

Chapter 4

Evaluation Highlights

- Availability of resources and incentives for the implementation of learning are essential for training success.
- Over one-third of training participants who tried to apply what they learned in their jobs lacked material resources to do so.
- Lack of incentives posed a particular problem in civil service training in low-capacity countries and in decentralized training programs.
- Projects are better positioned than the WBI to address organizational and institutional capacity constraints affecting the implementation of learning.
- Client commitment influences both the organizational context and the design factors that drive successful training.

When Training Works: The Organizational Context for Training

One of the strongest determinants of training success is the organizational context in which training is done. For training to be successful, participants must have the resources and incentives to implement acquired skills and knowledge (box 4.1). Where these resources and incentives are not in place prior to training, training must be accompanied by properly sequenced interventions in order to address organizational and institutional constraints. This chapter evaluates the extent to which Bank-financed training is done in contexts where the necessary resources and incentives exist for implementation of the knowledge and skills acquired.

Box 4.1: Why Learning Cannot Be Implemented

The following statements are from surveyed course participants:

"After the course, we were asked to write a proposal for possible assistance (small grant) but to date nothing has come...If they didn't promise, I wouldn't be bothered. I had big plans but no funds to back it up." (*WBI Debate to Action: Building Capacity in Nigerian Youth Organizations, Nigeria*)

"I could not apply new knowledge in my current work mostly because material and technical capacities of our organization are rather limited." (*Social Provision for Families Below the Poverty Line, Azerbaijan*)

"The decisions are not up to me. As much as I would like to apply social responsibility, it's the higher ranks who make the decisions. I can place my little grain of rice but I need more support than I

have in order to bring about bigger changes." (*WBI Corporate Social Responsibility, Mexico*)

"The positive aspect is that people do speak about what they feel about the Millennium Development Goals. The negative aspect is there are no resources to carry out the job." (*WBI Support for NEEDS Implementation Module: NYSC Dev Knowledge Seminar, Nigeria*)

"We lack equipment in the laboratories to apply what we learned." (*Organization and Management of a Detection Service, Tunisia*)

"Unfortunately I could not apply my new knowledge in my practical work. It is not easy to persuade other people to behave and work differently." (*WBI Lessons Learned for Community Driven Development, Azerbaijan*)

Source: IEG six-country survey of training participants.

Importance of Organizational Context for Training Success

The context in which training is done was found to be one of the two most important determinants of training success, along with targeting of training to organizational needs. The “drivers analysis” in the six-country survey data, cited in chapter 3, identified the support of managers and colleagues in the implementation of learning as the single most important determinant of training success, with availability of material resources and targeting of training emerging as other important variables.¹ The 45 percent of survey respondents who reported that training had less than a significant impact on their work cited lack of resources

or support in the workplace in implementing results of training as the second most important reason for low training impact, after targeting of training (table 4.1).

These findings correspond with those of the field studies and the benchmarking survey (box 4.2), as well as with the literature on workplace implementation of training, which cites the importance of addressing institutional incentives and organizational resources in order to ensure the sustainability of human-capacity-building efforts. As the United Nations Development Programme argued in a 2006 capacity-development practice note: “Attempts to address capacity issues at any one

Table 4.1: Lack of Relevance Is the Main Reason Why Training Lacks Impact

Diagnosis	Respondents agreeing	
	Project training (%)	WBI training (%)
I did gain significant new knowledge and skills, but they were not very relevant to important aspects of my work.	44	57
I knew how to apply what I learned but did not have the resources or support to do so.	13	17
The course content was relevant to my job but I did not know how to apply what I learned.	11	5
I didn't gain significant new knowledge or skills in the course.	7	9
Other.	18	4
Don't know/ Not applicable.	6	8

Source: IEG six-country survey of training participants.

Note: The differences between ratings of WBI respondents and project respondents are not significant at the 95 percent confidence level, using a t-test for significance, except for the statement: “I did gain significant new knowledge and skills, but they were not very relevant to important aspects of my work.”

Box 4.2: Importance of Workplace Environment to Training Success

In order to gather information on the likely impact of workplace environment on training outcomes, Motorola University asks all training participants to rate the following statements. The responses to these questions are stronger predictors of course success than evaluation questions on course content, quality, and self-assessment of learning.

- My managers know what I was taught in training.
- The training was built to match the way I need to do my job.

- Job aids are available to support what I learned in this training.
- The procedures taught in this training are ones I can use on the job.
- I feel my coworkers will help me if I have problems using this training on the job.
- In general, applying training on the job helps employees in their careers with Motorola.

Source: IEG benchmarking analysis.

level, without taking into account the others, are likely to result in developments that are skewed, inefficient, and, in the end, unsustainable.”²

Organizational Incentives and Resources for Applying Learning

Findings from interviews with WBI managers, the six-country survey, and the field reviews indicate that insufficient attention is being paid to the workplace context of both project-based and WBI training. The WBI does not generally assess or address resource and incentive constraints in the trainee’s workplace environment, unless it receives project or external donor financing to do so. This was illustrated in the case studies. As seen in figure 4.1, only one of eight WBI training offerings adequately addressed the workplace capacity context. In many of the cases that received medium or poor ratings, inadequate resources and incentives impaired implementation of learning. In others, there was no assessment of the organization’s capacity to facilitate implementation of the skills and knowledge gained and no monitoring of whether trainees were able to implement learning upon returning to their workplaces.

For example, in the case of the three WBI programs in Mexico, poor ratings were awarded because, as distance-learning courses with open

enrollment, they neither targeted specific organizations nor inquired into the capacity of the participants’ workplaces. In the single case where WBI training adequately addressed the capacity context—the Bangladesh Bank Partnership program—training was embedded within an International Development Association project and received project and donor financing for related interventions such as long-term, on-the-job, technical assistance, and salary supplements for participants. The field studies indicated that projects performed considerably better than the WBI in this regard, with over half of projects adequately addressing the capacity context.

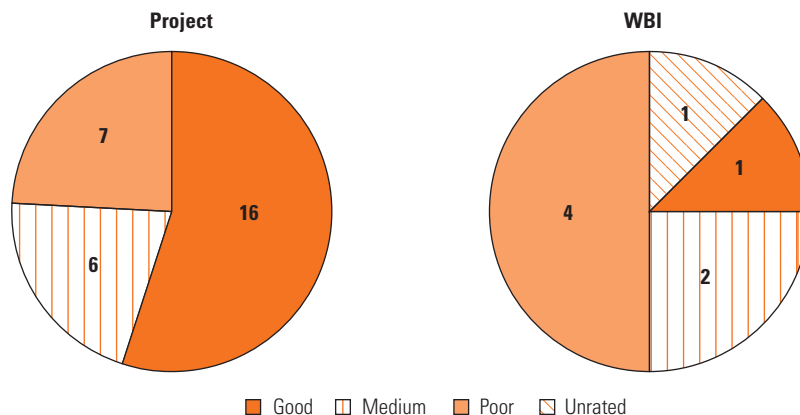
The six-country survey indicated that trainees often lacked material resources to apply learning. Over one-third of respondents who tried to apply what they learned in their jobs said that they had insufficient material resources to implement knowledge and skills acquired in training (table 4.2).³

Lack of incentives was found in the field studies to be a more frequent problem for training civil servants than training community groups, farming collectives, or private sector firms. These latter

WBI does not generally assess or address resource and incentive constraints in the trainee’s workplace environment.

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Figure 4.1: Projects Rate Higher Than WBI on Attention to Capacity Context



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.

Table 4.2: Organizational Incentives for Implementing Learning Are Satisfactory but Material Resources Are Insufficiently Available

Diagnosis	Respondents agreeing	
	Project training (%)	WBI training (%)
My managers encourage my efforts to use what I learned in the course	92	81
My colleagues provide me with the support I need to apply what I learned in the course	80	80
Policies at my organization allow me to apply what I learned	91	85
I have the resources to apply what I learned	65	61

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

Note: The differences between ratings of WBI respondents and project respondents are significant at the 95 percent confidence level for the statement: "Policies at my organization allow me to apply what I learned" and "My managers encourage my efforts to use what I learned in the course."

groups were more likely to have "built-in" incentives for applying learning, arising from the possibility of direct personal benefits, such as higher profits or more financing of community projects. Incentives to apply learning fall into two categories: general and specific. General institutional incentives, such as merit-based promotion systems or competitive salary levels, affect the participant's motivation to improve workplace performance. Specific incentives for application of new knowledge and skills include the support and encouragement of managers and colleagues and the existence of legal/regulatory frameworks for implementation of learning.

Incentives to improve workplace performance were lacking in countries with weak public sector capacity.

General institutional incentives were a problem primarily in Bangladesh and Burkina Faso, the two field mission countries with low public sector capacity. Where general institutional incentives are weak, staff have less incentive to pursue their own professional development, and bureaucracies have difficulty retaining trained personnel. In the most extreme cases, the building capacity of individuals working in the public sector can weaken organizational capacity through a "brain drain," if trained personnel are in demand elsewhere. This does not mean, however, that human capacity building should not be undertaken in contexts without adequate general institutional incentives. Such training can help build capacity as long as it is

Incentives to apply the specific knowledge and skills acquired were particularly lacking in diffuse or decentralized training programs.

accompanied by strategies to deal with problems of staff turnover and weak incentives, such as supplementing training with salary bonuses, or building local capacity to continue training new personnel, in environments with high staff turnover.⁴

Adequate specific incentives for implementing training, unlike general institutional incentives, were found to be as likely to occur in higher-capacity countries as in lower-capacity countries. Specific incentives for implementation were found to be particularly problematic in cases of diffuse or decentralized training programs, such as in-service teacher training. In such cases, even where commitment to training goals was high in the central government, it did not necessarily translate into strong commitment levels among the trainees, their managers, or their colleagues in the field.

Importance of Client Commitment

Timely availability of resources and incentives was also found to be highly correlated with client commitment to the objectives of learning. Where high-level decision makers see the training objectives as a priority, they are more likely to ensure that adequate organizational and institutional conditions exist to enable implementation of learning. Where this is not the case, significant delays in the disbursement of training resources may ensue, even when clients have committed to such disbursements up front. For example, bureaucratic problems delayed the launch of

training in the National Nutrition Project in Bangladesh by approximately two years. Moreover, once the program began, training organizers reported difficulties in obtaining the promised financing, and former “nutrition promoter” trainees did not consistently receive government payments for their activities.

Client commitment to training, where the clients are government policy makers, was better in Mexico and Tunisia where projects are loan-financed than in Bangladesh and Burkina Faso where projects are grant-financed. Sixteen out of 20 project-based training programs that could be rated in Mexico and Tunisia scored highly on client commitment, whereas only three out of nine project-based training offerings in Bangladesh and Burkina Faso received high scores in this category. Judgments on client commitment were based on interviews with government policy makers about the importance of training goals, as well as assessments by Bank staff and other informants involved in training organization.

Overall, client commitment was better in projects than in the WBI, reflecting lack of meaningful direct dialogue between the WBI and clients on

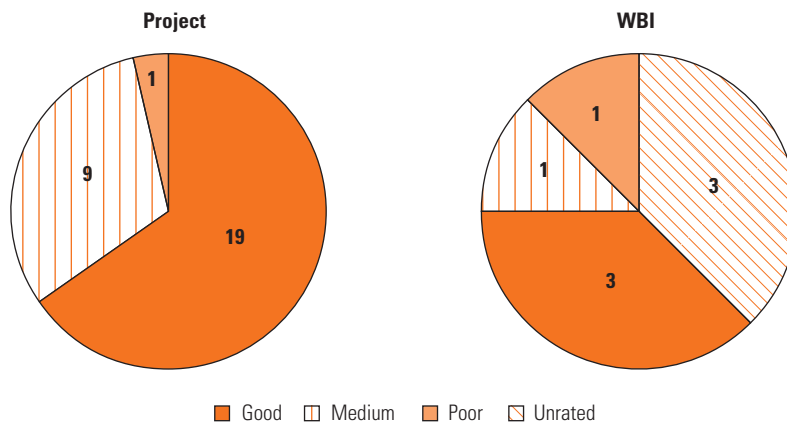
training goals and priorities (figure 4.2). This finding corresponds with a recent WBIEG evaluation of the WBI’s primary, country-level, program strategy document—the country program brief—which found that, “Although WBI has suggested that its learning programs are country led and fully owned at the country level, and that all focus countries ‘meet the essential criterion of ownership of the capacity development process,’ few CPBs [(country program briefs)] provide evidence to support these statements.”⁵

As mentioned in chapter 3, client commitment to training also influences training design and implementation processes such as the targeting of training and the monitoring and evaluation of training. For example, the Bangladesh Public Procurement Reform project was one in which strong client commitment to training goals, and strong involvement in implementing learning, resulted in the establishment of feedback loops between training and the workplace, thus enabling workplace realities to better inform training content (see box 4.3).

Where high-level decision makers see training objectives as a priority, they are more likely to ensure that the conditions for success exist.

Client commitment influences the availability of resources and the support for transferring learning to the workplace.

Figure 4.2: Client Commitment Is Stronger in Projects



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.

Box 4.3: Setting Up Training-Feedback Loops in the Bangladesh Public Procurement Reform Project

In medium- or long-term training programs, monitoring and evaluation systems can help improve outcomes by establishing feedback loops between the workplace and training programs. Information on the implementation of knowledge and skills by former trainees can be used to shape training content.

Monitoring and evaluation was successfully used in the **Bangladesh Public Procurement Reform Project** to improve training. The project included widespread training of both public sector officials and private sector agents, to facilitate the transition to new procurement regulations. A Central Procurement Technical Unit was established in the Ministry of Planning to implement and monitor the transition to new procurement regulations. Although an out-

side training provider was contracted to train trainers and manage the training, the Central Procurement Technical Unit remained actively involved in the design, implementation, and monitoring of training. The unit used data from its ongoing monitoring of implementation of procurement regulations to refine and enhance the training program and to provide strategic follow-up support to trainees in instances where there were evident implementation problems. Presently, with the training program stabilized after a lengthy pilot period, the unit is working to phase out its involvement in training by building the capacity of a local training institute. The unit's involvement in the initial phases was crucial to the success of the training, in support of the transition to the new regulations.

Source: Data based on field study findings.