

Enhancing the Contribution of Training to CD: Results of a World Bank Evaluation of Training

Aliza Belman Inbal, Tel Aviv University

Last year, the World Bank completed an evaluation of the contribution of World Bank financed training to the capacity of target organizational and institutional in the South. The evaluation found that, **while most training results in learning, approximately half of training does not lead to changed participant workplace behaviour or enhanced organizational capacity.**

The primary reasons that training does not successfully contribute to the capacity of participants' organizations are:

- **Training is insufficiently targeted to beneficiary needs.** Diagnosis of capacity gaps in organizations and assessment of trainee needs are only infrequently done.
- **Trainees do not have sufficient material resources, structural incentives or managerial support for implementation of training.** For example, in a survey done for the evaluation of over 500 participants in training courses on a wide range of topics, 1/3 said that they did not have sufficient resources to implement learning.

Amongst the key messages of the evaluation:

- **Training management, particularly in the preparation and follow-up of training, infrequently meets accepted standards of good practice, even though there is a high correlation between good practice and results.** Definition of good practice standards and expert review of training programs can help improve results.
- **Ownership is crucial for training success.** Without strong commitment of beneficiary organizations to training, training is far less likely to be targeted to real needs and training participants are unlikely to get the support they need to implement change. This is particularly challenging to implement as perverse incentives such as per diem, study trips, and high-profile events can create demand, regardless of the CD effect of training.
- **What is done before and after trainees enter the classroom is as important for training success as what happens in the classroom itself.** The likelihood that training will lead to change is strongly rooted in the quality of needs assessment done before training and the extent to which training is embedded in larger CD initiatives providing other forms of needed organizational, institutional and human capacity support. **Financing structures of training need to be changed to allocate a far higher percentage of funds to supporting processes external to the classroom like needs assessment and follow-up support.**
- **Training is generally insufficiently evaluated.** Training providers tend to rely on end-of-course participant satisfaction questionnaires as evidence of results. Academic research has shown that such questionnaires are only weakly correlated with learning or participant workplace behavior change. **Training providers often see themselves as accountable only for participant learning, not participant success at implementing learning in a way that meaningfully contributes to capacity.** This leads to an "accountability gap", where training providers may be rewarded even though training has led to no demonstrable effect on capacity.
- Stand-alone short training courses generally have little impact on organizational capacity. **For training to meaningfully impact organizational capacity, it is often necessary to embed training programs in broader, long-term CD initiatives** that address resource and incentive constraints alongside human capacity gaps and that reinforce participant learning through technical assistance, coaching or follow-up sessions.