

# Chairperson's Summary: Committee on Development Effectiveness (CODE)

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On September 12, 2007, the Committee on Development Effectiveness considered the report *Using Training to Build Capacity for Development: An Evaluation of the World Bank's Project-Based and WBI Training*, prepared by the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG), together with the Draft Management Response.

**Background.** On October 10, 2005, CODE discussed the report *World Bank Institute: Review of Progress FY03–05*, prepared by WBI. The Committee reviewed in March 2005 the IEG evaluation on *World Bank Support for Capacity Building in Africa*, which included WBI's role in capacity building. CODE also considered the WBI report *World Bank Institute: Developing Capacities in Countries—FY06 in Review* on October 4, 2006.

**Main findings and recommendations.** The Bank provides, on average, \$720 million per year for training to build client capacity. More than 90 percent is financed through projects and the remainder is provided through WBI. The IEG report finds that while most participants learned from training, only about half the time did learning lead to substantial changes in workplace behavior or enhanced development capacity. The most important factors driving training success are good design and targeting of training content, a supportive organizational context for implementation of knowledge and skills learned, and strong client commitment to training goals.

IEG recommends that the Bank enhance the contribution of training to client capacity building, by ensuring that the training is linked to the Bank's support for development

objectives; is embedded within broader capacity-building strategies; and conforms with best practice in training design. The following three recommendations are intended to lead to this outcome:

- The Bank needs to develop guidance and quality criteria for the design and implementation of training, to enable the quality assurance of all its training.
- The Bank could improve the quality and impact of training by making available to its Regional staff and borrowers, resources and personnel with technical expertise in design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of training.
- Management must clarify WBI's mandate on provision of training with capacity-building goals. If the WBI is to play a capacity-building role, its training processes should be substantially re-engineered so that it may better contribute to sustainable client capacity.

**Draft Management response.** Management concurs with a number of IEG conclusions and for the most part, with the recommendations. However, Management expresses serious reservations concerning the evaluative framework, methodological foundation, and data limitations that affect a number of findings and conclusions of the study. In addition, Management takes note of

the recommendation concerning WBI and responds that work is under way to address several issues mentioned in the IEG report, including better aligning its country-focus and long-term programmatic work with Bank operations. Management states that it will consider WBI's overall mandate, including its business lines in a different and wider context, the knowledge component of the Bank's long-term strategy.

**Overall conclusions.** The Committee welcomed the opportunity to discuss the report which was very timely given the prominence of nonlending services and capacity building in the Long-Term Strategy Exercise (LTSE) currently undertaken. Members commended IEG for an informative and valuable evaluation that provided previously unavailable statistics. While members acknowledged the methodological issues flagged by Management, they viewed the IEG findings to be consistent with their own knowledge and experience. They also felt the findings should not be viewed as overly critical or negative. Some thought the findings quite positive and in this regard queried whether there were benchmarks against which these results could be assessed. Going forward, members noted that the key issue was how to improve matters and in this regard, they appreciated Management's concurrence with several of IEG's substantive recommendations. With respect to the third recommendation to clarify WBI's role and re-engineer training processes, the Committee accepted Management's approach of undertaking a comprehensive strategic review of WBI in the wider context of the LTSE. The Committee Chair also suggested IEG focus on research of methodologies for assessing results in nonlending service, which is also important for accountability.

**Next steps.** The Committee looked forward to discussing a comprehensive strategic review of WBI in due course. It suggested the review should look at the broader context of training activities in the World Bank Group (WBG), and the division of labor within different parts of the organization. Management committed to take a

wider look at WBI and all its business lines, and come back with a timeline of the review process.

The following main issues were raised during the meeting:

**Scope of the report.** Some speakers noted the relevance of the report to the ongoing work related to the LTSE. They found that the IEG report provided valuable inputs in strengthening training activities. Members expressed different views on the comparison between Bank-financed training through investment projects and WBI training, their contribution to capacity building, and Management's concern on the methodology of IEG evaluation. A member felt that project-related training and WBI training were substantially different, and noted that most training (90 percent) was financed through projects. Another member agreed on the viability of comparing the two types of training within a uniform Bank's framework. Regarding the methodology, some members would have preferred further discussions and agreement between IEG and Management before conducting the evaluation. In this vein, one member said that methodological differences may have been linked to differences in training design. Relatedly, the Committee Chair invited IEG to think further about the general challenge of measuring noneconomic effectiveness of development interventions including training. Some members found the apparent differences between the IEG evaluation and the Management Response to be less substantive than they may first appear. One member thanked IEG for the new data on the Bank's financed training activities.

**Training and capacity building.** A few members concurred with IEG and Management that the impact of training can be assessed within the broader framework of capacity building, highlighting the WBG's leading role in this area. Some speakers also noted that not all training and learning activities are designed to lead to institutional capacity building. In addition, they noted that capacity building involves a long-term effort. Other speakers added that some of IEG's findings apply to training and capacity building

activities undertaken by the donor community in general.

**Effectiveness of training.** Although IEG found that training only resulted in substantial workplace performance outcomes about half of the time, some members found this finding very positive given the difficulty of trying to measure activities like training and the lack of benchmarks for judging success. They also noted that other factors may have influenced the outcomes such as weak public sector capacity, rigid adoption of organizational transformation, and lack of personal incentives. In addition, questions were raised about possible limitations in evaluating training due to the lack of clearly defined benchmarks, and about the relevance of training and transformational effects. One member encouraged further development of monitoring and evaluation. Another member questioned the sustainability of project-financed training, particularly after the full disbursement of Bank's loans. *IEG noted the subjectivity of indicating whether the glass was half-empty or half-full. In this regard, IEG suggested that the more relevant question was whether the Bank could do more to assure that those attending training could use the information to help achieve their organizational goals. IEG also noted that there are no international benchmarks which could be used. Management indicated that measuring impact outcomes should be considered beyond training per se. It added that there was a need to move away from the individual product to a more programmatic approach, in a country or program context, to achieve some form of transformation.*

**Training design.** Some Executive Directors agreed with IEG that design of training activities aimed at institutional capacity building requires an institutional setting, assessment of capacity gaps and training needs, and consideration of participants' roles and capacities which can be more costly for the Bank and the WBI. One member asked whether the quality of training design and understanding of the institutional context was better when Task Team Leaders are based closer to clients (e.g. field presence) rather than

managed from Washington headquarters. *IEG explained that the evaluation methodology did not specifically look at proximity to clients, although it found that clients are not always sufficiently involved in the diagnosis and design of training and TTLs lack adequate specialized skills for designing training components of Bank projects.*

**Organizational context for training.** Some members felt that Management should consider consistency of training with the Bank's development objectives, increase accountability, and promote adaptation. One of them mentioned that a comprehensive project-based training approach undertaken by a donor agency has induced policy changes in recipient governments. Another member regretted that the Bank's training service might be associated with dissemination of overly processed knowledge. In this regard, a few members stressed the need to focus on demand-driven aspects, and client-oriented focus of training activities. One of them sought further analysis on costs, including cost-sharing opportunities. The fragmented efforts in providing training and capacity building at the WBG level were noted as an issue. Some members felt that other development partners, including universities and local institutions in developing countries, could provide training services as well. *WBI noted its more than 200 partnerships with local institutions and that efforts were being taken to integrate its work with IFC and MIGA, such as the recent case of investment climate work in India.*

**Bank processes and systems.** Some members agreed with IEG on the need to develop guidance and quality criteria for the design and implementation of training provided by the Bank, including those provided by units such as WBI. In this regard, one member asked Management to advance the timeline for drafting the guidelines to mid-2008. She also asked Management to prepare a proposal for streamlining the Bank's training activities as a whole. *Management, while agreeing on the urgency for appropriate guidelines, also noted practical difficulties and the need for appropriate time to prepare them.*

**The role of WBI.** While recognizing the importance of WBI's work, several speakers noted that WBI needs to be aligned with the core objective of building capacity in client countries. In this vein, they asked Management to review WBI's core mandate and vision; business model, including programmatic approach; WBI role vis-à-vis other knowledge units (e.g. DEC, PREM, Regions); and integration with Bank Group's activities, including country assistance and partnership strategies. There was also a suggestion for WBI to develop some flagship products. Some members remarked that WBI is frequently viewed as a capacity-building institution, but it also provides other services such as dissemination of knowledge through the Shanghai Conference, which was regarded as very successful. A

few speakers asked whether WBI's limitations were linked to resource constraints, although one member commented on the use of trust funds by WBI. This member also observed the difficulty of measuring results of WBI training, and noted the need for long-term evaluation. *IEG indicated that the evaluation did not focus on division of labor among units delivering training. It only pointed out the current fragmentation of work, and the need for better integration of human, organizational, and institutional capacity-building measurers. It also added that training results were linked to resource availability, client involvement, and training expertise. Management indicated that WBI work with Regions is not covered in IEG's report.*

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*Jiayi Zou, Chairperson*