

Chapter 6

Findings and Recommendations

Findings

Over the past decade, the Bank has financed approximately \$720 million annually in training, more than 90 percent of it through projects and the remainder through the WBI.

Bank-financed training supports a wide variety of capacity-building goals, with target populations ranging from small farmers and community groups to high-ranking government officials.

While training occurs in all sectors of Bank activity, it plays a particularly important role in the health, nutrition, and population sector, where it accounts for an estimated 16 percent of investment project costs. However, the importance of training to the achievement of development objectives goes well beyond its dollar value.

Training is one of the primary means by which the Bank helps to build the capacity of countries to reduce poverty. Moreover, it is often fundamental to the success of other investments. Overall, in an estimated 60 percent of projects, training is either integral to the achievement of the goals of one or more project components or supportive of all project components.

Most Bank-financed training results in individual participant learning. Of all the training participants surveyed for this evaluation, only a small percentage claimed that they had not gained significant new knowledge through training. However, **while most participants learned**

from training, only about half the time did learning lead to substantial changes to workplace performance or enhanced development capacity of target institutions. Project-based training was more successful than WBI training in this regard. Sixty percent of project respondents and 50 percent of WBI respondents to the six-country survey reported substantial changes to key work functions as a result of training. Evidence of workplace performance improvements, as a result of training, was found in 15 of the 29 project-based training programs reviewed in field studies, but the same was found in only one of the eight WBI programs. Where learning did not result in changed workplace performance and, therefore, did not have an impact on development capacity, this could be attributed to one of three reasons: (i) insufficient participant understanding of how to apply learning in the workplace, (ii) inadequate incentives or resources for implementation of learning, or (iii) inadequate targeting of learning to organizational needs. **Making the**

leap from individual learning to workplace performance outcomes and, subsequently, to development capacity impact requires both good training design and an appropriate organizational and institutional context in which to apply the learning from training.

Training success is predicated on adequate design.

Good training design was found to involve three characteristics:

- Use of appropriate and professional pedagogic design, including opportunities to practice learned skills;
- Provision of follow-up support to trainees to facilitate implementation of knowledge and skills acquired; and
- Targeting of training content, anchored in diagnosis of institutional and organizational capacity gaps, formal assessment of participant training needs, and strategic participant selection.

Much of the Bank-financed training reviewed was found to have design flaws that affected results.

While over 90 percent of survey respondents found their training to be interesting and the lecturers to be of high quality, half stated that course length was too short for the topics covered and that their course did not devote significant time to practical exercises and projects. Adequate follow-up support was provided to project trainees in half of the 29 programs reviewed in field studies and to WBI trainees in only two of the eight cases reviewed. Finally, of the nearly one-half of all survey respondents who stated that training did not have a significant impact on key functions of their work, over a third attributed this to lack of relevance of training content to key work functions. This last issue is indicative of inadequate targeting of training content.

Targeting of training content was found to be the most important training design factor driving training success. For training to be well targeted, organizational and institutional capacity gaps need to be correctly diagnosed, specific training needs must

be assessed, and participants should be selected in a strategic manner. Project-based training reviewed in field missions performed better than WBI training in all of these targeting processes. Projects were better targeted mainly because they have more resources to conduct capacity assessments and they involve clients more fully in the design of interventions. The WBI does not generally mandate or finance in-depth diagnoses of capacity gaps or assessments of training needs, and it does not consistently consult with clients on training objectives and design.

The organizational context for implementing knowledge and skills learned was a second important determinant of successful capacity building through training. Training builds development capacity only when trainees have adequate resources and incentives to implement learning in the workplace. One-third of training participants surveyed stated that they lacked such sufficient material resources. Some trainees also lacked incentives to implement learning. Insufficient incentives were particularly problematic in two contexts. First, in decentralized training programs, like in-service teacher training, the central government's commitment to training goals did not necessarily translate into strong commitment among regional government officials, training participants, or their managers. Second, in the public sectors of countries with weaker government capacity, low salary levels and lack of merit-based promotion systems reduced the incentive of staff to pursue their own professional development. **But even where resources or incentives for implementing learning were initially lacking, training reviewed in the field studies succeeded as long as there was strong client commitment to training goals and adequate support was given to addressing related workplace capacity gaps.**

Field studies revealed examples of successful Bank-financed training activities provided by local training institutions, client governments, international consultants, and training providers, as well as the WBI. **In all cases, training succeeded when its design was good and the organiza-**

tional and institutional capacity context was adequately addressed in conjunction with training.

The WBI's training procedures and practices do not sufficiently anchor training within comprehensive capacity-building strategies and are, therefore, not generally conducive to building sustainable capacity. The WBI lacks systemic mechanisms for in-depth diagnoses of organizational capacity gaps or formal training-needs assessments of participants. It also lacks standardized procedures for meaningful, direct consultation with clients on training needs and priorities. In most cases, the WBI does not directly provide follow-up support to facilitate workplace implementation of learning. It also does not systematically link its training programs to complementary capacity-building support provided by operations or other partners.

The quality of project-financed training is uneven due to a lack of explicit design standards for all Bank training activities, and lack of expert support for training activities embedded in projects. Bank-financed projects provide an opportunity for effective use of training as part of an integrated capacity-building strategy. The project model can ensure that training is integrated into a comprehensive, multiyear relationship with the target organization, financing a range of complementary capacity-building interventions. However, the lack of defined design standards and expert support make it difficult for project teams to adequately supervise the design and implementation of training. This also prevents quality assurance mechanisms from being applied to training activities.

The Bank does not adequately monitor or evaluate training results. Most project-based and WBI training reviewed in field studies did not include sufficient monitoring and evaluation of training. Project Implementation Completion Reports seldom report on more than the number of persons trained and include little or no information on training results in terms of workplace behavior of participants and impact on development capacity, even where training is fundamental to the achievement of project goals. The WBI

systematically monitors at the program level only the number of participant training days and participant satisfaction, neither of which provides information about the impact of training on capacity-building objectives. Hence, clients, project task teams, and WBI task managers, alike, generally do not have sufficient information to detect training weaknesses and improve training performance, where necessary.

Recommendations

The Bank can enhance the vital contribution of training to client capacity building, by ensuring that the training it supports

- Is linked to the Bank's support for development objectives in client countries,
- Is embedded within broader capacity-building strategies that provide complementary support for the implementation of learning, and
- Conforms with best practice in training design.

The following three recommendations are intended to lead to this outcome:

Recommendation 1: The Bank needs to develop guidance and quality criteria for the design and implementation of training, so as to enable quality assurance, and monitoring and evaluation of all its training support. This guidance should be applied to all training financed by the Bank, including training that is directly provided by units such as the WBI. Design guidance should include

- Diagnosis and training-needs assessment requirements for training initiation;
- Participant selection criteria;
- Standards for the use of practical exercises and other action-learning techniques within training;
- Use of follow-up support; and
- Provisions for monitoring and evaluation, including specification of performance-change objectives and key monitorable indicators.

Recommendation 2: The Bank could improve the quality and impact of training by making available to its Regional staff and borrowers, resource persons with technical expertise in the design,

implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of training.

Recommendation 3: Management must clarify the WBI's mandate on provision of training with capacity-building goals. If the WBI is to play a capacity-building role in client countries, its training processes should be substantially reengineered to ensure that training is likely to contribute to sustainable change. New WBI training processes should ensure that all training meets the following criteria:

- Is based on a comprehensive capacity assessment of the target organization(s)/institution(s)—done in cooperation with clients—
- identifying (i) clear and specific capacity-building objectives, (ii) the human, institutional, and organizational capacity support that is necessary in order to achieve these objectives, and (iii) measurable indicators of success;
- Is undertaken after work is done with operations and partners to identify and confirm the resources required to achieve the capacity-building objectives, including, where needed, (i) multiyear training programs, (ii) follow-up technical assistance, and (iii) organizational and institutional support measures, such as policy support and financing of implementation of learning; and
- Is subject to external quality review and evaluation of results.