

EVALUATION ON BENEFICIARY APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

2015 Learning-Related Programming



This report is a product of the Planning, Performance and Results Section of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). The report records the section's periodic independent assessment of outcomes of learning-related programming. The report was prepared by Brook Boyer, Katinka Koke, Elodie Sierro and Julian Formica.

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MALE PARTICIPANTS SHOW A HIGHER APPLICATION RATE THAN FEMALE PARTICIPANTS.



GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ON NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL SHOW A HIGHER APPLICATION RATE THAN OTHER SECTORS.



PARTICIPANTS WHO HAVE COMPLETED THE EVENT SHOW A HIGHER APPLICATION RATE.



PARTICIPANTS WHO CONFIRMED APPLICATION SPEND AROUND 50-90% OF THEIR TIME ON WORK REQUIRING KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS FROM THE LEARNING EVENT.



THE TWO TOP PROMOTERS OF APPLICATION ARE OPPORTUNITY AND IMPORTANCE FOR JOB SUCCESS AND THE TOP TWO BARRIERS ARE LACK OF OPPORTUNITY AND LACK OF TIME.



MOST OF THE PARTICIPANTS, IRRESPECTIVE WHETHER APPLICATION HAS BEEN CONFIRMED OR NOT, FELT CONFIDENT.



FACE-TO-FACE AND BLENDED LEARNING EVENT PARTICIPANTS SHOW A HIGHER RATE OF APPLICATION.



THE MAJORITY OF THE RESPONDENTS WHO CONFIRMED APPLICATION, FIND THE KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS ESSENTIAL OR SOMEWHAT ESSENTIAL FOR THE JOB SUCCESS.



MOST OF THE RESPONDENTS WHO CONFIRMED APPLICATION STATED IT WAS FREQUENT OR OCCASIONALLY.



OTHER FACTORS THAT ARE NOT LINKED TO THE LEARNING EVENT ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO THE ENABLING OF THE PARTICIPANT TO APPLY KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS OF THE LEARNING EVENT.



MOST PARTICIPANTS HAD TWO MOTIVATIONS FOR PARTICIPATING (OWN INTEREST AND JOB RELATED), BUT THOSE WHO DID NOT HAVE AN INTEREST GOING BEYOND THE JOB HAVE SHOWN A LOWER RATE OF APPLICATION.



LONGER EVENTS SHOW A HIGHER RATE OF APPLICATION THAN SHORTER EVENTS.



Executive Summary

Learning-related programming is an important part of UNITAR's work programme, accounting for 60 per cent of beneficiaries and 67 per cent of events in 2015. Determining the effectiveness of learning depends not only on beneficiary reaction to training or the degree to which learning outcomes are achieved, but also the extent to which knowledge and skills acquired from training are applied to practice, and ultimately, produce positive changes in beneficiaries' performance at their workplaces.

With a view to assessing the effectiveness of learning-related programming, a survey was deployed and interviews were held to obtain data and information on the application or non-application of knowledge and skills from 2015 learning events. The exercise examined factors contributing to and preventing application, with analysis across gender, professional affiliation, delivery method and other parameters. The survey received a response rate of 30 per cent. Results indicate that there was widespread application, with 79 per cent of respondents confirming application of knowledge or skills, slightly down from 82 per cent reported in 2014. Opportunity to apply and importance for job success were the two most cited enablers, and lack of opportunity to apply and lack of time the top two barriers. The analysis of survey and interview results indicates that gender, organizational affiliation, event completion, thematic area and event length have

a direct relationship with application of knowledge and skills. Frequency of application, time spent on tasks, confidence and other factors were also examined.

"Our country Nepal was hit hard by the earthquake of magnitude 7.8 on April 2015. As a recovery and reconstruction plan, I integrate the learning and framework of disasters and ecosystems to build resilient ecosystem and community."

Anonymous respondent from Disasters and Ecosystems: Resilience in a Changing Climate

79 per cent of respondents confirmed application of knowledge/skills to the workplace. Opportunity to apply and importance to job success were the two most cited enablers to application/use.

Government sector respondents reported the highest rate of application, as did respondents enrolled in blended and face-to-face training events, with 93 per cent and 91 per cent of respondents confirming application/use, respectively. Respondents from multilateral diplomacy and public finance and trade-related training also reported the highest rate of application, at 98 per cent. Changes in professional activity and performance of learners were observed, including the use of

methods, technologies and tools; improved teamwork; and new job-related tasks and responsibilities. Survey respondents and interviewees also cited examples of multiplying knowledge/skills acquired through the delivery of training and the dissemination of publications or other written works.

Frequency of application/use is similar to results reported in 2014, with 37 per cent of respondents confirming frequent application (and 29 per cent occasional application).

Similarly, confidence in application was similar to 2014, with 60 per cent of respondents expressing full or much confidence in application. Most respondents confirmed having both a personal and a professional interest in the training. While information on application/use over time is limited, more than half of the interviewees confirmed continued application of knowledge or skills over time, particularly those who participated in training events of a longer duration.

Recommendations

Recommendations from the evaluation include the need to:

- 1) further explore the potential of blended learning, particularly for e-Learning events;
- 2) take concrete steps to ensure that participants complete events;
- 3) refine pre-event announcement information to include objectives on how participants are expected to apply/use knowledge and skills;
- 4) pursue longer duration training initiatives; and
- 5) integrate practical tools into training events to facilitate application/use.

1. Introduction

1. The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) is a dedicated training arm of the United Nations. Aiming to strengthen the effectiveness of the United Nations, UNITAR develops the capacities of individuals, organizations and institutions to enhance global decision-making and to support country-level action for shaping a better future. The key thematic areas in which UNITAR works include strengthening multilateralism; promoting economic development and social inclusion; advancing environmental sustainability, green development and climate change; promoting sustainable peace and post conflict reconstruction; increasing capacities for resilience and humanitarian assistance; and supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

2. In 2015, UNITAR provided training, learning and knowledge-sharing services to 39,653 individuals through the delivery of 480 events. Sixty-eight per cent of these events (or 325) and 59 per cent of these individuals (or 23,544) took part in events associated with specific learning outcomes. These events include briefings, courses, fellowship programmes, workshops and other events organized through a face-to-face (accounting for 54 per cent of beneficiaries), online (46 per cent of beneficiaries) or blended delivery method.¹ The male to female gender ratio of UNITAR’s learning-related beneficiaries in 2015 was 67 to 33.² Approximately half (48 per cent) of UNITAR’s learning-related beneficiaries took part in events with an objective assessment of knowledge³; 63 per cent of learners completed these events, and some 47 per cent of learners completing events with objective assessment of learning obtained certificates of completion (and 53 per cent obtained certificates of participation).



3. Participant reaction to UNITAR learning services was positive, with 89 per cent of respondents of post training feedback questionnaires agreeing or strongly agreeing that training was job-relevant, 78 per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing that information was

¹ One event was recorded as delivered through blended modality.

² Without counting peacekeeping training beneficiaries, the male to female gender ratio was 57 to 43.

³ An equal proportion of participants took part in learning-related events without objective assessments of knowledge, with over 11,000 certificates of participation issued.

new, 89 per cent confirming intent to apply/use information, and 91 per cent agreeing or strongly agreeing that training services were useful overall.

4. In addition to measuring the achievement of learning objectives through various instruments, including participant self-assessment and objective testing, UNITAR regularly tracks application and use of acquired knowledge and skills through periodic post-training surveys. The subsequent sections of this report review the principal questions of this evaluation; describe the methods and data collection used, as well as the limitations; and present the findings, conclusions and recommendations. The scope of the evaluation focuses on 2015 learning-related programming, with findings compared to 2014 where relevant.

2. Key Evaluation Questions

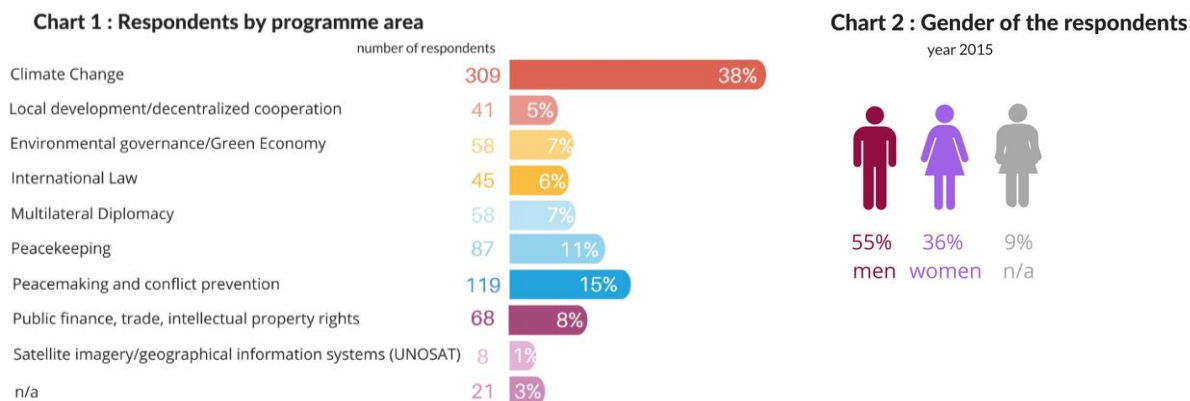
5. The key questions framing this evaluation are the following:
 - To what extent were knowledge and skills acquired through learning events applied or used in the participants' respective workplaces?
 - What were the noticeable and measurable changes resulting from application/use?
 - How frequently are knowledge and skills applied?
 - What are the principal enablers and barriers to the application/use of learning?
 - What influence have factors such as 'learning culture' had on the application of learning?
 - Is application different based on the gender considerations?
 - To what extent was the change in performance and new level of knowledge or skills sustained over time?
 - What were the major factors which influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the application of learning event related knowledge/skills?
 - What real difference have the learning events made to the participants in their work practice?

3. Methods and Data Collection

6. The methods and data collection tools used for the evaluation are threefold and include a review of documents, including learning event announcement information, participant statistics and narrative reports; the deployment of an online survey to a pool of randomly sampled participants from 2015 learning events; and semi-structured interviews with 14 survey respondents.

3.1 Survey

7. The survey sought to assess the extent to which knowledge and skills acquired from learning-related programming have been applied/used by participants. The survey included questions on whether and how knowledge and skills were applied/used, the frequency and confidence in application/use, and the factors that may have enabled or deterred application/use. The survey also included questions to sort respondents by gender, organizational affiliation and thematic area.
8. The survey was sent to the email addresses of a random sample of 3,000 participants from a pool of 15,774 cleaned data participants from 274 of 328 learning events recorded in the UNITAR events management system (EMS).⁴ The list of events included in the evaluation and the survey are attached as annexes 1 and 2, respectively. The survey was deployed in English, French and Spanish languages in April 2016. Two follow-up reminders were sent. Failure messages were received from approximately 500 participant email addresses. A total of 814 replies were received during the period in which the survey was open.⁵ Charts 1-4 below summarize the profile of the respondents by programme area, gender, sector and training delivery format.



⁴ Fifty-four of the total 328 learning events (or 16 per cent) included no or invalid email addresses and were thus not included in the evaluation.

⁵ In comparison, in 2015, 278 respondents replied to the survey from a sample of 1,300 cleaned data participants.

Chart 3 : Respondents by sector of activity
year 2015

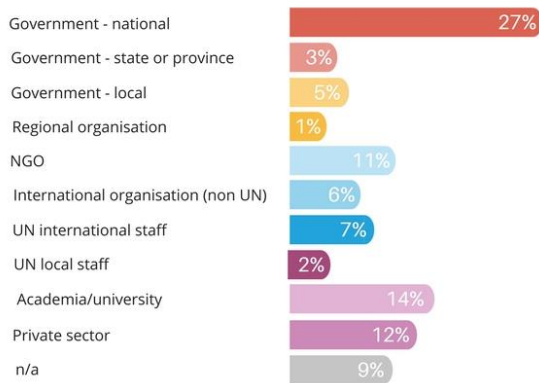
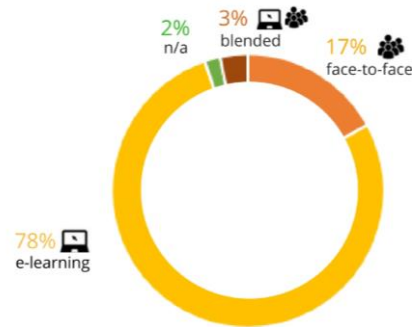


Chart 4 : Respondents by format of learning event
year 2015



3.2 Interviews


9. As a follow-up to the survey, contact was established with 14 respondents who expressed a willingness to be interviewed. The following criteria guided the selection of the interviewees: half confirming application, half non-application; gender parity (50 per cent female, 50 per cent male); and obtaining perspectives from different geographic regions and professional backgrounds.

10. Initial contact was made with 20 respondents (10 confirming application and 10 non-application) in May 2016. Following positive responses from 14 participants, interviews with seven participants confirming application and seven non-application were held. Interviewees represented a wide geographic area, as shown in Graph 3.

Graph 3 : Map of the interview participants
year 2015



4. Limitations

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11. As with all evaluations, it is important to note several limitations. First, while the survey allows for quantitative and qualitative data collection, the findings are largely based on respondent perception. Most learning-related programming was either administered on a stand-alone fee-basis (e.g. executive-type training, independent of broader capacity development outcomes) or was not of a sufficiently large scale to include objectively verifiable on-the-job performance changes.
12. Second, while 23,544 participants were recorded in a total of 328 learning events, contact information was only available for 15,774 participants (or 67 per cent of all learning beneficiaries) and from 274 events (or 83 per cent of all learning events). The results of the evaluation should therefore only be interpreted as representative of the sample population and not generalized across all UNITAR learning-related programming and thematic areas. Except for some variables such as delivery method (face-to-face, e-Learning, blended) and event length and theme, the evaluation treated learning-related events similarly, although they invariably differ in terms of targeted audiences, learning objectives, cognitive levels of learning, and presence of moderators/facilitators (i.e. instructor-led v. self-paced), and follow-up communities of practice. Resource limitations prevented undertaking a more robust data collection and analysis through stratification based on these and other defining criteria.
13. Third, the sample of the interviewees is small in comparison with the number of respondents from the deployment of the survey. While interviewees were selected with an equal number of those confirming application and non-application, conclusions should be interpreted with care.
14. Fourth, and finally, several respondents indicated having received promotions at work; however, the evaluation did not include analysis to isolate the effects of training on the changes reported and therefore limiting conclusions that promotion, for example, can be attributed to UNITAR training.

5. Findings

5.1 To what extent were knowledge and skills applied/used?

15. As illustrated in Chart 5, the results found that **79 per cent of respondents confirmed application** of knowledge /skills, a result that is marginally less than the 82 per cent application rate reported in 2014. The 79 per cent rating is 11 percentage points below the intent to use rating (at 90 per cent) recorded from respondents of post training questionnaires.⁶

Chart 5 : Application of the knowledge/skills to work
comparison 2014-2015



16. Charts 6-11 disaggregate the results of application/use by gender, affiliation, completion, type of event, programme area and job importance. As shown in Chart 6, **male respondents reported a higher level of application**, at 81 per cent, compared to female respondents, at 74 per cent. Organizational affiliation shows the highest rate of application, with **government officials at the national and local levels** reporting 84 per cent, while UN local staff reporting the lowest rate at 60 per cent (Chart 7). The rate of application reported by interviewees with different affiliations is relatively similar, however.

Chart 6 : gender and application

Year 2015 - Results taking into account that the numbers of men and women are unequal in the sample



Chart 7 : Application by affiliation
year 2015

SECTOR OF ACTIVITY	✓	✗
GOVERNMENT - NATIONAL	84%	16%
GOVERNMENT - STATE OR PROVINCE	71%	29%
GOVERNMENT - LOCAL	84%	16%
REGIONAL ORGANISATION	73%	27%
NGO	83%	17%
INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION (NON UN)	70%	30%
UN INTERNATIONAL STAFF	72%	28%
UN LOCAL STAFF	60%	40%
ACADEMIA / UNIVERSITY	78%	22%
PRIVATE SECTOR	74%	26%

17. The survey results found the application rate to be higher (81 per cent) for those respondents who **completed an event** in comparison to those who did not complete (74 per cent), as illustrated in Chart 8. The overall completion rate of applicants and non-applicants represents 86 per cent of the respondents.

18. In relation to learning delivery, while the overall number of e-learning respondents (78 per cent) was higher than the number of face-to-face respondents (17 per cent), as shown in Chart 4, only 76 per cent of respondents from e-Learning courses confirmed application/use, in comparison to 93 per cent and 91 per cent of respondents from blended and face-to-face learning events, respectively (Chart 9).⁷ While the small number of blended learning participants does not allow for much interpretation, **blended learning**

⁶ Based on feedback from 232 learning-related events (or 71 per cent of the total number of learning events delivered in 2015) in which 11,884 participants took part and feedback was provided. The average response rate was 57 per cent.

⁷ The large number of respondents from e-learning was due largely to the high number of respondents in the sample population from the UN CC:Learn Introductory e-Course on Climate Change.

and face-to-face participants do show a higher rate of application/use among the respondents. All survey respondents from face-to-face learning events who were interviewed reported application/use of knowledge/skills.

19. As shown in Chart 10, respondents from learning events related to **multilateral diplomacy and public finance and trade reported the highest rate of application**, at 98 per cent. All respondents who found the content of the training somewhat essential or very essential (63%) to their jobs confirmed application (Chart 11); however, the same is also true for respondents who did not indicate job importance. It can therefore not be directly attributed to application.

Chart 8: Application and event completion
year 2015

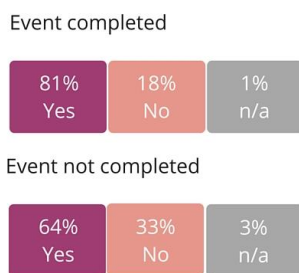


Chart 9 : Format and application



Chart 10 : Programme area and application

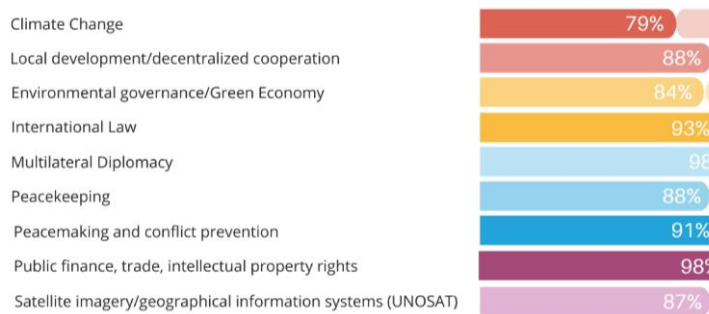
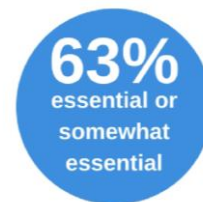


Chart 11: job importance and application



5.2 Reported behavioral changes at their workplaces

20. Survey respondents reported various changes in work-related performance as a result of acquiring knowledge and skills, including:⁸

- use of different skills, knowledge and terminology specific to the learning event, e.g. enhanced teamwork, project management, communication and public speaking, time management, reporting writing, leadership, presentations, needs assessments, etc.;
- development of new projects, funding proposals, business plans, tasks and responsibilities;
- changes of attitudes and behavior (e.g. related to gender and environment); and

⁸ Due to the high number of responses, a selection was made by the authors.

“I applied how to write a business plan and how to plan for opening a start-up. After the course, I decided to open a start-up in the field of tourism and I applied all the guidance supplied to us during the course in my steps.”

“After my participation in the program, I decided to start my start-up, thing is done and now it is 100% operational...”

***Anonymous respondents from
Entrepreneurship Training***

- capacity to influence in different professional contexts, such as police, hospital, university, school, non-governmental organizations and government.

21. Table I provides examples of respondents' quotations illustrating changes in activity and performance by category. It should be noted that these changes cannot be uniquely attributed to attendance in a learning event.

Evaluation of beneficiary application of knowledge and skills

Table I: Quotations from respondents showing changes in work activity and performance

Multiplier effect	Publications/written works	Training/training of trainers	Job promotion
"I've been transferring knowledge to my friends, family and community." (5 respondents, Introductory e-Course on Climate Change)	"As a journalist I wrote an article about it." (respondent from Multilateral Trade Negotiations event)	"Conducted a training for technical staff on content of UNITAR training" (respondent from UN REDD+ Academy for Africa)	"I was promoted from Legal Adviser to the Adviser to the board of directors. The skills from the course helped to review the way of thinking on the feasibility of a project while brainstorming" (respondent from Impact for Peace)
"shared with colleagues" (respondent from Enhancing Human Security: Identification and Protection of Trafficking Victims in Asia Pacific Region)	"I wrote an academic paper on the course or a blog." (3 respondents Introductory e-learning course on climate change)	"introduced climate change tutorials for high school students" (4 respondents, Introductory e-Course on Climate Change)	"I have received new responsibilities and I am now currently the Head of my Regional Unit" (respondent from Multilateral Diplomacy course)
"provided training for interns and officials" (respondent from UNITAR-Afghanistan Fellowship 2015)	"development of a handbook" (respondent from United Nations Protocol event)	"teach my students" (respondent from UN REDD+)	"I have been promoted to work in the Ministry's Destination Inspection Unit" (respondent from Multilateral Trade Negotiation: Tips and Techniques)
"used for teacher delegation" (respondent from UNFCCC COP training)	"writing a business plan" (respondent from Green Economy)	"used for my own lectures" (respondent from trade negotiations)	"I now head the Environmental Services department for the company I work with." (respondent from Introductory e-Course on Climate Change)
"in-house training for colleagues" (respondent from Enhancing a victim-centered approach: Identification, Assistance and Protection of Trafficking Victims by the Local Government in Asia-Pacific Region.)	"drafting briefing notes" (respondent from Orientation programme on climate change diplomacy)	"organized a step-down training for fellow staff" (respondent from the Fellowship Programme to Enhance the Conflict Prevention and Peacemaking Capacities of Indigenous Peoples Representatives)	"Now I am promoted" (respondent from To Build the Peace in our Society)
"sharing with co-workers" (respondent from Introduction to Nanomaterial Safety Course)	"As a journalist I wrote an article about it." (respondent from Multilateral Trade Negotiations event)	"given classes to the students using material from training" (respondent from Introduction to Peace Operations)	"I got promoted from Regional manager, to National Manager within AKF" (respondent from fellowship programme)
	"I wrote an academic paper on the course or a blog." (3 respondents Introductory e-learning course on climate change)	"trained communities" (respondent from conflict prevention and peace building)	"promoted" (respondent from Multilateral Trade Negotiations: Tips and Techniques, Introduction to Investment Arbitration, Introduction to Peace Operations, International Players in Public Finance and Debt Management.)

	<p>“development of a handbook” (respondent from United Nations Protocol event)</p>	<p>“organized two workshops” (respondent from International Collaboration for Development)</p>	<p>“new position” (respondent from International Law)</p>
<p>“writing a business plan” (respondent from Green Economy)</p>	<p>“used as resource in lectures” (respondent from Milestones in UN Peacekeeping; Restoring Governance of Natural Resources; What is Conflict; Introduction to Environment, Natural Resources and UN Peacekeeping Operations 2015)</p>		
<p>“drafting briefing notes” (respondent from Orientation programme on climate change diplomacy)</p>	<p>“face-to-face trainings and networking” (respondent from International Master's Degree in Conflictology)</p> <p>“Conducted training course of trainers of trainers (TOT) for 20 Senior Diplomats at the Kenya School of Governments and the materials for training and methodology were 100% borrowed from UNITAR Training” (respondent from peace and peacekeeping)</p>		

22. In addition to the information collected through the survey, respondents to interviews reported a variety of post learning event changes at their respective workplaces:

- application of **methods, modern technologies, tools and techniques** (e.g. needs assessments) from the training event and used as reference point (4 interviewees);
- improved **teamwork, better conversations with clients and better support of and discussions with colleagues** (4 interviewees); sharing of knowledge/skills from the training event as lecturer (1 respondent);
- **more responsibilities or new tasks** at work (4 interviewees);
- **changed views or perspectives, broadening of horizon and/or improved attitudes** on how to handle tasks at work (3 interviewees);
- **better information** for informed decision-making and understanding of work, including attention to detail (2 respondents); and
- changed **practical behavior related to aspects such as waste management, cleaning and gender equality** (1 interviewee).

5.3 How frequently are participants applying what they learned, or are likely to apply what they learned in the future?

23. Survey results have shown that 36 per cent applied the knowledge/skills **frequently** in 2014 and 37 per cent in 2015 (Chart 12), while the percentage for **occasional** application differs more significantly between 2014 (40 per cent) and 2015 (29 per cent). This may be explained by a higher rate of not applicable (N/A) replies in 2015.

Chart 12 : Application frequency
comparison 2014-2015



24. Interviews revealed that those who have confirmed application/use spend around 50 to 90 per cent of their time at work requiring knowledge/skills from the learning event in which they took part. Only one interviewee who confirmed application/use reported spending very little time (e.g. 15 per cent) of time working on tasks related to it. Those interviewees who did not yet have an opportunity to apply the knowledge/skills were optimistic about the possibility of future application.

5.4. What were the major enablers and barriers to application/use?

25. **The two top enablers** of beneficiary application/use of knowledge and skills are **opportunity to apply and importance for job success; the two top barriers are lack of opportunity and lack of time**. Some 80 per cent of respondents reported the existence of deterring factors. As can be seen in Chart 12, the results from 2014 and 2015 differ only slightly. It becomes clear that the factor “opportunity” is the most often cited factor contributing to application of knowledge/skills followed by “importance for job success”, which was also confirmed from the interviews. During the interviews, lack of opportunity was mostly explained through the fact that the current job of the interviewee

was not directly related to the content of the learning event – sometimes due to regular job rotation or other changes in professions. However, a difference between the 2014 and 2015 survey results can be observed for the deterring factors, as “lack of supervisor support” was cited by 13 per cent in 2015 and only 6 per cent in 2014, and “lack of confidence” showed a decrease from 2014 to 2015 (Chart 13). In the interviews, supervisor and peer support were noted as an additional enabler, while lack of action planning and systems and processes (2 interviewees) and peer support (1 interviewee) were cited as barriers.⁹

Chart 13 : Positive factors of influence on application
comparison 2014-2015

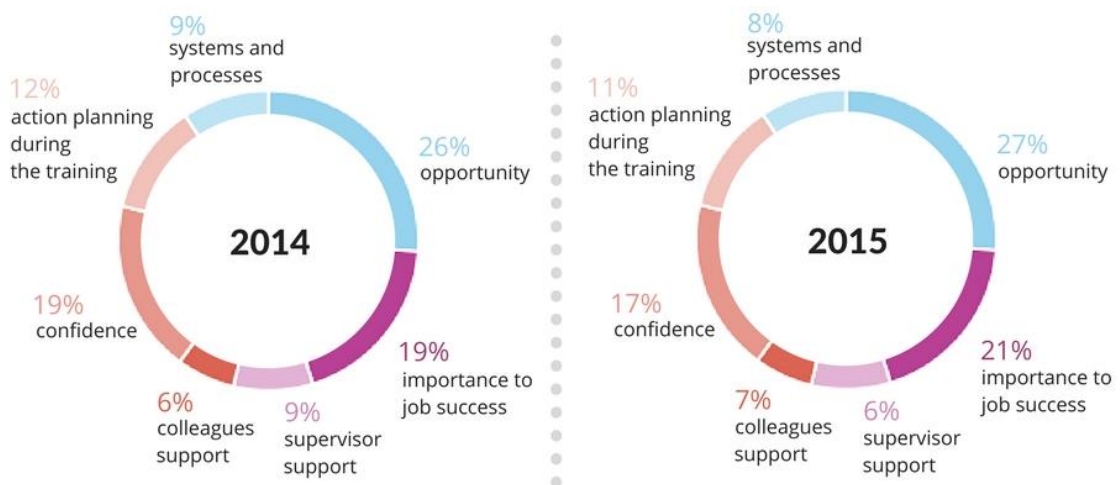
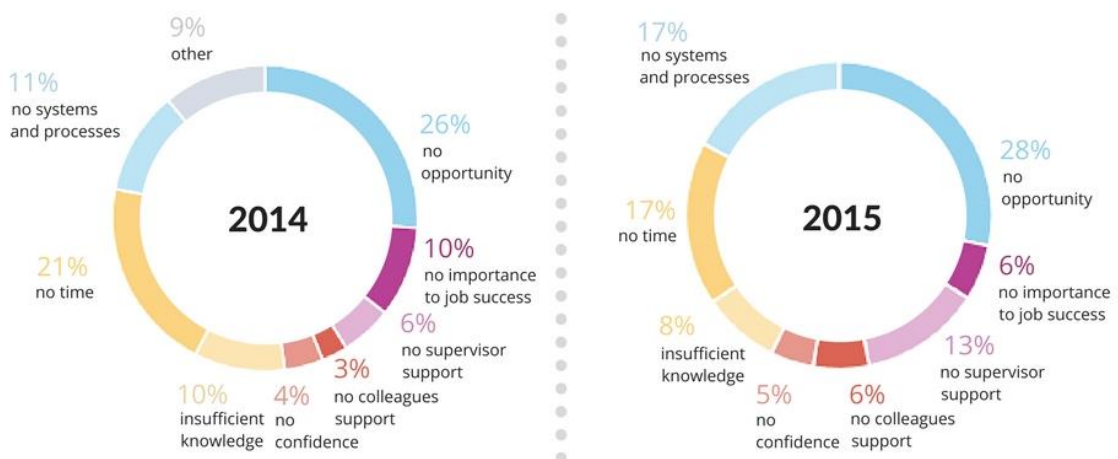


Chart 14 : Negative factors of influence on application
comparison 2014-2015



⁹ The data presented in Charts 13 and 14 are based on a relatively small sample and needs to be interpreted with caution.

Chart 15 : Confidence in application

comparison 2014-2015



26. Confidence to apply/use knowledge/skills showed similar results in 2014 and 2015 (Chart 15). However, it could be observed during the interviews that the level of confidence is not necessarily linked to whether application/use of knowledge/skills was confirmed as beneficiaries not reporting application felt somewhat to very confident after the learning event, but expressed lack of opportunity to apply. No interviewee expressed a lack of confidence.
27. During the interviews, respondents who confirmed application were asked to what extent the application is due to the event and to what extent **other factors facilitated application**. Interviewees estimated that some 50 to 90 per cent of application/use could be attributed to the learning event. Participants confirmed a 40 to 100 per cent confidence related to their answers which leads to an average of **53 per cent to which the learning event can be directly linked to the application and 47 per cent to other factors**. However, the number of interviewees being small, this figure should be interpreted with caution.
28. Other factors which may have contributed to on the job improvement include existing knowledge and experience, other training events, encouragement by supervisors and senior colleagues, promotion and a culture of performance.
29. Finally, some interviewees who were not yet able to apply/use knowledge/skills from the learning event confirmed that if there was an opportunity in the future they would be able to apply the knowledge/skills.

5.5 What influence does 'learning culture' have on the application/use of knowledge and skills?

30. Most interviewees stated that the reason for participating in a learning event included personal interest, a passion for learning, a general learning culture as well as the job requirements. In only one instance did an interviewee confirm that the supervisor asked the interviewee to participate; in just three instances was the job requirement the only reason for attending. It is nevertheless interesting to note that the interviewee who was requested by his/her supervisor to attend the event confirmed application, while two of the three interviewees who were not requested did not apply/use knowledge or skills. All those four interviewees were working for different levels in the government sector.
31. In most of the cases, the current job as well as the possibility for a future job as well as a content related to the previous working field presented reasons for the interviewees to enroll. Once the fact that the course was free of charge was mentioned as another argument for registration.

5.6 To what extent was change in performance and new knowledge or skills sustained over time and why?

32. A total of 8 out of 14 interviewees confirmed the **use of the acquired knowledge/skills over time**. Only one of the interviewees who confirmed application was unable to use it over time due to a recent job change.

33. In addition to the enabling and preventing factors explained above, it could be observed during the interviews that the **application is strongly linked to the duration of the learning event**. Those who clearly confirmed application/use over time participated in learning events of a duration of 6 weeks or longer, while those who participated in shorter events of a duration of several days to weeks (with some exceptions) were not able to apply/use knowledge/skills over time.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

34. The findings support widespread application/use of knowledge and skills from the sample of 2015 learning-related events. The degree of application/use varies, however, across gender, beneficiary affiliation, thematic area and delivery type. While application/use rates varied (marginally), data from 2014 and 2015 show relatively similar results for understanding the “why” question: Opportunity to apply and importance to job success are unequivocally important drivers to application and use.
35. While the analysis did not aim to uncover the impact of learning-related programming due to resource and sampling constraints, several survey respondents and interviewees confirmed job promotions or changes in professional responsibilities/tasks, or changes in behaviour/values (e.g. vis-à-vis gender or environmental issues). Moreover, although not necessarily the intent of all learning events, some learners succeeded in applying/using knowledge and skills in their own training initiatives, while other learners confirmed having shared knowledge/skills with friends, colleagues, families and communities.
36. In conclusion, UNITAR’s learning events have been effective and enabled a wide range of participants to apply the newly acquired skills/knowledge to their workplace and in some cases even further disseminate them by delivering courses or sharing them with colleagues.

Recommendations

37. Based on the evaluation’s findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made with a view to further enhancing the delivery and effectiveness of the Institute’s learning-related programming.

- ✓ **Programmes should expand opportunities for blended learning, particularly in combining e-Learning with face-to-face interaction.**

Rationale: While e-Learning delivery methods offer many benefits, including efficiency gains and broad geographical outreach, the evaluation’s findings indicate that face-to-face and blended learning delivery methods result in higher rates of application of knowledge and skills than e-Learning. When learning is delivered online, it is recommended to blend learning with face-to-face engagement with participants.

- ✓ **Programmes should encourage learners to inform their supervisors of attendance at the beginning of the learning event, and to provide their supervisors with updates as learning progresses and results are achieved.**

Rationale: The evaluation establishes a clear link between event completion and application/ use of knowledge and skills. Facilitating participant completion of learning event assignments, providing more realistic time for module completion and

reminding participants to complete events are some ways to further engage participants after registration. This recommendation reflects the widespread understanding that learning be an accompanied process in which the learner is not left alone once registered but rather receives regular follow-up and engagement. Moreover, opportunity to apply was the most cited enabler of application/use, and supervisors are instrumental to this process.

- ✓ **Programmes should refine pre-event announcement information to include objectives on the application/use of knowledge and skills to participant workplaces.**

Rationale: Purposeful training establishes a clear connection on how the development of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values can address individual and organizational performance challenges and needs. Most of the event announcement descriptions, while clearly defining learning objectives, did not establish linkages to application/use objectives, or concrete ways in which learners could apply knowledge and skills to practice. Interviews with learners confirmed that event information created expectations which were not necessarily fulfilled by learning events, leading to non-application/use of knowledge and skills.

- ✓ **When feasible, programmes should engage in learning-related events that are part of longer duration initiatives.**

Rationale: Shorter events have led to fewer reported cases of application while longer duration or events extending over a longer timeframe have enabled a larger number participants to apply the knowledge/skills that they have acquired. Tailoring events to participant needs is more difficult in shorter events, and there may be less opportunity to engage with learners and make applications to work-related settings. Longer duration events, on the other hand, allow for continuous learning and more time for exercises, simulation games and application of learning.

- ✓ **Programmes should ensure the integration of ready-to-use tools in learning programmes to facilitate the application of knowledge and skills by beneficiaries at the work place.**

Rationale: In a world with an ever increasing offer of free e-Learning courses, many learners seek opportunities which provide practical knowledge or skills which can be applied immediately. Templates, user guides or procedures were therefore mentioned by interviewees as those tools which they managed to apply most easily and most often. The lack of time was cited as one of the barriers of application and therefore, it shall be made as easy as possible for participants to apply the knowledge/skills through ready-to-use tools.

Annexes

- 1) List of events included in the evaluation
- 2) Surveys deployed
- 3) Interview protocol
- 4) Survey results
- 5) Interview results
- 6) List of interviewees