

Chapter 12

Investing in Government Personnel

Acquire new things while reflecting over the old.
—Confucius

INTRODUCTION

Role and Limits of Training¹

Governments rely on the knowledge, skills, and abilities of its employees to produce goods and services efficiently, effectively, and responsively. As governments modify their responsibilities in an increasingly integrated world, and face increasing competition from other service providers, they must renew their human resources. Training is increasingly important to subnational and local government entities that must cope with new responsibilities and rising expectations following the decentralization of recent years (Chapter 5). Training can also have a key role in improving employee performance, retaining government employees, and increasing employees' commitment to their agency. Training of government personnel is therefore undergoing major changes in orientation, as illustrated in Box 12.1.

At the same time, training is still frequently used as a device to avoid unpleasant but necessary personnel decisions, and as a refuge for nonperformers. Even when well run, government training programs are often unrelated to employees' actual or prospective tasks, giving them new skills that quickly atrophy from lack of use. Moreover, in the absence of efficient procedures or adequate incentives, training only generates frustration among employees. Indeed, training programs have been one of the single largest sources of wasted assistance to developing countries.

Box 12.1

The Changing Face of the Civil Service Training System

Many countries are overhauling their training systems for government personnel. Among the changes is the new commercial orientation of training institutes. At the same time, managers are being held accountable for their decisions on training resource allocations, and training costs and effectiveness are being more explicitly considered than in previous years.

United Kingdom — Major changes were initiated in the 1980s and early 1990s in the UK Civil Service College, which now more closely resembles a business school. It has, for instance, adopted the language and methods of business and offers courses organized in seven market business groups. Performance is measured against targets, and rewarded accordingly. The aim is to change the old image of the college as a remedial institution for failing civil servants. Today, the best and the brightest sign up for courses, which typically cost £1,000 a week, charged to their departmental budget. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Civil Service College makes a profit, £133,000 on a turnover of £14.7 million in 1992.

India — Training for the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) is also undergoing a sea change. The training programs in the National Academy of Administration are being redesigned to attune IAS officers to the new market requirements. Refresher courses for civil servants are now being held in premier academic institutions like the four Indian Institutes of Management. In addition to classroom instruction, the civil servants are taken on field visits to the stock exchanges, industries, and chambers of commerce. Probably the most significant effect of these changes has been in the attitude of civil servants, which has become more positive and open.

Source: World Bank (1996).

Because training is only one of the four key components of institutional capacity building (the others being improvements in regulations and incentives, in technology, and in organizational structures), rarely can training alone make an institution more capable. Normally, training is effective only when there are accompanying changes in rules and incentives, in the organization, or in technology (especially in information and communication technology)—or a combination of all these elements of capacity building. Thus, some scholars (Franks 1999) distinguish between capability and capacity. Capability is determined by the skills and abilities of the individual. Capacity, to be effective, is determined also by the institutional and resource context.

Thus, training will never fix a dysfunctional system. If employees are illequipped to discharge their tasks, they may have to be reassigned to tasks that are better suited to their skills. If they perform poorly because they are unaware of the performance standards, these standards should be clarified and enforced. If weak performance is linked to the failure to reward good work and dispense sanctions for bad work, the solution is a good performance appraisal and incentives system (Chapter 11). None of these situations call for training per se, except as a bureaucratic alibi for avoiding the real issues. Training is warranted if employees have inadequate skills for the jobs where they are best placed, and if the new skills will actually be used right after the training, or if specific skills are needed for career advancement or for the educational upgrading of a workgroup.

Therefore, the effectiveness of training depends on the training policies and institutions, the education system, the existing stock of educated manpower, the personnel policies and systems, and the administrative culture (Paul 1984). The first three factors relate to the amount and quality of training. The last two factors create more demand for training, as employers look forward to improved performance and employees to career advancement. For the individual employee, training may help to improve capability, but cannot do much to improve motivation, which depends on many other factors. Training is thus only one of the determinants of performance, and if attention is not paid to the contextual factors, training may not necessarily be effective.

With the above qualifications, well-designed training can achieve some or all of the following objectives:

- improve efficiency (reduce unit cost);
- help make labor more mobile, and government personnel more flexible and adaptable;
- motivate staff;
- lead to better and more responsive public service;
- equip government agencies with the skills and expertise they need to achieve their strategic objectives; and
- achieve specific personnel management objectives, such as employment equity, as well as build capacity in specific sectors.

Types of Training

Activity-related training

Activity-related training comprises skill formation, task-specific training, and executive development. Much of the training for government personnel is focused on skill formation.

Career-related training

Training may also be classified in terms of the different stages in a person's career. Most traditional training consists of four categories: pre-entry training, in-service training, project-related training, and personal effectiveness (Box 12.2). As the term implies, preentry or induction training is offered for employees before entry into public service. In some cases, this training may follow immediately after recruitment, but before placement in the first job. Countries like France attach considerable importance to this training, which includes internships. In-service training after induction into service includes specialized short-term programs within or outside the country. Project-related training focuses on the skills needed by project or program personnel. Personal effectiveness training establishes a better basis for career advancement or simply better work relations.

Formal and informal training

Formal training comprises structured courses, classes, and formal development programs. Informal training takes place in everyday work. Training policies should recognize that most learning takes place informally and on the job, rather than through formal education. Much can be achieved by creating a favorable climate for informal teaching and learning. While this costs little money, it has a potentially large payoff in improved performance and employee satisfaction. Informal learning strategies include job rotation and mobility, special assignments, opportunities to reflect on relevant work experiences, and generally any means of exposing individuals to the views, knowledge, and perspective of their professional colleagues. The expanded use of the Internet and e-mail offers unprecedented opportunities in this direction (Chapter 19), although "face time" remains an invaluable source of professional interaction and renewal.

Box 12.2
**Training Framework for a Newly Appointed Supervisor
 in Singapore**

Level of Training	Type of Training
Induction	General Civil Service Orientation
Basic	On-the-Job <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unstructured (e.g., being coached by the supervisor) • Structured (e.g., learning the basic job requirements)
	Off-the-Job (formal classroom training), e.g., managing people, communicating, getting commitment from employees, etc.
	Training in Functional Areas (e.g., a new supervisor whose duties include budgeting will need basic training in budget management)
Advanced	Off-the-Job, e.g., leadership courses, conflict management, etc.
	Training in Functional Areas
Extended	Job enlargement training, e.g., aspects of colleagues' jobs that the officer has not handled, new projects
	Higher-Level Jobs, e.g., learning, senior officer's job, development of others
	Off-the-Job Training, e.g., coaching and developing staff.
Continuing	Off-the-Job, e.g., updating supervisory skills, formal diploma in relevant areas, etc.

Source: Asian Productivity Organization (1998).

TRAINING POLICIES AND ADMINISTRATION

Importance of a National Training Policy

As stressed earlier, training delivered with no attention to the preconditions for its effectiveness will inevitably lead to inefficient use of resources and duplicated efforts. A sound training policy is therefore essential. An integrated national training policy should set the guidelines for planning, directing, and monitoring training; specify the complementary measures for training effectiveness; estimate and limit the financial resources available; and formulate training objectives for different sectors and for subnational governments.

The government should circulate a draft of the training policy among the ministries and their employees, the legislature, and different sectors of public opinion to elicit reactions and comments. The final version, approved by the highest political authority, endorsed by the legislature, and widely disseminated, should provide public managers at different levels with a concrete framework for planning and implementing their own training programs.

Training policy should be, but often is not, linked with the relevant aspects of the personnel policies of government, such as career development, promotion, and performance incentives. Without this link, neither a ministry nor its employees will be eager to participate. However, the existence of a link to career advancement is itself useless or counterproductive if the training in question is irrelevant, incompetent, or insubstantial. Before attempting to enforce a link between training and promotion, it is essential therefore to make sure that the training is appropriate and valued *by those for whom it is meant*.

This consideration implies that training should as much as possible be demand-driven. Too often in government the training specialists formulate programs without reference to the needs and wishes of the prospective beneficiaries and their managers. Sometimes, training programs are developed to provide continuous employment for those who design and implement the training. It is important, especially in developing countries, that training itself be subjected to clear performance criteria. The first of these must be the relevance of the training to the needs of employees and their managers, as defined and evaluated by them as clients, and not by the training providers or by experts hired by them.

Elements of Training Policies in Different Countries

A number of countries oblige civil servants to undergo pre entry training as a condition for substantive appointment, and in-service training as a condition for promotion to supervisory posts. The US has passed laws for the training of federal and state government employees. French law obliges the government to put in place an in-service training policy, and recognizes the right of government employees to in-service training. This same right is also contained in collective bargaining agreements with government employee unions in countries such as Italy and Spain. Countries in the British tradition, instead, generally regulate pre entry and in-service training through executive instructions.

Several Asian countries, such as the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Singapore, prescribe a minimum number of weeks of formal training for government personnel. There are prescribed training cycles for employees in functional cadres that require increasing levels of specialization, such as tax administration, labor law, or engineering. Employees may also have to undergo training before assuming higher responsibilities.

However, mandatory rules for training often do not take into account the capability of training institutions, budget limitations, or the ability of departments to spare employees for long spells of training. Often, the mandatory training before promotion is in fact taken long after promotion, defeating the purpose of the requirement. The problem of inadequate training facilities is sometimes addressed by ad hoc training programs for individual development, but this could lead to inequitable outcomes among employees.

To assure the relevance and good quality of the training, departments should develop a training road map for every employee, showing clearly the type of training he needs at different points in his or her career. This plan should be discussed and agreed upon between the supervisor and the employee, and reviewed at the end of every year. In practice, this does not often happen. At a minimum, however, training requests and requirements should be among the topics discussed during the periodic personnel evaluation.

TRAINING NEEDS, PROVISION, AND EVALUATION²

Assessing Training Needs

The starting point of all training is the question: *When is training appropriate?* As repeatedly noted, training does not solve all performance problems, and should not be resorted to simply because it is easier to undertake, is nonconfrontational, and involves no difficult management choices. Training needs must be identified at three interrelated levels: national, organizational, and individual. A broad assessment of skill availability, new skill requirements, and therefore skill gaps and training needs should be undertaken at regular intervals, so that a menu of training options may be developed, and the training institutions have the information essential for their curriculum and staffing plans.

Types of assessment

Consistent with the national training policy, training needs should be assessed by each ministry or agency, and the central unit should integrate these training assessments within the overall training policy framework, and relate them to the supply of competent training from institutions and individuals within and outside government. Training needs can also be assessed by the institutions to which the government entrusts the delivery of training programs, but mindful of the temptation to define needs as a function of the institution's preferences and capabilities rather than the government's requirements.

Training needs assessment includes general treatment needs, needs based on observed discrepancies in performance, and training to fill anticipated skill gaps. The government may require general training for all the employees in common areas such as relations with the public or the use of computers. But even for general treatment, the specific needs of the employees must be assessed in relation to their work context. The second type of assessment, based on observed performance discrepancies, generally shapes most training programs. The third type of assessment is becoming increasingly common. It is related not to present performance discrepancies but to future skill needs anticipated from technological advances or changes in strategic goals, e.g., computerization, or the new skills required by decentralization. Evidently, the more rapid the pace of technical change and the deeper the reorientation of the role of government, the more important future-oriented training needs assessment becomes. At the same time, the risk of wasting resources is inevitably greater.

Methodology

The appropriateness of the methods varies, depending on the sector and the unit of administration, as well as the content of the training and the target group. However, in any assessment, the analyst must have a clear picture of what a job entails, the major duties and responsibilities of the person holding the job, and the competencies that person must have to do the job well. The shortfalls will be identified with reference to the desired knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSA). In tangible terms, shortfalls may also be indicated by unmet standards of performance, frequent accidents, low ratings by clients, persistent delays, etc. The usefulness of the training needs assessment is critically related to consultations with employees, supervisors, and external clients within and outside government.

The budgetary and other limitations of agencies in developing countries dictate that training needs assessment should never aim at extensive data collection, or require substantial human or financial resources from the ministry or agency concerned. This is one of the many areas of public administration where the “best is the enemy of the good.” The assessment should focus on a few, important, and easily observable areas.

In view of the new demands on decentralized units, and greater expectations of citizens, training needs assessment should also include less measurable attributes: customer care, quality, sensitivity to the needs of disadvantaged groups, fairness, the use of simple and quick procedures, service costing, and relations with different levels of government, business, and civil society.

The final product

As noted, a good training needs assessment must rely largely on the views of all major stakeholders in the exercise, including the public managers and the potential trainees. Also, the statement of needs must be relevant and quantifiable, rather than assemble vague or subjective opinions. The training report should be agreed upon with the ministry or agency concerned and would normally include

- assessment of employees’ skills and the work environment;
- assessment of skills required for the functions of the organization;
- identified skill gaps;
- identified types of training and target participants among the different groups of employees;

- domestic and foreign institutions that can provide the training, and the problems related to such provision; and
- estimated training costs, constraints on the release of staff for training, and other practical issues.

Provision of Training

Design

Once the skill gaps, the training needs, and costs are identified, a training plan should be prepared. The plan should define the following in the light of the available budget

- learning objectives,
- prospective participants,
- program content,
- staffing and support,
- appropriate training methods, and
- evaluation.

The government agencies concerned should always be involved in deciding the content of the training courses, selecting participants, and making available relevant course material from work experience. Consultation with the ministries and agency managers is particularly critical when training is expected to induce behavioral changes.

In-house or outside delivery?

The question of who will do the training and how will depend on the target group of participants, the content of the training, and the relative capacities of in-house and outside training organizations in the public or private sector. Different countries follow different mixes of delivery, although in recent years there has been an increasing tendency to contract training to outside entities, and to move away from permanent government training institutions (especially in transitional economies).

Generally, in-house units have the advantage of knowing the policies, programs, and culture of the government agency concerned. Also, the government organization concerned will have greater control of the training program. The outside provider, on the other hand, is more flexible and able to cater to a variety of training needs. In-house and outside training

alternatives are not mutually exclusive, however, and some national training organizations (e.g., those in Malaysia) are able to capture the advantages of both.

On-the-job or off-the-job?

On-the-job training is done informally at all levels in the organization, but more often for new employees, and for training in new jobs, policies, and procedures. Apprenticeships and internships, such as those followed in craft organizations and for senior executive services, are examples of this type of training. Remedial training for underperformers can also be done on the job. As noted earlier, informal on-the-job training can be provided by the supervisor or a skilled coworker. Since feedback is immediate and the new skills are put to active use, this form of training can be highly motivating and successful (e.g., when teaching a new computer program). It is most effective, of course, if the person doing the training is skilled in working with people.

On-the-job training is often overlooked because it is done differently in different agencies and is informal. In addition, on-the-job training is rarely seen as a responsibility of supervisors, who get no credit for performing this function. However, as in the case of expatriate technical assistance, training of subordinates or of counterparts should be considered an integral part of job responsibility and rewarded as such (or penalized when it is not provided). Similarly, the importance of informal coaching and counseling should not be underestimated, although counseling and coaching need particular skills and attitudes, for which the supervisors themselves may need training. Finally, job rotation can give employees a broader perspective on the working of the ministry where they are employed or of several ministries, and new skills through exposure to different tasks as well as revitalize their interest.

Traditional training, consisting of classroom lectures, discussions, and case studies, is usually delivered by external institutions. It is indispensable when seeking to acquire a coherent set of new skills, or to reach higher educational levels. No generalization about the effectiveness of traditional training is possible. In developing countries, practical problems are frequent, however. There is rarely an effort to identify the skill and level of preparation of participants, or to consult with the client agencies beforehand. Unlike college and university students, who can be assumed to meet certain common standards, government employees are generally an heterogeneous

audience. It is therefore more difficult to define program content, and to pitch lectures at the right level. Also, when training is provided by international experts, there is often a problem of language, as many local trainees are not well equipped to follow instruction in English or other international language. However, fashionable new training methods—e.g., interactive video, role playing, etc.—cannot substitute for sound, subject-competent training, and should not be used as an avoidance mechanism. Competence in the subject matter is always far more important in a trainer than teaching techniques.

Training Evaluation

As noted, training that is badly designed or not accompanied by needed institutional changes is a waste of resources. The cost-effectiveness of the training investment must therefore be assessed. Training evaluation, like all other evaluations, compares the *results* with the *objectives*. Pre- and posttraining job performance can also be compared in the rare cases when performance can be reliably quantified. Formal training can be evaluated at five levels: reaction, learning, behavior, results, and cost-effectiveness (Sims 1993). The first two relate to the trainee, while the other three relate more to the organization's goals and incentive framework.

Besides evaluation of immediate results of training compared with objectives, governments should also develop outcome indicators to evaluate the overall effectiveness of training, using information from trainees, peer groups, supervisors, the personnel unit, the client agencies, and where relevant the citizens. Performance measurement is a complex and tricky area, however, and must be approached with care and common sense as discussed in detail in Chapter 18.

Implications for Developing Countries

Most developing countries have weak or nonexistent institutional structures for training. Training needs assessment is typically lacking, such that training programs do not meet the needs of either the employees or the government agencies and are a waste of resources. Furthermore, the usefulness of training is diluted by lack of reinforcement from supervisors after the trainee returns. In large part, these problems arise because most training activities are supply-driven, and there is little involvement or interest among line ministries and their employees in the design of training programs. Often pushed and executed by external donors, training programs

have weak local ownership and are therefore hobbled by a lack of incentive to devote efforts and local resources to the programs. At the same time, the scarcity of local resources and the limited capacity of local training institutions constrain the developing countries from themselves addressing the training needs of government employees. Accordingly, training evaluation is typically mechanical and not linked to the outcomes or to actual utility of the training program.

An encouraging trend, however, is the cost-effective training for technical cadres, frontline employees, and occupational groups like teachers and health workers, done by several developing countries (especially in Asia) through training in the workplace.

Decentralization requires training to address the skill needs of political and administrative cadres in local government. This must be largely a national effort because of the uneven resource base among local governments. The national government should also encourage and support in practical ways joint and cooperative training activities by local governments that cannot provide this training singlehandedly.

Linking Government Training to Civil Society

In building capacity in civil society for closer partnership and active participation in governance, governments should consider extending traditional training to cover the needs of voluntary agencies, elected representatives, and citizen groups. This could be a part of sector training programs in health, family planning, primary education, women's development, etc.

Especially designed orientation programs for elected local government representatives have been undertaken in many countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Such programs are critical for countries moving toward political decentralization. Training is needed at both regional and local levels, and the main skills to be provided cover, among others, basic legal issues, financial management, project management and monitoring, and communication skills. The dissemination of good practices from elsewhere in the country or abroad is an important ingredient of local capacity building, and donor agencies have a useful role to play in this effort.

TRAINING INSTITUTIONS³

Organizational Framework

Much of the training for government employees cuts across ministries and agencies, and is an important element of government personnel management. Most countries have therefore entrusted training policy development and monitoring to the central ministry in charge of public administration or personnel, or to a public service commission charged with career development that can thus relate training results to career advancement and promotion. These entities work closely with the central agency responsible for initiating administrative reforms, as in Malaysia and the UK.

In many countries, training is inadequately funded or the available budget is often badly utilized. Funds earmarked for training or donor programs will not help without well-conceived administrative arrangements. When training funds are centralized, they are often allocated to the training division in the central personnel agency. This agency pays the designated training institutions, meets the cost of ministry and agency training programs, and provides grants and loans to employees for educational leave and self-development programs. When training funds are decentralized, each ministry or agency manages the funds, pays the training institutions, and meets the self-education needs of employees. Central funding could be supplemented by donor-provided fellowships for training and study tours abroad, equipment, and foreign consultants.

There is no a priori preference for centralized and decentralized administration. Both arrangements require monitoring and control to ensure that training objectives are met, prevent overlaps and interdepartmental inequities, and optimize the training efforts and expenditure. In centralized administration, where the central unit meets all the costs of training and the training is free for the government agency concerned, the agency obviously tends to ask for more training than what is needed, or for training unrelated to the jobs. However, the central unit cannot and should not attempt to take over the selection of employees for training. Many countries follow therefore a mixed funding arrangement. The central unit is provided with funds for the centralized training of senior cadres, and for training to address important skill gaps. It also allocates training funds to the ministries and agencies on the basis of their own training plans, and mobilizes support from public training institutions (as well as technical assistance from donors).

In such an arrangement, the ministries and agencies have flexibility and discretion in the use of the training funds, consistent with the plans submitted, and may of course also finance specialized training themselves. (The creation of training and research institutes for specific ministries, however—which was the norm in the former Soviet Union and eastern Europe—is inefficient and should not be encouraged.) Naturally, whenever the training needs are common to the ministries and agencies, and the desired skills are transferable between ministries, centralized training economizes on scarce trainers and funds.

In countries where training is centralized, the central training unit usually assesses the training needs of the government as a whole and of individual sectors and ministries based on consultation with the ministries, training institutions, and stakeholders outside government. (As noted earlier, it is useful to consult the employee unions as well.) Subject to the approval of the political authority, the training unit is responsible for all aspects of the design and funding of government training, including the cost estimates, adequate funding, the identification of training providers in the public and private sectors, interaction with the client ministries and agencies, and the training plan. Advisory councils, composed of representatives of public and private training institutions and user groups, are set up in many countries to assist the central training unit.

The US provides an example of how the training function is integrated into the central personnel agency. The Office of Personnel and Management has a training and development division grouped around clusters of states to assist federal agencies in designing training courses and devising training solutions.

On the basis of the training needs assessment, the central training unit draws up long-term and annual training plans for the government, including indicative financial provisions, the role of training institutions, the assignment of responsibilities, and monitoring and evaluation provisions. The final mix of training programs at the national and sector levels should be arrived at through iterative interactions with the treasury and the client organizations. The training plan should also interface with the career development and personnel management functions.

In countries with decentralized training, overall training objectives and policies remain the responsibility of a central agency, but the actual management of training, including the administration of sector policies, is

entrusted to the line ministry and agency concerned. This devolution often accompanies the establishment of executive agencies (Chapter 6) and the devolution of authority to chief executives for personnel management. In all cases, such devolution must be based on the willingness and capacity of line ministries and agencies to discharge the function, and requires as well strong central capacity for effective monitoring of outcomes. In the case of Malaysia, the central training unit requires the ministries and agencies to submit annual training proposals, which the unit evaluates before allocating funds for a well-designed training program.

Assuring both good line-ministry capacity and strong central monitoring, decentralized training allows diverse training needs to be met through cost-effective combinations of formal and informal training. An effective incentive in some countries is to allow budgetary savings by individual ministries to be used for their own training and to encourage competition for excellence in training (e.g., the Investing in People program in the UK).

As noted, in any organizational arrangement the central unit retains a number of functions. In addition to its responsibility for national training policy and training plans, the unit is generally responsible for training senior executives and elite generalist cadres. In South Asian countries the central agency also coordinates the training of subordinate administrative cadres, in addition to ensuring the integration of training with administrative reform and with personnel management policies such as performance evaluation and career development. For economies of scale and convenience, the central training unit normally also serves as a clearinghouse of information on all matters related to training institutions and experts, training practices, needs assessment, and evaluation. (In a number of countries this information is increasingly made available in electronic form.)

The vast changes in government training in transitional economies deserve a separate word. Before 1990, in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe each ministry typically had its own research and training institute, consistent with the logic of central planning. Changes in training arrangements in the former Soviet Union and eastern Europe in the 1990s have been more in the nature of experiments than of systematic efforts. The ministry-based training institutions atrophied from lack of resources and clientele, and are almost all gone but a variety of problems prevented their replacement with a comprehensive new policy and organization.

The enormous legal, organizational, and procedural changes accompanying the post-Soviet transformation gave rise to a need for suitably qualified public servants. Although government employees were highly qualified technically, they needed different skills (and attitudes) suited to the new role of the state. The search for coherence in public sector training led, in most cases, to the creation of a governance focal point, in the form of a coordinating ministry (mostly internal affairs) or a state office specifically created for this purpose. However, a critical step still to be taken by many transitional economies is the institutionalization of public sector training in the form of a school for administrative studies. Such schools would not only offer relevant programs in a market-oriented context but also make for better coordination of assistance from foreign donors, as well as help the governmental focal point to assess training needs far more thoroughly than most transitional economies now do.

Types of Training Institutions

Training institutions for government personnel can include

- government-owned and government-managed institutions (primarily providing nondegree programs);
- autonomous institutions training both government and private sector personnel;
- university-affiliated institutes, which offer educational programs leading to a degree or diploma; and
- business schools, originally set up to provide training in private management but which have diversified into also training personnel in the public sector.

Some of these institutions operate in several areas. Organizations owned or substantially funded and controlled by government have been set up in most countries for preentry and in-service training of government personnel. Governments that function along the British model have civil service training academies (Box 12.3). For governments that follow the French tradition, the dominant training institution is similar to the French *Ecole Nationale d'Administration* (ENA) (Box 12.4). Many governments have set up national training organizations directly under the control of the public service or personnel ministry. The government meets the entire expenditure, but allows the organization to supplement its resources through fee-based courses for public sector personnel or for donor-assisted projects.

Some countries have set up sector-level management institutes and training centers, and specialized training organizations for local government employees often supported by donor agencies. Generally, these developments have been wasteful. Training relevance to the sector can be ensured at lower cost through effective participation in the design and conduct of training programs by a single central institution. Also, fragmentation of training among sectors leads to the creation of specific vested interests, which tend to perpetuate themselves and feed the supply-driven nature of many training programs.

Box 12.3
Civil Service Academies

A civil service academy is engaged heavily in induction training and long-term preentry training for new recruits into major administrative cadres of government, and in-service training mostly for middle and senior personnel. The civil service colleges in the India, Singapore and UK typify this model. The academy's programs cover general and functional administration. Often there are separate academies for different senior cadres, with greater technical and specialist orientation. Many countries also have dedicated academies for secretarial staff and for health, education, railways, engineering, communications, and other occupational groups. The academies are sometimes located in the cabinet office, as is the case with the British civil service college, which was recently incorporated in the Cabinet Office as the Centre for Management and Policy Studies.

Source: Alain Billon, Deputy Director of ENA, personal communication (2000).

Box 12.4
Ecole Nationale d'Administration

The typical program of the ENA in France is of the long term pre-entry type, combining course instruction and internships. The school admits about 100 students every year on the basis of competitive examinations. They start with a six-month internship with a prefecture in France and six months abroad with a French embassy or one of the leading French companies. This is followed by a year of administrative training in ENA, in subjects like international law, economics, budgeting and finance, and administration. After graduation, the students are ranked according to their performance and assigned to elite services. ENA training nowadays focuses on subjects like ethical values, globalization, the demands of the European Union, cross-sector skills, communication, negotiation, and legal frameworks. ENA also offers specialized short-term programs. Similar schools provide complementary training for the senior cadres in local government, health, revenue, and judicial service. France and other countries have special academies for personnel recruited for subnational and local government levels.

Source: Alain Billon, Deputy Director of ENA, personal communication (2000).

Concerning the university-affiliated institutes, the primary task of university departments of public administration is to prepare young graduates for a career in government through preentry education and training. However, some of these departments (as in the Philippines and Singapore) are also active in in-service training on behalf of the client ministry or government agency, offer part-time or full-time courses for personnel sponsored by the government, and support sabbatical studies by individual government employees.

The autonomous institutes of public administration are generally larger than a university department, but smaller than the civil service academies. They tend to specialize in research and consulting, but also offer in-service training on a part-time or full-time basis. At the urging of government, many of these institutes have moved into specialized areas such as project planning and management, and budgeting. The administrative "staff college" is a hybrid organization (found in countries such as India and the Philippines) that organizes joint programs on management and policy problems for public and private sector managers, besides doing research and consulting work.

Business schools were originally set up to meet the training needs of managers in the private sector. However, as the role of government has shifted in many countries, these institutes now also cater to the training needs of government personnel. Smaller countries, for which it would not be practical to set up specialized management schools, depend on excellent regional facilities such as the Asian Institute of Technology in Thailand, the Korean Development Institute, or the Asian Institute of Management in Manila.

Finally, voluntary organizations, too, are often brought in to help train health workers and teachers, as well as train the members of community organizations to carry out social development programs.

Problems in Developing Countries

Training in developing countries is beset by problems related to the supply-driven orientation of most training for government personnel, the low priority given to such training, its fragmented approach, and deficiencies in the staffing and organization of training centers (Box 12.5). The training infrastructure is fragmented and poorly utilized. The content of training is often irrelevant to the current needs of government and the employees. The training staff is inhibited by civil service regulations and practices, lacks material incentives or career prospects, and its subject competence is sometimes weak. The poor quality of training in most training institutions and the concentration of expertise in a few national institutions are serious problems. Many public training institutions in developing countries are unfamiliar with good training practices in the private sector.

To be effective, training centers in all countries must have excellence and continuity of leadership, and an environment that fosters innovation, experimentation, and a collegial atmosphere. In developing countries, the organizational features common to successful national training institutions (Paul 1983) are

- autonomous organization, with a competent management and an expert advisory council;
- continuity of committed and quality leadership;
- assured access to resources;
- focus on the multiple, but related, tasks of research, training, and consulting;
- multidisciplinary academic base;

Box 12.5 Training Infrastructure in Bangladesh

The system of public administration training in Bangladesh has several major problems. First, it is not responsive to the real needs of the trainees. Training is based on needs as perceived by the training institutions and not on a systematic and objective assessment. Little consideration is given to planning the training in relation to the career development path of the trainees. Second, training for civil servants in various ministries and other public agencies is provided by more than 300 institutions, most of low quality and whose programs are poorly coordinated. Third, these institutions rarely offer programs of the appropriate relevance, quantity, and quality. Their curriculums, training materials, and training methodologies require significant improvement.

In addition, there is a huge backlog of pre entry training for new civil servants. Many new civil servants take up their positions without any orientation or training, and receive induction training only after several years, by which time the induction programs are irrelevant. In-service training programs are a requirement for promotion, but their relevance and quality are questionable as well.

Source: Asian Development Bank (1997b).

- strong links with client organizations and other training institutions;
- critical mass of faculty;
- collegiate environment and participative decision making; and
- performance incentives and career development opportunities for trainers.

Training of Executive Personnel⁴

The grooming of senior cadres for higher management and policy advisory responsibilities calls for a careful analysis of the required competencies and of the existing skill gaps. Competence, in the context of training for executive development, includes not only job-related skills of a high order, but also people-related and leadership skills. An executive training program should therefore be based on the following, among other things:

- involvement of top management;
- a professional training division under a high-level executive;
- early identification of managerial talent and career paths;
- job mobility as a development tool; and
- encouragement of self-improvement activities.

In both centralized and decentralized training systems, the central personnel unit must be responsible for the development of executive personnel. The training would be imparted to both those who show promise of rising to executive ranks, as well as those who would profit from improved executive skills. The latter type of training is particularly important for persons entering laterally from functional services or from outside the government. For this purpose, the US has set up the Federal Executive Institute, which certifies candidates for entry into the Senior Executive Service (SES). (The federal government also operates executive seminar centers for personnel below the SES level.) The ENA in France and the Civil Service College of the UK have been performing this role for their senior cadres, and in Asia Singapore has one of the best-organized executive training programs (Box 12.6). Executive training should be complemented by appropriate career incentives, such as the opportunity to leapfrog over more senior colleagues. In Canada, senior executives are trained through the Canadian Center for Management Development. The Canadian federal government's program "La Relève" identifies executives for leading positions through a prequalification process and facilitates their advancement through the Accelerated Executive Development Program.

Box 12.6
Executive Personnel Training in Singapore

The government amalgamated several schemes of service into a single senior officer scheme in 1996. The scheme covers five functional areas: line operations, human resource management, finance and corporate services, public affairs management, research, and information support. Also, training beyond induction training is provided at five career levels. The staff thus attends different courses at different stages in their career, and at least 100 hours of training a year. The training centers are well equipped to handle these demands.

Each ministry is expected to organize its own specialized functional training, while the Civil Service College handles training in core functions and policy areas. The college groups courses into four areas: managing service excellence, managing change, managing people, and managing self. Also known as the life skill series, the courses in self-development enhance the staff's personal effectiveness and confidence in his personal life and work. They include such topics as balancing work and home responsibilities, managing one's health, and planning for retirement.

Source: Commonwealth Secretariat (1998a).

Efforts to build the capacity of senior personnel in different agencies at the local level are increasingly undertaken by national governments, with the support of international agencies and training institutions. (In countries like Indonesia such programs sustain their national municipal infrastructure programs.) However, attention to training for executive development at subnational government levels is still insufficient in most countries, although some successful examples of executive training at the provincial and local government levels do exist in developed countries (Box 12.7).

Box 12.7

Executive Development at Subnational Levels in the US and Canada

In the US, there is a national certified public manager consortium, which conducts accredited programs for state executives based on six job-related, competence-testing management courses. These courses parallel the executive continuum, from supervisory to senior levels, and are delivered in association with state university systems or with a government institute. The New York public service training program includes two practical, skill-based curricula—one on supervision and individual performance, and the other on administration and organizational performance (Flanders, in Perry 1989). The funding for the program is highly unusual, in that it is provided for in the agreement between the state and the bargaining unit for professional and scientific employees.

In Ontario, Canada, the provincial government has developed a human resource plan for senior management, incorporating a framework of core competencies. The training program combines just-in-time learning opportunities with a long-term education and training strategy. All new appointees are required to attend a foundation learning program. Within 24 months of appointment, they are expected to take at least one corporate program, the leadership program, and one foundation program relating to transforming government, mastering business issues, and managing relationships. Individuals can also take advantage of a menu of supplementary programs, depending on their interest and needs, and pursue university-accredited courses in information technology in a unique partnership between the government institute and three universities.

Source: Fesler and Kettl (1991); Borins (1999).

Systematic executive development is being attempted by a few developing countries (Box 12.8). However, some studies show that the benefits are not commensurate with investments in training because of the poor link to career development and the lack of performance incentives. Executive personnel do not attend these training courses regularly, or attend them mechanically and without enthusiasm (Mutahba 1986). This may indicate either lack of incentives, as noted, or of course poor quality of the training itself. Either way, reliable and systematic feedback surveys are essential to either improve the training or halt the drain in resources.

Box 12.8

Executive Personnel Training in Some Developing Countries

A number of countries have set up special institutions to provide pre-entry and in-service training for executive personnel. Courses on diverse themes of development, as well as ethical values and communication, are commissioned by the Department of Personnel and Training at over 100 accredited institutes in the public and private sector. The National Academy of Administration in India, for example, organizes, on behalf of the Department of Personnel and Training, two types of training courses for officers in the elite administrative service. One is a series of orientation courses on various topics, where staff of different seniority are grouped together. The second is a series of one-week and three-week courses throughout the year, tailored to staff of different ranges of seniority, to build relevant skills. Some of these courses involve the collaboration of overseas institutes such as ENA and National Institute of Public Administration (INTAN) in Malaysia. Staff are given opportunities to spend short periods in the academy on case studies or research and teaching. Although training is mandatory for all senior staff, except those in the top two grades, there is a weak link between training and career development, and no conscious effort to prepare staff for higher positions.

Argentina has created a permanent training subsystem, whereby executive personnel must obtain a certain number of credits in training, either to remain in their posts or to be promoted. Similarly, the People's Republic of China organizes training for senior executives through the National School of Administration, and has made it mandatory for all persons in "leading positions" to attend a minimum period of training.

THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION OF TRAINING

Training Institutions

There are a variety of intergovernmental training institutes. Some have been established under the auspices of the United Nations. These include the Asian and Pacific Development Administration Center in Kuala Lumpur, the African Training and Research Center in Administration and Development in Tangiers, and the Latin American Center for Development Administration in Caracas. The World Bank offers training programs in Washington DC, and in developing countries through the World Bank Institute (formerly the Economic Development Institute). The International Monetary Fund has been providing training in financial and macroeconomic programming for officials of member countries through the IMF Institute. The Asian Development Bank established in 1998 the ADB Institute, and other regional development banks have done the same. All of these institutes have outstanding staff, with country experience and expertise in different subjects, and substantial resources.

There are also a variety of regional training centers, such as the East and South African Management Institute in Tanzania; the Pan-African Institute for Development, with four centers in different parts of Africa; the Central American Institute for Public Administration in Costa Rica; and the Caribbean Center of Development Administration in Barbados. Other regional institutions, although autonomous, are supported by multilateral agencies; an example is the Asian Institute of Technology in Bangkok. Areas of technical cooperation and exchange under various forms of regional cooperation, such as the associations in Southeast Asia and Latin America, include training in public administration and in the strengthening of national training institutions.

Apart from the institutes supported by multilateral organizations, training institutes in developed countries offer degree programs and short-term programs for officials from developing countries. As noted earlier, for example, ENA in France runs a regular international course in French for officials from developing countries, similar to its course for domestic candidates, as well as short-term specialized courses. Similar programs for international participants are organized by the British Civil Service College, INTAN of Malaysia, and the National University of Singapore. Evidently, scarcity of good training opportunities is not a constraint on the effectiveness of training for government personnel of developing countries—at least at

the senior levels. Training effectiveness is constrained instead by the other institutional and incentive factors mentioned earlier.

Networking among Training Institutions

Among developed countries, there has always been considerable collaboration among institutions in training for public administration. This collaboration is regularly underlined in periodic conferences of bodies such as the International Institute of Administrative Sciences, the International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration, the Study Group of European Public Service Training Agencies, and country-level meetings of schools of public policy.

“Twinning” between training institutions in developed and developing countries emerged as a form of technical cooperation in the 1980s. Examples include the agreement entered into by ENA of France with national training institutes in the People’s Republic of China, India, and various countries in the French administrative tradition. Such agreements cover exchange of faculty and training in such areas as needs assessment, training evaluation and methodology, and curriculum development. This type of cooperation is also becoming common under the European Union’s PHARE technical assistance program between western European training institutions and their counterparts in eastern European countries.

A variant of the twinning concept is sector-specific training for several countries, such as that provided by the Dutch-supported Habitat coalition, which is organized around the Dutch Institute of Housing Studies and comprises Ghana, India, Indonesia and Peru. Another variant is the regional network of sector institutions that is sponsored and partly financed by UN agencies. For example, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has successfully sponsored a network of training institutions in urban development and housing, as well as a network of city mayors and managers called CITYNET.

A major example of intercountry cooperation is the public management network among countries in the British Commonwealth, sponsored by the Commonwealth Secretariat. The network is supported by the independent Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM), which arranges annual conferences on diverse topics for officials, experts, and practitioners; disseminates experiences and country profiles; and supports innovations in individual countries. CAPAM

and the Commonwealth Secretariat also arrange training courses for developing countries, and offer consulting services to governments in different areas. (A similar forum is being established for Europe under the auspices of the European Union.)

Institutes in Asian, African, and Latin American countries also offer courses for international participants, as noted earlier in the case of INTAN in Malaysia. There is increasing “South-South” cooperation between training institutions in the field of public administration, such as the agreement between the PRC and India, and the technical cooperation in the ASEAN countries. Under these agreements, the trainers, the faculty of training institutes, and senior officials attend programs and study tours organized in other developing countries.

In addition, there is increased networking outside the government as well. The institutes of public administration in a number of countries are collaborating in a variety of areas. Agreements between private business associations have led to specialized training for managers in areas of common concern, such as electronic commerce, computer crimes, cross-border transactions, commodity standards, and patent and copyright laws. Finally, nongovernment voluntary agencies in different countries are collaborating in broad governance areas or specific areas like low-income housing and microcredit. All these forms of cooperation should expand to enrich and strengthen training efforts in the developing countries, particularly as new information and communication technology opens up revolutionary new training opportunities. External donors have a constructive role to play in this direction.

KEY POINTS AND DIRECTIONS OF IMPROVEMENT

Key Points

Training of government personnel should be viewed as an important element of personnel management and individual development, and can make a major contribution to greater administrative effectiveness. However, it cannot be a solution to a dysfunctional system. Training cannot be effective unless the new skills are well utilized and the training is linked to the staff career path and actual job responsibilities. Training in an inefficient organizational framework or delinked from incentives is a waste of time and resources. Therefore, training of government personnel should take place in the context of a well-formulated national training policy, linked to

policies for career development, and providing room for sector-specific training and training of local government staff.

Training can be centralized through a central government unit that allocates all the funding and designs and administers all training programs, or decentralized, with each ministry in charge of financing and managing the program. Generally, as in procurement or personnel management, a combination works best—with a central unit defining policies and allocating funds to sectors; ministries responsible for deciding on training content and participants; and the actual training delivered by competent educational institutions.

Regardless of whether administration of training is centralized or decentralized, a good training program must begin with a sound assessment of training needs, from the viewpoint of the individual staff as well as their ministry and the government as a whole. Too often, however, training programs are supply-driven and correspond to the preferences and current capabilities of training institutions (or of external donors) rather than the real needs of the civil servants and the skill requirements of the government.

Assuming a good needs' assessment, the effectiveness of training depends on the motivation of participants and the quality of the training itself. The first factor is a function of the organizational and incentive framework within which the new skills are to be utilized. The second factor, training quality, depends largely on the capacity and competence of the training institutions. In-house government training institutions have the advantage of familiarity with the policies, culture, and needs of the government agency concerned; outside providers have the advantage of flexibility and the capacity to cater to a variety of training needs. Again, a combination usually works best for formal training. However, the practice of ministry-specific training institutions is generally wasteful and should not be encouraged.

It is essential to note that much valuable staff training is informal and on-the-job. For this, the ministry concerned and government as a whole should create an environment where coaching and mentoring of subordinates are a normal and expected part of a supervisor's responsibilities—and rewarded as such.

Training of developing countries' civil servants can benefit from a variety of international and regional programs delivered by multilateral

organizations such as UN, ADB, World Bank and IMF, or by training institutions in developed countries, such as the ENA in France. Networks among training institutions have also emerged, such as that supported by the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management. Scarcity of training opportunities or funding is thus not the basic constraint for developing countries, at least for senior staff. The effectiveness of training is constrained instead by institutional and incentive problems, as noted earlier.

Directions of Improvement

In many developing countries, the time is ripe for a comprehensive review of the training system for government personnel. Training for public administration requires rethinking and reflection on both the demand and the supply side.

On the *demand* side, the foundation for such a review must be a revision of the roles of the state because the government's skill requirements depend necessarily on the tasks it is intended to perform. As all other aspects of government personnel policy, from retrenchment to compensation and to basic procedures, training cannot be targeted effectively in the absence of a clear idea of the functions of government. It is possible, however, to define skill requirements and hence training needs progressively for individual sectors or levels of government—provided that there is a clear link between training and staff career development.

On the *supply* side, many countries have an unnecessarily large number of institutions for training of government workers. Partly as a result, the availability of resources and quality of training are weak. Major improvements can be expected from a rationalization of the system, eliminating overlapping, duplication, and waste of resources. In particular, specialized training institutions associated with specific sector ministries require careful scrutiny, as they are often the source of unnecessary training justified only by the need for their survival. For this rationalization, greater reliance on the actual needs of government agencies and individual civil servants is important, and is possibly the only way to combat the supply-driven mentality of most training programs. Informal and on-the-job training should be systematically encouraged as well.

External assistance can provide a useful role in these improvements, especially through the permanent commitment entailed by “twinning”

arrangements between local training institutions and public administration institutes in certain developed countries. But external aid has often been a major part of the problem, too, supporting vast training programs without clear aims, lacking the essential institutional and organizational prerequisites, and in some cases inadvertently weakening the capacity of local training institutions. It is therefore important for developing countries' governments to reassert ownership of external aid programs for public administration training. In turn, this requires a simple but clear and sound national policy for training of civil servants.

NOTES

- ¹ This section is drawn partly from Commonwealth Secretariat (1996); Klingrer and Nalbandian (1998); Starling (1998); Franks (1999); and US Human Resource Development Council (1997).
- ² This section draws in part on Paul (1983); Sims (1993); Klingrer and Nalbandian (1998); Riley (1993); Corrigan et al. (1999); and internal ADB memoranda and country reports.
- ³ This section draws largely on Paul (1983); Sims (1993); Fesler and Kettl (1991); Corrigan et al. (1999); internal ADB memoranda and country reports; OECD (1999b); and Borins (1999).
- ⁴ This section draws mainly on Sims (1993); Fesler and Kettl (1991); Paul (1983); Mutahaba (1986); Oszlak (1999); Flanders in Perry, ed. (1989); Government of India (1996); Government of France (1998); and internal ADB memoranda and country reports.