

# Lessons learned from evaluations

## Series 1

DECEMBER 2021

Planning, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

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# Foreword

Learning from evaluations is an important part of any evaluation exercise. This forward-looking function of evaluation is often given less attention than the accountability function, yet as a learning organization, UNITAR needs to seize opportunities to identify, share, discuss and incorporate lessons from past experiences into future programming and practices.

This lessons learned series provides the UNITAR community of professionals with structured summaries on lessons learned from both self-evaluations and independent evaluation exercises. This first series highlights lessons on training methodology, tracking outcomes and impact, gender and COVID-19. It is hoped that this series will serve as a tool to promote evaluation's important learning function.

The able inputs from Katinka Koke, Roxana Gomez and Joyce Mukoma as well as from colleagues from programme units who have identified lessons from self-evaluation undertakings are gratefully acknowledged.

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# Executive summary

The Planning, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (PPME) has developed this paper series on lessons learned to provide valuable insights for learning and improved decision-making related to future programming. This paper uses the rapid evidence assessment (REA) methodology to analyse and synthesize lessons learned from past UNITAR independent and self-evaluations undertaken since 2017.

This first edition focuses on lessons related to training methodologies, tracking outcomes and impact, gender inclusivity and COVID-19. Seventy-eight lessons were analyzed, resulting in fifteen lessons learned. The selection of lesson categories has been done according to its relevance and to the number of lessons in the category.

The methodology chosen comprises nevertheless a few limitations. In order to be 'rapid', an REA compromises on the breadth, depth and comprehensiveness of the search and in this case, it does not allow for an in-depth study of the context of each project in which a lesson learned was formulated. Another limitation is an unequal distribution of lessons by UNITAR division. Moreover, while evaluations derive from different sources as stated above, the majority has been formulated by UNITAR personnel in self-evaluation reports. While the Lessons Learned database offers richness in lessons across categories, information on actual use of those lessons to inform future project implementation is limited.

The following meta-lessons were found:

## Training methodologies

- 1. Needs assessments help determine instructional design and ensure that the content is aligned with participants' learning needs**
- 2. Theory and practice need to be carefully balanced, and adult learning principles can define the right mix.**
- 3. Both self-paced e-learning and tailor-made other training events can lead to high participant engagement through flexibility in assigning learning time and adaptation to the audience's needs and characteristics.**
- 4. An appropriate selection of training experts and resource persons is key for ensuring participants' engagement.**
- 5. Follow-up coaching and mentoring are key ingredients for ensuring participants' knowledge/skills application**

## Tracking outcomes and impacts

- 1. Attitudes and behaviour change in capacity building projects are captured better in the long-run.**
- 2. Impact might occur through unplanned channels and unintended outcomes can be rewarding.**
- 3. An adequate and valid Theory of Change (ToC) is essential for measuring impact.**
- 4. Theory-based approaches to evaluation are useful for measuring impact in demand-driven projects**

1. Achieving women empowerment requires a strategic approach with a needs assessment that includes a thorough gender assessment.
2. Including different perspectives in group discussions can be enriching for all participants.
3. Depending on the cultural and national context, change management strategies might also be required to target male participants' attitudes towards female participants or women in more general terms.

1. Participants' engagement is crucial during the transformation of training delivery formats
2. COVID-19 as an opportunity to strengthen online learning delivery methods.
3. Addressing the digital divide in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic requires adaptive management and availability of online tools

The paper concludes that while lessons are generalized, in some instances, they are limited in applicability to all UNITAR programming and sometimes only applicable to more specific context. Moreover, the paper recognizes the usefulness of recording lessons learned from experience to inform drivers of success or challenges for future projects. Most of the lessons examined as part of the assessment highlight strengths and only a few lessons highlight weaknesses, though lessons learned can in general arise from both.

As next steps, a lessons learned forum will be organised to discuss findings from this assessment and invite colleagues from Programme Units to share and exchange. Moreover, this paper series will be continued and future editions will focus on different categories of lessons learned. The Lessons Learned database and this assessment shall inform new programming development. To track use of it, a survey to programme management will be issued to measure use of lessons learned to design future phases of existing or new programming.

# Acronyms and abbreviations

CAS	Complex Adaptive Systems Approaches
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GAANA	Gender-responsive Asset-based Approach to Needs Assessment
MSC	Most Significant Change
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
PPME	Planning, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Unit
QS	Quality Assurance Framework Quality Standards
REA	Rapid Evidence Assessment
TOC	Theory of Change
ToT	Training of Trainers
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNOSAT	United Nations Satellite Centre

# Introduction

Learning from past experiences to inform future programmes or organizational decisions is a vital step of an evaluation process. Evaluations are useful not only for the topic or programme under evaluation, but also other programmes/projects that may have similar characteristics (e.g., location, target audience, programme objective, etc.).

Aligned with UNITAR strategic framework's learning approach to evaluation, the Planning, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (PPME) has developed this paper series. Using rapid evidence assessment (REA) methodology, this paper series analyzes and synthesizes lessons from UNITAR independent and self-evaluations undertaken since 2017. Each of the series contains lessons from different categories.

This first edition focuses on lessons related to **training methodologies, tracking outcomes and impact, gender inclusivity and COVID-19**. Seventy-eight lessons were analyzed, resulting in fifteen lessons learned. After this introduction, the purpose and methodology are presented, followed by the findings, take-away messages from the process and a description of the next steps.

## Purpose

The Lessons Learned paper looks into past evaluations and captures lessons learned from UNITAR's work across its programmes from 2017-2020. This paper shall provide valuable insights for improved decision-making and better development results. The first edition focuses on lessons related to training methodologies, tracking outcomes and impact, gender inclusivity and COVID-19. The selection of lesson categories has been done according to its relevance and to the number of lessons in the category. The lessons derive both from independent and from self-evaluations.

## Methodology

This paper uses the definition of lessons learned proposed by the OECD/DAC Glossary (2010). Lessons or "lessons learned" are defined as: "*Generalizations based on evaluation experiences with projects, programs, or policies that abstract from the specific circumstances to broader situations. Frequently, lessons highlight strengths or weaknesses in preparation, design, and implementation that affect performance, outcome, and impact.*" (OECD, 2010, p.26).

The guiding questions proposed for the analysis are the following:

- What can we learn from past programming to guide future design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation phases?
- What factors can be identified as drivers of success or reinforcing challenges towards the achievement of project/programme goals?
- What are the main lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic to inform future programming?

The REA methodology provides a balanced assessment of what is known (and not known) in the scientific literature (or in the lessons learned database) about an intervention, problem or

practical issue by using a systematic methodology to search and critically appraise empirical studies.<sup>1</sup>

The lessons analyzed derive both from independent and self-evaluations available in the [UNITAR repository of lessons learned](#) from 2017-2020<sup>2</sup> as of October 2021. Lessons in the repository are classified under 19 categories of lessons according to their type. This edition focuses on four of these categories: training/learning methodologies, tracking outcomes and impact, gender inclusivity and COVID-19. As mentioned above, the selection of lessons categories was made according to its relevance and the number of lessons classified in the category. *Training methodologies* was the category with the larger number of lessons (48), while *tracking outcomes and impact*, *gender inclusivity* and *COVID-19* have less than 15 lessons each, they were incorporated by their relevance for UNITAR programming. UNITAR is committed to mainstream gender considerations into its programming, as stated in its Strategic Framework and Gender Policy<sup>3</sup>, as well as aligning its work from a results-based perspective. On the other hand, the COVID-19 has required a shift in planning and implementation of many of UNITAR's projects which makes it relevant to learn from early experiences of this new reality.

Seventy-eight lessons were analyzed for this paper. The classification per category is presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Number of lessons per category**

Lesson category	Number of lessons in the category	Observations
Learning/training methodologies	48	8 lessons duplicated in repository
Tracking outcomes and impacts	12	One lesson duplicated in repository
COVID-19	11	7 under own category and 4 under other categories but referred to COVID-19
Gender inclusivity	7	
Total	78	

## Limitations

In order to be 'rapid', an REA compromises on the breadth, depth and comprehensiveness of the search and in this case, it does not allow for an in-depth study of the context of each project in which a lesson learned was formulated (Barends, Rousseau & Briner, 2017). Another limitation is an unequal distribution of lessons by UNITAR division, with a total of 33 lessons from the Prosperity Division but only 1 lesson from the Division for Multilateral Diplomacy, as shown in Table 2. Moreover, while evaluations derive from different sources as stated above, the majority has been formulated by UNITAR personnel in self-evaluation reports (49 lessons). While the Lessons Learned database offers richness in lessons across categories, information

<sup>1</sup> Barends, E., Rousseau, D.M. & Briner, R.B. (Eds). (2017). CEBMa Guideline for Rapid Evidence Assessments in Management and Organizations, Version 1.0. Center for Evidence Based Management, Amsterdam. Available from [www.cebma.org/guidelines](http://www.cebma.org/guidelines)

<sup>2</sup> Exception is made for the lessons under the COVID-19 category, which projects were implemented in 2020-2021.

<sup>3</sup> Strategic framework:

[https://unitar.org/sites/default/files/media/publication/doc/unitar\\_strategicframework\\_web-new.pdf](https://unitar.org/sites/default/files/media/publication/doc/unitar_strategicframework_web-new.pdf)

Gender policy: <https://unitar.org/sites/default/files/media/publication/doc/unitar-gender-mainstreaming2016.pdf>



on actual use of those lessons to inform future project implementation is limited. Finally, at the time of this paper drafting, an independent evaluation of UNITAR programming response to COVID-19 was in progress. Therefore, lessons of this assessment shall be read in conjunction with the report.

**Table 2: Lessons per Division and type pf evaluation**

<i>Division</i>	
Multilateral Diplomacy	1
Multiple	3
Peace	21
Planet	7
Prosperity	33
Satellite Analysis and Applied Research	8
<i>Type of evaluation</i>	
Self-evaluation	49
Independent evaluation	25

## Findings: Lessons Learned

### Training methodologies

The 48 lessons under this category can be categorized under five sub-categories which are aligned with the UNITAR Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) quality standards (QS) (2017): i) learning needs (related to QS 1); ii) content and structure (related to QS 5); iii) methodology and target audience (related to QS 6 and QS 2); iv) training expertise (related to QS 8); and v) training follow-up (related to QS 10). Likewise, five main lessons are identified based on the above.



# 1.

## Needs assessments help determine instructional design and ensure that the content is aligned with participants' learning needs

This lesson derives from the sub-category “**Learning needs**”. Needs assessments are key training preparations in order to first answer the question whether training is the right answer to the needs identified, how the training is addressing the identified needs, what instructional design methods will be appropriate and what content shall be selected.

A needs assessment is an information-gathering process that assesses and analyses data about an organizational need that could be met through training in order to determine the difference between the current situation and the desired outcome (gap analysis) in regard to the variables of interest. However, the response to a needs assessment is not necessarily a training. Different processes are illustrated in a Good Practice document highlighting experiences from two UNITAR Programme Units.<sup>4</sup>

*“The needs assessment confirmed that the majority of participants were interested in acquiring training skills and sharpening their communication and presentation skills. However, it then became clear that some of the participants were more likely to engage in other forms of outreach than training in their functions.”*

The QAF<sup>5</sup> includes a set of ten quality standards. Quality Standard 1 focuses on learning needs and includes the following sub-points:

- The event responds to an identified learning need(s) for a specified target audience.
- Consideration is given to the relationship between learning needs and performance needs of individuals/ organizations.
- The event responds to an identified learning need(s) for a specified target audience.
- The learning need(s) are derived from and associated with evidence of individual and/or organizational capacity/performance needs.

For needs assessments to be effectively used, it is good practice to share the results from the assessment with trainers/resource persons and with participants. Box 1 presents an example from the Hiroshima Office.

Organizational aspects such as advance notifications to participants, analysing participant lists, collecting expectations and assessing diversity in the audience can also lead to better addressing training needs and expectations during the training event.

*“Advance notification enables potential participants to prepare for the course and plan accordingly.”*

*“It’s helpful to have in advance the training participants list. This enables a better awareness of the broad professional background and GIS knowledge level of participants to ensure that the training content takes into consideration the various learning needs.”*

*“Some participants were approaching the training with very different expectations and from very different backgrounds. At first, it was challenging to create a collaborative work environment amongst participants.”*

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<sup>4</sup> [Good Practice Document - Training Needs Assessment.pdf \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> <https://unitaremail.sharepoint.com//unitarnet/Documents/AC.UNITAR.2017.11%20-%20Quality%20Assurance%20Framework,%20Revision,%202017.pdf>

### Box 1. “UNITAR Hiroshima Transforming the Future: Empowering Social Entrepreneurs and Youth Leaders for Iraq 2020” Self-Evaluation

The programme always undertakes a Needs Assessment with participants following their acceptance to a programme. The assessment results help determine the instructional design of the programme; they are also shared with Resource Persons for further tailoring the content to the participants learning needs.

All the participants undertook an initial needs assessment questionnaire regarding the content of the programme during the orientation workshop in Baghdad. An anonymised summary of the needs assessment results was shared with participants during workshop and was addressed during presentations and practical exercises sessions. Participants indicated that exposure to these results allowed them to identify issues they all faced in their work.

The needs assessment results indicated that participants wished for more focused training around key elements of entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, communication techniques and co-founding team. The assessment data showed that more than half (62 per cent) of the participants have “no knowledge” to “some knowledge” on key elements of entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship, which were addressed during workshop II. Furthermore, 92 per cent of participants mentioned that effective communiques are relevant is to their current role, while 85 per cent of participants mentioned that knowledge and skill around developing budgets will benefit them.

To address the gap in participants’ knowledge of entrepreneurship, introductory sessions were incorporated in the programme to outline the concepts of entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship, as well sessions examining communication techniques and teambuilding and teamwork.

## 2. Theory and practice need to be carefully balanced, and adult learning principles can define the right mix.

The second sub-category focuses on “**content and structure**”. The selection and choice of training topics, but equally having the right mix of theory and practice is of key importance. Time allocations need to be made according to needs assessed (see lesson one).

*“There is a continuous need to balance conceptual elements with technical, issue-specific actions to take.”*

*“Theory without practice is less effective. The evaluation concluded that theoretical content – although critical to establish the foundational know-how – needs to be complemented by practice. All informants insisted on this aspect. Practice helps build their muscle memory, their professional ethics and behaviour and integrate all the notions through repetition and real-life scenarios.”*



In this context, adult learning principles<sup>6</sup> are of use for defining the right mix. Table 3 below provides an overview of adult learning principles.

**Table 3: Adult learning principles. Adapted from Knowles (1973).**

Adult learning principles	Tips for the trainer
Adults bring to a learning opportunity a wealth of knowledge and experience and they are often willing to share it.	You should build on and make use of adult's knowledge and experience.
Adults want to know why they should learn something before investing resources (time, money) into a learning event.	You should explain the purpose of the training (overall goal, specific learning objectives, etc.) and contextualize the training.
Adults enjoy being active during the learning process and interacting with each other.	You should privilege participatory methods and encourage learners to share their knowledge and experience.
Adults are willing to learn those things that they believe help them perform a task or solve a problem.	You should ensure that the training relates to situations adults face.
Adults tend to respond better to internal motivators (such as increased self-esteem) than to external motivators (such as salary growth).	You should ensure that the internal motivation is not blocked by creating a safe learning environment.
Adults appreciate to be engaged and have fun.	You should make the training engaging and fun - as appropriate.

As we see in Table 3, adults enjoy being active during the learning process. Hence, the below lesson concludes from a challenge that too-theory intensive events were not well received by adults:

*“The courses are considered too theory intensive. Some participants thought that given the price paid for the course they were not getting enough in return in terms of content.”*

Quality Standard 5 focuses on “Content and Structure” and consists of three sub-points.

- Information on the content and structure of the event is presented in a clear and logical sequence.
- Learners are provided with a programme schedule or outline for face-to-face briefings, workshops or seminars which details the sequencing of the contents and activities. For courses, learners are provided with a syllabus.

<sup>6</sup> See UNITAR [Facilitation Toolbox](#) for more information on training design.

- Methods, tools and interactive activities are structured in such a way as to facilitate the achievement of learning objectives.

### 3. Both self-paced e-learning and tailor-made other training events can lead to high participant engagement through flexibility in assigning learning time and adaptation to the audience's needs and characteristics.

The third sub-category focuses on “**methodology and target audience**”. The lessons contained in the category differentiate between e-learning, face-to-face and blended formats. E-learning is considered as either complementary or an opportunity to reach larger groups and ensure the learning is being continued during global health pandemics, such as COVID-19 (see section below on COVID-19). When e-learning is in a self-paced modality, participants can adjust training time in a flexible way to their respective working schedules.

*“A self-paced and on-demand feature of the course ensured that the participants could complete the course requirements without disruption of their professional activities.”*

It is crucial to adjust to the target group by e.g., using experimental and dynamic approaches when organizing training for youth and also adapting learning material according to the audience's characteristics. Other useful methods are case studies, study tours, mock committee meetings and feedback sessions which allow participants to practice their skills. Teamwork and group assignments make adult participants feel more comfortable. Throughout implementation, regular communication and interaction both with experts and peers was found to be effective. Small repetitions of learning content can lead to fostering learning. Developing projects as follow-up assignments were found to be great opportunities for participants to use their skills and participants were highly engaged.

*“More varied presentation techniques encourage learning. This includes increased use of visual aids, such as PowerPoint presentations and videos.”*

*“Learning approaches structured around case-studies, mock Committee meetings and feedback from a panel offered “real life” learning opportunities.”*

*“Duplication is not a problem so long as the delivery methodology is effective.”*

*“Working with youth in rural and urban settings requires adapted materials and methods that help put knowledge in context and considers the differences across audiences in terms of gender, age, culture and social norms.”*



UNITAR's QS 6 focuses on "Methodology" and refers to three sub-points:

- The methods and tools to be used are defined, and relevant to the achievement of learning objectives.
- Learning is systematically assessed.
- The mode of delivery selected is an effective medium for learners to achieve the learning objectives.

UNITAR's QS 2 focuses on "Target Audience" and refers to two sub-points:

- The target audience is defined with prerequisites (e.g., prior learning) or other selection criteria clearly defined.
- The event limits participation to the targeted audience (exceptions may be granted).

Backstopping services may be offered as additional add-on services that allow to adjust to local needs. The below example illustrates how activities can be tailored to the target audience to address individual institutional needs in the Pacific:

*"Integrating flexible mechanisms such as backstopping activities that can react to local demands, particularly in rapidly changing environments such as the Pacific Islands, is supportive of successful project implementation."*

#### **4. An appropriate selection of training experts and resource persons is key for ensuring participants' engagement.**

The fourth sub-category focuses on "**training expertise**". The choice of resource persons is key and, as impact story results have shown,<sup>7</sup> experts with great regional, national and local expertise and knowledge are much appreciated by participants. Apart from trainers, also mentors, coaches, master trainers and other resource persons, on international, national and on local levels, play an important role in framing the learning journey. It is also key that there is a continuous and frequent exchange between the different personnel involved in the training event.

UNITAR's QS 8 focuses on "Training Expertise/Qualifications" and refers to three sub-points:

- Individuals involved in the delivery / facilitation / moderation of training have the required expertise given the level and nature of their involvement.
- The bio profile/qualifications of the selected facilitators/moderators is communicated to participants.
- The event does not exceed a 30: 1 ratio of event participants to facilitators/trainers.

The QAF further specifies that the facilitator, tutor or moderator has the overall responsibility to guide learners throughout the learning activity and assist them in the knowledge acquisition process. They need to have the required expertise in the subject matter and adequate skills as trainers to effectively facilitate the learning process. Online facilitators/tutors require in additional specific online facilitation skills to adequately guide learners, in particular coordinating and summarizing discussion threads, coordinating collaborative activities, providing feedback, and assuring an adequate and well-balanced level of participation of the whole cohort.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://unitar.org/results-evidence-learning/stories>

*“Experts familiar with the local situation contributed to contextualized learning and were able to relate programme content to the current local situation.”*

Beyond training expertise, it is key how trainers/experts are being involved in discussion boards, as the following lesson illustrates:

*“More involvement of the trainer on discussion boards would encourage the contribution of the participants. Posting two or three times a week, reacting to the participants’ contributions, would be good ways for the trainer to keep the discussions active.”*

## **5. Follow-up coaching and mentoring are key ingredients for ensuring participants’ knowledge/skills application**

The fifth sub-category focuses on **“training follow-up”**. Follow-up, coaching and mentoring are recognized as part of efficient follow-up strategies to make sure learning can be applied and used once back on the job. It is also considered part of exit strategies and shall lead to increased sustainability. A learning reinforcement plan<sup>8</sup> can include communities of practices, simulation exercise, gamification, amongst others. It can start during the training (if there are different modules) or after the training. In case of mobile reinforcement of learning for example, there can be retrieval exercises (e.g., multiple-choice questions, open questions, flashcards) every other day. Communities of practice, be they online or in person, can also lead to enhanced application and use of knowledge and skills as illustrates the below example:

*“Online communication and interaction with the participants on a regular basis (expert-to-participant and peer-to-peer) provided invaluable access to practical information on the course theme and a community of practice.”*



*“Coaches greatly enhanced participants’ confidence in using newly acquired policy appraisal tools.”*

<sup>8</sup> See UNITAR good practice document on [learning reinforcement plans](#)

### Box 2: “UNITAR Hiroshima Developing Dreams: Entrepreneurship and Project Design in South Sudan 2019 cycle” Self-Evaluation

Coaching and mentorship are key elements of this programme, augmenting the learning and providing participants support as they complete their assignments. Volunteering their time, insight, and experience, coaches and mentors are an important element of the programme and an invaluable asset to the timely delivery and quality of the programme. To promote South-South cooperation, international mentors from the UNITAR Hiroshima Afghanistan Programme were introduced to the new participants in close coordination with the UNITAR Juba-based coaches, providing necessary mentorship to the participants on a regular basis. Participants placed into five separate coaching and mentorship groups allowed mentors to provide focused, one-to-one and critical insights on assignments and hold need-based online meetings. Most of the correspondence between participants, mentors, and coaches took place through email exchanges. In evaluations, sharing knowledge, experiences, and ideas attributed to an enriched learning experience and mentorship. UNITAR will explore the possibility of organizing periodic face-to-face sessions between local mentors and new participants in the UNITAR Juba Office to establish a good rapport between mentors and participants in future iterations of the programme.

Other follow-up activities can involve assignments to develop projects/plan to directly provide participants with an opportunity to apply knowledge/skills as illustrated in Box 3.

### Box 3: “Anti-Corruption Training Programme for North Africa” Self-Evaluation

One example of best practice was to ask the participants to develop an anti-corruption project/plan of their choice using a template prepared by UNITAR. This was done as a follow-up assignment to the first workshop and was then presented at the second workshop. From the results it was clear that the exercise was done with interest and was used by most as an opportunity to develop existing ideas while using newly acquired skills, and fostering new partnerships.

A specific type of training is “Training of Trainers (ToT)” which can lead to multiplier effects when trained trainers use knowledge/skills to deliver training by trainers. An independent cluster evaluation on Training of Trainers<sup>9</sup> has concluded some relevant lessons, specifically on ToT:

- **Institution-based.** ToT initiatives that are institution-based are likely to produce more enduring results, as trained trainers of learning centres (whether they are staff or consultants) are more likely to have training opportunities in the medium to long term. While an institutional basis for ToT is a necessary condition, it is not sufficient, however.
- **Partner ownership, buy-in and clarity in roles.** Successful ToT requires a spirit of multi-stakeholder partnership, buy-in and clarity in roles by the ToT service provider, the beneficiary institution/client, the donor (if applicable) and the individual trainers to be trained. A lack of clarity in the ToT partnership concept or the roles of any of these stakeholders can compromise the success of the engagement.

*“A train-the-trainer approach can achieve good multiplier effects for outreach.”*

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<sup>9</sup> [Cluster Evaluation of UNITAR’s Training of Trainers Programming | UNITAR](#)



## Tracking outcomes and impacts

Twelve lessons were classified under this category, leading to four sub-categories: i) definition, follow-up and measurement of causal links; ii) data collection and management; iii) measurement of behavioural change; and iv) project cycle and timeframe. Likewise, four main lessons are identified based on the above.



### 1. Attitudes and behaviour change in capacity building projects are captured better in the long-run.

A large part of the Institute's programming is focused on capacity building interventions with outcomes related to either learning or behaviour change. Whereas there is evidence that application and transfer of knowledge and individual behaviour change<sup>10</sup> can occur in shorter time periods (e.g., three months), institutional changes usually need longer time to appear, and, therefore, measure and evaluate.

UNITAR has institutionalized the Kirkpatrick-Phillips approach<sup>11</sup> for evaluating training, a flexible approach that allows to capture both, learning and behaviour change, according to the programme objectives. Experiences from applying the framework has evidenced that information related to outcomes and impacts at the institutional or other higher-level, e.g., impacts at broader geographical scale or with longer time span, is difficult to obtain in the short-run. Depending on the nature of the training, information related to high-level behaviour change should occur after the capacity building activities completion within an adequate timeframe.

*“Higher level outcomes and impacts relating to capacity development and behavioural change invariably take a long time to deliver, and to gather evidence against. When the intended outcome is systemic, national-level (or even global-level) capacity development, it will almost certainly be unrealistic to expect such*

<sup>10</sup> Two examples of rapid change in behaviour at the individual level are captured in the Impact Stories: [“Multilateral Diplomacy - Enhancing Women's Leadership and Mentoring Capacities”](#) and [“Hackathon - Strengthening Rural and Urban Relationships while Achieving the SDGs”](#).

<sup>11</sup> An approach that categorizes evaluation data based on five steps to evaluating training, including Level 1 (reaction and planned action), Level 2 (learning and confidence), Level 3 (application and implementation), Level 4 (impact/organizational change) and Level 5 (ROI).

*changes to be in place – and measurable – within a typical three to four year project.”*

Besides an adequate timeframe, measurement of behaviour change requires a monitoring system that follows up on different stages of change. Previous independent evaluations have found that programmes often lack adequate measurement for behaviour change. At the evaluation stage, qualitative indicators can help overcome gaps in quantitative indicators, especially for retrospective guidelines to measure impact.

## **2. Impact might occur through unplanned channels and unintended outcomes can be rewarding.**

*“UNITAR’s impact is evident through informal and unexpected channels such as the sharing of knowledge by participants through personal networks.”*

Past evaluations indicate that outcome achievement from UNITAR training can go beyond the “individual trained” and their organization, and occur through informal and unplanned channels such as knowledge sharing within a participant’s (informal) network. These knowledge transfer experiences include knowledge sharing with the community; inclusion of content from the UNITAR training in lectures, seminars and webinars; and some experiences of ToT format and personal projects organized and managed by participants outside their professional settings. Transfer of knowledge can also occur informally with colleagues at work (e.g., during lunch breaks)<sup>12</sup>, usually when participants do not have the opportunity to share their new knowledge using formal channels. Tracing alternative channels of knowledge sharing (and results from it) derived from the training can help better understand and measure UNITAR’s scope of impact.

Unintended outcomes can also derive from the training dynamics themselves. Capacity development projects with an interactive component (e.g., teamwork and discussion panels) can incentivize collateral knowledge sharing and well-established professional networks among participants. An example from the latter includes the FAO-UNITAR joint e-Learning series in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The opportunity of interaction between participants provided by the course has created a network of professionals from the region in the areas of trade, international trade agreements and food security, interested in continuous learning and knowledge sharing. Participants have remained in contact after the course completion outside the UNITAR-FAO official channels, i.e., participants’ personal networks.

*“Planning for collateral outcomes in training events: When people are brought together for a training event, there will always be ‘collateral’ benefit that comes through participants making contact and sharing their ideas and experiences with others. The theory around “boundary objects” can help better understand and plan for these less visible but important knowledge-sharing processes to happen and be maintained”*

Planning for collateral outcomes in projects with learning outcomes is, nevertheless, possible, allowing the possibility to create mechanisms for follow-up. Building on existing theoretical knowledge, such as complex adaptive systems approaches (CAS)<sup>13</sup> of capacity development projects, some methods to measure unintended impacts can be applied during the planning

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<sup>12</sup> Data from a survey applied for the independent evaluation of UNITAR’s Strategic Framework Fund indicates that 87 per cent of survey respondents have shared knowledge from UNITAR training informally with their colleagues.

<sup>13</sup> “CAS focuses on capturing changes in the behavior of and relationships between the direct participants of the CD process, rather than specified outcomes in terms of traditional technical performance indicators. [...]. CAS approaches are also open to recognizing intended and unintended changes resulting from CD” (Vallejo & When, 2016). <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305750X15002739>

and evaluation process. Some recurrent methods to do so are the Most Significant Change (MSC) approach, outcome mapping and outcome harvesting (Vallejo & When, 2016). Other theories from the social sciences identified in previous evaluations is the “boundary objects theory”, as described in Box 4.

#### **Box 4. IOMC toolbox for decision making in chemicals management – Phase III project.**

The Toolbox project was created to set up a ‘one-stop-shop’ where national staff responsible for the sound management of chemicals could quickly and easily find the resources they needed. The Toolbox was designed also as a problem identification and problem-solving tool to enable countries to identify the most appropriate and efficient actions to address specific national problems related to chemicals management.

A participants survey indicated that 40 per cent considered that meeting and learning from each other was the most useful aspect of the workshop. Experiences cited in the [evaluation report](#) as listed: “*The interaction with representatives from other countries allowing (us) to know how they are currently managing their chemicals*”, “*Connection with other colleagues in the same field of experience (toxicology) from other countries*”, and “*Know what others are doing in my country about the treatment of chemicals*”.

Moreover, unintended impacts can be highly beneficial for both beneficiaries and project development (or future phases of a project). An example is presented in the “CommonSensing project” managed by UNOSAT, where the COVID-19 realities created the need to move the capacity development activities to online or blended modalities, improving the digital literacy of beneficiaries. The knowledge of new online tools did not only create advantages for beneficiaries (i.e., technical knowledge) but it also broadened possibilities for future training.

### **3. An adequate and valid Theory of Change (ToC) is essential for measuring impact.**

The evaluations reviewed confirm the importance of ToC for measuring impacts and results with greater precision. Defining a ToC in the early stages of the project is as important as validation and adjustment during project implementation.

Benefits of defining a sound and realistic ToC, including risks and assumptions around it, on achieving and measuring impact can be summarized in three points:

- A well-designed ToC enhances project efficiency as resources are better focalized.
- It is easier to measure progress and tackle challenges when there are clear causal mechanisms towards a specific goal. Review of risks and assumptions of the proposed ToC is necessary to identify these challenges and understand progress.
- A clear ToC can create greater engagement from partners and implementing partners as it provides clarity of the project and how it contributes to an overall goal.

*“A well-articulated Theory of Change can ensure Partner engagement and project success. UN CC:Learn’s partners are committed to the success of the project and attribute their own success to its support. There are opportunities to strengthen this engagement through clarifying purpose and methodology through developing a well-articulated agile Theory of Change.”*

Furthermore, the factors identified for a functional ToC related to impact measurement include the following:

- Coherence and alignment between the ToC and log frame is key for a clear pathway to impact.

- Results and intended impacts should be aligned to the project resource constraints/availabilities since project inception. Resources to consider include the allocated budget, staff designated to project implementation and their capabilities and data availability (e.g., secondary data available to track impact or budget allocated for data collection).
- Define potential risks and assumptions when drafting the initial ToC.

*“Importance of defining realistic, measurable results. While project log frames are dynamic instruments and may be subject to review and modification, it is important that project metrics have means of verification and can be measured within the project’s resource constraints”*

## 4.

### **Theory-based approaches to evaluation are useful for measuring impact in demand-driven projects**

Although the definition and initial measurement of progress indicators should take place since the project planning stages, the nature of a project might limit this from happening. Tracking progress and measuring impact in demand-driven projects is difficult, considering that project outputs are not necessarily planned since its inception. In this event, theory-based approaches to evaluation<sup>14</sup> represent a suitable approach for identifying results and impacts. Box 5 below presents an example from an independent evaluation.

*“Effective management of documentation, information and data is critical in highly activity-driven undertakings.”*

#### **Box 5. Reconstructing and testing a ToC for measuring impact: Evaluation of UNOSAT Rapid mapping service**

The UNOSAT Rapid Mapping Service provides satellite imagery analysis during humanitarian emergencies. The Service has been created to meet the demand of United Nations agencies, Member States and other humanitarian agencies for rapid mapping and satellite derived analysis in the wake of disasters and complex emergencies.

In the absence of such results-based planning, results were previously measured by counting the numbers of activations and using a user feedback survey with varying response rates.

An evaluation of the Services identified impact on end-beneficiaries by reconstructing a ToC using theoretical contribution where possible.

Even though demand-driven projects do not represent a large part of the UNITAR project portfolio, previous experiences can facilitate future programming.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/audit-evaluation/evaluation-government-canada/theory-based-approaches-evaluation-concepts-practices.html#toc5>

## Gender inclusivity

The seven lessons under this category can be categorized under three sub-categories: i) strategy and assessment, ii) enriching discussions; and iii) participant attitude. Likewise, three main lessons are identified based on the above.

### 1. Achieving women empowerment requires a strategic approach with a needs assessment that includes a thorough gender assessment.

The lessons under this sub-category conclude that it is important to have a strategic approach in order to empower women through training, that goes much beyond a simple participant selection.

*“Achieving women empowerment in Fellowship cohorts requires a more strategic approach beyond requesting national partners to select more female candidates.”*



Empowerment of women does also not just happen in the training room and one needs to be creative to also target women outside of office and training room spaces. One way to start a strategic gender approach is by integrating gender assessments as part of the needs assessments. The **Gender-responsive Asset-based Approach to Needs Assessment (GAANA)** is designed to help to conduct needs assessment by focusing on assets/capacities of different gender groups by examining their capacities in terms of access to resources as well as their roles and power relations. GAANA helps to identify the existing access mechanisms, underlying power relations, organizational, agency, community, fiscal, and individual people skills. This approach is useful as it goes beyond analyzing existing assets/capabilities available in a community or among a group of people and examines access mechanisms as well as existing structures and power relations that may make it hard for other members of the community or groups to utilize the existing assets (CFAES, 2020).

*“A thorough gender assessment is important to undertake as part of the needs assessment and analysis to ensure that gender mainstreaming in project design is relevant and adequate and can be realistically delivered throughout project implementation.”*

As part of good practices in gender-responsive monitoring and self-evaluation that were presented by UNOSAT,<sup>15</sup> it was highlighted that conducting a gender assessment during the

<sup>15</sup> Good practice document on “Gender-responsive Monitoring and Self-Evaluation”, publication forthcoming.

baseline helps having baseline data on specific gender-related indicators and can inform the project implementation. Moreover, combining self-assessments and objective assessments of learning and disaggregating results by sex helps understanding whether different scores are related to confidence-related matters or mirroring acquisition of knowledge.

#### **Box 6: “Women’s Leadership in Tsunami-based Disaster Risk Reduction Training Programme for World Tsunami Awareness Day 2016” Self-Evaluation**

Patriarchy and cultural norms make women’s participation in DRR planning difficult:

While it was indicated by participants that the number of men in DRR related positions outweighs that of females, there was also an acknowledgement that women tend to “overcommit” to families and churches. A key line of discussion that developed during the programme was for this commitment to in-fact be channelled toward increasing DRR related education and best-practice like sharing of DRR related preparedness information at church events; at PTA events; and through family connections.

**2.**

#### **Including different perspectives in group discussions can be enriching for all participants.**

Opinions from different genders and sexes may differ. It is hence recommended to strive for gender-balance in all training activities, when possible. However, in order to create an enabling environment for women, one needs to go beyond gender parity amongst participants. In some cases, additional efforts may be needed to actively include women into discussions against the principle of “one-size fits all”. Encouragement and ways to strengthen women’s confidence could be two ways to further motivate women to actively participate to discussions.

*“The majority of female Fellows were vocal in sharing their experiences, which contributed to constructive discussion and informative debate within the group.”*

*“Gender balance among Participants enriched the quality of workshops through women’s active engagement and input in practical exercises, group discussions, and teamwork.”*

UNITAR’s strategic framework 2018-2021 includes the objective to achieve gender-parity amongst its participants by 2021. In 2020, for the first time, UNITAR positively reversed its female-male gender ratio. UNITAR’s Executive Director for example is part of the Gender Champions network and one of the key pledges is the Panel Parity Pledge, through which Champions commit to no longer take part in any single-sex panels. This hence also applies to trainers and organizing personnel.

**3.**

#### **Depending on the cultural and national context, change management strategies might also be required to target male participants’ attitudes towards female participants or women in more general terms.**

This sub-category’s lesson applies to the male-dominated peacekeeping training context but also in entrepreneurship programmes such as those delivered in Afghanistan and Iraq, amongst other locations. Particularly for projects targeting women empowerment, but also for projects that do not have women empowerment as a primary objective, change management strategies may be required in addition to a gender analysis, gender strategy and a gender-responsive needs assessment.

An ITC-ILO handbook on “Gender and Organisational change” provides ideas for assessing the readiness for organizational change for gender equality.<sup>16</sup>

Arcand (2007) explains that for change to happen four conditions must be met:

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<sup>16</sup> ITC-ILO [handbook on Gender and Organisational change](#)

- Creating awareness among staff and management;
- Increasing the willingness of actors;
- Improving individual and collective skills;
- Allowing mobilisation of actors.

Each of Arcand’s four conditions needs to be met for change to take place. Change agents, whether they be at the top, mid-level or in operations, and who are firm promoters of gender equality, may have an overly positive view of the change process and should therefore be aware of myths relating to change in general and the challenges facing gender equality change agents.

**Box 7: “UNITAR Hiroshima Transforming the Future: Empowering Social Entrepreneurs and Youth Leaders for Iraq 2020” Self-Evaluation**

Gender balance among participants enriched the quality of workshops by women and men’s active engagement and input in practical exercises, group discussions, and teamwork. It is observed by Staff that male participants respected their female counterparts’ strength and accepted women’s current and potential contributions to the areas of entrepreneurship, leadership, and development in Iraq. To increase the number of skilled female leaders who can have a positive impact on Iraqi society.

## COVID-19

The eleven lessons under this category (7 classified as COVID-19 and 4 classified in other categories but related to COVID-19) lead to three subcategories: i) efficiency; ii) achievement of learning objectives; and iii) format delivery and methodologies, and likewise three lessons learned were derived from the analysis.



### 1. Participants’ engagement is crucial during the transformation of training delivery formats

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, many UNITAR training events needed to shift from a face-to-face to an online delivery format. The success of transformation of face-to-face to online modalities did not only depend on UNITAR staff and trainers adaptability but also on participants engagement in seeking alternatives to complete the training and their commitment to follow these solutions. Active communication and consultation with participants about new

alternatives for online learning resulted in greater participant's responsibility and ownership under the new modality and smoothed the adaptability process.

*"[...]Robust engagement and communication with participant[s] allowed for the smooth implementation and identifying alternative solutions. Participants showed high level of commitment through completing assignments and video recording their Pitches which were submitted on time as the final assignment."*

## 2.

### **COVID-19 as an opportunity to strengthen online learning delivery methods.**

While the COVID-19 pandemic brought many challenges during programme implementation, it also enabled UNITAR to leverage the adoption and use of online training methodologies. The evaluations revised for this analysis suggest that online training formats were, in some cases, more time and money efficient than traditional formats (i.e., face-to-face). The identified advantages include:

- COVID-19 helped position online learning as an advantageous tool to reach broader audiences while being cost-effective from a project perspective.
- The reduction of travel required for face-to-face training and print materials reduced the project's carbon footprint.
- COVID-19 provides the opportunity for programmes to update (or create) internal guidelines and procedures for effective online training delivery.
- Online training self-paced features allowed participants to combine their professional activities with learning.

*"Online e-learning resources can have a wide reach and broad and diverse engagement, enabling project goals to be achieved at low cost. E-learning approaches can continue or be scaled up during times of global health crises, where face to face activities are suspended."*

*"The self-paced and on-demand feature of the course (asynchronous learning) ensured that the participants could complete the course requirements without disruption of their professional activities which is extremely important in the current COVID-19 crisis."*

## 3.

### **Addressing the digital divide in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic requires adaptive management and availability of online tools**

One of the main concerns during the transformation of training delivery format due to COVID-19 was ensuring the principle of leaving no one behind and how to address the digital divide. Two influential factors were identified during this review: adaptive management and existence of previous tools able to reach broader audiences.

- Adaptive management is crucial for testing and adopting alternative training tools that favour the achievement of learning objectives and inclusion of participants access and knowledge of digital tools.
- Previous experiences of training delivery using less traditional formats of training delivery (e.g., mobile-based or radio broadcasting formats) can speed up adoption of resources that help closing the digital divide in online training.

*"Unintended outcomes can be highly relevant, appreciated and rewarding. Adaptive management is crucial to address important niche areas for capacity support, such as the case for responding to demand-driven and tailored backstopping support and*

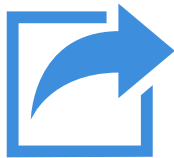


addressing digital divide by supporting online and blended learning solutions in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

“The app-based mobile-ready course delivery enhanced the learning experience through greater engagement, easy access of the courses, while ensuring that each participant has opportunity to interact Experts to support their learning journey.”

## Take-away messages

The rapid evidence assessment has led to the following take-away messages:



- Lessons are generalized but, in some instances, they are limited in applicability to all UNITAR programming and sometimes only applicable to more specific context. We recognize a weakness of lessons learned where e.g., lessons may not apply between learning and non-learning events or be limited to a specific national context.



- Lessons learned are very useful to record learning from experience. While personnel at UNITAR is rotating, lessons from past project implementation can help informing future projects, be they in a similar or different context. They hence present an excellent opportunity for organizational learning.



- Most of the lessons examined as part of the assessment highlight strengths and only a few lessons highlight weaknesses, though lessons learned can in general arise from both. In the findings, we tried to include both positive and not so positive lessons, but a full balance was not possible due to an imbalance in the database. This might be a common finding from self-evaluations given that it is more difficult to write about challenges and failures than about positive experiences. Independent evaluations include more lessons focusing on challenges. Nevertheless, we recognize the importance of encouraging colleagues to also develop lessons based on challenges as part of self-evaluations.



- Lessons can help inform drivers of success or challenges for future programming. This paper has highlighted four categories with fifteen sub-categories that can be used as drivers for successful future programming.

## The way forward

As next steps, the following actions are foreseen:



- A lessons learned forum will be organised to discuss findings from this assessment and invite colleagues from Programme Units to share and exchange.

- This paper series will be continued and future editions will focus on different categories of lessons learned.

- The Lessons Learned database and this assessment shall inform new programming development. To track use of it, a survey to programme management will be issued to measure progress on the following two indicators:

- Managers from projects confirming that lessons learned informed the design of future phases of those projects;
- Percentage of projects in which lessons learned inform the design of future phases of those projects.

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# Annexes

## Annex 1. Lessons compilation

Lessons	Category	Sub-category
Coaching and mentoring were key elements of the programme, augmenting the learning and providing Fellows support as they completed their assignments.	Training/Learning methodologies	Training follow-up
A self-paced and on-demand feature of the course ensured that the participants could complete the course requirements without disruption of their professional activities.	Training/Learning methodologies	Methodology and target audience
There is a continuous need to balance conceptual elements with technical, issue-specific actions to take.	Training/Learning methodologies	Content and structure
Coaches greatly enhanced participants' confidence in using newly acquired policy appraisal tools.	Training/Learning methodologies	Training follow-up
Strengthening local capacities in the long run relies on a more frequent exchange that goes beyond a limited amount of individual trainings sessions and shared curricula.	Training/Learning methodologies	Training follow-up
International mentors and resource persons contributed to global, regional, and national-level discourse. Their inclusion added multiple perspectives to Fellows' learning and brought various insights and expertise.	Training/Learning methodologies	Training expertise
Proposal writing and presentation skills are highly relevant to Fellows' needs.	Training/Learning methodologies	Content and structure
Experts familiar with the local situation contributed to contextualized learning and were able to relate programme content to the current local situation.	Training/Learning methodologies	Training expertise
Learning approaches structured around case-studies, mock Committee meetings and feedback from a panel offered "real life" learning opportunities.	Training/Learning methodologies	Methodology and target audience
Daily monitoring of progress of each of the participants ensure that they are aware of the support and guidance available to them throughout the course. This contributed to the high completion rate.	Training/Learning methodologies	Methodology and target audience
A train-the-trainer approach can achieve good multiplier effects for outreach.	Training/Learning methodologies	Training follow-up
Advance notification enables potential participants to prepare for the course and plan accordingly.	Training/Learning methodologies	Learning needs
More varied presentation techniques encourages learning. This includes increased use of visual aids, such as PowerPoint presentations and videos (Reformulated by PPME).	Training/Learning methodologies	Methodology and target audience
It is helpful to have in advance the training participants list. This enables a better awareness of the broad professional background and GIS knowledge level of participants to ensure that the training content takes into consideration the various learning needs.	Training/Learning methodologies	Learning needs
Most of the participants encountered some difficulty capturing the basic concepts of remote sensing in two days. Most of them recommended a bit more time to grasp remote sensing theories and application.	Training/Learning methodologies	Content and structure
Most of the participants are professionals working in governments and they are less comfortable with exams and more comfortable with group assignments or teamwork. The exams made them nervous and to a slight extent, shifted their focus from the course work to the preparation of the exam.	Training/Learning methodologies	Methodology and target audience
The courses are considered too theory intensive. Some participants thought that given the price paid for the course they were not getting enough in return in terms of content.	Training/Learning methodologies	Content and structure
More involvement of the trainer on discussion boards would encourage the contribution of the participants. Posting two or three times a week, reacting to the participants' contributions, would be good ways for the trainer to keep the discussions active.	Training/Learning methodologies	Training expertise

Some participants were approaching the training with very different expectations and from very different backgrounds. At first, it was challenging to create a collaborative work environment amongst participants.

Training/Learning methodologies Learning needs

One example of best practice was to ask the participants to develop an anti-corruption project/plan of their choice using a template prepared by UNITAR. This was done as a follow-up assignment to the first workshop and was then presented at the second workshop. From the results it was clear that the exercise was done with interest and was used by most as an opportunity to develop existing ideas while using newly acquired skills, and fostering new partnerships.

Training/Learning methodologies Training follow-up

The needs assessment confirmed that the majority of participants were interested in acquiring training skills and sharpening their communication and presentation skills. However, it then became clear that some of the participants were more likely to engage in other forms of outreach than training in their functions.

Training/Learning methodologies Learning needs

Building on the change management presentations, discussion focused on the need for more structured processes for stakeholder identification and any related role allocation. The added legitimacy and perceived results from such a focus were outlined as were methodologies participants could use to realize this, particularly with regard to transition modelling.

Training/Learning methodologies Content and structure

The methodology for the programme, blended so as to appeal to differing adult learning styles, included participant presentations, expert presentations, study tours, and small group-, paired- and individual exercises. In particular, the DiSC Personality Profile test, a behaviour assessment tool which was then linked to the role of participants as leaders in their communities, was commented on by participants as being both unique, and inspirational.

Training/Learning methodologies Methodology and target audience

Theory without practice is less effective. The evaluation concluded that theoretical content – although critical to establish the foundational know-how – needs to be complemented by practice. All informants insisted on this aspect. Practice helps build their muscle memory, their professional ethics and behaviour and integrate all the notions through repetition and real-life scenarios.

Training/Learning methodologies Content and structure

Duplication is not a problem so long as the delivery methodology is effective.

Training/Learning methodologies Methodology and target audience

Informants mentioned that some of the training materials were repetitive and redundant considering other trainings they received in their country of origin. However, according to interviews and group discussions, repetition is part of capacity building and learning as long as the methodology is effective. In this project, the methodology was said to be adapted to the context and effective.

Digital presence is efficient UN CC:Learn's and UNITAR's strong digital presence and experience of developing digital content has been core to the project's success and should be built on in future phases and in other projects.

Training/Learning methodologies Methodology and target audience; COVID-19

Online e-learning resources can have a wide reach and broad and diverse engagement, enabling project goals to be achieved at low cost. E-learning approaches can continue or be scaled up during times of global health crises, where face to face activities are suspended.

E-learning is an efficient mean to reach larger groups.

Institution-based. ToT initiatives that are institution-based are likely to produce more enduring results, as trained trainers of learning centres (whether they are staff or consultants) are more likely to have training opportunities in the medium to long term. While an institutional basis for ToT is a necessary condition, it is not sufficient, however.

Training/Learning methodologies Learning needs

Integrating flexible mechanisms such as backstopping activities that can react to local demands, particularly in rapidly changing environments such as the Pacific Islands, is supportive of successful project implementation.	Training/Learning methodologies	Methodology and target audience
Master trainers make a difference as key drivers of knowledge and change in peace and reconciliation if given the adequate tools and incentives	Training/Learning methodologies	Training expertise
The potential role of youth as agents in peace and reconciliation is enhanced if there is a combination of dynamic capacity building approaches, experiential learning in context and linkages to networks that catalyze leadership.	Training/Learning methodologies	Methodology and target audience
Working with youth in rural and urban settings requires adapted materials and methods that help put knowledge in context and considers the differences across audiences in terms of gender, age, culture and social norms	Training/Learning methodologies	Methodology and target audience
Virtual and distance learning mechanisms are effective if seen as complementary to the in-person methods, and if enough guidance is provided to the trainees and organizations to apply best practices in facilitation to make this as closely experiential, relational and sensitive as the face-to-face methods	Training/Learning methodologies	Methodology and target audience
Online training methodologies have been fully embraced as an effective methodology given the current COVID-19 pandemic.	Training/Learning methodologies	Methodology and target audience; COVID-19
While online training delivery is a viable approach, the participants do have preferences.	Training/Learning methodologies	Training expertise
The FAO/UNITAR approach of delivering mentor-facilitated training with interaction with fellow learners and receiving a Certificate of Participation is an appealing format for the participants		
Online communication and interaction with the participants on a regular basis (expert-to-participant and peer-to-peer) provided invaluable access to practical information on the course theme and a community of practice. This also greatly expanded the visibility of FAO and UNITAR in the region.	Training/Learning methodologies	Methodology and target audience; training follow-up
The flexibility (i.e. no scheduling constraints) of the course ensured that the participants could participate at any time or review the course materials whenever needed.	Training/Learning methodologies	Learning needs
Using innovative tools such as eLearning have been demonstrated as an effective and efficient approach to share knowledge and strengthen networking of like-minded officials from different countries and government ministries.	Training/Learning methodologies	Methodology and target audience
Face-to-face training delivery is still the preferred training methodology, but blended training (face-to-face and online training) has been increasingly accepted based on the survey results.	Training/Learning methodologies	Methodology and target audience
The availability of the course across different countries and the flexibility accorded to the participants ensured that the online training can be offered to a greater number of participants which they can follow at their own pace. 13 of the 17 countries that participated in the course were Least Developed countries in Sub-Saharan Africa where electricity and internet connection is unreliable.	Training/Learning methodologies	Learning needs
The self-paced and on-demand feature of the courses (asynchronous learning) ensured that the participants could follow the programme without disruption of their professional activities. The learning tools and daily monitoring of progress allowed the learners to achieve the weekly milestones in their learning journey and to access support as and when needed.	Training/Learning methodologies	Methodology and target audience; training follow-up
In spite of the global lockdown and restricted movement brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, the training methodologies and use of information and communication technologies allowed the beneficiaries uninterrupted access to quality training and to connect and learn from peers and experts.	Training/Learning methodologies	Methodology and target audience; COVID-19

**VISITING HIROSHIMA INSPIRED PARTICIPANTS AND GAVE THEM HOPE FOR IRAQ'S RECOVERY**

A major component of the programme's third international workshop, held in Hiroshima, is exposing Participants to the story of Hiroshima's atomic bombing and subsequent reconstruction and recovery. Many Participants remarked on the emotional impact of spending time learning about the horrors of Hiroshima's destruction in the Peace Memorial Museum, then stepping back out into the verdant, beautiful Peace Park and seeing the transformation Hiroshima accomplished. Alongside this simple visual impact, UNITAR Staff and Resource Persons also gave a lecture on Japan's post-war reconstruction, as well as a guided tour of the Park. Although the situations of post-war Japan and current Iraq have significant differences, seeing Hiroshima's transformation with their own eyes inspires Participants to continue working to give their country a bright future.

Training/Learning Methodology and target audience methodologies

**THE SHARING OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT RESULTS POSITIVELY IMPACTED THE PROGRAMME**

The programme always undertakes a Needs Assessment with participants following their acceptance to a programme. The assessment results help determine the instructional design of the programme; they are also shared with Resource Persons for further tailoring the content to the participants learning needs.

Training/Learning Learning needs methodologies

All the participants undertook an initial needs assessment questionnaire regarding the content of the programme during the orientation workshop in Baghdad.

An anonymized summary of the needs assessment results was shared with participants during workshop and was addressed during presentations and practical exercises sessions. participants indicated that exposure to these results allowed them to identify issues they all faced in their work.

The needs assessment results indicated that participants wished for more focused training around key elements of entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, communication techniques and co-founding team. The assessment data showed that more than half (62%) of the participants have "no knowledge" to "some knowledge" on key elements of entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship, which were addressed during workshop-II. Furthermore, 92% participants mentioned that effective communication is relevant to their current role, while 85% participants mentioned that knowledge and skill around developing budgets will benefit them. To address the gap in participants' knowledge of entrepreneurship, introductory sessions were incorporated in the programme to outline the concepts of entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship, as well sessions examining communication techniques and teambuilding and teamwork.

**BUSINESS PROPOSAL WRITING AND PRESENTATION SKILLS ARE HIGHLY RELEVANT TO PARTICIPANTS' NEEDS**

Both UNITAR Staff and the Iraqi participants understood the skill level and preparation necessary for writing and pitching effective business proposals to donors and investors. Elements of effective, comprehensive proposals, such as the results of an objective Needs Assessments, a sound budget, and detailed risk mitigation and monitoring and evaluation sections, were emphasized throughout the programme. Participants also honed their presentation skills through multiple opportunities to present their assessment results and project

Training/Learning Content and structure methodologies



proposals, along with presentations related to group exercises undertaken during workshops. Constructive comments on presentation style were always part of the feedback from UNITAR Staff and Resource Persons.

**COACHING AND MENTORING WAS A KEY ELEMENT OF FACILITATING PARTICIPANTS LEARNING**

Training/Learning methodologies Training follow-up

Coaching and mentorship is a key element of this programme, augmenting the learning and providing Participants support as they complete their assignments. Volunteering their time, insight, and experience, Coaches and Mentors are an important element of the programme and an invaluable asset to the timely delivery and quality of the programme. To promote South-South cooperation, international Mentors from the UNITAR Hiroshima Afghanistan Programme were introduced to the new Participants in close coordination with the UNITAR Juba-based Coaches, providing necessary mentorship to the Participants on a regular basis. Participants placed into five separate coaching and mentorship groups allowed Mentors to provide focused, one-to-one and critical insights on assignments and hold need-based online meetings. Most of the correspondence between Participants, Mentors, and Coaches took place through email exchanges. In evaluations, sharing knowledge, experiences, and ideas attributed to an enriched learning experience and mentorship. UNITAR will explore the possibility of organizing periodic face-to-face sessions between local Mentors and new Participants in the UNITAR Juba Office to establish a good rapport between Mentors and Participants in future iterations of the programme.

**ONLINE TRAINING CREATES NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY TO CONNECT AND LEARN**

Training/Learning methodologies Methodology and target audience; COVID-19

The use of online training tools and methodologies such as, online webinar was out of necessity to deliver our commitment to the programme and our participants. However it turned very useful during large-scale shutdown and quarantine. It allows for learning from the comforts of one’s home without any travel. The programme will make efforts to utilise such methodologies and new technologies to connect participants in the future and to maximize the number of beneficiaries without impacting the quality of the training delivered by adhering to well established guidelines for effective online training delivery.

SHARING OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Training/Learning methodologies Learning needs

The programme undertakes a learning needs assessment with Participants following their final selection. These assessments influence the instructional design processes of the Division and are shared with Resource Persons and UNITAR Staff for constructive feedback on designing needs-based learning modules. Beginning with this Programme, an anonymized summary of the needs assessment results was shared with Participants through the orientation workshop and addressed during presentations and practical exercises sessions. Participants indicated that exposure to these results allowed them to identify common issues amongst themselves. The results also functioned as discussion points when examining lessons learned and change management.

The results of the learning needs assessment indicated the need for more focused training on the project management cycle. The data showed that while 68% of Participants have a role related to project management, including project proposal writing, developing action plans, and monitoring and evaluation, 77% Participants reported that they had no formal training in the areas of project management, which is negatively affecting their work performance and the overall services delivered to the people of South Sudan.

To fill the gap, introductory sessions were incorporated to outline the concepts of the project management cycle and sessions examining Organizational Needs Assessment, in order to provide all Participants with a baseline knowledge. Additional sessions were delivered on proposal writing and action plan development. With regard to the communication and leadership aspects of

the programme, the assessment showed that while the Participants were, in general, quite comfortable within their field and/or communities, there was a need for further training around effective communication, risk mitigation, conflict identification, and conflict resolution.

The multi-stakeholder nature of the workshops helped to discuss some of the important intergovernmental coordination topics that can help improve data availability and dissemination at low cost

Achieving women empowerment in Fellowship cohorts requires a more strategic approach beyond requesting national partners to select more female candidates.

Gender balance among participants enriched the quality of workshops and female fellows were often vocal in sharing their experiences.

The majority of female Fellows were vocal in sharing their experiences, which contributed to constructive discussion and informative debate within the group.

Patriarchy and cultural norms make women’s participation in DRR planning difficult: While it was indicated by participants that the number of men in DRR related positions outweighs that of females, there was also an acknowledgement that women tend to “overcommit” to families and churches. A key line of discussion that developed during the programme was for this commitment to in-fact be channelled toward increasing DRR related education and best-practice like sharing of DRR related preparedness information at church events; at PTA events; and through family connections.

Training/Learning methodologies Learning needs

Gender inclusivity Strategy and assessment

Gender inclusivity Enriching discussions

Gender inclusivity Enriching discussions

Gender inclusivity Strategy and assessment

<p>Importance of gender analysis to ensure gender mainstreaming. A thorough gender assessment is important to undertake as part of the needs assessment and analysis to ensure that gender mainstreaming in project design is relevant and adequate and can be realistically delivered throughout project implementation.</p>	<p>Gender inclusivity</p>	<p>Strategy and assessment</p>
<p>GENDER EQUALITY HAD A POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON THE GROUP DYNAMIC</p>	<p>Gender inclusivity</p>	<p>Enriching discussions; Participant's attitude</p>
<p>One of the key characteristics of the programme was the gender ratio among participants, which is closely related to the Sustainable Development Goal 5. UNITAR took concrete steps to improve the gender balance in the 2019 cycle of the programme compared to the 2018 cycle. Nine (9) out of sixteen (16) of the 2019 programme participants were women, coming from various public sector, private sector, academic institutions, and civil society organizations. The majority of female participants were highly educated, competent, and vocal in sharing their experiences and opinions, which contributed to constructive discussion and informative debate within the group. Occasionally participants were more reserved due to a lack of confidence in their English ability, but this issue affected participants of both genders. In the future, UNITAR will make sure to nurture participants' confidence along with their knowledge and skills.</p>		
<p>Gender balance among participants enriched the quality of workshops by women and men's active engagement and input in practical exercises, group discussions, and teamwork. It is observed by Staff that male participants respected their female counterparts' strength and accepted women's current and potential contributions to the areas of entrepreneurship, leadership, and development in Iraq. To increase the number of skilled female leaders who can have a positive impact on Iraqi society.</p>		
<p>GENDER EQUALITY HAD A POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON THE GROUP DYNAMIC</p>	<p>Gender inclusivity</p>	<p>Enriching discussions; Participant's attitude</p>
<p>One of the notable characteristics of the programme was the gender ratio among Participants. Almost half of the 2019 Programme Participants were women, who came from various public sector, private sector, academic institutions, and civil society organizations. Gender balance among Participants enriched the quality of workshops through women's active engagement and input in practical exercises, group discussions, and teamwork. Gender balance also closely related to the Sustainable Development Goal 5, Gender Equality. It is observed by the Coaches and Staff that male Participants respected their female counterparts' strength and accepted women's current and potential contributions to the areas of entrepreneurship, leadership, and development in South Sudan. Female Participants were often vocal in sharing their experiences and opinions, which contributed to constructive discussion and informative debate within the group.</p>		
<p>The COVID-19 pandemic did not negatively impact any stage of the project implementation. It has rather strengthened the utility of online training as a means to deliver capacity building activities to a wider audience in a flexible, measurable, and cost-effective manner</p>		
<p>COVID-19</p>	<p>Efficiency</p>	
<p>The self-paced and on-demand feature of the course (asynchronous learning) ensured that the participants could complete the course requirements without disruption of their professional activities which is extremely important in the current COVID-19 crisis.</p>		
<p>COVID-19</p>	<p>Achievement of learning objectives</p>	

THE OUTBREAK OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES CAN POTENTIALLY DELAY THE IMPLEMENTATION AND HARM THE HEALTH OF PARTICIPANTS

COVID-19

Format delivery and methodologies

The outbreak of infectious diseases such as Malaria and Typhoid, which are very common disease in many parts of South Sudan and are affecting the health of so many people including the programme Participants. This is not limited to the in-country workshops and events but also international workshops, which requires travel and stay in another country. Some countries have very stringent infectious disease control procedures, that If a Participant is infected and remain asymptomatic for a certain of period time, could potential be barred during entry or exit to and from a country, should the Participant develops fever or exhibits other symptoms. Similarly, the outbreak of Ebola caused serious concerns and fear among the programme Participants. In addition, the COVID-19 outbreak which has started at the end of 2019 and continued through March 2020, has caused serious health and socio-economic impacts around the world. While there is no known cases of COVID-19 in South Sudan so far, however the subsequent quaranteens put in place and restriction on international travel and affected our face-to-face activities in South Sudan. Considering such a situation, the future programme will develop and test alternative implementation methodologies including webinars, and e-learning courses.

Conducting a course via e-Learning resulted in a significant reduction of the cost per participant and the carbon footprint of a widely dispersed audience compared with traditional face-to-face training. Besides, face-to-face training delivery is not a practical option in the current circumstances.

COVID-19

Efficiency

Access to knowledge and skills development delivered online resulted is a significant reduction of the cost per participant and the carbon footprint of a widely dispersed learners compared with traditional face-to-face training. As a result, the programme was able to accommodate greater number of beneficiaries. The app-based mobile-ready course delivery enhanced the learning experience through greater engagement, easy access of the courses, while ensuring that each participant has opportunity to interact Experts to support their learning journey.

COVID-19

Efficiency; Format delivery and methodologies

THE FLUID AND CHANGING HEALTH, POLITICAL AND SECURITY SITUATION IN IRAQ AND THE WORLD

COVID-19

Achievement of learning objectives

During the implementation phase of the programme, a number of challenges arose such as, total shutdown and curfew in Iraq which coincided with the timeline of Workshop-II (Oct 2019), and the global COVID-19 virus pandemic outbreak (Mar 2020) during workshop-IV. These challenges while enormous and beyond the control of the programme, however the programme managed and overcome the negative impacts of such events by resourceful solutions, collaboration and adaptability of the Participants. For instance, the workshop-IV as the final event of the 2019 programme was conducted online to eliminate the health risks if participants were to gather. Robust engagement and communication with participant allowed for the smooth implementation and identifying alternative solutions. Participants showed high level of commitment through completing assignments and video recording their Pitches which were submitted on time as the final assignment.

Although the programme supports individual, and by extension, institutional transformation, no tracking of its output to outcome to impact has been undertaken. Tracking is essential for learning-related programming.

Tracking outcomes and impact

and Definition and follow-up of causal links

<p>Effective management of documentation, information and data is critical to track progress in activity-driven projects. The lack of systematic documentation for all activations and the unclear identification of the actual users of the Service's deliverables make tracking the Service's effects challenging.</p>	<p>Tracking outcomes and impact</p>	<p>and</p>	<p>Data collection and management</p>
<p>Higher-level outcomes and impacts related to capacity development and behavioral change take a long time to deliver and to gather evidence for.</p>	<p>Tracking outcomes and impact</p>	<p>and</p>	<p>Measurement of behavioural change</p>
<p>Measuring attitude and behaviour change is important in capacity building projects. UNITAR showed innovation by wanting to measure the behavioural change in the trained FPU's and PCCs. It should be reinforced and find the means to improve the data collection process so it can then be replicated to other projects.</p>	<p>Tracking outcomes and impact</p>	<p>and</p>	<p>Measurement of behavioural change</p>
<p>A well-articulated Theory of Change can ensure Partner engagement and project success UN CC:Learn's partners are committed to the success of the project and attribute their own success to its support. There are opportunities to strengthen this engagement through clarifying purpose and methodology through developing a well-articulated agile Theory of Change.</p>	<p>Tracking outcomes and impact</p>	<p>and</p>	<p>Definition and follow-up of causal links; project cycle and timeframe</p>
<p>Projects with ambitious global goals can achieve significant reach when designed to build local partnerships and to build capacity to empower local action, using methodologies developed to mobilize local engagement and access or leverage local resources. Implementing a sizeable project without a clear evidence based ToC creates lack of clarity, lack of focus and inefficiencies and appears to be contributing to less than optimal GP collaboration. Achievement of a project goal seeking global change through capacity building will never be possible in a 4 year project cycle. Projects of such ambition should be established against at least a 10 year timeframe, with systematic processes for evidence gathering, evaluation, and amendments to ensure effective progress towards the goal.</p>			
<p>A good ToC will include regular review of risks and assumptions, plan for piloting and innovation and build evidence of what works and what doesn't, in order to strengthen the project with every subsequent stage.</p>			
<p>Needs assessments and medium to long-term engagement. Successful ToT initiatives take time and require a careful and thorough assessment of needs and medium to long-term engagement in which capacities of learning centres can be developed through training, mentoring and coaching strategies, as well as through regular monitoring and follow-up before disengagement of the ToT service provider. The timing of disengagement needs to be carefully considered and discussed by the service provider and the beneficiary: disengagement too early could compromise impact and sustainability; disengagement too late could lead to reliance on the service provider and long-term inefficiencies in the ToT strategy for the beneficiary.</p>	<p>Tracking outcomes and impact</p>	<p>and</p>	<p>Project cycle and timeframe</p>
<p>Planning for collateral outcomes in training events: When people are brought together for a training event, there will always be 'collateral' benefit that comes through participants making contact and sharing their ideas and experiences with others. The theory around "boundary objects" can help better understand and plan for these less visible but important knowledge-sharing processes to happen and be maintained</p>	<p>Tracking outcomes and impact</p>	<p>and</p>	<p>Definition and follow-up of causal links</p>
<p>Developing and using a theory of change: Including a theory of change in a project document and revisiting it during the mid-term and final evaluations is generally seen as good practice. The lesson</p>	<p>Tracking outcomes and impact</p>	<p>and</p>	<p>Definition and follow-up of causal links</p>

is that such a use of theory of change should be considered in other projects.

Coherence and alignment between the log frame and ToC is key for a clear pathway to impact.

UNITAR's impact is evident through informal and unexpected channels such as the sharing of knowledge by participants through personal networks

Importance of defining realistic, measurable results. While project log frames are dynamic instruments and may be subject to review and modification, it is important that project metrics have means of verification and can be measured within the project's resource constraints.

Unintended outcomes can be highly relevant, appreciated and rewarding. Adaptive management is crucial to address important niche areas for capacity support, such as the case for responding to demand-driven and tailored backstopping support and addressing digital divide by supporting online and blended learning solutions in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tracking outcomes and impact

and Definition and follow-up of causal links

Tracking outcomes and impact

and Measurement of behavioural change

Tracking outcomes and impact

and Definition and follow-up of causal links; data collection and management

Tracking outcomes and impact

and Definition and follow-up of causal links; COVID-19