Evaluation of “Managing a Country Office”

Heidi S. Zia
Peter J. Dirr

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Vice President, World Bank Institute
Ms. Frannie Léautier
Chief Learning Officer
Ms. Phyllis Pomerantz
Manager, Institute Evaluation Group
Ms. Marlaine E. Lockheed
Task Team Leader
MS. Heidi Zia
**ACRONYMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IFC</td>
<td>International Finance Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIGA</td>
<td>Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Package for the Social Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFR</td>
<td>Africa Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAP</td>
<td>East Asia and the Pacific Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECA</td>
<td>Europe and Central Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCR</td>
<td>Latin America and Caribbean Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MNA</td>
<td>Middle East and North Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAR</td>
<td>South Asia Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HQ</td>
<td>Headquarters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRSP</td>
<td>Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAS</td>
<td>Country Assistance Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAP</td>
<td>Systems Applications and Products</td>
</tr>
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<td>FY04</td>
<td>Fiscal Year 2004</td>
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<tr>
<td>CM</td>
<td>Country Managers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREM</td>
<td>Poverty Reduction and Economic Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFTOS</td>
<td>Africa Training Operation Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPCS</td>
<td>Operations Policy and Country Services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ii  
ACRONYMS iii  
TABLE OF CONTENTS v  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY vii  

1. CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES 1  
   
   course description 1  
   evaluation questions 1  
   Evaluation Methodology 2  
   Evaluation Instruments 2  
   Target Population 2  
   Response Rates 3  
   Data Analysis 4  
   The Respondents 4  

2. EFFECTS OF THE COURSE 5  
   
   Level of Preparation for the Job 5  
   Overall Effectiveness, Usefulness and Quality 6  
   Effectiveness in Meeting Course Objectives 7  

3. COURSE CONTENT 9  
   
   Effectiveness of the Case Study Approach 9  
   Usefulness of the Course Topics 10  
   Suggestions About Specific Topics 11  
   General Suggestions for Improving Content 11  

4. COURSE QUALITY 13  
   
   Course Delivery 13  
   Venue 14  
   Timing 14  
   Pedagogical Issues 14  
   Guest Speakers 14  
   Materials 15
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This evaluation was conducted to determine if the World Bank course, “Managing a Country Office” was achieving its goal of preparing new Country Managers and Country Directors to assume their responsibilities. It also sought to identify any gaps that might exist between the current course curriculum and the training needs of Country Managers and Country Directors, and to make recommendations for improvement of future offerings.

The study addressed four evaluation questions:

(1) How effective was the course in systematically exposing and sensitizing participants to key financial, administrative, and personnel areas for which they are accountable? Answer: On a seven-point scale (1-low to 7-high), the course achieved moderate success in teaching personnel matters (mean of 5.3) and administrative matters (mean of 5.0). It was not as successful in teaching financial matters (mean of 4.4).

(2) Did the course meet its two other stated objectives, to acquaint participants with headquarters managers and staff who can help them deal with these areas, and, to provide an opportunity for participants to build a network of colleagues encountering similar problems in the field? Answer: The course achieved moderate success with these two goals. It received a mean rating of 5.2 out of 7 for acquainting participants with headquarters managers and staff, and a mean rating of 5.0 for providing participants with opportunities to network with each other.

(3) How useful were the specific topics covered in the course? Answer: Course participants were asked to indicate how useful the course topics had been in their work. They gave modest ratings to the usefulness of most of the topics. The mean ratings hovered around the mid-point of the rating scale (i.e., 4), ranging from 4.5 for Legal Issues to 5.4 for Security. In ranking “overall usefulness” respondents gave this course a mean rating of 5.4, a rating which is lower than that of all other staff learning courses of 5.9. Only 75 percent of the respondents rated the overall usefulness above the midpoint compared to 88.9 percent in other Bank courses.

(4) What were the gaps between the topics covered and the topics that the participants wish they had learned (e.g., client engagement skills, advanced operations skills, developing partnerships)? Answer: The respondents indicated a few topics that they would like to have learned about, but they also pointed out that this course might not be the appropriate venue for those topics and that other sources of information about those topics already exist. For example, the respondents gave highest ratings to Interfacing with the Media,
Client Engagement Skills, and Coaching Local Staff (5.6, 5.1, and 5.0 respectively). A concern was shared by many that this course is already packed with information and that it would be a mistake to try to add anything to the course.

Overall, this evaluation concludes that the course is achieving only modest success in its goal of preparing participants to assume their job responsibilities as Country Managers. The course lags behind other Bank courses with respect to usefulness and quality: the respondents mean rating of 5.4 for overall usefulness and quality falls short of the 5.9 benchmark for other Bank training courses. Furthermore, only 75 percent of the respondents rated the overall usefulness of the course above the midpoint compared to 88.9 percent in other Bank training courses. To improve the course this evaluation recommends assembling a small working group to address several key issues and examine specific changes that might be made to the course.
1. CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 This Chapter briefly describes the “Managing a Country Office” course, sets out the evaluation questions and describes the evaluation methodology.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

1.2 The “Managing A Country Office” course was launched by the World Bank in 1993 after having been piloted for some time before that. It is a week-long course to train Bank staff who are about to assume responsibility for Country offices, either as Country Managers or Country Directors. (In some cases, the individuals have already assumed those positions when they take the course). The course is offered twice each year, usually in June and November, to 10 to 15 participants, and has been offered by the same two instructors for the past decade. The instructors have received feedback regularly from participants, which has allowed them to modify the course content from time to time, but the course has never been evaluated by a third-party to determine the impact it has had on the participants.

1.3 The course is intended to prepare Country Managers and Directors to run a Country Office efficiently and effectively. It seeks to accomplish three goals: (a) to systematically expose and sensitize participants to the key financial, administrative, and personnel areas for which they are accountable; (b) to acquaint participants with Headquarters managers and staff who can help them deal with these areas; and (c) to provide an opportunity for participants to build a network of colleagues encountering similar problems in the field. The course uses thirteen interrelated case studies to cover roughly eighteen topics in four categories: Responsibility and Accountability (including ethics), Managing Resources (including accounting controls, facilities management and security), Legal Issues, and Managing People (including medical issues, respect in the workplace, conflict resolution, compensation and benefits, and termination and severance procedures).

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1.4 The overall objectives of this evaluation are to: (a) determine whether the course is achieving its goal of preparing new Country Managers and Country Directors to assume their responsibilities, (b) identify gaps that might exist between the current course curriculum and the training needs of Country Directors and Country Managers, and (c) make recommendations for improvement of future offerings.

1.5 The study addresses four evaluation questions:

a) How effective was the course in systematically exposing and sensitizing participants to key financial, administrative, and personnel areas for which they are accountable?

---

1 The instructors, Tom Oxley and Liam Fitzpatrick, are consultants based in Oxford, England.
b) Did the course meet its two other stated objectives, to acquaint participants with Headquarters managers and staff who can help them deal with these areas, and, to provide an opportunity for participants to build a network of colleagues encountering similar problems in the field?

c) How useful were the specific topics covered in the course?

d) What were the gaps between the topics covered and the topics that the participants wish they had learned (e.g., client engagement skills, advanced operations skills, developing partnerships)?

**Evaluation Methodology**

1.6 The original design of this evaluation anticipated two post-course measures, an e-mail survey of qualified participants who had taken the course in 2001 through 2003, and a telephone interview with a representative from each of the six regions. The second part of the design was modified slightly based on the responses to the first part of the evaluation, as is explained below.

**Evaluation Instruments**

1.7 A survey instrument was developed for online administration (see Appendix A). It consisted of multiple choice, Likert-scale, and open-ended questions. It elicited participants’ assessment of the main components of the course and examples of how those components have helped them in their jobs. It also elicited suggestions for other training that might have helped them perform their jobs more effectively or more efficiently. The survey instrument was sent to the participants as a “link” in an e-mail message. The survey took approximately ten minutes to complete. Responses were captured in an online database that was later downloaded for in-depth analysis.

1.8 The original evaluation design included a second instrument, a telephone interview protocol, that would elicit more in-depth information from six Country Managers who had taken the course, representing the six Bank regions. The respondents were to be asked to elaborate on how they believe the course had impacted their performance and indicate any additional training they thought would benefit themselves or those who report to them. As the first waves of responses to the online survey came in, two things became clear: first, those who were responding were providing (in response to open-ended questions) much the same information that might be derived from telephone interviews; second, it might be necessary to conduct telephone interviews with non-respondents to bring the response rate up to the goal of 75 percent. Consequently, the online survey was converted into a telephone interview protocol and used as the second survey instrument.

**Target Population**

1.9 The evaluation targeted all those who had participated in the course during 2001, 2002, or 2003 and were Country Managers, Country Directors, or an equivalent position. Bank records indicated that 82 persons took the course over the three-year period, and that 71 of those persons were Country Managers, Country Directors, or their
equivalents, including their equivalents in IFC and MIGA. All 71 were considered “qualified” for this evaluation. The other eleven persons held jobs with less responsibility or were no longer employed by the Bank and were considered “non-qualified” for the purposes of this study. (see Table 1). (A complete list of the qualified attendees is available upon request).

### Table 1: Course Participants, 2001 to 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Nov. 03</th>
<th>June 03</th>
<th>Nov. 02</th>
<th>June 02</th>
<th>Oct. 01</th>
<th>June 01</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of Participants</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Qualified *</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-Country Directors</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Directors</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Managers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputies / Spec. Reps.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFC/MIGA Staff</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* “Qualified” are those who are Country Directors, Country Managers, Deputies (or equivalent); (excludes staff with titles such as administrators, liaisons, and HR officers)

### Response Rates

1.10 The main mechanism for this evaluation, an online survey, worked fairly effectively. The first mailing yielded 11 responses (15 percent). Three follow-up e-mails were sent to non-respondents over a three week period. Each follow-up mailing resulted in additional responses. After the fourth mailing, responses had been received from 45 persons (63 percent). To further increase the response rate the remainder of the data were collected by telephone interviews, ultimately achieving a response rate of 75 percent, as shown in the following Table. This response rate allows one to have great confidence that the responses represent the opinions of all the Country Managers and Country Directors who have taken “Managing a Country Office” during the past three years.

1.11 Because it appeared from the initial wave of responses that those participants who were employees of IFC were responding somewhat differently than those who worked for other divisions of the Bank, it was decided to overweight the sample of non-respondents selected for telephone interviews with IFC employees (i.e., chose a few more IFC employees for follow-up than their proportionate representation in the universe) so as to have a large enough number of IFC respondents to permit valid and reliable comparisons.

### Table 2: Response Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Wave</th>
<th>Cumulative No. of Responses</th>
<th>Cumulative Response Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Analysis

1.12 Data were captured online and first transferred to an Excel spreadsheet for cleaning and preliminary analysis. Text data were transferred to a Word document for content analysis. (A verbatim transcription of the text data is provided in Appendix B.) Statistical data were transferred to an SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) database for further analysis.

The Respondents

1.13 Fifty-three of the seventy-one participants (75 percent) in this study responded to the survey questionnaire. All were in positions at or equivalent to Country Manager and Country Director level. The global distribution of the respondents was roughly equivalent to the global distribution of all the participants, as shown in Table 3, although managers in the African region were somewhat under-represented among the respondents. Response rates were over 80 percent for all but two units (ECA and AFR), with the response rate in Africa falling below 50 percent. On balance, however, the respondents to the survey were well distributed across World Bank areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>World Bank Region</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Response Rate by Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFR</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAP</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECA</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCR</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MNA</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAR</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFC</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>99.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.14 One of the questions explored in this study was whether the IFC respondents viewed the course differently than those who work for the World Bank regions. That relationship was examined statistically for all the quantitative data. Few statistically significant differences were found. Where that is the case, they are so noted in the narrative.
2. EFFECTS OF THE COURSE

2.1 Three metrics were used to measure the effects of this course: (i) an assessment of how well the course helped prepare Country Managers and Country Directors to assume their job responsibilities; (ii) an assessment of the overall effectiveness, usefulness, and quality of the course; and, (iii) an assessment of how well the course achieved its five goals.

LEVEL OF PREPARATION FOR THE JOB

2.2 This study sought to determine how well the “Managing a Country Office” course prepared participants to assume their job responsibilities as they entered their new office. Respondents used a seven-point rating scale (1-Not Very Well Prepared to 7-Extremely Well Prepared) to answer the question, “After completing the course, how well prepared did you feel for the challenges of your new job?”

2.3 The course was helpful in preparing the respondents for their job but there is also room for improvement. The mean score for preparing the participant to become a Country Manager was 4.9, meaning that, after taking the course, the average respondent felt somewhat better than “4-Moderately Well Prepared” but substantially less than “7-Extremely Well Prepared” to meet the responsibilities of his/her new job as Country Manager or Country Director. There was no statistically significant difference between the IFC staff and Bank staff on this item.

2.4 Respondents were also invited to give comments and suggestions in a series of open-ended questions, including: “If you could change two things about this course to improve its effectiveness, usefulness, and quality, what would they be?” and, “Please provide any additional comments or observations that you think might help improve this course.” The verbatim responses to all open-ended questions are shown in Appendix B.

2.5 One respondent commented on how helpful the course was on the job: “The course was very useful. I felt very comfortable going back to my job knowing that there were all these resources available for me to do my job well and knowing who to call when I needed help.”

2.6 Still another respondent put the course in the context of his career experience: “I took the course after I had been in the field for over 2 years and perhaps because of that I saw a lot of relevance in topics and issues covered that perhaps other people that had not yet been to the field did not see in the same light. The great value and relevance of this training is in the preparation to deal with the seemingly unexpected through the case studies and putting a face to the people that one is most likely to have to deal with in HQ while away in the field....”
OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS, USEFULNESS AND QUALITY

2.7 This study also sought to determine the overall Effectiveness, Usefulness, and Quality of the training the participants got in the course. Respondents used a seven-point scale (1-Low to 7-High) to rate those three overall characteristics of the course. For each characteristic, their ratings ranged from 2 to 7. They rated each of the three characteristics above the mid-point (4-Moderately Well), giving Effectiveness a mean rating of 5.2, and Usefulness and Quality a mean rating of 5.4. The IFC respondents rated all three characteristics lower than the respondents from the World Bank regions but the differences were not statistically significant.

Figure 1: Overall Effectiveness, Usefulness and Quality

2.8 The “Managing a Country Office” course lags behind other Bank courses with respect to its usefulness and quality as perceived by participants. The average ratings of usefulness and quality (5.4) are below the World Bank average for staff learning, which is 5.9 on a 7-point scale for both measures. The difference is approximately one-half a standard deviation, which is both statistically and meaningfully different.

Table 4: Comparison With Other World Bank Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Usefulness</th>
<th>Quality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Managing a Country Office” -- % rating 5, 6, or 7 (7-point scale)</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>84.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Bank Courses -- % rating 5, 6, or 7 (7-point scale)</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
<td>89.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.9 Comments on the effectiveness, usefulness and quality of the training were mixed. One respondent was skeptical about the overall value of the course for him. “In hindsight, I am no longer sure if this course was worth returning from the field to DC. Perhaps, with batch recruitment, it could be offered prior to departure, giving the candidates also some more time for follow-up reading and interaction with colleagues at HQ, rather than having to return immediately to the field to be inundated with the day-to-day challenges.” Another indicated that the course was very useful but it was hard for him to provide specific input to the evaluation after a couple of years.

\[\text{Based on Level one evaluations that have been on a seven point scale.}\]
Effectiveness in Meeting Course Objectives

2.10 This evaluation tested how effectively the course dealt with each of its five stated objectives: (a) to teach key financial material, (b) to teach key administrative material, (c) to teach key personnel material, (d) to acquaint participants with headquarters staff, and (e) to provide opportunities to build a network of colleagues. The respondents used a seven-point scale (1-Not at all Effectively to 7-Extremely Effectively) to rate each of the five objectives.

2.11 The course did not meet all its goals equally effectively. It was most effective at providing opportunities for participants to network with each other (a mean rating of 5.4), and least effective in teaching financial matters (a mean rating of 4.4). The effectiveness of the three other goals (teaching administrative matters, teaching personnel matters, and acquainting the participants with Headquarters staff) fall between those two ratings.

2.12 Ratings of IFC staff were statistically significantly lower (at the .03 level) than the ratings of all other respondents. The rating for Networking with Colleagues would have been higher, absent the responses of the IFC personnel. This suggests that the IFC personnel move in different circle than the rest of the Bank staff. As will be seen below (see “Additional Training Needs”), IFC personnel also believe that they have different training needs than other Bank staff.

Figure 2: Meeting Course Objectives

2.13 Respondent comments on what might be done to improve the course’s effectiveness in reaching its goals provide insight into the numerical ratings. For example, the goal of teaching the participants the financial responsibilities for which they would be held responsible was rated the lowest of the five course goals. In their comments, five of the respondents indicated that they could have benefited from more information on finances and budget, especially how to develop and monitor a budget:

- “Financial management could have been given more time.”
- “There was very scant coverage of budget monitoring systems.”
• “I felt (and still feel) very ill prepared in the matter of financial management.”

• “… elements of country office budgeting and financing might have been useful in more detail.”

• “… greater depth related to the mundane operation of the office, e.g., finance and administration contracting.”

2.14 One of the IFC respondents, however, thought that too much detail was paid to the financial issues. He pointed out that “IFC country office managers have a somewhat different set of responsibilities. Specific modules for IFC staff would have made a lot of difference.” Another IFC respondent pointed out that, “Many of the topics covered were not top priority for IFC personnel.”

2.15 Although the teaching of personnel matters was given relatively high ratings, some respondents wished that more coverage had been given to ways to motivate and involve staff.

2.16 One respondent questioned whether the course objectives are the right objectives: “The objectives are not the right objectives. The country manager is not an administrative position – it is a position primarily dealing with strategy, government dialogue and donor coordination. These three elements should have much more time in the course.”

2.17 It is not the role of this evaluation to address the goals of the course, but this respondent’s view of the responsibilities of a Country Manager or Country Director could help to focus a discussion of course goals.

2.18 Another respondent questioned the planning and timing of the course by indicating that she had already learned a lot on the job before she took the course, something that was later mentioned by three or four other respondents. Although the course is intended to prepare persons as new Country Managers and Country Directors, it seems that it is not unusual for the course participants to have been in their positions for some time before taking the course.
3. COURSE CONTENT

3.1 Several aspects related to the content of the course were examined: how effective the case study approach was; the usefulness of specific course topics; and, how the course content might be improved.

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CASE STUDY APPROACH

3.2 The case study approach is central to the “Managing a Country Office” course and constitutes most of the course delivery time. About 13 case studies were developed and offered as the vehicle for delivering most of the course content and much of the course interaction. This evaluation asked the respondents whether they found the case study approach to be an effective way to organize the course. More than nine out of ten (90.2 percent) of the respondents replied that the case study is an effective instructional approach for this course.

Table 5: Effectiveness of the Case Study Approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>IFC Staff</th>
<th>All Other Staff</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7 (100%)</td>
<td>39 (88.6%)</td>
<td>46 (90.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5 (11.4%)</td>
<td>5 (9.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7 (100%)</td>
<td>44 (100%)</td>
<td>51 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3 When asked, to comment on specific ways to improve the effectiveness and/or usefulness of the course, five respondents mentioned the case study approach. Three indicated that while effective, the case studies took too much time and need to become more focused. Two emphasized the importance of case studies for highlighting real problems in Country Offices.

3.4 When asked, “if you could change two things about this course to improve its effectiveness, usefulness, and quality, what would they be?”, ten respondents addressed the case study approach. Four urged that the case studies be reviewed and revised to make them more real:

- “Cases studies that deal with the real life that we are facing in our field offices.”
- “Some of the case studies had an exaggerated negative tone as if there would be nothing but corruption and strained staff issues in the country office.”
- “… make them real world cases.”
- “… use real applications.”

3.5 Others offered specific suggestions for case study topics, ranging from engaging clients to the preparation of PRSPS, and CAS to accounting control.
3.6 One called for a “clear indication of what the underlying objectives are (for the case studies). This would help narrowing the large variety of directions of thoughts and side-effects experienced and allow the participants to dig more into the issues.”

3.7 Another suggested that the case studies be complimented with “some lists of do’s and don’ts as summaries.”

**USEFULNESS OF THE COURSE TOPICS**

3.8 Besides examining whether the course met its content-related objectives (i.e., to teach financial matters, administrative matters, and personnel matters), this evaluation also studied the extent to which the major topics of the course were useful to the participants in their jobs.

3.9 Usefulness was lower than most staff learning courses. Respondents were asked to rate how useful each topic had been to them in their work. On a seven-point scale (1-Not at all Useful to 7-Extremely Useful), their mean ratings hovered above the mid-point (4-Moderately Useful), ranging from 4.5 for Legal Issues, to 5.4 for Security. None of the ratings is an outstanding endorsement of the usefulness of the topic. In fact, the scores lag behind the benchmark score (5.9) for usefulness in other Bank training courses that have been rated on a seven-point scale.

**Figure 3: Usefulness of Course Topics**

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3 The ratings of the IFC employees tended to drag these ratings down in general and at a significant level in the case of Career Expectations.
3.10 The respondents see security, medical issues, compensation and benefits, accounting controls, and recruitment as being the most useful topics covered in the course (rated 5 and above). They view legal issues, career expectations, internal audit, ethics, and facilities management as less useful.

3.11 One statistically significant difference was found between the IFC employees and all other Bank employees. The IFC employees rated Career Expectations at 3.6 compared to 4.9 by the rest of the Bank employees. This difference is significant at the .02 level. In other words, IFC employees did not find that topic as useful as other Bank employees.

3.12 In comments provided in open-ended questions, the respondents provided quite concrete suggestions both for specific topics and for more general ways to handle the content of the course.

Suggestions About Specific Topics

3.13 Ethics was the most referenced topic in respondent comments. Several urged that the amount of time devoted to this topic be reduced:

- One “was surprised how much time was dedicated to ethics …” even though he understood that it is “an issue of importance to senior management.”
- “Drop or greatly reduce the ethics session – more relevant and less preachy.”
- “Drop ethics, or at a minimum reduce overlap between similar functions (Ombudsman, INT, etc.).”
- “Rethink thoroughly the ethics and values presentations, and be aware of geo-political realities and perceived American dominance in setting values.”
- “… it seemed a bit academic with lack of real life experiences.”

3.14 Two respondents pointed to the importance of career expectations, one thinking it especially important “in view of the reorganization and major changes that have taken place.”

3.15 One called for more emphasis on the Public relations side of the Bank (client culture and media). Another asked for more time on financial management.

General Suggestions for Improving Content

3.16 Three respondents suggested that the course might benefit from more hands-on activities, specifically dealing with accounting controls and internal audits, SAP, and budget. This suggests questions about the overall design of the course. Did the course participants feel lectured to? Were there group activities but no hands-on activities, especially on the topics of budget, finance, internal audit, and accounting controls? Can real and relevant hands-on activities be developed for these topics?
3.17 These questions become even more important in view of the fact that six respondents thought the mix of activities needed review and possibly tightening.

- “…try to be more selective and devote more time to some key things like analysis of case studies.”
- “It may try to do just too many things.”
- “Case studies could be tightened up.”
- “Too much material packaged into a very short time.”
- “… reduce the ‘intensity’ of the training.”
- “Shorten parts.”

3.18 One respondent observed that the course seemed clear and carefully organized in the beginning modules but that the “material presented towards the end seems to be a collation of bad/nightmare management scenarios from which it is difficult to draw any lessons.” This suggests a review of each lesson in the course to see that it meets the highest standards for design and materials.
4. COURSE QUALITY

4.1 The overall quality of this course was below the World Bank average for staff learning, and to understand the overall rating, this chapter examines the quality of six aspects of the course: the two lead instructors, guest speakers, logistics, course material, facilities, and time allocation.\(^4\)

4.2 Respondents rated the six characteristics on a seven-point scale, from 1-very poor quality to 7-extremely high quality. The ratings showed clear differentiation among these aspects of the course. Highest ratings went to the two lead instructors (a mean rating of 5.6), followed by course materials (mean of 5.4), course logistics (mean of 5.3), and the guest speakers (mean of 5.1). Respondents were disappointed in the meeting facilities (Mean of 4.6) and the time allocation (Mean of 4.8). They particularly mentioned that they would have liked more time to read the materials and network with their peers. There were no significant differences between IFC staff and all other Bank staff.

Figure 4: Quality Assessment of the Course

4.3 On improving course quality, respondents commented on four aspects of the training, two with respect to pedagogy and two with respect to delivery. Aspects of delivery received the highest number of comments.

CURSO\text{D} E\text{L} I\text{V} E\text{E}\text{R}\text{Y}

4.4 Both the physical location of the course and its timing received strong negative comments from participants.

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\(^4\) The overall quality of other Bank staff training courses is 5.8 on a seven-point scale.
Venue

4.5 A change of venue was one of the major changes suggested by the respondents when asked about the two things they would change to improve the effectiveness, usefulness, and quality of the course. Eight respondents commented on the poor location of the course, which took place in a basement meeting room that lacked natural light, which was particularly difficult for field staff experiencing jet lag: “I came in from the field office and had to sit in the basement for a week for this course – the room had no natural light and I suffered horribly from jet lag the whole week. It would be better to do it off site or at least somewhere with some natural light.” Many other respondents commented on this, specifically.

4.6 Respondents also found that locating the course at Bank Headquarters presented too many distractions, such as the temptation to schedule meetings and visits with other Bank personnel (“too many other demands and expectations such as meetings.”) They recommended a different venue (“... somewhere away from the Bank even if nearby enough that it is not residential.”).

Timing

4.7 Respondents observed that starting the course on a Sunday conflicted with Bank values regarding work-life balance and contributed to absenteeism. In the words of one, “It is a bad idea to start these meetings on Sunday. That is a disconnect with the values the Bank promotes.” Noted another, “... an important part of the trainees were not able to make it.”

4.8 Opinions about the overall length of the course varied; some recommended shortening it (“Collapse it to 4 work days”) while others recommended lengthening it (“Timing might have to be slightly longer to have more time for actual discussion in the full group and networking/informal contacts with peers”). Others thought the durations was acceptable, but that the content should change (“Program should be kept to 5 working days only; attempt should not be made to cover every theme but there should be focus on risky issues.”)

PEDAGOGICAL ISSUES

4.9 The main comments about course pedagogy mentioned the guest speakers and the course materials, and were mostly positive.

Guest Speakers

4.10 Respondents valued high level, high quality guest speakers who were on time for their presentations. They noted that there was a range in the quality of guest speakers (“Speakers varied from poor to high” and “… some guest speakers were excellent … some were less impressive.”) They recommended greater selectivity in speaker choice. Most respondents who commented on guest speakers thought the use of Bank guest speakers was a good idea, and one suggested that peer learning would be valuable (“if a colleague CM would have presented his experience after the first year or following
completion of his assignment that might have been interesting and helpful.”) They also expressed interest in having senior management speak (“Please bring in higher level management to also talk with us.”) Some responses indicated that there was a problem with guest speakers showing up late or not showing up at all (“… resolve the issue of people not turning up or not turning up on time.”).

Materials

4.11 Respondent views about course materials were typically positive. One indicated that he still has and refers to the course materials. Another suggested that the materials be provided in electronic form (“Provide materials on a CD-ROM and integrate its use in the course.”). Two suggested that the materials be sent to the participants (“a few weeks or months”) ahead of the workshop. Another asked for “consistency in the course materials” that would make it easier to access them for future reference. One respondent seemed overwhelmed by the sheer volume of materials (“…it was out of the question to make use of the huge amount of materials distributed, even after the course. The organizers should be more selective in the materials and allow more time for individual reading.”)
5. ADDITIONAL TRAINING NEEDS

5.1 The final area explored by this study was whether there were other topics that the course might have covered that would have been helpful to the Participants in their jobs. On a seven point scale (1=Not At All Helpful, 7=Extremely Helpful), participants ranked six possible topics that had been suggested by a review of the course that HRSLO had begun in mid-FY04. These additional topics were: Client Engagement Skills, Advanced Operation Skills, Developing Productive Partnerships with Colleagues, Coaching Local Staff, Inter-cultural Sensitivity, and Interfacing with the Media. The respondents were asked about those topics and encouraged to suggest any others. respondents indicated that the two most helpful areas that might be added to the course are Client Engagement Skills and Interfacing with the Media.

POSSIBLE ADDITIONS SUGGESTED BY HRSLO

5.2 In the area of additional training needs suggested by HRSLO, the responses of the IFC staff differed the most from the responses of all other World Bank staff. IFC staff placed statistically significantly lower value on additional training in Advanced Operation Skills, Developing Productive Partnerships with Colleagues, and Coaching Local Staff than did other Bank staff. Their reasoning becomes apparent in the open-ended responses (below).

Table 6: Additional Training Needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Topics</th>
<th>Total Means</th>
<th>Means of IFC Staff</th>
<th>Means of All Others</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interfacing with the Media</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>.403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client Engagement Skills</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching Local Staff</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing Productive Partnerships with Colleagues</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Operation Skills</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-cultural Sensitivity</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>.244</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.3 There seems to be little consensus among the respondents on what other training would help prepare individuals for positions as Country Managers and Country Directors. The need for training on Interfacing with the Media was shared by many respondents (a mean rating of 5.6). Client Engagement Skills (Mean of 5.1) and Coaching Local Staff (Mean of 5.0) received moderate support. Other suggested topics received less support. However, it must be noted that the ratings of the IFC staff dragged down the overall ratings of these topics.

5.4 There were statistically significant differences between the ratings of the IFC staff and all other Bank staff for Advanced Operation Skills, Developing Partnerships with Colleagues, and Coaching Local Staff.
5.5 Looking only at the ratings of all other Bank staff for the suggested training topics, one could make the argument that several should be explored further. The mean rating for all other Bank staff for Interfacing with the Media is 5.7, and for Client Engagement Skills is 5.3. These are rather high ratings and those two topics deserve further attention. Two others are close behind: Coaching local staff, with a mean rating of 5.2 and Developing Productive Partnerships with Colleagues, at 5.0.

5.6 Some respondents gave a qualified endorsement to some of the topics in the list. For example, in citing the need for training in how to interface with the media, one respondent added that it should include training in media policy – what is expected from a media standpoint from a country office.

5.7 Others gave suggestions for re-casting some of the topics, such as, when talking about client engagement skills, include academics and universities as possible sources for “knowledge sharing;” or, be sensitive to the need to tailor the training as much as possible to regional or local needs.

5.8 Some respondents were not convinced that the suggested topics represented the most important needs or that they were not already being met in other ways. One claimed that most of the topics in the list “can be addressed in other courses; for example, I attended media training immediately after this course.” Another thought some of the proposed topics might be helpful, “but not as part of this course.” The third thought that “there is already overload in this course” and that you just have to learn some of the topics on your own. He did suggest, however, that “intercultural sensitivity can be dealt with by building it into revised case studies.”

5.9 It was clear that the IFC staff felt that their need for training differs substantially from the training needs of other Bank staff. Three IFC employees addressed the issue of additional training with much the same thought. One put it this way: “The wording of question 11 (i.e., the listing of possible additional training needs – Advanced Operation Skills, Developing Productive Partnerships, Counseling Local Staff, etc.) tells it all. This course does not take into account the different needs of IFC.” Another said, “… Bank procedures that are not relevant to IFC.” The third said, “Many of the topics are World Bank specific; not important to the IFC.”

5.10 The notion of differences in training needs and expectations between the IFC staff and all other Bank staff cropped up several times in this evaluation, suggesting that it is probably not wise to combine staff in future offerings of this course. The recommendation is that a separate course be developed for IFC staff that more directly targets their training needs and job expectations.

OTHER CHANGES SUGGESTED BY RESPONDENTS

5.11 Some respondents suggested other changes to the course that do not fit easily into the categories used in the evaluation form or in this report. They address the following issues:

(1) Consider providing follow-up to this course:
• “Have a repeater after six months or so.”

• “Have a follow-up session after about a year to reinforce what is covered in the course. We would come back with concrete examples to discuss.”

• Institute a “Hotline to call with questions afterwards.”

• “I would suggest a follow-up course, ideally with the same cohort group to see how things are for Country Managers one year after the course. Perhaps the participants can come with a 1-2 page “Case Study” of their specific experience and 2-3 issues for the group to explore.”

(2) Think differently about the course. One respondentsuggested, “Perhaps think about an ‘induction period’ of one month instead of a single concentrated course. Half would focus on ‘internal issues’ such as those covered in this course, and half on ‘external issues’ such as relations with government and donors, sector clients, and the media.”
6. CONCLUSION

6.1 This evaluation set out to determine if the World Bank course, “Managing a Country Office” was achieving its goal of preparing new Country Managers and Country Directors to assume their responsibilities. It also sought to identify any gaps that might exist between the current course curriculum and the training needs of Country Managers and Country Directors, and to make recommendations for improvement of future offerings.

6.2 To determine whether the course met its objectives, identify the potential “gaps” in the course content, and make recommendations for improvement of future offerings, the study addressed four evaluation questions:

**Question 1:** How effective was the course in systematically exposing and sensitizing participants to key financial, administrative, and personnel areas for which they are accountable?

**Answer:** The course achieved moderate success in teaching personnel matters (Mean of 5.3 out of 7) and administrative matters (Mean of 5.0). It was not as successful in teaching financial matters (Mean of 4.4).

**Question 2:** Did the course meet its two other stated objectives, to acquaint participants with headquarters managers and staff who can help them deal with these areas, and, to provide an opportunity for participants to build a network of colleagues encountering similar problems in the field?

**Answer:** The course achieved moderate success with these two goals. It received a mean rating of 5.2 out of 7 for acquainting participants with headquarters managers and staff, and a mean rating of 5.0 for providing participants with opportunities to network with each other.

**Question 3:** How useful were the specific topics covered in the course?

**Answer:** Course participants were asked to indicate how useful the course topics had been in their work. They gave modest ratings to the usefulness of most of the topics. The mean ratings hovered around the mid-point of the rating scale (i.e., 4), ranging from 4.5 for Legal Issues to 5.4 for Security. In addition to Legal Issues, four other topics received a mean rating of 5 or above: Medical Issues (5.2), Compensation and Benefits (5.0), Accounting Control (5.0), and Recruitment (5.0). None of the ratings in an outstanding endorsement of the usefulness of the topics; and none reaches the benchmark of 5.9 set by other Bank training courses.

**Question 4:** What were the gaps between the topics covered and the topics that the participants wish they had learned (e.g., client engagement skills, advanced operations skills, developing partnerships)?
Answer: The respondents indicated a few topics that they would like to have learned about, but they also pointed out that this course might not be the appropriate venue for those topics and that other sources of information about those topics already exist. For example, the respondents gave highest ratings to Interfacing with the Media, Client Engagement Skills, and Coaching Local Staff (5.6, 5.1, and 5.0 respectively). A concern was shared by many that this course is already packed with information and that it would be a mistake to try to add anything to the course.

6.3 In addressing the issue of other training needs, this evaluation uncovered real differences between the training needs and expectations of IFC staff and all other Bank staff. Those differences suggest that in the future, IFC staff should be prepared separately from other Bank staff to assume their field responsibilities.

6.4 The respondents rated course effectiveness slightly above average, giving it a mean of 5.2 on a seven-point scale. To improve effectiveness and hence impact, respondents provided several suggestions for improving the impact of the course.

6.5 Overall, this evaluation concludes that the course is achieving only modest success in its goal of preparing participants to assume their job responsibilities as Country Managers. The course lags behind other Bank courses with respect to usefulness and quality: the respondents mean rating of 5.4 for overall usefulness and quality falls short of the 5.9 benchmark for other Bank training courses. Furthermore, only 75 percent of the respondents rated the overall usefulness of the course above the midpoint compared to 88.9 percent in other Bank training courses.

6.6 To improve usefulness, quality and effectiveness this evaluation recommends assembling a small working group to address several key issues and examine specific changes that might be made to the course.
7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It appears that the World Bank course, “Managing a Country Office,” has had a steady record of preparing new Country Managers and Country Directors fairly well. The evaluation does, however, suggest that now is a good time to consider changes that could improve the effectiveness, usefulness, and quality of the course. One goal of a review and re-design of the course would be to improve the usefulness and quality of the course to the point that most respondents in future evaluations rate all aspects of the course with 5s, 6s, and 7s. To reach that goal, the Bank might want to assemble a small working group to address several key questions and examine specific changes that might be made to the course.

7.2 Key questions that the working group might consider include:

- What is the role of the Country Manager/Country Director? Is it more administrative or more focused on policy and strategy?
- Can the essentials of preparation for a Country Manager/Country Director be adequately presented in a one-week course? Is it better to think of that preparation as taking place over a longer “induction period?” Can that period be divided into training on “internal matters” and “external matters?”
- When is preparation for a Country Manager/Country Director best offered – prior to assignment, shortly after taking up the position, or some combination thereof? Does it make sense to have a follow-up course or workshop after the person has been in the field for some time?

7.3 Specific changes to the course that the working group might consider include:

- Change the location of the course. Move it away from the Bank to reduce distractions. (What impact will that have on the availability of Guest Speakers and access to HQ staff?) Move it to a facility that has better space, including windows and daylight.
- Examine the length of the course and the number of topics dealt with. Is it possible to identify the absolutely essential topics and limit the course to them? What is the appropriate mix of topics for the responsibilities placed on today’s Country Managers/Country Directors? Can the course be reduced to five working days? Do not begin on Sunday. (This should be considered in the context of the question above about an “induction period” rather than a single course for training.)
- Look at the balance of the topics based on the feedback provided in this evaluation and additional feedback from the field (e.g., less time on ethics, more on finance and budget; include coverage of crisis management such as evacuations and staff terminations). Be aware of sensitivities to American dominance in setting values.
• Discuss whether it is possible to tailor the topics and the treatment of the topics to the regional and local needs of the participants in each cohort.

• Consider retaining the case study approach but try to tighten the case studies – be sure they reflect real-life issues; involve current CMs who can share war stories, what works and what does not; state the objectives of each case study clearly; provide a list of Do’s and Don’ts at the end of each unit.

• Consider, also, providing a greater mix of activities, including more hands-on exercises and more discussions with recent Country Manager graduates about what really works in the field. (You might consider using the Bank’s teleconferencing capabilities for the latter.)

• Review the course materials to make sure that there is no deterioration of quality between the early lessons and the later lessons. Consider distributing the course materials on CD-ROM. Send the materials to the participants in advance of the course; allow sufficient time for reading in advance and during the course.

• Exercise care in selecting Guest Speakers. Are they at a high enough level? Are you sure they present well to groups such as this? Do they know exactly when they are expected to speak and for how long? Are they given topics that you want them to cover?

7.4 Two other issues merit discussion by the working group:

(1) How best to separate out the training for IFC staff and all other Bank staff. (Is it a matter of having two different training programs? Some overlap and some separate sessions?)

(2) How to schedule the evaluation of this training so that it is none closely tied to the completion of the training. (The lead instructors currently conduct a course evaluation, but it falls short of a third-party evaluation and the results are not systematically reviewed.)

7.5 It is very possible that the working group will develop recommendations of its own as it reviews the findings of this evaluation and begins its consideration of changes that might improve the quality and effectiveness of the course. The working group should be encouraged to take the initiative to explore all avenues to improve the course.
ANNEX 1. EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

Online Survey

Evaluation of "Managing a Country Office"

Dear Evaluation Participant:

Thank you for taking the time to give us your feedback, which should not take you more than 10 to 15 minutes.

We need your honest feedback. Your response will be kept confidential. Please answer each question.

Thank you for your help with this. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or need assistance.

Peter J. Dirr, Ph.D.
pdirr@worldbank.org

* * *

*1. For what PART of the World Bank Group do you primarily work? *

*  *

*2. After completing the course, how well prepared did you feel for the CHALLENGES of your new job?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-Not Very Well Prepared</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4-Moderately Prepared</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7-Extremely Well Prepared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepared</td>
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*3. How would you rate the OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS, USEFULNESS, and QUALITY of the training you got in the "Managing a Country Office" course?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-Low</th>
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<th>4-Moderate</th>
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<th>7-High</th>
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<td>Overall Quality</td>
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*  *

*4. Please rate how EFFECTIVELY the course dealt with each of its major objectives:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-Not at all Effective</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4-Moderately Effective</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7-Extremely Effective</th>
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<tr>
<td>TEACHING PERSONNEL MATTERS</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
ACQUAINTING YOU WITH HEADQUARTERS STAFF

PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES TO NETWORK WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES

*5. Please provide any comments you think might help improve the EFFECTIVENESS of this course.*

*6. Tell us how USEFUL each of the course topics has been IN YOUR WORK.*

1-Not at all  2 3 4-Moderately Useful  5 6 7-Extremely Useful

ETHICS

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

ACCOUNTING CONTROLS

INTERNAL AUDIT

LEGAL ISSUES

MEDICAL ISSUES

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

RECRUITMENT

CAREER EXPECTATIONS

SECURITY

*7. Please give us any comments you think might help improve the USEFULNESS of this course.*

*8. Did you find the CASE STUDY APPROACH used in this course to be effective?*

Yes

No

*9. Please help us understand the QUALITY of various aspects of the course by rating them from 1 (Very Poor Quality) to 7 (Excellent Quality).*

1-Very Poor Quality  2 3 4-Moderate Quality  5 6 7-Extremely High Quality

The TWO LEAD INSTRUCTORS

The GUEST SPEAKERS

The Course LOGISTICS (registration, travel, accommodations, etc.)
The MATERIALS used in the course

The Meeting FACILITIES

TIME ALLOCATION (e.g., for reading case studies, discussion, and networking)

*10. Please give us any comments you think might help improve the QUALITY of this course.*

*11. We’d like to know if there are any "gaps" in the course; areas that you wish had been covered. On a scale of 1 (Not at all Helpful) to 7 (Extremely Helpful), what ADDITIONAL TRAINING would have helped prepare you for your position?*

1-Not at all Helpful 2 3 4-Moderately Helpful 5 6 7-Extremely Helpful

Client Engagement Skills (See Note 1 below)

Advanced Operation Skills (See Note 2 below)

Developing Productive Partnerships with Colleagues (See Note 3 below)

Coaching Local Staff

Inter-cultural Sensitivity

Interfacing With The Media

*Note 1: (e.g., working with government and donor counterparts on PRSP, PREM, CAS)
Note 2: (e.g., quality at entry, portfolio management, bank instruments)
Note 3: (e.g., sector team members, country strategy team, other colleagues across the Bank Group)*

*12. What other ADDITIONAL TRAINING would have been helpful to you?*

*13. If you could CHANGE TWO THINGS about this course to improve its effectiveness, usefulness, and quality, what would they be?*

* *

*14. Please provide any additional comments or observations that you think might help improve this course.*
ANNEX 2. RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

*Question #5: Comments on ways to improve the EFFECTIVENESS of this course.*

- Design modules for continued learning through VC and e-based courses.
- There were opportunities for socializing among colleagues such as lunches dinners; however, there should have been some more work on this to encourage the participants to take advantage of it.
- I took the course over two years ago - I would recommend more focus be place on management techniques/styles and how to get staff more involved, i.e., the personal and cultural side of running a country office.
- The effectiveness of a particular course depends on the guest lecturer so more careful selection based on the participants’ feedback should help.
- Reduce and rethink the elements on ethics and values. Very poorly presented and talking down to people who have demonstrated their values for 20, 30 or even more years. There was no answer to the question, whose values we are talking about?
- The case study approach needs developing and focusing as it takes a lot of time in the course. In contrast to the initial study material, which is clearly directed towards particular learning, material presented towards the end seems to be a collation of bad/nightmare management scenarios from which it is difficult to draw any lessons. Financial management could be given more time.
- The course focuses too much on administrative procedures
- The case study methodology is quite effective but takes up a lot of time. The course should allow for more interaction (using e.g. the results of discussions in various break-out groups) to expand full group discussion, thus encouraging sharing/learning from actual experience among participating country managers.
- Course is very much designed for World Bank country office managers. IFC country office managers have a somewhat different set of responsibilities. Specific modules for IFC staff would have made a lot of difference. Financial/accounting module was far too detailed.
- There was a very scant coverage of budget monitoring systems. The case studies were very useful but got a bit too repetitive.
- Introduce conflict resolution case studies.
- Please spend more time on personnel and staffing issues. These are difficult issues for manager in country offices.
- Overall the course was good at making one aware of the issues and giving a place to look things up. Overall I felt (and still feel) very ill prepared in the matter of financial management.
• Producing a country office handbook which contains precise rules organized by subject in the style of the admin. manual not just a collection of rules that overlap and sometimes contradict each other while at the same time leaving huge knowledge gaps.

• Perhaps a location outside HQ may help to keep focus and avoid distraction with other commitments in DC.

• Bring more and more former country managers to share their success in dealing with particular issues that use to come up more frequently in the CO management. (i.e., relations with staff, fiduciary issues, relation with Government in particular circumstances)

• I’m afraid the course was some time ago now and so it is not that easy to remember the details. For me possibly some practical elements of country office budgeting and financing might have been useful in more detail.

• Starting on a Sunday afternoon did not work; an important part of the trainees were not able to make it

• I found we spent too much time on case studies on relationship and office staff management issues. In hindsight there are a number of skills / areas of knowledge I wish we had explored at greater depth, mainly related to the mundane operation of the office... e.g. finance and administration contracting.

• I found the course effective. In particular, I think case study examples were very useful in highlighting possible problems encountered in Country Offices. This is especially true in financial management, personnel issues and issues related to interactions between visiting missions and Country Office staff.

• The objectives are not the right objectives. The country manager is not an administrative position - it is a position primarily dealing with strategy, government dialogue and donor coordination. These three elements should have much more time in the course.

• The underground venue was not ideal. Perhaps a meeting room which allows participants to form small groups rather than just a large U-shaped room would facilitate discussion and teamwork.

• Hard to remember going back three years. Many of the topics covered were not top priority for IFC personnel.

• Opportunities for networking with colleagues were not as good as at Country Manager retreats.

• My answers are skewed because I took this course after 2 years in post and had already learned a lot on the job.

*Question #7: Comments on ways to improve the USEFULNESS of this course.*

• There was not much on the last 5 topics (Medical Issues, Compensation, etc.), which is fine since the Managing a CO course did go in some very
detailed aspects. The NMLP course provided very good information about how to get access to resources for help. However, it may need to be structured a bit differently in order to help Managers to get a strategic approach of managing these issues which are generally time-consuming and sensitive for any staff in need (selective and regular refreshment messages based on recent regional or sub-regional trends, networking with some champions, etc.)

- More emphasis on career expectations for national staff should be addressed. This is a very important issue.
- There was a lot on ethics and diversity in the course, which is line with corporate thinking. However, it seemed a bit academic with lack of real life examples. While the case study provided for some, it was in many ways too extreme to really offer guidance. I have found personal coaching a lot more useful on many of these sensitive ethical issues, whereas some bread and butter stuff like getting your admin or finances right might usefully have taken up additional time.
- More hands-on on account controls and internal audits
- Hands-on training on SAP
- Overall very useful
- A regional focus is missing. It is presumed that all Country Offices are equal. That may not be the case. I would like a course tailored to regional needs, if possible
- Security issues in post conflict countries are worth to share with the course attendees.
- I was surprised how much time was dedicated to ethics.... Senior management seems to think that's required. I don't want to second-guess that judgement but still think the point could be made more subtle... Otherwise the topics were the right topics, only I found that we stayed too much on the surface.
- I think the case study examples of where actual problems have occurred before is a very operationally useful method of training.
- Treatment of Budget issues could have been improved by using hands-on experiences.
- Career Expectations are a real concern, especially in view of the reorganization and major changes that have taken place.

*Question #10: Comments on ways to improve the QUALITY of this course.*

- Guest speakers were generally very good, some more relaxed, some more structured and results-oriented. Overall, I would encourage to keep it this way.
• Course was generally well received and of good quality; however, it would have been better received if it were held in a location outside of the Bank. Also focus should be on client relations.

• Be more critical in the selection of speakers. Make sure there is a window in the room. And provide background materials on a CD ROM.

• Time allocation was adequate for some, too much for others (ethics in particular) and too little for yet others (admin in my case, but this may differ from one to the other). The instructors were largely ok; some guest speakers were excellent (e.g. on compensation on HR issues, on medical issues) some were less impressive. Fred Temple was also excellent, although mainly because of the case evidence he shared rather than what he had to say about integrity issues.

• I came in from the field office and had to sit in the basement for a week for this course--the room had no natural light and I suffered horribly from jet lag the whole week. It would be better to do it off site or at least somewhere with some natural light. It would have been good to organize some more opportunities (dinners, etc) to network with the participants.

• Do not include Sunday. Speakers varied from poor to high. Suggest to move the course out of the basement.

• Make sure that there is full coordination between this course and the new management and leadership course

• Have most course material sent few weeks or months before the start of program.

• Please bring in higher level management to also talk with us.

• This course needs more time. Perhaps it would be a good idea to divide it into two sections: Basic and Advanced.

• Hard to resolve the issue of people not turning up or not turning up on time. That got pretty frustrating from recollection.

• Perhaps, as a complementary session, if a colleague CM would have presented his experience after the first year or following completion of his assignment that might have been interesting and helpful.

• Need a nicer setting; the basement rooms with no windows are too hard to take for a week.

• I still have and refer to the book of materials for the course. Meeting facilities were all underground with no windows; not good.

• It is a bad idea to start these meetings on Sunday. That is a disconnect with the values the Bank promotes.

• Time allocation would have been better if we had been able to study the materials ahead of time. Two major problems: (a) held in a basement with no daylight; (b) started on a Sunday.
Question 12: What other ADDITIONAL TRAINING would have been helpful to you?

- Interacting with civil society organizations and academics (e.g., on knowledge sharing partnerships)
- How the Matrix Management should work in a Decentralized Environment. My sense is that AFR SMs in charge of quality and a huge number of countries are facing a real challenge to get a good sense of what is happening in the field. The debate may help raise awareness.
- More on how to deal with performance issues.
- Media training is always an issue. Media policy should be presented. What is expected from a media standpoint from a country office?
- Communication skills
- Advanced Operation Skills depends on the candidates. Some CMs are very experienced, others are not at all. Inter-cultural sensitivity is critical, but some of the trainers I have had over the years demonstrated bad examples and did more harm than good. Preaching about inter-cultural sensitivity is often counter productive, and I would suggest role playing, team teaching, and the use of video.
- Not sure it needs to be combined into this, and probably quite specific to my personal circumstances but: - I would have benefited from some basics on CM role in portfolio management - I would have benefited from some simple tips on strategies and resources for engaging the client
- The key issue is prioritization and trade-offs, which are extreme in country manager positions due to the multi-faceted work responsibilities and overload. Thus the trainees would have benefited from some exposure on how to prioritize time management etc. There was not a sense from the different sessions of the priorities -- the impression was given that everything is important which is of course true, but not which subset of the different topics is truly essential.
- The wording of question 11 (i.e., listing of possible additional training needs -- Advanced Operation Skills, Developing Productive Partnerships, Counseling Local Staff, etc.) tells it all. This course does not take into account the different needs of IFC.
- Most of the above needs to be tailored to specific contexts/regions, but dealing with the media is very important
- Project processing
- I took the course a long time ago and it would better to get this survey within 2 weeks of taking the course. I don't recall right now where I thought there were gaps.
- More focus on finance/budget/control issues
• All the above are very important to country managers especially client engagement partnerships and cultural sensitivity. But most can be addressed in other courses - for example I attended media training immediately after this course.

• Any training more focused on specific country or regional conditions would be welcome. The more general the focus the less useful.

• Suggesting additional training would also mean to drop another topic. However I felt the topics were well chosen only the relative time allocation should have changed giving less time to soft topics such as ethics and cultural sensitivity and more to technical/administrative issues.

• Relations with the media

• I think the course content is sufficient.

• Donor coordination - preparing and training CGs, managing donor partnerships, harmonization, etc.

• Tighten up the Financial Management lessons.

• Adv. Op. Skills and Coaching Local Staff are different types of training, perhaps needed but not as part of this course.

• There is already overload in this course. Some of the topics you just learn on your own. The intercultural sensitivity can be dealt with by building it into revised case studies.

• Supervising local staff and walking them through OPE cycle which, for some, is culturally a new experience.

• Several of the suggested topics are Bank procedures that are not relevant to IFC personnel. Inter-cultural sensitivity should not be needed because we are all multi-national people.

• 1) how to work with local NGO or university to train staff in interpersonal skills and inter-cultural sensitivity; 2) how to deal with emergencies and crisis situations (e.g., firing someone, health evacuations) that a CM confronts at least once during a 3-year stint.

• Many of the topics are World Bank specific; not important for IFC. Consider more on working with private sector clients.

**Question 13:** If you could CHANGE TWO THINGS about this course to improve its effectiveness usefulness and quality what would they be?

• Some idea of how to go about engaging clients in the dialogue and preparation of PRSPS, CAS would be useful, in particular if it can be done through case studies. I would also add half a day for this.

• Case studies that deal with the real life that we are facing in our field offices

• On the case studies: I would like to see a clear indication of what the underlying objectives are. This would help narrowing the large variety of
directions of thoughts and side-effects we experienced. This will allow the participants themselves to dig more into the issues.

- Have a repeater after six months or so.
- More emphasis on client culture and media (the Public relations side of the Bank)
- Provide materials on a CD-ROM and integrate its use in the course. Check with AFTOS and OPCS for good practice examples. Rethink thoroughly the ethics and values presentations, and be aware of geo-political realities and perceived American dominance in setting values.
- 1) Less time on case study 2) More time on FM
- See if one could get a recent or current CM actively involved as judge for feedback throughout the programme or around specific themes. Provide some lists of do's (if possible) and don'ts as summaries to the case study discussions
- Location
- Location -- somewhere away from the Bank even if nearby enough that it is not residential.
- 1. Drop ethics, or at a minimum reduce overlap between similar functions (Ombudsman, INT, etc.) 2. Collapse to 4 work days.
- Timing may need to be slightly longer to have more time for actual discussion in the full group and for networking/informal contacts with peers.
- A key issue is how to concentrate so much information in so little time. Perhaps we should try to be more selective and devote more time to some key things - for instance for the analysis of case studies.
- Accounting controls need more attention
- Consistency of course materials so we can have easy reference afterwards. Hotline to call with questions afterwards.
- This is a great course. It may try to do just too many things, but I like it's practical focus. One thing might be to bring in 1-2 recent CM graduates to help set the stage and exchange war stories-- things that worked and things that didn't.
- Drop or greatly reduce the ethics session - more relevant and less preachy. Case studies could be tightened up.
- Duration (too much material packaged in very short time). Focus (regional instead of global).
- Don't start on a week end
- 1. Venue 2. Some of the case studies had an exaggerated negative tone, as if there would be nothing but corruption and strained staff issues in the country
office. I did not find that very helpful and it does not jive with my experience.

- 1. More time to discuss the case studies; 2. More time to interact with participants
- Keep as is.
- Much more time on the issues covered in point 11 - > 50 percent of the course.
- Strengthen the case studies; make them real-world cases
- Use more case studies; use real applications
- Have a follow-up session after about a year to reinforce what is covered in this course. We would come back with concrete examples to discuss.
- Location of the class.
- Not all Bank issues are relevant to IFC staff. Need to think about some issues that are tailored to IFC.
- 1) Hold the training outside the Bank (too many other demands and expectations, such as meetings); 2) Expand to 2 weeks to add new training (e.g., client engagement skills, interfacing with Media, partnerships) and at the same time reduce the "intensity" of the training.
- Perhaps think about an "induction period" of one month instead of a single concentrated course. Half would focus on "internal issues" such as those covered in this course, and half on "external issues" such as relations with government and donors, sector clients, and the media. Two other suggestions: (a) change the location (daylight), and, (b) shorten parts (cannot remember which now, but some parts were too long).

**Question 14: Additional comments or observations on ways to improve this course.**

- I took the course after I had been in the field for over 2 years and perhaps because of that I saw a lot of relevance in topics and issues covered that perhaps other people that had not yet been to the field did not see in the same light. The great value and relevance of this training is in the preparation to deal with the seemingly unexpected through the case studies and putting a face to the people that one is most likely to have to deal with in HQ while away in the field. The normal preparation before a field assignment in my case through briefings was of very relative value because even though it provided quite a bit of useful information it did very little to prepare one for the types of situations that one is likely to have to deal with in the field and that are different from the types of issues that one deals with at HQ, and those situations are not related to advanced operations, quality at entry, etc., but rather to personnel issues, conflicts of interest, ethics, health and medical issues, security, etc.
• The course was very useful. I felt very comfortable going back to my job knowing that there were all these resources available for me to do my job well and knowing who to call when I needed help.

• The course was very useful in all aspects. I had a little bit of difficulty to do this evaluation because the course had happened quite some time ago and I can't remember of all the relevant aspects that I would probably like to comment on.

• Survey to take place much earlier. If there is the need to have a survey two years after the course, questions/performance on individual facilitators is difficult to recall.

• You should give the survey within 2 weeks of participants taking the course.

• Not so much this course, but a general greater realization of the importance of an induction period before moving into the new CM job, including more attention to general country briefings and language skills.

• The course was good but it was out of the question to make use of the huge amount of materials distributed (even after the course). The organizers should be more selective in the materials and allow more time for individual reading.

• In hindsight, I am no longer sure if this course was worth returning from the field to DC. Perhaps, with batch recruitment, it could be offered prior to departure, giving the candidates also some more time for follow-up reading and interaction with colleagues at HQ, rather than having to return immediately to the field to be inundated with the day-to-day challenges.

• Program should be kept to 5 working days only; attempt should not be made to cover every theme but there should be focus on risky issues.

• I would suggest a follow-up course, ideally with the same cohort group to see how things are for the Country Managers one year after the course. Perhaps the participants can come with a 1-2 page "Case Study" of their specific experience and 2-3 issues for the group to explore.

• Did not respond to the original survey because it has been so long since I took the course and I could not remember all the details. So, I did not think my response would be relevant now, especially because I am no longer managing a country.