |
| Adequate support for transfer of learning to workplace | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-class preparation to facilitate implementation of learning in the workplace through action learning and practical exercises • On-the-job follow-up support |
| Adequate targeting of training to organizational needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational capacity diagnosis (What capacity gaps exist? Is training an appropriate means of addressing these gaps?) • Training-needs assessment (What is the present capacity of those to be trained? What training is needed to address existing capacity gaps?) • Strategic participant selection (Who should be trained to meet organizational goals?) |

Source: IEG evaluation literature review.

Quality: How well did Bank-financed training perform on the three factors for training efficacy and their associated training processes?

Importance: How important were these factors/processes in the achievement of training results?

To assess process quality, respondents to the six-country survey were asked the extent to which these training management processes were present in the courses they attended.¹ In addition, the field studies rated each WBI and project-based training program on the extent to which it successfully implemented these processes. Training management processes were rated using the following scale:

Good: training process was adequately implemented, with no more than minor shortcomings;

Medium: training process was partially implemented, with significant shortcomings;

Poor: training process was not implemented or was implemented with major shortcomings.

The relative importance of various processes to training success was assessed in the six-country survey through two methods.² First, a “drivers-of-training-success” analysis was completed using the six-country survey data (see box 3.1).³ The drivers analysis found that the most important factor for training success was the organizational context in which training was done (discussed in chapter 4). Design factors associated with targeting of training were found to be of substantial secondary importance.

Second, participants who had stated that training had less than a substantial impact on key aspects of their work (45 percent of respondents) were asked the reasons for this lesser impact. Inadequate targeting of training was cited as the most important cause. Fifty-seven percent of WBI respondents to this question, and 44 percent of project-based training respondents,

Box 3.1: Drivers of Training Success

To determine the importance of training processes and contextual factors to training success, respondents were asked to agree or disagree with specific statements. A principal-components analysis^a was then used to group processes and contextual factors based on participants’ responses and to identify key drivers of successful training. These drivers were

then ranked in importance on the basis of a discriminate function analysis that linked the respondent’s rating of training impact on his or her work to the respondent’s ratings on each of the course attributes. The stronger the predictive power of course attributes, the higher the importance of the driver overall.

| Driver | Correlated survey statements |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Course targeting | The level of the course was appropriate for a person with my knowledge and experience. The course content specifically addressed my country’s circumstances. The course content addressed issues that are important to my work. |
| Course quality | The lecturers were of good quality. The course content was interesting. The course was in a language I am fluent in. |
| Participant input | I was given the opportunity to provide feedback on my satisfaction with the course. The course organizers asked me to share with them my needs or objectives in the course, either before the course or at its start. |
| Participant mix/interaction | Course participants had about equal levels of knowledge/experience coming in to the course. I learned from the experience of other participants in the course. |

Source: IEG six-country survey of training participants.

a. In principal-components analysis, individual survey questions are grouped together based on respondent answer patterns. Through correlation analysis, it groups the variables that respondents tend to rate similarly.

said that training was not relevant to key aspects of their work.⁴ Inadequate resources or incentives for implementation of training (organizational context) was the second most important reason cited (table 4.1). In sum, these two methods both identified targeting of training content and the organizational context for implementation of learning as the two primary determinants of training success.

Pedagogy

Good pedagogy involves the matching of curriculum and learning methods to training goals and participant characteristics. There are many questions that need to be addressed by instructional designers: Should training content be delivered all at one time or spread out over weeks or months? To what extent are participatory methods or practical exercises necessary in order to achieve sustainable learning? Are small class sizes necessary to facilitate learning? Can course content be covered using electronic or distance learning, or is face-to-face, classroom-based training necessary? How should training content be sequenced to maximize understanding? How much time should be devoted to specific topics?

A comprehensive, in-depth assessment of pedagogical methods was beyond the scope of this evaluation, because it would have required detailed investigation of course attributes by subject-area experts. Instead, interviews with participants and training providers in the field studies and the six-country survey responses about course interest and lecturer quality were used to indicate pedagogical design quality. Box 3.2 illustrates a range of good pedagogical techniques identified in the field studies.

As noted in chapter 2, Bank-financed training has been successful, overall, in meeting learning objectives, which suggests that pedagogy was adequate. Indeed, participants interviewed both in the six-country survey and the field reviews expressed satisfaction with pedagogical design and teaching standards. However, two major shortcomings were found repeatedly in the field studies and also cited by participants in the six-country survey—inadequate course length and insufficient use of practical

The most important drivers of training success were targeting of training and trainees' workplace context.

Participants interviewed in both the six-country survey and the field reviews expressed satisfaction with teaching standards.

Box 3.2: Diverse Pedagogical Methods Support Learning

The WBI's partner in Mexico is the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey, which works primarily through a Web-based, interactive distance-learning platform, with participants signing onto the World Wide Web to pursue the course. In designing a course, the Mexican institute assembles a teaching team that consists of professors/lecturers and tutors, and a design team that includes an instructional designer, graphic designer, media producer, and Web editor, with systems developers, technical support staff, and multimedia staff available as needed. All content and exercises are practical and action oriented. The content is structured around problems that have to be solved in the workplace and feasible solutions based on good practice examples from around the world.

The Agricultural Services Support project in Tunisia used a blend of pedagogical techniques to help agricultural producers increase the quality of their products and to increase exports. Pedagogy bal-

anced theory, application, and practice. A three-day workshop on producing for export was followed by a one-and-a-half-day study tour to a farm to assess producers' processes and conditions. The instruction ended with another three-day workshop on other export issues such as marketing and contracting.

The Savings and Credit Sector Strengthening project in Mexico used highly practice-oriented pedagogical techniques to train over 5,000 representatives of savings and credit institutions. Presentations by mentors were combined with group activities and practical exercises about real-life cases. Training was structured in an initial series of courses that were 10 days long, followed by a series of shorter courses for updates and more specialized topics. This multifaceted approach, with emphasis on real-life examples, helped participants bridge the gap between the course and the jobs where they had to apply what they learned.

Source: Data based on field study findings.

exercises in courses (table 3.2). Half of all survey respondents agreed that their course covered too many topics for the amount of time allotted. Similarly, about half of respondents reported that their courses had not devoted significant time to practical exercises and projects, an issue that is further discussed in the following section on support for transfer of learning to the workplace.

About half of respondents indicated that training did not devote significant time to practical exercises.

Almost all the training courses examined in the field reviews were less than five days long, regardless of the course objectives. A review of all WBI fiscal 2006 courses confirms that the median length of all WBI courses was three days, with 80 percent of courses five days or less. The average length of project-based training examined in the field reviews and of WBI training is significantly shorter than in many of the benchmarked institutions. For example, the average course length is two months at the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), 25 days at the Israeli Center for International Cooperation (MASHAV), and two weeks at the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ITC/ILLO). The

Two to five days of training appears inadequate to achieve many of the Bank's capacity-building goals.

two- to five-day training model, while appropriate for certain limited training goals, is inadequate for achieving the more ambitious capacity-building goals that Bank-financed training often targets. The results of this evaluation

suggest that insufficient consideration is given to matching course length to content and to capacity-building goals.

Support for Transferring Learning to the Workplace

Good training design seeks to achieve learning and to support the trainee in applying new knowledge and skills in the workplace. The two training-design practices most commonly associated in the literature with supporting transfer of learning to the workplace are

- The use of practical learning techniques such as exercises, action plans, and projects where the trainee has the opportunity to explore how learned knowledge and skills relate to or could be implemented in his or her workplace environment;⁵ and
- Follow-up support through on-the-job technical assistance or access to off-site expert coaching or advice.⁶

The use of practical learning techniques is recognized in the literature as fundamental to the sustainable acquisition of skills through training.⁷ Research on adult learning indicates that tasks learned through practice are more likely to be remembered, particularly where more complex skills are involved.⁸ Despite this well-known finding, only 43 percent of project respondents and 53 percent of WBI respondents in the six-country survey indicated that significant time during the training was devoted to practical exercises or projects (table 3.2). Similarly, in several of the training courses reviewed in field studies, participants stated that there were insufficient opportunities to practice skills.

The use of action learning methods by the WBI may even be decreasing. A 2007 WBIEG evaluation found that use of a key form of practical learning—the preparation of participant action plans for implementation upon return to the workplace—had dropped from 47 percent in fiscal 2004 to 39 percent in fiscal 2005,⁹ even though previous WBIEG evaluations had concluded that such action plans improved learning rates.

Table 3.2: Courses Are Interesting but Too Short and Lack Hands-On Work

| Diagnosis | Respondents agreeing | |
|--|----------------------|------------------|
| | Project training (%) | WBI training (%) |
| The course was interesting. | 97 | 93 |
| The lecturers were of good quality. | 91 | 91 |
| The course covered the right amount of topics for the amount of time allotted. | 48 | 53 |
| The course devoted significant time to practical exercises or projects. | 43 | 53 |

Source: IEG six-country survey of training participants.

Note: The differences between WBI and project ratings are significant at the 95 percent confidence interval for “the course was interesting” and “the course devoted significant time to practical exercises.”

The Bank's inconsistent use of action plans and other practical learning techniques contrasts with the practices of some benchmarked institutions. For example, MASHAV and Germany's Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung (InWEnt) use the design of action plans for implementation upon return to the workplace as the cornerstone of almost all their courses. InWEnt often conducts follow-up training sessions with training participants who developed action plans in-course, to provide expert support and guidance on the implementation of the action plans. JICA has recently adopted policies to increase the use of action plans and practical learning in its courses. JICA requires target organizations with which it has multiyear partnership agreements to commit to implementing action plans developed in-course by training participants.

Follow-up support for trainees is recognized in the literature as a second important method for assisting trainees in applying learning. Research has indicated that learning, particularly of skills, is far less likely to be retained and implemented if it is not reinforced by follow-up support once trainees return to the workplace.¹⁰ Where follow-up support is not given, short-term learning gains often do not translate into sustainable behavioral change, due to participant uncertainty about how to apply the learning or lack of positive reinforcement in the workplace for learning application.¹¹ As one training expert (Taylor 2001) notes, "Training should not be seen as an end, but as a means to achieving the organizational objective. The changing of behavioral patterns is a long-term undertaking which, to be successful, needs to be continually monitored and reinforced . . . It is necessary to look beyond training by establishing a coaching and mentoring period to follow the training."¹²

Among the benchmarked institutions, Motorola has the most comprehensive follow-up program. It provides coaches to help employees adapt and implement the training to the job, and sets up a Web page to facilitate dialogue among course alumni. InWEnt provides participants with access to an Internet group, through which they can

request online expert sessions in the subject area. In contrast, follow-up is only sometimes provided in Bank-financed training programs.

The six-country survey of training participants found that most participants had not had any form of follow-up contact with instructors or on-the-job technical assistance. Figure 3.1 presents data on follow-up support from the field reviews. Fourteen of the 26 project-based training programs and two of the six WBI training offerings in the field reviews that IEG rated included adequate follow-up support. Where follow-up support for WBI training was found in field reviews, it was not financed by the WBI, but was made possible through partnerships with other donors, partner training institutes, or related Bank operations.

Some of the benchmarked institutions use action plans to support workplace implementation of training in almost all their courses.

Targeting of Training

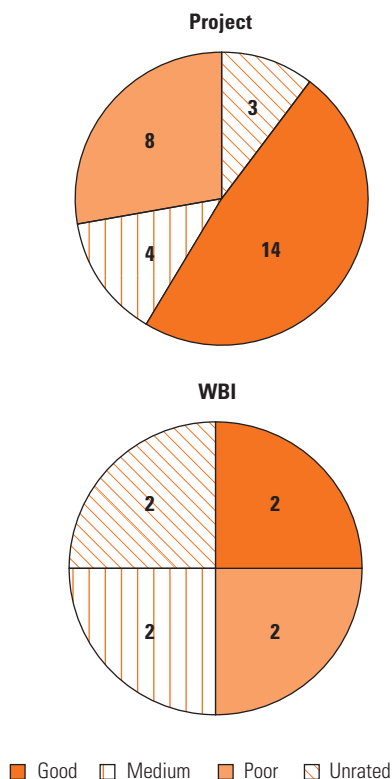
Well-targeted training addresses capacity needs that affect the achievement of development objectives. As noted in table 3.1, three processes are used to target training:

- **Diagnosis** of capacity gaps involves assessment of existing organizational, institutional, and human capacity gaps and of the appropriateness of training as a means to address these gaps.
- **Training-needs assessment** roots training design in an understanding of the present capacities of the individuals to be trained and the specific knowledge and skills that participants must acquire in order to meet development objectives.
- **Strategic participant selection** is necessary to ensure that the participants trained are those whose capacities must be built up in order to meet development objectives.

As noted earlier, good targeting of training was determined to be one of the most important drivers of training success. Project-based training reviewed in field missions performed better than WBI offerings on all

Diagnosis of capacity gaps, training-needs assessment and strategic participant selection are all needed for accurate targeting of training.

Figure 3.1: Project-Based Training Provided Adequate Follow-up Support More Frequently Than WBI



Source: IEG field study findings.

Note: The number shown within each pie-chart section indicates the number of training programs reviewed with that section's rating.

In the **Tunisia Export Development Project I**, the government created a market for follow-up technical assistance. The project financed training of export consultants, which private sector firms could hire to complement their own training. The government gave these consultants a one-time tax exemption and, upon the submission of an acceptable business plan, the public-private sector steering committee gave export firms a one-time, 50-percent subsidy for using these consultants. In the **Mexico Savings and Credit Sector Strengthening Project**, training that was focused on general topics was combined with on-the-job technical assistance. Consultants worked directly with the staff of savings and credit institutions to customize and apply the knowledge obtained in training courses to institutions' particular circumstances.

Where training did not have a significant impact, poor targeting of training was at fault approximately half of the time.

targeting criteria, while the six-country survey did not find any significant difference between WBI and project-based training, with regard to targeting.

The six-country survey of training participants indicates that where training did not have a substantial impact on workplace performance, poor targeting was at fault in approximately half of the instances. Fifty-seven percent of WBI respondents and 44 percent of project respondents who reported that training had less than a significant impact on key functions of their work attributed this to lack of relevance of the training content to key work functions. In a separate set of questions, almost a quarter of all survey respondents reported that training did not address their country's circumstances, and an equal number

reported that the course did not address issues important to their work (see table 3.3).

Diagnosis

Good diagnosis of capacity needs is the first step in targeting training.¹³ Diagnosis involves identification of human, institutional, and organizational capacity gaps that must be addressed in order to achieve development objectives. Diagnostic exercises should also consider what means are most appropriate for addressing these gaps: some human capacity gaps are better addressed through on-the-job technical assistance or the provision of independent learning materials, as shown in box 3.3. Moreover, diagnosis must also determine whether there are critical contextual conditions, such as resource or incentive constraints, that are likely to block successful implementation of

learning. For example, at Motorola University, new course topics are initiated by the company's production managers, on the basis of production problems in their units. Instructional designers are then commissioned to determine whether weak performance is attributable to knowledge or skills gaps—which are best addressed through training—or to other constraints, such as incentives, resources, or production processes.

Diagnosis was found to be good in all project-based training reviewed in Mexico and Tunisia, but in only half of the project-based training programs reviewed in Bangladesh and Burkina Faso. This wide variation in performance was found to be associated with varying client capacities and commitment levels in the field-review countries. Mexico and Tunisia had higher overall client ownership of project goals, and higher levels of client involvement in diagnosis and design of training.¹⁴ Examples of good diagnosis were also found in Bangladesh and Burkina Faso, where there was strong client commitment to training goals and involvement in training management, and where clients received support from external training experts.

Only two out of eight WBI programs reviewed in the field studies had adequate diagnosis. In WBI programs reviewed that did not adequately diagnose capacity problems, this was associated with limited or no dialogue with target organizations about training goals. Some WBI training programs were based on consultations with

Table 3.3: Targeting of Training

| Diagnosis | Respondents agreeing | |
|---|----------------------|------------------|
| | Project training (%) | WBI training (%) |
| Course content did not specifically address my country's circumstances. | 22 | 21 |
| Course content did not address issues important to my work. | 25 | 24 |

Source: Data based on IEG six-country survey of training participants.

relevant country team members, but dialogue with Bank staff alone proved insufficient to identify capacity needs and ensure client buy-in to training goals.

When adequate diagnosis was done in reviewed WBI training, it involved extensive client consultations and was financed by related Bank projects rather than by the WBI. While no WBI data were available on the amount of funding allocated to diagnostic exercises and for specific WBI training programs, interviews with WBI task managers and senior management indicated that the WBI does not generally provide funding for diagnosis of organizational/institutional capacity-needs or training-needs assessment, even in the case of multiyear training programs. As a result, in-depth preparatory work to better target training programs generally necessitates outside funding. Indeed, in all the cases found in field studies where

Good diagnosis is associated with strong client involvement.

Box 3.3: When Not to Train

Training is not always the best way to address human capacity gaps. Other types of capacity-building interventions may be more appropriate when:

- Solving a problem requires applying a technique rather than building knowledge or skills,
- The number of persons requiring knowledge and skills is limited,
- Tasks are easy to learn,
- Learners have a strong background in the topic and new knowledge and skills can be self-acquired, and
- Learners are not used to or comfortable in classroom environments.

Source: IEG evaluation literature review.

WBI training was based on adequate diagnosis, training-needs assessment, and strategic participant selection, WBI training was linked to Bank projects.

Training-Needs Assessment

Training-needs assessment is used to determine what specific knowledge or skills must be learned to achieve capacity goals.¹⁵ A training-needs assessment can be done as part of a diagnostic exercise or separately from it. For example, for InWEnt’s multiyear training projects in the field of education, one education expert is contracted to diagnose what capacity gaps the program should address (for example, improving math instruction) and a second expert in the specific target field, is subsequently contracted to do a training-needs assessment and to design a learning program.

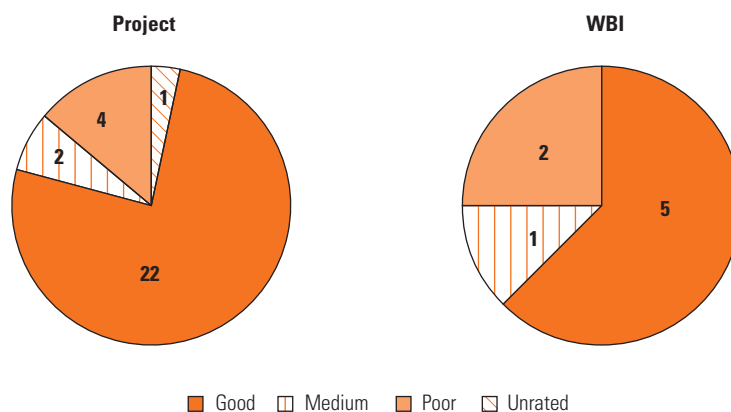
Capacity diagnosis without training-needs assessment can lead to incorrect assumptions about training needs.

Whether diagnosis and training-needs assessment are done as part of the same exercise or separately, it is important that both be done for training to be properly targeted. For example, the HIV/AIDS Prevention project in Bangladesh correctly diagnosed the need to build the capacity of NGOs working with at-risk populations through training, but did not do training-

needs assessments of these NGOs. As a result, an incorrect assumption was made that more experienced NGOs had sufficient capacity to train less experienced NGOs. Only later, after the bigger NGOs proved incapable of playing this role, was a training-needs assessment done, and a more suitable training program designed. Similarly, the Second Basic Education Development project in Mexico correctly diagnosed a need for parental training to support preschooler learning. However, lack of a training-needs assessment resulted in training being at an inappropriate level for the 20 percent of parents who were functionally illiterate and had difficulty understanding the texts.

Adequate training-needs assessment was done in 22 out of 29 project-based training programs (85 percent of Mexico and Tunisia project-based training, and 55 percent of project-based training in Bangladesh and Burkina Faso), and in five of the eight WBI training courses reviewed (figure 3.2). All five highly rated WBI offerings used external financing for their training-needs assessments: three from WBI’s partner training institute in Mexico, and two from projects. For example, project financing enabled WBI’s Rural Development program in Burkina Faso to do a series of participatory needs-assessment work-

Figure 3.2: Adequate Training-Needs Assessments Were Done in a Majority of Training Programs Reviewed in Field Missions



Source: Data based on field mission study findings.

Note: The number shown within each pie-chart section indicates the number of training programs reviewed with that section’s rating.

shops with agricultural producers, so they could help shape a training program that would best suit their needs.

The three WBI programs without external financing did not have adequate training-needs assessments. As in the case of in-depth diagnosis, the WBI does not generally finance formal training-needs assessments or ensure that they be done. Indeed, a 2004 WBIEG evaluation that surveyed WBI task managers reported that formal training-needs assessments were done in 31 percent of the courses evaluated. While economic and sector work can be used to assess training needs, the WBI does not apply planning and review processes to ensure that training be undertaken only where it or others have first done a training-needs assessment.¹⁶

Participant Selection

For training to contribute to development objectives, it has to involve the right people, and the right combination of people, in any given classroom.¹⁷ Optimal participant selection strategies vary depending on the development objectives. For certain types of training, it is essential for all trainees to have similar levels of experience and expertise in order to facilitate learning, whereas for others, it may be useful to train an entire unit together, placing high-level managers and low-level assistants in the same classroom. Table 3.4 provides some examples of participant selection strategies.

Both the field studies and the six-country survey highlighted significant shortcomings in participant selection (see figure 3.3). The field studies determined that participant selection strategies were better for projects than for the WBI. Poor participant selection strategies were associated with a lack of Bank supervision of participant selection. Detailed information on participant selection strategies is rarely included in project or WBI planning documents, and the WBI typically sends letters of invitation to government ministries with only loosely specified participant profiles. While it is generally neither feasible nor desirable for Bank TTIs or WBI task managers to micromanage participant

selection, these shortcomings in participant selection suggest the need for greater Bank supervision in the design of participant selection processes, resulting in better targeted training.

The six-country survey could provide only limited information on participant selection because participants were not necessarily aware of how they were selected. The survey found that approximately half of the time, course participants did not have equal levels of knowledge or experience coming into the course (table 3.5). There are circumstances where assembling training participants with a broad range of experience is desirable. However, the driver analysis in the six-country survey found that having equal levels of experience and knowledge was an important contributor to perceptions of successful training. This finding suggests that where participants of similar backgrounds were preferable, this condition was insufficiently ensured.

Among strategies that should be more frequently employed in Bank-financed training is competitive selection. Although not appropriate for all training goals, competitive selection of participants is seen as an essential contributor to course quality in benchmarked institutions such as MASHAV and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Institute. MASHAV selects, on average, one out of every four course applicants for its international courses. Lack of a sufficient pool of qualified applicants is seen as evidence of lack of demand for a course. Acceptance into IMF Institute courses is based on a rigorous competitive application process. Qualified applicants are reviewed and ranked by the IMF's resident representatives, the relevant area departments, and the Institute's admissions committee. Final selection is done by a committee, chaired by the Institute, with representatives from the IMF departments that are relevant to the region and to the topic of the training.

WBI does not generally finance formal training-needs assessments or ensure that they be done.

Poor participant selection strategies were associated with a lack of Bank supervision of participant selection.

Table 3.4: Four Strategies for Selecting Participants

| Type of strategy | Strategy description | Appropriate use of strategy | Example |
|------------------|--|--|---|
| Competitive | Selection based on a competitive application process. | Recruitment of new personnel to be trained for specific roles in the target organization. Selection may be phased, with performance in the first stage of the course determining continued participation. Strategy may be used in multicountry or multiorganization courses to ensure uniform high quality of training participants. | In the Bangladesh Procurement Reform Project, participants in the training of trainers program were selected through a multistage competitive application process. Initial training was done of trainers who had passed the screening process. The best performers in the first training course were selected to proceed to subsequent courses. |
| Targeted | Invitation of participants based on highly specified job profiles. | Training needed only for persons fulfilling specific key functions within an organization. These may be key decision makers or persons with specialized technical skills. | Trainees for plant protection and seed/plant certification as part of the Tunisia Agricultural Support Services project were selected on the basis of job profiles. Only technicians or high-level members of laboratories were accepted. |
| Widespread | Training large numbers of people in an organization or across a sector, often with different job functions and levels of expertise. | Training objectives are organizationwide, necessitate building support for change, or call for the coordinated action of persons serving a range of organizational functions. | The Initial Education Project in Mexico trained 1.3 million parents of children aged 0–4 in rural communities of 500–2,500 inhabitants, in order to help them play a positive role in their children’s education. |
| Demand-driven | Training is open to (qualified) participants on a willingness-to-pay basis. Includes fee-based training and training with cofinancing credits. | Training for private sector organizations or in the context of community-driven development programs, where the participants are in the best position to evaluate their own needs. | The Competitiveness and Enterprise Development project in Burkina Faso offered 50 percent cofinancing credits to businesses requesting training support. Businesses were responsible for procuring their own training once the credits had been awarded. |

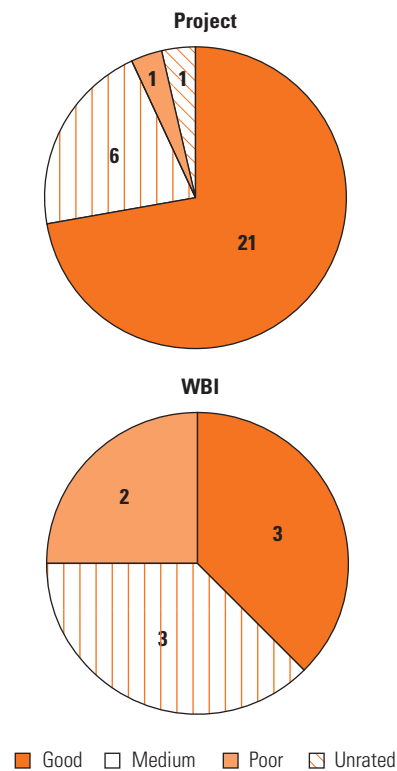
Source: IEG.

Table 3.5: Different Participant Expertise Levels Impair Training Results

| Diagnosis | Respondents agreeing | |
|---|----------------------|------------------|
| | Project training (%) | WBI training (%) |
| I learned from the experience of other participants in the course. | 75 | 85 |
| Course participants had about equal levels of knowledge/ experience coming into the course. | 51 | 52 |

Source: Data based on IEG six-country survey of training participants.

Note: The differences in the results between WBI and project respondents were significant at a 95 percent confidence interval for the statement: “I learned from the experience of other participants in the course.”

Figure 3.3: Participant Selection Strategies Reveal a Wide Range of Weaknesses

The field studies revealed a number of weaknesses in participant selection processes. While none of these phenomena affected more than a few training offerings, in aggregate they indicate the many potential pitfalls in participant selection:

- Participants were sometimes selected based on distortionary incentives. Where per diems were offered to cover expenses or study tours were provided, the selection of course participants sometimes reflected the desire to “reward” certain employees rather than substantive criteria. This was particularly a factor in low-income countries.
- Participants were sometimes chosen on the basis of their availability or “expendability” from work, when there was low client commitment to training. In one such WBI program in Bangladesh, one trainee reported that 30 percent of participants in the course were “serious” ones whose work required the training, 30 percent were sent solely to represent their ministries or organizations, and 40 percent were there to “fill seats.”
- Course participation was sometimes expanded to include participants with limited subject-matter experience and expertise who did not need the training to fulfill their work functions. This negatively affected participants whose work related more directly to training topics, by lowering the course level and raising the class size so that the use of effective participatory learning techniques and practical exercises was impossible. This was primarily found in WBI courses, reflecting, perhaps, WBI management’s use of number of participant training days as an indicator of success.

Source: Data based on field study findings.

Note: The number shown within each pie-chart section indicates the number of training programs reviewed with that section’s rating.

From Process to Context: Making Learning Work for the Organization

Targeting of training, use of practical exercises in learning, and follow-up support were all determined to be important factors in facilitating transfer of learning to the workplace. However, success in implementing learning does not only

depend on the quality of the training design. Rather, the organizational and institutional context in which training occurs is also a significant determinant of whether learning outputs result in workplace outcomes and in impact on development capacity. The next chapter explores these contextual factors.