

ILLUME

Q U A R T E R L Y

April - 2006

Human Resource Development Network

Quality Standards in Training



Editorial

Capacity building is one of the dominant themes in the development world, echoed repeatedly in development work at all levels from grassroots community development to the strategic development discussions at the highest level of policy making in government and donor organizations. This is understandable because most human development interventions, in the end, are aimed at 'enabling people' to grow, prosper and lead fulfilling lives. But how do you develop the capacity of say a community, an organization or an individual? Surely there are more than one ways of doing this but 'training' is usually the answer.

Given the importance of training in capacity building, everyone from practitioners to the organizational heads is calling for increased attention to enhancing the quality and effectiveness of training. So far, however, the rhetoric seems ahead of work. Human Resource Development Network (HRDN) tried to advance this work by initiating the development of quality standards for NGO training in Pakistan.

This issue of ILLUME features Quality Standards for Management and Skill Enhancement Training in the Nonprofit Development sector developed by HRDN, an interview with Azhar Saeed on quality issues in training and significance of quality standards and an exciting commentary from Ramiz Allawala who juxtaposes Pakistani values against the principals of Western management.

In addition to other regular features of ILLUME, a brief report on the Conference on Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation is also part of this issue.

Please send us your feedback and ideas at editorillume@hrdn.net

Happy reading!!!

Syeda Mujeeba Batool



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Quality Standards for Management and Skill Enhancement Training in the Nonprofit Development Sector

Developed By HRDN

Background and Rationale

Capacity building through Training in nonprofit development management is fast emerging as a distinct profession within the nonprofit development sector. Centrality of human resource development to social change places human resource development professionals at the heart of almost all social development efforts. From grassroots communities to boardrooms of nonprofit development organisations, HRD professionals more commonly identified as trainers are involved in helping their respective clients acquire new skills and competencies to become more effective in their work.

Within a professional discipline, there is a collective responsibility to maintain and improve standards of professional practice. One of the hallmarks of the professional status is that the profession sets standards with the involvement of key stakeholders and monitors the same through a credible and transparent mechanism.

Since no agreed upon standards of professional HRD practice exist in the nonprofit development sector of Pakistan, Human Resource Development Network has decided to initiate the process of developing the same through a broad based consultative process with HRD professionals, capacity building and training organisations and CSO leadership. Being perhaps the only representative body of HRD professionals within the nonprofit development sector of

Within a professional discipline, there is a collective responsibility to maintain and improve standards of professional practice. One of the hallmarks of the professional status is that the profession sets standards with the involvement of key stakeholders and monitors the same through a credible and transparent mechanism.

Pakistan, HRDN is not only obliged to take this initiative but also uniquely positioned to take it to fruition.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a set of minimum standards in relation to management development and skill enhancement training in the nonprofit development sector of Pakistan. The standards cover areas such as selection of participants and their entry into the programme, aims and objectives of training, contents, delivery, assessment of training outcomes and certification. These standards and their accompanying criteria are reference points against which actual programme delivery and outcomes can be evaluated.

Premise

These standards are for the "Training Programmes" covering the entire Training Cycle. While developing these standards, Trainers and Training Organizations have been considered as the primary users of this

document. However, Trainees and the management of client organizations may also find these helpful in managing their in-house training programmes as well as in selection of appropriate training programmes for their staff.

The Standards

Standards are arranged under three key areas: Pre Training, During Training and After Training.

Each Standard defines a required quality and is accompanied by one or more brief statements about the underlying principle or philosophy. Under each standard there is a list of criteria, which are the key performance attributes, contributing to the standard.

1. PRE-TRAINING

Standard 1.1

The aims, objectives and outcomes of the training programme are clearly documented.

Why?

- To help prospective clients fully understand what to expect from the training programme
- To increase the likelihood of attracting the most relevant participants
- To provide the basis for assessing the outcomes of training programme

Criteria

- a) The aims, objectives and intended learning outcomes of the training programme are described in clear

and specific terms;

- b) The documented aims, objectives and learning outcomes are readily accessible to prospective trainees, their organisations and other stakeholders.

Standard 1.2

Criteria for the selection of participants are spelled out.

Why?

- To ensure that only the relevant and suitably qualified candidates apply
- To help the management of client organizations nominate suitable candidates
- To help Trainers select relevant and suitably qualified candidates

Standards are arranged under three key areas: Pre Training, During Training and After Training.

Each Standard defines a required quality and is accompanied by one or more brief statements about the underlying principle or philosophy. Under each standard there is a list of criteria, which are the key performance attributes, contributing to the standard.

Criteria

- a) The minimum education, language proficiency and skills required in participants to optimally benefit from the training programme are described in clear and specific terms.
- b) It has been documented as to who could most benefit from the

programme and how.

- c) The above information is shared with potential participants and their organisations.

Standard 1.3

While accepting nominations in the training programme, adherence to selection criteria is ensured.

Why?

- To ensure participation of only those candidates who could optimally benefit from the programme

Criteria

- a) Application forms solicit information needed to ascertain that the applicants fulfill the selection criteria
- b) Selection criteria is not compromised just to fill places to reach the target total or for other considerations

Standard 1.4

Where applicable, efforts are made to prime the potential participants before training to ensure optimal utilization of training time.

Why?

- In most cases, appropriate pre-training home work assignments can greatly enhance participants learning from the training programme.

Criteria

- a) Suitable reading materials are mailed out to the participants well in advance to help the participants get a

head start and as a result maximize learning in the programme.

- b) If appropriate, other homework in the form of individual exercises, short research assignments etc are given in advance.

Standard 1.5

Information regarding all logistics is clearly documented and made available to all concerned.

Why?

- It is participants' right to get complete information about the logistical arrangements and related costs including travel, stay, food, timings, weather etc. This will help ensure that the participants don't come across any last minutes surprises and also come well prepared in terms of clothing, medicines and other such items of personal use and the probability of any untoward situation in minimized.

Criteria

- a) Information about training fee, discount and refund policy is documented and included in the training announcement brochure
- b) Information about training Timings, board and lodging arrangements, transport assistance and other logistics is documented and made available to all concerned.

Standard 1.6

Contents of Training programme are in line with the announced purpose, objectives and outcomes of the training.

Why?

- To minimize inclusion of irrelevant and redundant activities and materials in the training programme.

Criteria

- The training plan and training materials are developed in a way that each activity and/or reading material directly contributes to one or more training objectives/outcomes.
- Activities in the training plan are organized in a logical learning sequence e.g. starting from the basics and then moving to more complex topics step by step.

Standard 1.7

Venue of training is selected carefully to ensure best possible learning environment

Criteria

While selecting the training venue adequate attention is paid to factors like accessibility, cost-effectiveness, noise level, furnishing and space for breakout activities etc.

Standard 1.8

Accurate and sufficient information about the facilitators and resource persons is shared with prospective participants in advance;

Why?

- So that the prospective participants know the qualifications, experience and expertise of the resource persons in

advance and have realistic expectations.

Criteria

- Sufficient and accurate information about the resource persons is included in the training announcement. This should include resource persons' education, relevant experience, areas of specialization, number of similar training conducted and any other relevant information which may prospective participants make an informed choice.

2. DURING TRAINING**Standard 2.1**

Training objectives, intended outcomes and training plan are sufficiently explained to the participants at the start of the training.

Why?

- So that every one knows what to expect.

Criteria

Facilitator explains the objectives and intended outcomes of the training programme. S/he should also broadly describe the main topics to be covered and approximate timings and training methodology for each topic.

Standard 2.2

Participants are introduced to one another and necessary information about logistics and training norms is shared with the participants at the start of the training programme.

Why?

- To create an enabling environment for learning and minimize disruptions.

Criteria

- a) Information about the daily starting and ending timings, time and duration of lunch and tea breaks and information about other logistics like relevant facilities in and outside the venue are shared with the participants.
- b) Training norms about punctuality, use of cell phones, listening and sharing etc are developed.
- c) Participants are given opportunity to get introduced to one another so that they start coming together as a group and feel comfortable with each other.

Standard 2.3

Participants are given the opportunity to share their expectations

Why?

- So as to ensure that participants don't have very divergent or unrealistic expectations

Criteria

Participants are requested to share their expectations from the training at the start of the training programme. In case it turns out that one or more participants have some unrealistic expectations not likely to be fulfilled from the training the facilitator makes it clear in the beginning.

Standard 2.4

Training materials used during the training are either those specifically developed by the resource persons themselves or otherwise due acknowledgement is given to the source.

Why?

- To protect the intellectual property right of individuals and organizations and minimize the use of unacknowledged materials.

Criteria

- a) Training Materials like readings, presentations, audios and videos etc are either developed specifically for the training programme or the resource person has acquired legitimate right to use them.
- b) In cases where such materials developed by others are used, due acknowledgment to the source is made.

Standard 2.4

All participants are given equal opportunity to participate and learn.

Why?

- No one is deprived of learning from the training programme on the basis of sex, age, academic background, personality traits, facilitators' personal liking or disliking or any other reason.

Criteria

- a) Facilitators consciously make an effort to ensure that all participants e

are given equal opportunities to participate and learn.

- b) It is ensured that all participants get good quality copies of training materials, intended for distribution, and no one is left out.

Standard 2.5

Participants' feedback is solicited during the training.

Why?

- To make small improvements during the training to make the programme more relevant and useful for the participants.

Criteria

- a) Participants' feedback is solicited in a structured manner at the end of each session or at least at the end of each day.
- b) Facilitators make a sincere effort to improvise the remaining part of the training on the basis of this feedback.

3. POST-TRAINING

Standard 3.1

Training is comprehensively evaluated at the end.

Why?

- To assess as to what extent the training objectives and the intended outcomes were achieved and what needs to be done differently to make it more effective in future.

Criteria

- The difference in the knowledge, skills and (if possible) attitudes of participants, before and after training is assessed.

Standard 3.2

Where applicable and feasible, efforts are made to assess the impact of training on the performance of the participants after a certain period.

Why?

- The real test of the effectiveness of a training programme lies in assessing the change that it brings in participants' performance.

Criteria

- a) Some follow up mechanism for measuring the impact of the training programme on participants' performance is developed and is implemented.
- b) The learning from this follow up assessment is used to improve future training programmes.

Interview with Azhar Saeed

By: Syeda Mujeeba Batool

Interview

HRDN recently developed Quality Standards for Training which are now available on its website. These standards were developed during the period when Mr. Azhar Saeed was heading the organization as Executive Director. In the following interview, he has shared his views on a range of issues relevant to training as well as the need and significance of Quality Standards.

ILLUME: *What is the role of professional training in general?*

Azhar Saeed: Professional training is a booming business all over the world. In any given year, organizations spend billions of dollars on training their staff, albeit mostly reluctantly. This is so because despite development of extremely sophisticated models which purport to precisely measure the impact of training, or return on investment (ROI) in corporate parlance, contribution of training towards improving organizational performance remains shrouded by suspicion. On one hand training is seen as an important way of improving skills and motivation of staff, on the other managers are seldom sure of whether and to what extent these objectives are actually achieved.

However, the quantum and speed of change that the organizations have to cope with in order to survive and thrive in today's world, make it absolutely crucial for them to ensure that their staff learns and unlearns continuously and as fast as possible.



Azhar Saeed has two university degrees – an MBA from LUMS and a B.Sc. Engineering from UET – and work experience of about 18 years in both public and private sectors. In his career, he has worked as program and project manager, chief executive, technical advisor and freelance management consultant with local and international development organizations. His training and consulting expertise includes NGO governance, public private partnership, human resource management, micro enterprise development, leadership, project management, result based management and organizational development. He can be reached at azharsaeed50@hotmail.com

Training despite its pitfalls is one way of making that happen.

ILLUME: *Are you satisfied with the quality of training in Pakistan?*

Azhar Saeed: Unfortunately there is so much diversity and difference in trainings being conducted at different levels and in different sectors that it is impossible to make an informed guess. For instance take the example of corporate sector where companies are usually extremely cost conscious. Perhaps in today's fiercely competitive business environment, they can not afford to be otherwise. They have to do their best to maximize the value for money they spend in training. A corporate manager will only invest in training when s/he is reasonably sure that the training will produce real, tangible results in terms of

enhanced staff skills or motivation or both. Therefore corporate sector organizations go to great lengths to identify real training needs of staff, select the right trainer, scrutinize the training contents and methodology and evaluate its effectiveness in essence ensure quality. Come to the nonprofit development sector commonly known as the NGO sector - and you find that this emphasis on quality is either missing or not being given sufficient attention.

ILLUME: *Why?*

Azhar Saeed: I wish the answer were as simple as your question. There are a number of issues which reinforce one another and complicate the challenge of quality assurance in training in the NGO sector. First is the issue of well known 'measurability problem'. Given the nature of development work which more often than not involves intangible outcomes and results that cannot be directly attributed to the work of a certain NGO, it is much more difficult to gauge the performance of an NGO as compared to that of a commercial company. Now when the performance of an organization is itself elusive, tracking the impact of a certain training on its performance becomes even more troublesome.

Second we need to understand the composition of the NGO training market. It comprises training seekers or users of training service, training providers and training financiers. It is usually junior to mid level staff of NGOs who are 'users' of this service; senior level managers and those in leadership positions rarely have the time and/or willingness to attend a training program especially if it is being conducted

within the country!

As for providers, a significant proportion of training is provided by freelance trainers or management consultants who come in all colors and shades. While I do not deny that there are some very good, experienced, knowledgeable and technically solid trainers in the market, a huge number of trainers are not up to the mark.

ILLUME: *And why is that so?*

Azhar Saeed: I learnt in my MBA that for every business there are some entry barriers. If you want to get into, say, cement manufacturing, you will need lots of capital, sophisticated technology, technical staff, suitable plant site, raw material quarries and so on. These are the entry barriers of this business because you will have to cross these barriers to start the business. Now what do you think are the entry barriers to get into training? You might say purpose built facility, in depth experience and knowledge of the subject, understanding of instructional system design and adult learning, marketing expertise and may be more. I would say yes, it is great if you have all of these but you can do even without. All you need to do is to sit on your computer, write a training invitation and email it to thousands of NGOs



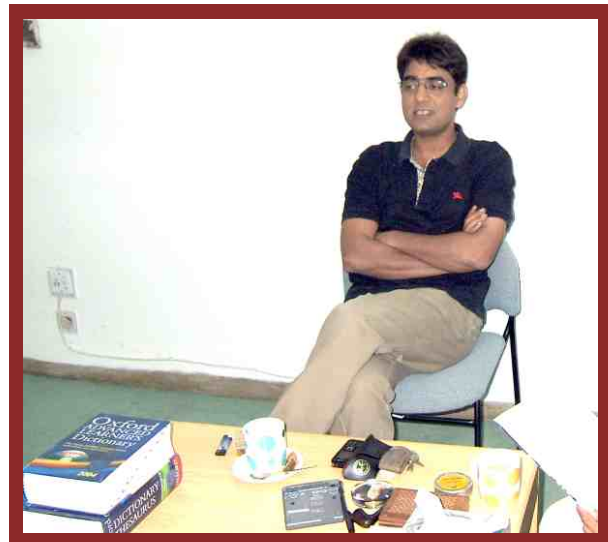
in the country and get a hotel booked for the event. If you get enough participants, you are in the game. Then designing and developing the training materials is not a big deal either. You can find readings and articles and even online books on almost any topic on the World Wide Web. So download lots of materials from the internet, may be change the titles and references and get these materials photocopied for your unsuspecting participants and then conduct the training. It is as easy as that. Now if you yourself do not have sufficient training experience and a solid grounding in the subject, you will of course deliver a poor quality training, but by then wouldn't it be too late for the parties involved to do anything?

You see this is the ease of becoming a trainer that makes training business susceptible to the invasion of all kinds of trainers. In a way this is good because people can enter into this profession without serious hurdles and then learn gradually and improve. But the downside is that they do enough damage during their cruise on the learning curve, especially in the initial stages.

ILLUME: *Well I guess that explains the providers' part. Now going back to our earlier discussion, you have so far explained two of the three key players in the NGO training market. Tell us about the third one.*

Azhar Saeed: Third category of key players in NGO training comprises those who foot the bill. In nine out of ten cases, it is neither the trainee nor his/her organization which pay the cost of training. Instead the cost is directly or indirectly paid from the project funds made available to the organization by one or the other development donor. Now

the funders are typically far removed from where the action is. In addition, a donor organization is typically handling tens or sometimes even hundreds of grantee organizations and therefore it can not ensure that every single training conducted with its donation measures up to the highest quality standards. Similarly NGOs can not do it themselves because they usually do not have the technical capacity needed to monitor the whole training process. In the end, bulk of the burden of ensuring quality rests on the shoulders of the training provider.



ILLUME: *So how will Quality Standards help training providers improve the quality of their training?*

Azhar Saeed: I believe that Quality Standards is HRDN's humble contribution towards helping the training providers and well as the users of trainings to benchmark quality. However please note that standards are not meant so much for the top of the line trainers who already excel in their profession. They may not find the standards sufficiently demanding. But for starters these can help them understand as to what

needs to be done at each stage of the training process to ensure that at least minimum quality is maintained.

Take for instance Standard 1.1 which says "The aims, objectives and outcomes of the training program are clearly documented". This is a very simple standard and one might even say that it is superfluous because who would even think of announcing a training program without a clear statement of its purpose and objectives. But I cant tell how often I come across training announcements in which the purpose of training is extremely vague and one can not figure out as to what the participants would be able to do after attending the training. Similarly you can take each standard one by one and you will see that these provide simple guidelines which need to be adhered to at each stage of the training process.

Besides the standards can also help those who wish to evaluate a training by monitoring whether these standards are being met or not.

ILLUME: *How were these standards developed?*

Azhar Saeed: These Quality Standards were developed through a broad based consultative process. The draft you now find on the HRDN's website has gone through several iterations in roundtable discussions with groups of trainers and capacity building experts. These consultations were held during 2005.

ILLUME: *What next? Where do we go from here?*

Azhar Saeed: Quality Standards won't work in vacuum. On upstream you need to get together a core group of very strong and experienced trainers as well as a few representatives of other key stakeholders to periodically review and update these standards. On downstream you need to get a buy in from the trainers at large, the NGOs who use training services and donor organizations. Moreover you will also need to set up some technical assistance program to help trainers adopt these standards. For the time being it would be better to encourage people for voluntary adoption of standards. At some later stage, when you have reached a critical mass, it might be even possible to create a certification regime in training based on these standards.

Pakistani Values and Western Management

By: Ramiz Allawala

Pakistani corporate managers consistently displaying their resilience and creativity in using western corporate structures impresses me most. These western structures which presuppose trust and self-regulation used in a society which essentially lacks both must give these managers a colossal headache. They probably end up spending an inordinate amount of energy in reconciling conflicts arising from using systems based on western values in a society bereft of these values.

Most scholars agree that western values such as accountability (giving an account of your actions), assertiveness (openly and freely expressing ideas and opinions), proactivity (preempting and seeking options), dignity (self-respect) and openness (displaying integrity fearlessly) play a crucial role in achieving successful organizational performance.

Try as they may, Pakistani managers daily confront employees and bosses who not only avoid practicing these crucial western values but also replace them with peculiar Pakistani values. Sabar (patience), layhaaz (preserving others' sentiments), ghairat (honor), sula joey (keeping peace and harmony), burkhurdari (respect for authority), and farmabardari (obedience to authority) often contradict and conflict with core values underlying western corporate models.

For example, most meetings involving Pakistani bosses and subordinates turn into

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After running businesses in USA and Pakistan, he founded Gulfstone Training which highly influenced new thoughts and approaches getting introduced to business training and changing managerial performance.

Ramiz became a team leader in organizing workshops, as a sub-contractor, for Academy For Educational Development (AED) under USAID sponsorship on Foundation Training of Trainers, Diagnosing Organizational Performance and Consulting Skills. Ramiz's specialization in OD and change management helped a number of organizations build their teams and adapt to new technologies.

He graduated with Distinction from Babson College, Wellesley, Massachusetts, USA in 1980

lectures and "nag-sessions" where only one participant, usually the boss or his pet crony hogs air time while others sit silently waiting patiently for their ordeal to end. When western managers introduced principles of direct and open communication in all meetings, their goal remained seeking maximum understanding between all parties. In turn, their Pakistani counterparts reduce most meetings into "silencing the lambs" by stressing on employees' burkhurdari and farmdardari values. Active participation gets sacrificed at the altar of obedience.

Assertiveness, another keystone in successful western companies, remains a kiss of death in Pakistani organizations. According to Schuetama's observations about Pakistanis, he expresses amazement that most disgruntled employees complain to the whole world and their mothers but keep silent in front of the person best equipped to address their grievances the boss. Fear of lack of employment choices and intimidation based on authoritarianism keeps employees pliant and silent. Some one please tell Mr. Schuetema this signals success of indoctrinating crucial Pakistani values of naseeb and kismet.

Another example of this clash of values shows up when the ghairat meets western style of accountability. Pakistanis feel dishonored when asked to give an account of their actions or results achieved. Many bosses believe they do not owe explanations to employees or other stakeholders. They feel affronted when asked to explain their actions. Most Pakistani managers look upon accountability disdainfully because it appears dishonorable or bayghairat. People behaving perfectly as honorables usually do, can not be held accountable.

And the list goes on...

So how do we hang on to those Pakistani values we hold so precious while practicing those that so precious define managerial success?

I believe very strongly that creating a high trust culture resolves these issues. But first three Pakistani cultural characteristics need to get addressed. Reliance on external

control, vagueness in language, and false promises based on fear undermine all attempts to evolve into progressive and happy organizations.

To begin with, we simply do not invest enough energy into promoting self-regulation. This quality does not exist innately in any society. Individuals need space and coaching to develop this. Self-regulation results from habits formed since childhood and reinforced by long training and for this they require time and probably much suffering from which our parents, teachers and bosses seek immunity. But trust does not build randomly. It only exists when each individual feels confident in theirs' and in others' ability to self-regulate and self-govern, but five thousand years of domination atrophied muscles that did not get used. Put an arm in a sling for too long and it loses its ability to lift even the lightest object. Control people for too long and they can not self-control. Any training devoid of self-control, self-management, and self-governing becomes simply and selfishly senseless.

Now about our use of language: Urdu while rich with multiple meanings and nuances creates on one level a deep appreciation of life's multiplicity and diversity yet at another level it creates vague and imprecise meanings that tend to lack clarity and closure. And unfortunately when we do speak it with precision it reverts back to a language of command and coercion which was its original purpose when invented to integrate (or ingratiate?) armies from Turkish, Persian, Hindu and Arabic backgrounds. English, derived from Latin,