

TRAINING ACROSS INTERNATIONAL BORDERS

BY RICHARD L. SULLIVAN

Here's how a health organization developed low-cost training packages that could be easily adapted to deliver in different countries. The process also created a career development path for master trainers.

In Uttar Pradesh, India, thousands of midwives and medical officers need training in how to dispense information on family planning to the state's growing population of 150 million. Health ministries in Indonesia, Nepal, Brazil, Kenya, and other countries face similar challenges. So, the JHPIEGO Corporation—a nonprofit training organization in Baltimore, Maryland—developed an approach for maintaining the quality and consistency of family-planning programs delivered in different countries.

In 1994, JHPIEGO (Johns Hopkins Program for International Education in Reproductive Health) provided family-planning programs targeted to more than 40 countries.

It isn't easy to design a training program that will be delivered across international boundaries. First, it's important to work with people in the target countries to conduct the appropriate needs assessments. Next, it's necessary to identify subject matter experts as potential "in-country" trainers,

and then to prepare them to train.

Organizations abroad tend to have limited resources, so they can't easily reproduce glossy, high-tech training materials. To overcome that obstacle, JHPIEGO has developed low-cost and high-quality training materials that can be adapted by trainers in other countries.

JHPIEGO's "training package" approach is to

- ▶ assess training needs
- ▶ develop training materials based on the identified needs
- ▶ transfer technical knowledge and skills to potential trainers
- ▶ transfer training skills to potential trainers
- ▶ provide support for the in-country trainers as they assume responsibility for delivering the training.

Three assessments

JHPIEGO's training packages are similar. Yet, they must also fit the needs of each target country. Standard training materials based on skills identi-

fied in the home office don't always work. In order to get trainees' buy-in, for instance, the materials must use terminology that will be familiar to them.

Before developing a particular training package, JHPIEGO conducts three types of needs assessments. One is a macro- or country-level assessment for each target country. The macro-assessment documents the status of the general population's reproductive health and identifies the constraints on family planning that can be addressed through training. To do this type of needs assessment, JHPIEGO works with people in the target countries.

The second assessment is an institutional or facility needs assessment to determine the adequacy of specific facilities in the target countries for delivering the training—such as universities, hospitals, government agencies, and training centers.

The third type of assessment is a training needs assessment to identify

specific problems related to the delivery of family-planning services in the target countries.

As most trainers know, the basic steps of a needs assessment include

- ▶ identifying the problem, using observable and measurable terms
- ▶ identifying and describing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to correct the problem
- ▶ designing and administering such needs-assessment instruments as questionnaires, employee interviews, and performance-based checklists.

Once JHPIEGO conducts the needs assessments and collects the data, staff members analyze the findings, consider various training options, and present them to the appropriate people and agencies in the target countries. Together, they determine which training activities are appropriate and feasible. Then, JHPIEGO begins developing the training package.

Part and parcel

One key to keeping the training delivery consistent is to use a standardized training package with specific components: a reference manual, a trainer's notebook, a participants' handbook, audiovisuals, and anatomic models.

The heart of the package is the manual, which contains all of the essential information on the training content. The manual serves as a text for trainees and as a reference for the trainer. It's comprehensive, so handouts aren't needed. The manual's design is simple. When in-country trainers have to modify the manual to fit cultural requirements, they may have to take a brief workshop on redesign. When necessary, the manual is translated from English into trainees' native language.

The supporting audiovisuals save in-country trainers from having to produce their own media. The audiovisuals include a videotape, slides, overhead transparencies, and suggestions for what to write on flipcharts. The videotape avoids talking heads, so that the audio track can be recorded in different languages. That way, some video footage can be used in different countries for little additional cost.

The manual, audiovisuals, and anatomic models are the most expen-

sive components of the training package, but they require few adaptations. The components that do require some adaptation from country to country are the trainer's notebook and participants' handbook.

The participants' handbook includes the following:

- ▶ a course description that includes the objectives, materials, trainee-selection criteria, evaluation methods, and course dates
- ▶ a course outline and schedule of daily activities
- ▶ a pre-course questionnaire on knowledge-based objectives
- ▶ a performance-evaluation checklist on skill-based objectives.

The trainer's notebook has the same items—plus answer keys, instructions for administering and scor-



Health-care professionals and "master trainers" Dorothy Andere, a nurse, and Dr. James Machoki prepare a flipchart for use in a train-the-trainer class to teach family planning to doctors and nurses in Nairobi, Kenya.

ing both the knowledge-based and the skill-based assessments, and an end-of-course questionnaire. The course outline helps ensure that the training remains consistent from session to session and from trainer to trainer. The course outline is divided into four areas:

- ▶ Time. This area shows the approximate amount of time the trainer should spend on each training objective and activity.
- ▶ Objectives and activities. The objectives (taken from the manual) combined with the activities (practice sessions, breaks, and so forth) guide the sequence and flow of the training.

▶ Training methods. This area includes the methods, activities, and strategies used to deliver the training for each objective.

▶ Resources and materials. This area lists the reference materials and audiovisuals for each objective.

The path to master trainer

To support the package, JHPIEGO trains people in the target countries in training-delivery skills. Even when using a standardized training package, it's important to devote time and resources to developing qualified trainers. JHPIEGO's train-the-trainer courses help standardize the in-country trainers' skills and provide them with a career development path to become master trainers.

Like the family-planning programs, the train-the-trainer courses use a standardized training package consisting of a manual, a participants' handbook, a trainer's notebook, and supporting media.

A videotape shows some actions in-country trainers should take as they deliver courses:

- ▶ Create a positive training climate.
- ▶ Use coaching and interactive training techniques.
- ▶ Administer both knowledge-based and performance-based assessments.
- ▶ Evaluate training.

The training-skills courses are delivered according to the course outline in the trainer's notebook and using a similar format to the courses in-country trainers will eventually conduct. The potential in-country trainers observe the "master trainer" as he or she delivers the course using the training package. That way, they get a clear picture of how they should conduct their own courses.

The training-skills courses include illustrated presentations, small-group activities, extensive participant involvement, and two opportunities for participants to make presentations. The presentations are videotaped, and participants get immediate feedback. Trainees also become familiar with the packages they'll be delivering in their own countries.

JHPIEGO wrestled with the issue of whether its train-the-train courses do, in fact, turn people into qualified trainers. But over time, the curriculum has evolved into a career development

The Path to Proficiency

JHPIEGO's train-the-trainer program paves a career development path—from subject matter expert to in-country trainer to master trainer.

	The person...	Completing this training course...	Is then qualified as a...
Level 1	clinician (doctor, nurse, or midwife)	clinical-skills course on the knowledge and skills necessary to provide one or more family-planning services	competent service provider to provide one or more family-planning services
Level 2	proficient service provider (several months of practice following a clinical-skills course)	clinical training-skills course on the knowledge and skills necessary to train clinicians to be service providers	competent clinical trainer to conduct a clinical-skills course
Level 3	proficient clinical trainer (has successfully conducted several clinical-skills courses)	advanced training-skills course on the knowledge and skills necessary to train service providers to become clinical trainers	competent master trainer to conduct a clinical training-skills course

path that enables potential trainers to become master trainers. (See the box.)

The first level of the train-the-trainer curriculum is designed to prepare a large number of professional medical personnel to provide family-planning services throughout their countries. Potential trainers attend a course on the required knowledge, skills, and attitudes to provide high-quality services in family planning. Those who finish the course receive a certificate of qualification. They perfect their skills in the field.

Level 1 courses must be delivered by clinical trainers. To meet the demand, medical personnel who are considered proficient in their field and who are interested in becoming trainers attend a Level 2 training-skills course on training clinicians. Topics include learning styles, presentation skills, coaching, and evaluation.

Level 3 courses are designed to develop in-country master trainers who can conduct the Level 2 courses. Candidates for Level 3 courses are proficient clinical trainers who have successfully conducted several of the clinical-skills courses in Level 2. Level 3 topics include needs assessment,

course design and materials, and group process.

The keys to the success of the train-the-trainer program have been selecting the right participants, developing comprehensive training packages for each level, and designing highly interactive courses.

JHPIEGO's vision is to develop its training system further so that master trainers can assume full responsibility for the design, delivery, and evaluation of the training. Through such a system, JHPIEGO's staff seeks to improve the quality of family-planning programs throughout the world. ■

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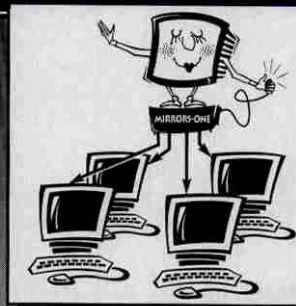


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