

LEARNING THROUGH EVALUATION



ESTABLISHED IN 1997, WBI'S INTERNALLY INDEPENDENT EVALUATION GROUP (WBIEG) conducts systematic evaluations and studies of WBI's strategic directions and capacity development programs, providing objective, timely, fair, and useful information on the effectiveness, outcomes, and impact of those programs.¹ WBIEG also supports the development of monitoring and evaluation capacity through training.

WBIEG's analyses, evaluations, and research fall into three major categories:

- *Monitoring of the immediate quality of learning activities.* Learners assess the quality, relevance, and usefulness of the activities they attend. WBIEG produces a periodic quality report for WBI.
- *Evaluation of outcomes.* WBIEG conducts rigorously designed tracer studies of participants in WBI's capacity development programs, using both quantitative and qualitative data. The studies assess the degree to which programs are effective and the extent to which the information, knowledge, and skills imparted in the programs are utilized by participants.
- *Strategic evaluations and research studies.* These reviews and research studies assess WBI's strategic directions and internal functioning. Diagnostic or metanalytic in nature, they often yield early information on the efficiency and likely impact of the programs they cover.

In FY06, in response to the World Bank's heightened focus on results and its growing emphasis on enhancing capacity to promote sustained growth, WBIEG honed a new strategy to meet its mandates and objectives. That strategy also reflects WBI's consolidation of its country-focused strategy and expansion of activities to develop organizational and institutional capacity.

Three principles underpin WBIEG's strategy:

- A focus on direction. Evaluations that answer the question, "Are they doing the right things?" precede those that address "Are they doing things well?"

- Development of evaluation methodologies to assess outcomes of efforts to develop organizational and institutional capacity.
- Support and encouragement of a culture of results monitoring and self-evaluation in collaboration with other Bank units.

To support the implementation of these principles, WBIEG developed a formal disclosure policy for its findings and a mechanism for WBI's management to respond to WBIEG's recommendations, both to be implemented in FY07.

OUTCOMES EVALUATION: WBI'S COUNTRY FOCUS IS BRINGING BETTER OUTCOMES

WBIEG expanded its evaluation of WBI's country-focus approach in FY06, analyzing data covering four fiscal years (FY03–FY06) (table 7.1).

WBIEG surveyed some 2,900 WBI clients in 25 focus countries and asked them to rate the effectiveness of the capacity development programs in which they had participated and the degree to which they utilized the knowledge and skills they gained from those programs. Clients rated the effectiveness of WBI's programs on a



¹ WBIEG also evaluates the Knowledge and Learning Board (KLB), the World Bank's staff training arm.

TABLE 7.1

Focus countries included in WBIEG's FY06 outcomes evaluation, by region

Africa	East Asia & Pacific	Europe & Central Asia	Latin America & Caribbean	Middle East & North Africa	South Asia
Burkina Faso Ethiopia Ghana Kenya Nigeria Senegal Tanzania	China Indonesia Philippines Thailand Vietnam	Russian Federation Tajikistan Turkey	Bolivia Brazil Guatemala Mexico	Arab Republic of Egypt Islamic Republic of Iran Morocco Republic of Yemen	India Sri Lanka

seven-point scale on three dimensions: raising their awareness, improving their knowledge and skills, and providing them with strategies and approaches to address the needs of their organization or country.

The results show that WBI's country-focus strategy is resulting in better outcomes than before (figure 7.1). The ratings of the effectiveness of the FY05 programs were significantly higher than they were for FY01 programs, controlling for a number of important variables, such as gross national income per capita (GNI per capita), activity features, and clients' position in their organization. The FY05 overall effectiveness ratings were 5 percent higher than the FY01 ratings.

Clients also rated the degree to which they had used the knowledge and skills they acquired for academic purposes, such as research and teaching, and operational purposes, such as influencing legislation and developing organizational strategies. WBI clients in FY05 were significantly more likely to report using what they had learned as compared to their counterparts in FY01 (figure 7.2). Controlling for a number of variables, the FY05 ratings for overall use were 8 percent higher than the FY01 ratings.

The lessons learned in this study echo the findings of smaller country-focused studies completed in previous years.

It is important to engage high-level participants and leaders for catalyzing change. Clients in top-level positions, including ministers and deputy ministers, were significantly more likely to report using what they learned for operational purposes, compared with those in other positions (figure 7.3). However, this category of clients comprised only 10 percent of the sample.

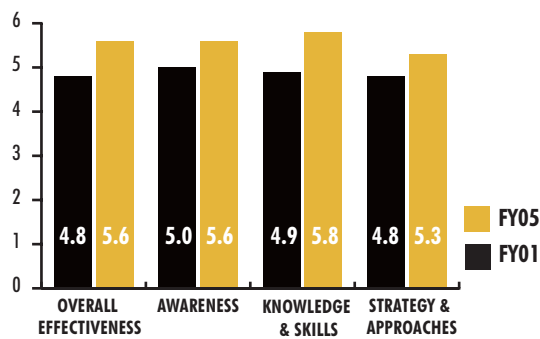
Relevance to country needs ensures effectiveness. A key variable predicting effectiveness and impact was the relevance of WBI's programs to the specific needs of the country. Activities that were highly relevant to the country's needs were more effective than those that were not relevant at all (35 percent). WBI's activities were rated as being significantly more relevant in FY05 than they were in FY01 (figure 7.4).

Effectiveness is higher in low-income countries. WBI's effectiveness was higher in low-income countries than elsewhere. Thus, there is a need for WBI to develop a more relevant strategy for middle-income countries than it currently has.

Pedagogical use of action plans improves effectiveness. Having participants develop an action plan to use the knowledge and skills they gain boosted effectiveness by 6 percent. However, fewer than half, 43 percent, of WBI clients reported being part of activities that utilized this approach. Sixty-six percent of those who did develop action plans reported using them in their work.

FIGURE 7.1

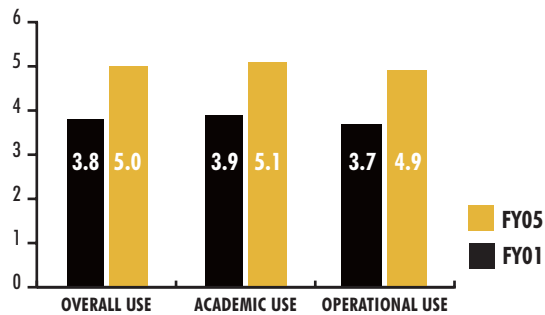
According to learners, WBI effectiveness increased significantly between FY01 and FY05



Scale: 1 = not effective at all. 7 = extremely effective

FIGURE 7.2

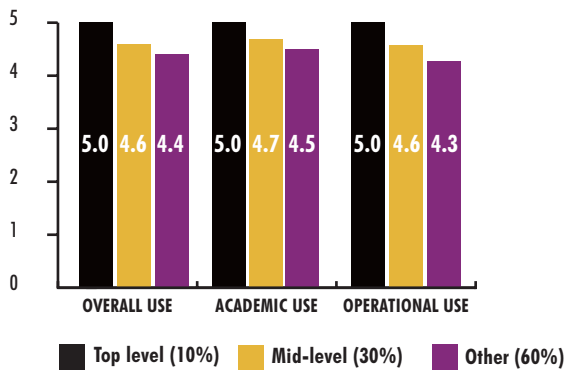
WBI's impact increased significantly between FY01 and FY05, as learners made greater use of course material



Scale: 1 = not at all. 7 = very often

FIGURE 7.3

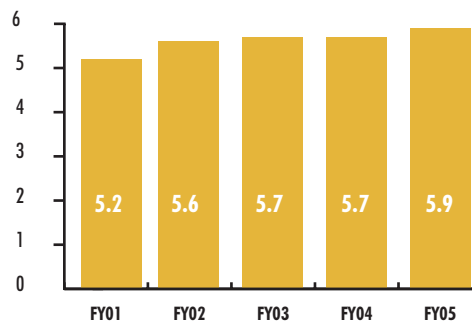
Top-level clients report greater use of learning than do officials in other positions



Scale: 1 = not at all. 7 = very often

FIGURE 7.4

WBI's programs are more relevant to specific country needs



Scale: 1 = extremely irrelevant. 7 = extremely relevant



STRATEGIC STUDIES: METHODS TO ENSURE EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPACT

Among strategic studies conducted in FY06, WBIEG performed a metanalysis of 31 of its evaluations. It also reviewed the World Bank's partnership with the Joint Africa Institute and studied approaches to joint client-staff learning.

The metanalytic review highlighted some key lessons learned, including those presented above. It also found that programs that provide ongoing support and follow-up are more effective and are put to greater use.

The purpose of the Joint Africa Institute review was to help the Bank refine its strategies and enhance its focus on the core function of capacity development. The review found that although the partnership among the Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Africa Development Bank had functioned largely as envisioned, it lacked sufficient emphasis on organizational and institutional capacity development. A second key issue was the relative lack of emphasis on client demand. These issues can be addressed when the partnership is renegotiated.

Finally the study of joint client-staff learning found that joint approaches were more suited to some types of learning events than to others. For example, joint learning is effective in policy discussions directly related to operational tasks (as opposed to highly technical topics); region- or country-specific vs. global or multisited events; and activities where learning or working in teams is the desired outcome.

WBIEG'S ONGOING SERVICES

In FY06, WBIEG continued to provide training in monitoring and evaluation. It also broadened its advisory and analytic services for monitoring and measuring results. This work included:

- Analysis of the Bank's ratings of the impact of investment projects to identify variables associated with institutional development and to outline lessons for mainstreaming capacity development in the Bank's lending operations.
- Multivariate analysis of data from the Bank's Quality Assurance Group to identify variables associated with project ratings. WBIEG also provided recommendations

on how to simplify the questionnaires used for assessments of quality at entry and quality of supervision.

- WBIEG continued to provide monitoring and evaluation training to clients and Bank staff in partnership with other Bank units. In FY06, WBIEG provided 17 training courses for Bank staff and clients from 14 countries. Among these courses, six were provided through distance learning.
- Finally, WBIEG's dissemination program includes Evaluation Briefs that summarize the key findings of evaluations, other publications, and presentations at staff meetings and professional conferences. The group's publications and briefs are available on its Web site. www.worldbank.org/wbi/evaluation

UPCOMING DEVELOPMENTS IN EVALUATION

In FY06 WBIEG initiated several new strategic studies to improve WBI's internal performance metrics and provide robust measures for assessing the impact of capacity development services aimed at achieving organizational and institutional changes. WBIEG will also initiate in-depth studies of WBI's impact.

Measuring organizational capacity. The research agenda includes the identification of areas of organizational performance and the development of indicators of organizational functioning in those areas. The initial research is complete, and the development and piloting of questionnaires will commence in FY07.

Refined performance indicators. WBIEG is analyzing in depth the data and information available for use as indicators of WBI's performance. The work includes a review of the indicators currently in use and the development of new indicators of outcomes and impact.

In-depth study of WBI's impact. WBIEG will initiate a major study of WBI's performance and impact in Brazil, China, India, and other large countries with which WBI has been intensively engaged. The objectives of the upcoming study are to assess WBI's long-term impact and to distill lessons about how capacity development should be approached in other client countries.