COWI

Evaluation of Train4Dev

Final evaluation report

July 2011

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Executive summary

Train4Dev is an open forum currently comprising 31 donor ministries and agencies as well as multilateral organisations that was established in 2003 to promote harmonisation in the field of competence development and training. It seeks to do this by developing and delivering joint learning programmes, networking around specific thematic areas, knowledge sharing and the promotion of open courses within the network.

This is the first external evaluation on Train4Dev. It reports on achieved outputs and outcomes, the degree of value added to its members, and on lessons learned.

Overall conclusion

Train4Dev has provided an effective response to the call for enhanced donor harmonisation in the field of competence development and training.

Over the period 2003-2010 Train4Dev has delivered 77 Joint Learning Events in more than 30 countries for approximately 3,000 participants from member (donor) organisations, partner governments and NGO/civil society/private sector. This is a substantial and very tangible output, not least when one considers that these results have been delivered by a voluntary network of donor organisations. In addition to this, a lot of knowledge sharing has taken place through the work of the subgroups and a large number of staff from the member organisations has taken advantage of the open courses that have been offered through the network.

Conclusions on the evaluation criteria

Train4Dev's activities have been highly **relevant**, both in relation to the series of High Level Meetings related to the Aid Effectiveness Agenda and the specific needs of the partner countries. Train4Dev has also been an asset to especially the small member organisations, which have had access - through Train4Dev - to training resources that would otherwise have been hard to get.

Train4Dev's governance structures have stood the test of time and served the network well. While Train4Dev is highly dependent on personal interest and the strong engagement of individuals, a clear majority of the Core Group members and Subgroup leaders see this – overall – as a benefit. The evaluation team agrees that the advantages from the current set-up outweigh the disadvantages.

Knowledge and experience sharing mainly happens within the subgroups and the modality of certain subgroups is especially focused on this. Annual meet-

ings, information bulletins from the core group, the website and activities from cross cutting groups as e.g. the Knowledge Management subgroup also serves as important platforms for networking and exchange of information across the subgroups, but there are indications that there is a need to improve the knowledge and information sharing in Train4Dev.

With regard to **effectiveness**, the evaluation team finds that the network is achieving satisfactory progress towards its stated role and objectives. The evaluation team finds that Train4Dev's track record with regard to delivery of JLEs merits a positive assessment. This assessment is, among others, based on the fact that there has been an *increase* – and diversification – in the annual number of JLEs between 2008 and 2010, after the total number of JLEs peaked in 2007. Moreover, it is the overall assessment of the evaluation team that the governance structure of the network is conducive to effectiveness.

Regarding the **efficiency**, there are several indications that Train4Dev is cost effective and to some extent saves money and time for its members. Stakeholders generally find that its informal structure is conducive to efficiency, and the evaluation team shares this view. However, it appears that the potential economies of scale from the multiplication of JLEs are not fully reaped and that knowledge-sharing could be increased between subgroups.

With regard to **sustainability**, there is little evidence that the network and its activities are sustainable. Standard training packages are available on the network's website, but JLEs have only in a few cases been scaled up (replicated) without the direct involvement of Train4Dev. It is also questionable whether up-scaling is really possible given the special joint-donor aspect of the JLE mechanism.

Train4Dev does not monitor the **impact** of its activities (but some subgroups have made efforts in this direction) and there is limited hard evidence that there has been an impact. However, there are several indications of likely impact. In this connection, the e-survey indicated a remarkably high degree of lasting learning effects as a result of Train4Dev activities. A high percentage of course participants report that they have applied the learning from the training in their daily work processes and that it has strengthened their abilities to perform.

Recommendations   The evaluation contains two sets of recommendations. The first is extracted mainly from the e-survey, where Core Group members and Subgroup leaders and some other stakeholders were asked to consider ways of improving Train4Dev's performance and results. As a supplement to this, the evaluation team offers a few recommendations of our own. Both are structured in respectively internally and externally oriented recommendations.

1 Introduction

Train4Dev is an open forum currently comprising 31 donor ministries and agencies as well as multilateral organisations that was established in 2003 to promote harmonisation in the field of competence development and training.

Given that the context is changing and several years have lapsed, it has been decided (for the first time) to commission an external evaluation of Train4Dev.

The objectives of the evaluation are to assess the achieved outputs and outcomes, determine the degree of value added to the members and derive lessons learned. On this basis, the evaluation makes recommendations to enable the network to enhance its contribution to improved aid and development effectiveness for poverty reduction through enhanced donor harmonisation in competence development and training. Potential threats to the further development of the network are also identified and addressed.

1.1 Context

Train4Dev background

About a decade ago, the international donor community became increasingly aware of the need for more effective aid. Following a series of High Level Meetings on aid effectiveness, a new international development architecture emerged, which includes the Poverty Reduction Strategy Approach, the Rome Declaration on Harmonisation, the Paris Declaration and the different High Level Forums on Aid Effectiveness.

This presented donors and development agencies with new challenges and opportunities that required staff to develop competences in a wide range of areas and at different levels. It was the recognition that this can be done more effectively by pooling technical and financial resources through joint initiatives that led to the establishment of Train4Dev.

It was thought that joint competence development facilitated by Train4Dev not only would help donors share resources and experience, but also create a common understanding and language in development co-operation and foster harmonisation among donors. The target audience – originally focused on staff of the member agencies – is now widened to include partners' organisations. During recent years, an effort has also been made to take account of the participation of civil society.

1.2   Train4Dev

Vision

The declared vision of Train4Dev is: to promote improved aid and development effectiveness for poverty reduction through enhanced donor harmonisation in the field of competence development and training.

Mission

Train4Dev's mission is: to add value as facilitators of joint learning, open to donors and partners, in areas of high priority for aid and development effectiveness, by attaining the following objectives:

1   Developing and delivering of joint learning programmes;

2   Networking around specific thematic areas by making use of available resources;

3   Knowledge sharing and exchanging experiences on effective approaches to training and learning;

4   Promoting and sharing open courses within the network.[1]

Characteristics of Train4Dev

Membership of Train4Dev is open to all donor ministries and agencies, multilateral organisations and training or research institutions founded or funded by donors which make a substantial financial, technical or scientific contribution to development cooperation.[2]

It is important to emphasise that Train4Dev is not an organisation, but an open forum – a classical network.[3] There have been discussions at times whether Train4Dev should be formalised with a secretariat and so forth. At the Annual Meeting in 2006 (referred to as "Cross Roads") it was decided to retain the informal structure of a loosely organised network, where there is room for experimentation. Flexibility is important to the network and members organise according to their needs. It is the voluntary nature and personal commitment of the involved individuals that drive the network.

Train4Dev is funded by voluntary contributions by its members, in cash or in kind. The network's joint activities are usually funded by either co-financing or basket funds established specifically e.g. for each series of Joint Learning Events (a joint learning programme and its roll-out). As exemplified in the Public Financial Management (PFM) sub-group, some Train4Dev activities do not necessarily require a joint funding set-up or JLEs as the mode of operation, but are simply knowledge sharing and sharing of information about learning oppor-

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[1] Quoted from "Train4Dev Charter," final version approved by the Annual Meeting of 3 June 2010

[2] Eligible members of Train4Dev must also meet a series of conditions concerning their commitment to the objectives of the network and their willingness to contribute to its activities. Further details can be found in the *Train4Dev Charter*.

[3] Most of the information on the characteristics of Train4Dev (the remainder of section 1.2) is based on personal interviews with members of the Evaluation Steering Group (see section 1.3).

tunities that are separately funded. Typically – since the network's activities are mainly intended for the use of donor and agency staff members – funding is derived from the administrative funds set aside for training and learning within each of the member organisations.

Members vote by country, where each country has one vote. One vote is reserved for the multilateral member organisations of the UN System. All other multilateral organisations or institutions have one vote each. This means that there are no formal power relations within the network; but the length and extent of involvement of individuals and agencies and their ability to raise interest and funding for the network's activities within their own organisations are important factors.

1.3   Evaluation funding and management

Three Train4Dev members - Switzerland, Denmark and Luxembourg - created a basket fund to finance the evaluation. Lux-Development manages the fund and is the contracting authority on behalf of these three countries.

An evaluation Steering Group has been formed to manage the evaluation. This consists of two representatives of the Train4Dev Core Group: ADA (Austria) chairing the Steering Group and Lux-Development (Luxembourg); and the three financial partners (SDC, Switzerland), Danida (Denmark) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Luxembourg).

Following a restricted tendering procedure, COWI A/S was contracted to undertake the evaluation. COWI's team consisted of Tom Dahl-Østergaard (team leader), Lars Lyhne Stensgaard (training specialist) and Steven Højlund (survey specialist). They undertook the evaluation of Train4Dev over the period February - May 2011.
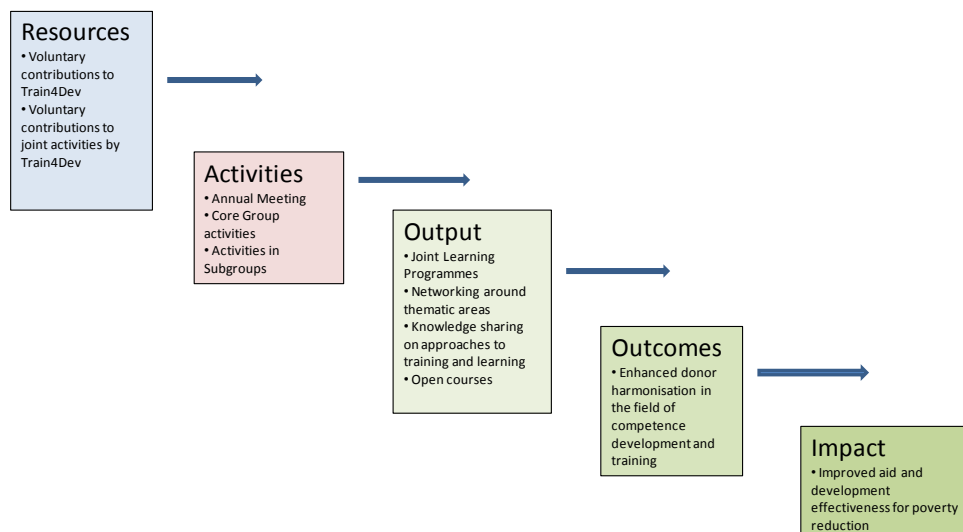
1.4   Report structure

This evaluation report is structured as follows. The next chapter provides details on the evaluation methodology. The following chapters present the findings in accordance with the DAC evaluation criteria: relevance (Chapter 3), effectiveness (Chapter 4), efficiency (Chapter 5), sustainability (Chapter 6) and impact (Chapter 7). All the key questions from the ToR are addressed under the respective evaluation criteria. Chapter 8 provides our overall conclusions. This is followed by recommendations in Chapter 9.

2   Methodology

2.1   Programme theory

In recent years theory based approaches to impact evaluation have gained popularity because they can shed light on not just what works but why it works. As Train4Dev wants to use this evaluation to improve performance, it has been decided to construct a programme theory to map how Train4Dev is intended to reach its objectives, see Figure 2.1 below. This has guided the evaluation process and already served as a basis for discussion with the evaluation Steering Group.

Figure 2.1: Programme theory for Train4Dev

Something is missing   The programme theory in Figure 2.1 is a narrow reflection of the existing Charter for Train4Dev. The evaluation team has observed that something is missing on learning and the uptake of the learning that is supposed take place as a result of the training programmes (output) promoted by Train4Dev. More specifically, the outcomes from the joint learning events, networking, knowledge sharing and open courses go beyond enhanced donor harmonisation. Hopefully, some of these activities also produce a direct developmental impact in the form of applied learning and improved development effectiveness. This ought to be properly reflected in the Charter for Train4Dev and in Train4Dev's promotional efforts.
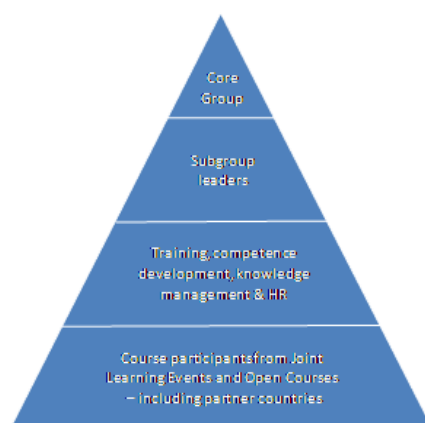
Notwithstanding the above, as the Terms of Reference for this evaluation also contain questions on the broad impact of Train4Dev, a certain emphasis has been given to the learning issue throughout the evaluation process.

2.2   Data collection

The data collection was carried out using a mix of methodologies.

Document review

The evaluation team was given access to Train4Dev's website, including the former versions of this and pages reserved for members. The members of the Evaluation Steering Group also provided a large quantity of documents to the team. In our review of the documents, emphasis was given to the selected sub-groups and JLEs for case study.

Participant observation

The evaluation team leader and training specialist had a full-day briefing with the Evaluation Steering Group in Vienna, which provided a good overview and appreciation of the network. Subsequently, the training specialist participated as an observer in a meeting of the Core Group in Ljubljana, while the team leader was a participant observer in a full-day special meeting of the Subgroup leaders in Bruxelles. This added substantially to our understanding of the network.

E-survey

An e-survey comprising the majority of the evaluation questions from the ToR was designed in close collaboration with the Evaluation Steering Group. The questionnaire contained both open and closed-ended questions.[4] Four separate respondent groups were defined, see Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: Respondent groups for e-survey

Core Group members, Subgroup Leaders, stakeholders and course participants

We received completed questionnaires from the following: 6 members of the Core Group, 10 Subgroup Leaders (representing six different Subgroups), 17 stakeholders from competence, training, knowledge management and HR de-partments of 14 different donor agencies and multilateral organisations. Finally,

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[4] For the closed-ended questions we used the Likert scale, which comprises five ordered response levels, and which is the most widely used scale in survey research.

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we received 64 questionnaires from <u>course participants</u> in the 60 different JLEs delivered under the auspices of Train4Dev.[5]

Respondent groups

In the presentation of the findings from the e-survey, which follows in chapters 3-7, the respondent groups are referred to respectively as: Core Group, Subgroup Leaders, stakeholders, and course participants (as per Figure 2.2 and the underlining in the paragraph above).

2.2.1   Case studies and interviews

Throughout the evaluation process, special attention was paid to the following <u>subgroups</u> that were pre-selected for case study:

- Knowledge Management
- Managing for Development Results
- Sector Wide Approaches (SWAP)
- Public Financial Management

- and the following series of <u>Joint Learning Events</u>:

- Managing for Development Results
- SWAP
- Poverty Reduction Strategies

In addition to the above, a series of interviews were undertaken, both in person and by telephone. In each case, a semi-structured interview guide was used.

2.2.2   Assessment of the outcomes of JLEs on MfDR

The evaluation team also undertook an assessment of the outcomes of Joint Learning Events on Managing for Development Results (MfDR) in 2009/10. The team was contracted to do this under a separate agreement with the expectation that the results would feed into this general evaluation of Train4Dev. As the work on the two assignments was done in parallel by the same team members, this report reflects a general focus on MfDR throughout. In practice, the assessment of MfDR was integrated into our analysis of Train4Dev in the sense that when we discuss JLEs in this report, much of our data and insights derive from the assessment of JLEs on MfDR. This report, therefore, uses many examples from the MfDR assessment without necessarily making specific reference to the separate report that was made on this.

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[5] A total of 337 links to the e-survey questionnaire went through to valid mail recipients among the former JLE course participants. 64 completed questionnaires (40 in English, 18 in French and 6 in Spanish) give a response rate of 20%. We think this is fairly good since most of the JLEs took place a long time ago (2003-2007). One has to take into account that most people, for obvious reasons, would be disinclined to comment on a learning event that happened even just one year ago.

3   Relevance

Box 3-1 provides an overview of the key findings with regard to relevance; i.e. the extent to which an intervention's objectives are pertinent to needs, problems and issues to be addressed.

Box 3-1   Key Findings

> • Objectives are relevant vis-à-vis the international aid effectiveness agenda
>
> • Activities are based on content analysis
>
> • Activities are tied to country and sector processes
>
> • Activities generally address learning needs

Context of High Level meetings

The High Level meetings of the last decade that led to the new international development architecture centred on aid effectiveness through harmonisation, and ownership, alignment, managing for development results, and mutual accountability. As this is largely synonymous with Train4Dev's vision, it is appropriate to examine Train4Dev in the context of the High Level meetings.

Table 3.1: Milestones in Aid Effectiveness

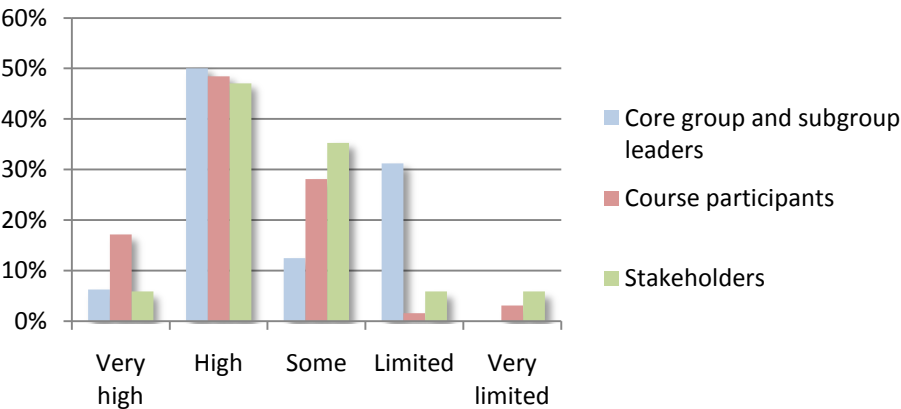| Year	High Level Meetings and similar	Key points
1998	*World Bank*	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs)
2002	*International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey*	More money alone was not enough. Aid to be used as effectively as possible.
2003	*Rome Declaration on Harmonisation*	Harmonization efforts to be adapted to the country context. Streamline donor procedures and practices
2005	*Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness*	Ownership, harmonisation, alignment, managing for results, and mutual accountability
2008	*Accra Agenda for Action*	Accelerate and deepen implementation of the Paris Declaration.

It can be observed from the table above that there is a close correlation between the key points of the High Level meetings and Train4Dev's focus areas and activities. The launch of the PRS in 1998 and the emphasis on SWAPs following the Rome Declaration in 2003 provided the basis for the establishment of the first – and most productive – Train4Dev subgroups (PRS and SWAP). The subgroup and multi-donor initiative on Managing for Development Results was created in order to promote the implementation of the MfDR principle of the Paris Declaration in 2005. As shown in Table 4.1 (next chapter), a total of 51 JLEs have been delivered through the subgroups on PRS, SWAP and MfDR. This is equivalent to 85% of all the JLEs that have been implemented. Judging from this perspective, Train4Dev's main activities have been highly relevant.

Activities and Train4Dev's objectives

Out of 10 Subgroup leaders, who responded to the e-survey, 9 find that the network's main activities are relevant to Train4Dev's stated objectives to a high or very high extent.
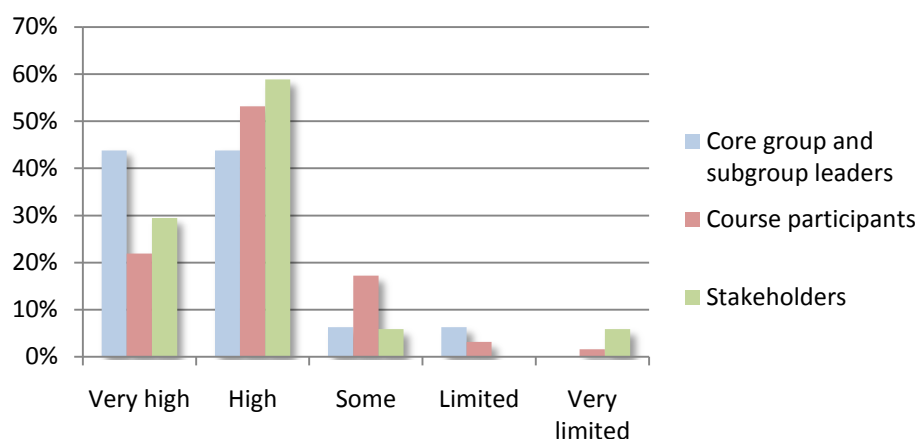
Aid and development effectiveness

The respondent groups are nearly unanimous in assessing the activities of Train4Dev as being relevant to the international aid - and development - effectiveness agenda. As appears from the figure below, only 5% of all respondents find this to be the case to a limited or very limited extent.

Based on adequate needs and context analyses?

Out of all e-survey respondents, 61% find - to a high or very high extent - that the activities of Train4Dev are based on adequate needs and context analyses, especially in the partner countries. There is little variance between the three respondent groups in their positive assessments, but members of the Core Group and Subgroup leaders stand out with a large proportion who find that Train4Dev activities are not based on adequate needs and context analyses. This is illustrated in the figure below.

Link with country and sector processes	A prerequisite for the relevance of any development intervention is the degree to which it is tied to actual country and sector processes. The course participants were asked to assess this in the e-survey. Two-thirds of 62 respondents found that the JLEs were linked to country and sector processes to either a high or very high extent; less than 10% replied to a limited or very limited extent. This is actually an impressive result, and it reflects the emphasis that is placed on this, e.g. in the subgroup on Managing for Development Results where a local resource person is always engaged as an important part of the delivery of each JLE, mainly to ensure the link with national processes. In the survey done for the MfDR assessment, all of the 47 respondents found that the JLE on MfDR was relevant. Moreover, 94% of the course participants found the relevance to be high to very high. In the subgroup on SWAP a local input was also incorporated and local participants had to submit applications that were screened by the JLP Executive Committee against objective criteria to ensure ownership and link to local SWAP processes.	
Definition of target audience	Another dimension of the above is whether the target audiences of Train4Dev's activities are clearly defined. Out of the total number of respondents, 62% find - to a high or very high extent - that the target audiences are clearly defined. However, this masks some interesting differences; whereas seven out of ten Core Group members, Subgroup leaders and course participants agree with the above, only four out of ten stakeholders share that view.	
Value added	Seen from the perspective of the stakeholder respondents, there is no doubt that Train4Dev provides value added to its members. Two aspects tend to stand out. Train4Dev provides an opportunity – especially for the small member organisations – to get access to training resources that would otherwise have been hard to get. Members also see great value added from the possibility to develop e.g. Joint Learning Events together with professionals from other countries and member organisations, and - in general - to network with these. Before the network was established, training was fragmented. That is no longer the case to the same degree. Furthermore, the development of a common understanding of key concepts – e.g. in relation to SWAP – has really added value. Several stakeholders also believe that their involvement in Train4Dev allows them to share costs and thus save time and money.	

Learning needs

The Core Group / Subgroup leaders and stakeholders were asked to what extent the structure of the network is appropriate to address the learning needs of donor agencies and partner organisations. The replies from a total of 26 respondents indicate that the majority is positive. Nevertheless, a noticeable proportion (one quarter) did not find that the structure of the network is appropriate to address the learning needs.

Agency awareness of Train4Dev

The above may reflect that Train4Dev is generally *not* well known within donor agencies beyond the staff that is directly involved. Out of 17 stakeholders consulted, 7 have either a limited or very limited awareness of the existence/activities of Train4Dev. In view of that, it is not surprising that 8 out of 16 stakeholders indicated that staff members of donor agencies only integrate learning from Train4Dev activities into their actual work to a limited or very limited extent.

4 Effectiveness

Box 4-1 provides an overview of the key findings with regard to effectiveness; i.e. the extent to which objectives are achieved.

Box 4-1   Key Findings

> • Governing structure is conducive to effectiveness
>
> • The network's website needs further improvements
>
> • Open courses are shared in the network
>
> • There is general progress towards meeting the objectives
>
> • There is a good track record with regard to delivery of JLEs
>
> • Knowledge is shared and harmonisation is taking place

Governance structure

One of the questions from the ToR is whether the governance structure of the network is conducive to effectiveness. Train4Dev operates through an Annual Meeting, a Core Group and Subgroups, including cross-cutting "support groups."

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting consists of all member organisations of Train4Dev and observers who may wish to become members. It decides on the strategic objectives of the network and the specific areas of co-operation. It also discusses and adopts the annual work programme and elects the core group chair for a year-long term.[6] Member organisations take turns to host the Annual Meeting.

Core Group

The Core Group comprises one or two named representatives of the host organisations of the previous, present and future Annual Meeting. The organisers of the last Annual Meeting were France and EuropeAid, the 2011 Annual Meeting will be organised by Lux-Development and BTC, and the following Annual Meeting in 2012 will be organised by ADA and ITC-ILO. Therefore, the designated representatives from these members constitute the current Core Group.

Lux-Development provides the current chair of the Core Group. Lux-Development has had to make time available for the senior staff who has agreed to take this responsibility and was elected during the 2010 annual meet-

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[6] The incumbent may be re-elected for a second term.

ing. Additionally, Lux-Development provides a part time assistant to the Chair who is also the webmaster of www.train4dev.net . Apart from the Chair, the other key position is that of the Subgroup Coordinator and the Communication Coordinator, both provided by EuropeAid.

The responsibilities of the Core Group Chair include leading the network, acting on the annual work programme, and ensuring the network's activities and programmes are agreed.

Subgroups

The subgroups form the backbone of the network. The subgroups consist of representatives of member organisations working on priority themes identified or endorsed by the Annual Meeting. Currently there are 14 sub-groups listed on the website from which 8 are active, 3 emerging, and 3 pending or in-active.

Each subgroup is self-organized and developed by sub-groups of members on a voluntary basis and according to their interest in the particular area. One of the sub-group members acts as the lead agency, manages the activities and reports to the Subgroup Coordinator and the Core Group. Implementation is often carried out by experts selected through open tendering processes according to the terms and conditions of the lead agency.

The responsibilities of the Subgroup Coordinator include ensuring that subgroups develop annual objectives and work plans, ensuring good communication with subgroup leaders, and ensuring the subgroup leaders are aware of and fulfil their reporting responsibilities.

It is important to emphasise that the working and funding modalities differ from subgroup to subgroup.

It should also be noted that some subgroups have functioned more as crosscutting support groups (Knowledge Management, and Evaluation) for the subgroups that organise JLEs and/or facilitate knowledge sharing.

The table below provides key points on the modalities and outputs of the four Subgroups that were selected for case study under this evaluation.

Table 4.1: Subgroups - modalities and outputs

Sub-group	Modality	Outputs
Knowledge management	Cross cutting, hub of competences on knowledge management methods and tools	Modules: Introduction to KS and KM; KM methods and tools; communities of practice; on-line facilitation. WIKI based toolkit for joint training.
MfDR	Basket fund, the service provider, MDF (Netherlands), has been contracted to facilitate the JLEs.	10 JLEs in 2009-2011. MfDR joint learning programme package of materials.

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SWAP	Currently not active. Basket fund, 2011 financing to be decided	25 JLEs over the period 2005-2010. Training kits for a standard event and a senior level event.
Public Financial Management	Not characterised as "JLEs" but has developed a course framework to be implemented within member organisations. Plus knowledge sharing/networking	Internal guidance "package" on partner government systems including guidelines and tools. Two Danida E-learning courses are available for members as introductory modules. The following courses have been carried out on the basis of the course framework: Danida: 2 courses in 2010 AusAid: 4 courses in 2010 DFID: 3 courses 2010 EC: 17 courses in 2010 PEFA: 9 courses in 2010 Sida: 5 courses in 2010.

Subgroup overview

The modalities of the subgroups have different advantages and challenges depending on their objectives and opportunities. The following table illustrates some of these.

Table 4.2: Subgroup modalities

Modality	Advantages	Challenges
With separate funding - focus on JLEs (SWAP, MfDR, PRS)	Allows implementation of training programmes on a larger scale. Close collaboration across donors. Collaborative development and implementation of a specific training module add to increased harmonisation. Cost and resource sharing allows smaller donors to participate and contribute.	Resource demanding for the development and implementation of JLEs. Need long time for planning which makes the approach less flexible. Less responsive to changing needs.
Focus on developing shared frameworks or packages for training (PFM)	Shared cost for development. Collaborative development of training modules add to increased harmonisation. The developed training modules can be adapted to the specific needs of the individual donors and target groups.	Needs total funding from individual donors for the implementation of training. Less combined effort compared to above.

Information and resource sharing (KM)	Insight to resources and experiences from other members. Are able to focus on cross cutting issues and collect best practices. More responsive to needs. Low input of resources.	Flexible and open planning that requires less commitment to contribution and participation than the above. More difficult to measure outputs.

Annex 1 provides a complete and fully updated overview of the subgroups, including their status, Subgroup leader and members, as well as information on all their delivered JLEs. The information in the Annex has been verified by the Subgroup leaders.

Website

The website contains core information on Train4Dev, the core group and sub-pages for the different subgroups. Not all subgroups have placed information on their web pages. The discussion board page currently contains only six posts and is rarely used. Although a lot of effort has recently been made to improve Train4Dev's website, nearly two-thirds of the stakeholder respondents to the e-survey only score "some" to the question to which extent the website supports the information and operational needs and the effectiveness of the network.

Assessment of governance structure

The e-survey responses from Core Group members and Subgroup leaders indicate that practically all find that Train4Dev's governance structure is conducive to effectiveness. They also believe that the Annual Meetings support the guidance and information needs of the network.

Overall, it is the assessment of the evaluation team that Train4Dev's governance structures have stood the test of time and served the network well. The governance structures are lean and characterised by personal commitment and an inbuilt mechanism (i.e. voluntarism) that ensures constant relevance and focus on the needs and priorities of the members of the network. This is conducive to effectiveness.

The preparation and roll-out of joint learning programmes are, perhaps, where Train4Dev is making the most distinct and unique contribution, compared to the situation if the network had not existed. The statistics in this regard are therefore a good indicator of Train4Dev's effectiveness.

Open courses

Member donors open some of their courses for other members' personnel. It was mentioned during interviews with donors that open courses are flexible and responsive, and that the sharing of resources and opportunities through open courses is much appreciated by the members.

GIZ and ITC ILO are examples of institutions that offer space for Train4Dev members in open courses. A number of open courses have been offered especially in the sub-group on PFM, e.g. by GIZ or DFID. Travel and accommodation costs are usually covered by the participants, while course attendance is free to members of Train4Dev. A list of open courses is published on the Train4Dev website. This reveals a wide variety of open course topics that are

closely related to the themes of the subgroups. At present the list comprises 19 courses, but not all open courses are included on the list.

Train4Dev does not have data on how many open courses have been offered and to what extent these opportunities have been used by the members, but our interviews indicate that at least some of the members occasionally utilise the open courses. Danida informed us that some of their staff have attended DFID open courses several times and occupied up to six seats at different courses. CEF is an example of a training institution and a network member that reserves two seats for Train4Dev members in their courses, but the individual courses are not listed directly on the Train4Dev website. CEF informed that especially ADA has used the opportunity of the open courses and has attended six workshops in two years.

Furthermore, Danida offers their e-learning course *Introduction to Public Financial Management* as an open course, as an addition to a component in the PFM training package. Danida has had 400-500 external participants from Train4Dev member organisations completing its e-learning programmes.

Joint Learning Events

By the end of 2010 Train4Dev had carried out a total of 76 Joint Learning Events (JLEs) based on joint learning programmes developed by eight Subgroups.

Table 4.3: Joint Learning Events

Sub-Group	2003/4	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Sub total
Poverty Reduction Strategies	11		6	5	2			**24**
Sector Wide Approaches		3	6	10	2	2	2	**25**
Pro-poor Growth						1	1	**2**
Managing for Development Results						2	7	**9**
Effective Electoral Assistance			1	2	3	5	1	**12**
Capacity Development					1	1	1	**3**
Conflict Prevention and Peace Building			1	1				**2**
Sub-total	**11**	**3**	**14**	**18**	**8**	**11**	**12**	**77**

Data on participation has not been available for all the joint learning events, but it is estimated that more than 3000 participants have been trained in the 77 JLEs.

The sub-groups on Sector Wide Approaches and Poverty Reduction Strategies (both are now closed down) have implemented the vast majority of JLEs (25 and 24). The annual delivery of JLEs peaked in 2007, when 18 JLEs were delivered. The overall the average is 9.6 events per year. As illustrated in Figure 4.1 below, the early years were dominated by JLEs of mainly two subgroups

rolling out their programmes (SWAP and PRS), while in the later years the JLEs reflect new activities in a broader range of sub-groups.

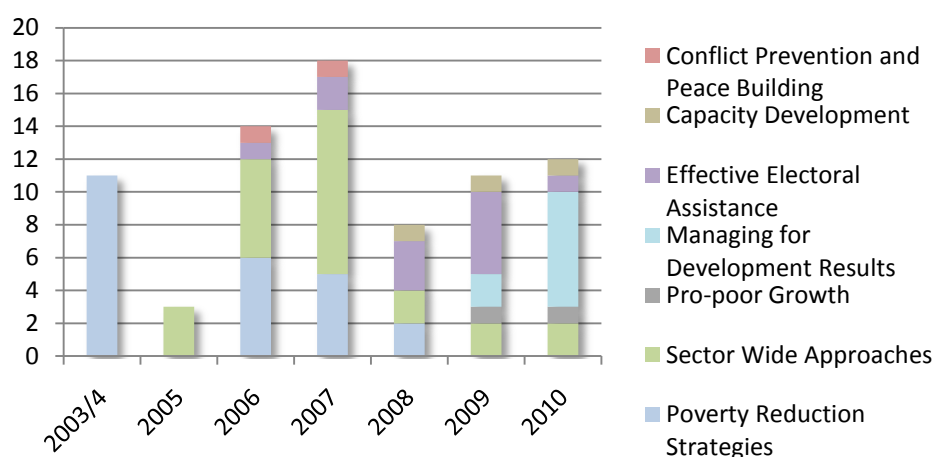*Figure 4.1: Distribution of Joint Learning Events*

Figure 4.1 reveals that there was a drop in the number of JLEs after the record year (2007), but also that there has been an *increase* in the annual number of JLEs between 2008 and 2010. For 2011 eight JLEs have already been planned, and two of these were implemented in March.

Table 4.4: Participation in JLEs of MfDR, SWAP and PRS*

JLE programme (no. of events)	Number of Countries	Total participants	% Donors	% Government	% CSOs/private
MfDR-JLE - 10	8	344	28	54	18
SWAP-JLE - 25	20	1040	25	65	10
PRS JLE - 11	11	790	62	26	11

* Data from JLE reports and sub-group progress reports.

Government representatives have dominated the participation in the LJEs on MfDR and SWAP, whereas in PRS the JLEs were mainly donors. Representation by the CSOs/private sector has been relatively low in all three joint learning programmes.

Assessment of evaluation team

It is natural that each theme "has its time" on the global development agenda. As discussed in Chapter 3, PRS and SWAP came onto the agenda early and the demand for joint approaches in these areas was strong. Over time, however, this need has waned in parallel with the increased adoption of PRSPs - in some countries in second and third generations of these - and wide acceptance of sector approaches and even budget support. But, as Figure 4.1 illustrates,

Train4Dev has launched joint approaches in new areas and even shown a generally rising trend in the delivery of JLEs. Nevertheless, there is a perception among those inside Train4Dev that this is rather insufficient. Only 9 out of 15 Core Group members and Subgroup leaders stated "some" to the question: "to what extent is the network achieving satisfactory progress towards its stated role and objectives?" The evaluation team believes that Train4Dev's track record with regard to delivery of JLEs merits a more positive assessment.

Effect on training policies

There are indications, however, that Train4Dev is not very effective when it comes to affecting the strategies of their member organisations for competence development of their own staff and advisors. Asked to what extent this happens, one-third out of 16 respondents from the Core Group and Subgroup leaders in the e-survey replied to some extent and one-third replied either to a limited or very limited extent.[7] A similar number of stakeholders gave an even less favourable rating: about one-third replied to some extent while half replied either to a limited or very limited extent. In the opinion of the evaluation team, this is not surprising given that Train4Dev does not really aim to change training policies.

Other effects

However, the JLEs and Open Courses have had a broad range of other effects. Stakeholders report that JLEs and the Open Courses have built thematic competences in the areas they have addressed, mainly within member organisations at headquarters and embassy level – and to some extent among developing country partner organisations. Moreover, the stakeholders point out that the JLEs and Open Courses have contributed to developing a common language and a better understanding of each other's views. Concrete problem solving and policy building has been facilitated in the field, and the prior discussion and common understanding has saved time for the donors.

Finally, 13 out of 17 stakeholders find that the network is contributing to a high extent towards enhanced donor harmonisation in the field of training and competence development. Of the 62 course participants who responded to this question in the e-survey, 45% responded "to some extent" while 35% responded "to a high extent."

Reasons for achievements

In the e-survey, 11 Core Group members and Subgroup leaders reflected on the reasons for Train4Dev's achievements. Measured by the frequency of mentioning, the most important factor is without a doubt the commitment and engagement of the individuals who take part in the network's activities. The network is characterised by dedicated people who enjoy friendship and good relationships with one another.[8] Another reason mentioned by several is that Train4Dev provides an opportunity to harmonise, which every donor is obliged to do. Finally, Train4Dev is regarded by some as an opportunity to save costs, compared to the situation if the network had not existed, in part because the network is informal and non-bureaucratic.

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[7] Three respondents stated a "high" extent while two respondents replied "not applicable".

[8] This also came out very clearly during the Special Meeting of Subgroup leaders in Bruxelles on 3 March 2011, during which an external facilitator moderated an appreciative enquiry session on Train4Dev.

Nearly all the Core Group members and Subgroup leaders consulted in the e-survey believe that the present mix of Joint Learning Events and Open Courses is effective in delivering on the overall goal of aid effectiveness.

There is a general feeling among Core Group members, Subgroup leaders and stakeholders that the current mix of policy staff, development practitioners and HR-staff who are involved in Train4Dev activities has a positive effect on these. However, some point out that the balance is too heavy towards HR-staff and that not enough policy staff and development/technical staff are involved. Experience shows that when all three staff categories are engaged, it works very well. Furthermore, HR-staff have benefitted from interacting with development/technical staff from other agencies.

Reasons for non-achievements

The Core Group members and Subgroup leaders also identified reasons for non-achievements. One of the most frequently mentioned issues is organisational self-interest. In this connection, it is seen as a weakness that Train4Dev relies on voluntary contributions, especially in a time of widespread budget cuts. Similarly, the (now) relatively weak participation of some of the large donors is cited as a reason. To some donors, it is an issue that they feel they contribute more than they get in return.

A second issue relates to communication. It is believed that Train4Dev is still not well-known beyond the circles of its active members, and that more self-promotion should take place. In this connection, it is pointed out that network members in general do not keep abreast with developments on the Train4Dev website.

A third issue – identified as one of the conclusions in the assessment of JLEs in MfDR – is that it has been difficult to attract (and keep) key actors and senior level personnel for a three day learning event, especially if the involvement of relevant stakeholders has been low in the preparatory stages. A quotation from a statement made by one of the course participants in a JLE on MfDR illustrates some aspects of this problem:

> *The government counter parts (directors) left after the first break.[9] The (key) ministry did not make any follow up on the course's content, and I did not witness that the ministry changed its approach of managing the national reform programme to more results orientation.*

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[9] According to MDF, it is actually in accordance with their plans that high level people do not attend the full event.

5   Efficiency

Box 5-1 provides an overview of the key findings with regard to efficiency; i.e. the extent the desired effects are achieved at a reasonable cost.

Box 5-1   Key Findings

- Activity costs are competitive relative to similar types of training services
- JLEs are cost effective
- There is limited multiplication of JLEs
- There is limited duplication / knowledge exchange between subgroups
- The network structure is conducive to efficiency
- The network delivers value for money

Most evaluations grapple with the question of cost-effectiveness. In the real world, costs can seldom be compared with the benefit and outcomes of aid interventions. Train4Dev is no exception to this.

Seen from the perspective of Subgroup leaders, the main outputs of the JLEs are improved common understanding of important development terms, issues and trends, as well as improved harmonisation from bringing the relevant stakeholders together and the high quality of training that a JLE can offer. Furthermore, outputs referred to are networking and knowledge sharing. Who can put a definite price-tag on such outputs?

Cost per participant, JLE

However, it is possible to discuss some efficiency proxies. The direct costs of each participant per course can be calculated. The JLEs of the Managing for Development Results subgroup may be examined as an example. The basket fund that was established to develop and implement a series of JLEs in MfDR amounted to EUR 481,000. By the end of 2010, a total of 313 staff had been trained in MfDR through the delivery of 9 JLEs in 7 different countries.[10] As 31 participants took part in the most recent – and last – JLE in MfDR (Nicaragua, March 2011), the average cost per participant has amounted to EUR 1,400 per

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[10] Managing for Development Results - "Joint Learning Event on MfDR," *4th Progress Report (July-December 2010)* submitted by GIZ and MDF Training & Consultancy on 7 January 2011.

course. International training experts generally find this price for a 3-day training event to be in the competitive range.

However, the above calculation does not tell the full story. The following would need to be added to get a more accurate picture of the total costs. First, the costs of MfDR subgroup members who have spent time (salary portions and some direct travel costs among others) in developing the subgroup and the programme of JLE in MfDR. Second, the local costs in connection with the JLEs (these comprise the time and costs of in-country lead donors and in some cases also travel, per diems, rent of venue for the learning event and accommodation costs for participants if the training venue is outside the capital city). While these "hidden" costs are a part of the total picture, we believe that it would be pointless to attempt to impute their price; besides, all development assistance has a measure of this.

The principle of *cost-sharing* enables the members, especially those with limited resources, to engage in JLEs. Even though the total cost (development, facilitation and implementation, including venue and transportation costs) might exceed a competitive price level, the individual contributions are less than fully sponsoring the training event alone.

Economies of scale

Despite the above limitations, it is commonsensical to assume that there are certain efficiency gains (from economies of scale[11]) associated with the implementation of series of JLEs – such as it has been the case with e.g. the joint learning programmes in SWAP (24 separate JLEs) and PRS (18 separate JLEs). Conversely, if a JLE is implemented only once – as was the case with the JLE in Conflict Prevention and Peace Building in 2005 – then there would be no gains from economies of scale and the costs per participant would be higher.

In the self-assessment of the Subgroup leaders, the JLEs are generally cost effective. One half finds – to a high extent – that the modalities used for joint learning are cost-effective, while the other half sees this happening to some extent. However, a majority of these believe – only to some extent – that the multiplication of the Joint Learning Events is done in an efficient way. This suggests that the potential economies of scale are not fully reaped, at least not by Train4Dev.

Exchange between subgroups

Another indicator of efficiency is whether the network capitalises on the existing opportunities for organisational synergy. One area where this could occur is among the subgroups. The Core Group members and Subgroup leaders were, therefore, asked to what extent there is exchange between the subgroups. 10 out of 16 found that exchange between the subgroups takes place to a limited or very limited extent. The others indicated this happened to some extent. Not surprisingly, the picture was very similar when the Subgroup leaders were asked whether lessons learned and experiences are exchanged between subgroups. In other words, this is an area where there is definitely scope for efficiency improvement.

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[11] Economies of scale occur when the average cost per unit falls as the scale of output is increased.

Coordination with other networks

External coordination represents another possibility to increase efficiency. Three-quarters of the Core Group members and Subgroup leaders who responded to the e-survey find that Train4Dev coordinates with other international organisations and networks to some extent. There is almost unanimous agreement among the Core Group members and Subgroup leaders that Train4Dev does not duplicate the work of others.

One example of a similar network, with which there is some coordination, is the "Practitioners' Network for European Development Cooperation" This is an open platform for exchange, coordination and harmonisation. The Practitioners' Network, which has existed since 2007, has 11 members and it aims to facilitate exchange of experience (but does not train) on aid effectiveness. Interestingly, DFID, which has now practically withdrawn from Train4Dev, plays a very active role in that network. Another feature of interest compared to Train4Dev is that the Practitioners' Network has a small permanent Secretariat, in Bruxelles. Another relevant network is the "Global Development Learning Network" (GDLN), which is coordinated by the World Bank. The GDLN is a partnership of over 120 recognized global institutions (Affiliates) in over 80 countries that collaborates in the design of customised learning solutions for individuals and organisations working in development.

Train4Dev's informal structure

The informal structure, voluntary character and dependence on personal commitment are key characteristics of Train4Dev, like most other networks. These features can lead to cost-effectiveness, but may also cause problems and constraints.

Among the stakeholders, 15 out of 17 e-survey respondents believe that the membership of Train4Dev is highly dependent on personal interest and the engagement of individuals. The Core Group members and Subgroup leaders were asked to assess this. 11 out of the 16 persons who responded see this – overall – as a benefit and 5 see it as a constraint. Some respondents mentioned that the personal commitment is generally a benefit, but this becomes a constraint when people change positions and discontinue their involvement in Train4Dev. Another respondent emphasised that the network features keep it light, flexible and directly focussed on the needs of the member organisations. The fact that Train4Dev is an informal structure is seen to facilitate the establishment of contacts, the cooperation between partners and the exchange of information, but it is also seen as a reason for the limited exchange between the Train4Dev subgroups.

Based on the interviews and Train4Dev meetings the evaluation team has participated in, we find that the advantages from the current set-up outweigh the disadvantages.

A large majority of the Core Group members and Subgroup leaders find that the financial and administrative set-up of Train4Dev is appropriate, and several even find that this is the case to a high or very high extent.

Good value for money

The response to the bottom line question – to what extent does the network provide "good value" for money in relation to the results achieved? – are abun-

dantly clear: 10 out of 16 Core Group members and Subgroup leaders find that the network provides good value to a high or very high extent. Five of the respondents to this question indicated to some extent and only one to a limited extent.

6   Sustainability

Box 6-1 provides an overview of the key findings with regard to sustainability; i.e. the extent to which positive effects are likely to last after Train4Dev activities.

Box 6-1   Key Findings

- The Network is adequately resourced

- Only little up-scaling of JLEs is taking place

- There is generally limited awareness in relation to the network and its activities

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Sustainability, in the sense of whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn, can be assessed in several ways. In this section we will look at resources and up-scaling, institutionalisation of Train4Dev within the member organisations and the match with partner country needs.

Financial viability

A majority of the Core Group members believe that Train4Dev's activities, especially the Joint Learning Events, are adequately resourced.

The Core Group members and Subgroup leaders were asked what could be learned from experience to ensure financial viability of JLEs in the future. Several respondents pointed to the importance of using simple arrangements, e.g. a lead donor and a basket fund. One person reflected that perhaps a more structured and formal secretariat would solve a few issues of the network, but this person also sensed that in the prevailing budget constrained environment in all agencies, the appetite for such a function would be limited. Finally, one respondent suggested that a process needs to be initiated to assess and evaluate different possibilities to ensure financial viability of the JLEs.

Scaling up

The SWAP, MfDR and PFM subgroups have developed frameworks for implementation of a training event including training materials that is made public available on the Train4Dev website and which provide opportunities for scaling up the JLEs.

In the e-survey, Core Group members and Subgroup leaders were asked to give examples where Joint Learning Events have been scaled up (replicated) without the direct involvement of Train4Dev. Apparently, apart from the up-scaling of

some of the activities of the subgroup on SWAp (examples in Tanzania, Namibia and Serbia), the JLEs have not been scaled up.

However, one of the Subgroup leaders remarked that she was not too sure whether a JLE, with its very special character, can just be replicated or scaled up. She argued that the methodology and the content can, but the JLE itself is a rather unique set-up. She liked the idea that it be made possible to scale up the JLEs and suggested that the compiled set of training materials, which was developed within the subgroup for MfDR, is a good example that could serve as a point of departure for further discussions.

Visibility

More than half of the Core Group members and Subgroup leaders indicate that the activities of Train4Dev are only to a limited or very limited extent institutionalized as core activities of their agencies. More than one-third of the stakeholders share this view, while half of them say this happens to some extent. A majority of the e-survey responses also indicates that Train4Dev is not sufficiently on the "radar" of the agency decision makers. Awareness about Train4Dev generally appears to be limited to those who have had direct involvement, either through funding decisions, JLEs, participation in Open Courses or some of the sector work of the subgroups. In other words, the membership in Train4Dev is not an interest that is widely spread in member organisations.

There may also be a lesson to learn from subgroup activities that never took off, or took very long to do so. One lesson in that regard is that it is important for partners to agree on an action plan with a concrete timetable and clearly defined steps to reach agreed objectives.

Partner country awareness and involvement

Train4Dev was established as a network for the competence development of donor staff, but the scope is now widened to include partners' organisations to some extent. There are strong indications, however, that the partner countries are not yet sufficiently aware of the value of Joint Learning Events. A majority of the Core Group members and Subgroup leaders believe partner countries' awareness of JLEs is limited or very limited. In a similar vein, more than 70% of the 63 course participants who responded to the same e-survey question indicated that there was only some or limited awareness of this.

However, a similar majority of Core Group members and Subgroup leaders believe that Train4Dev has made efforts – to some or a high extent – to involve different stakeholders (including partner government staff and civil society representatives) in their activities. But there is not a consensus among the Core Group members and Subgroup leaders on this question. A few of these believe that Train4Dev has made efforts to do this only to a very limited extent. On the other hand, when asked the same question, two-thirds of 63 course participants found that such efforts had been made to either a high or very high extent.

Train4Dev activities have not been marketed as learning opportunities for partners on a wide scale due to limitations of Train4Dev and its member agency mandates and funding sources.

7   Impact

Box 7-1 provides an overview of the key findings with regard to impacts; i.e. long-lasting effects.

Box 7-1   Key Findings

> • The impacts of on harmonisation and knowledge-sharing of the network are intangible and largely undocumented
>
> • JLEs generate lasting learning effects that are applied by course participants

Impact in the sense of positive or negative long-term effects produced by Train4Dev activities, either directly or indirectly, intended or unintended, is not easy to measure. This is clearly recognised in the Terms of Reference for this evaluation.

The separate assessment that was made of the outcomes of JLEs on MfDR can, however, shed some light on the possible impact of the JLEs offered through the different subgroups. One of the conclusions from that study was that knowledge and skills obtained during the JLEs have not been disseminated to a great extent in the home organisations of the course participants, but the JLEs have had a range of positive impacts on the work performance of the course participants. More than two-thirds of the MfDR JLE course participants found that the impact on their work performance had happened to an either high or very high extent.

Views from the Core Group and Subgroup leaders

Despite the difficulties in measuring impact, we asked Core Group members and Subgroup leaders to indicate whether they had any evidence that the work of Train4Dev has had an impact on the global aid effectiveness agenda.

Twelve of these persons offered their views through an open-ended question in the e-survey. Judging from this assessment of some of the individuals who are currently those most closely involved in Train4Dev's activities, it is clear that there is no hard evidence that there has been an impact. This is not to say that there has been no impact; only that this has not been measured by Train4Dev as a whole, or by any of its subgroups.

However, there are several indications of likely impact. For example, Train4Dev is effectively "living" the idea of donor harmonisation by breaking
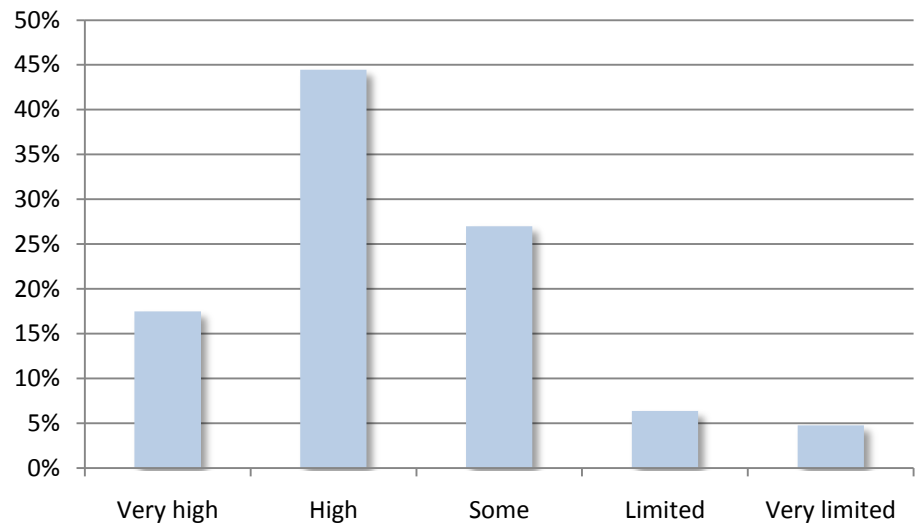
the global idea of aid effectiveness down to a lower level and turning it into practice. Train4Dev's objective is to produce common approaches for donor interventions in its various areas of activity. Practically all of its activities in the partner countries gather staff from development agencies as well as national bodies and others, aiming specifically to contribute to harmonisation and alignment, results and ownership aspects. In other words, Train4Dev is answering directly to Article 32 of the Paris Declaration, which says that donors must commit to work together and: "promote joint training to share lessons learned and build a community of practice." Train4Dev is probably the only entity to do so!

Train4Dev has also facilitated the integration of small donor agencies into 'mainstream' global aid efforts, and it has provided an essential tool for harmonisation to some of these. It has provided opportunities to fight against isolation by bringing their staff in contact with other organisations, not only for subjects covered by the sub-groups.

Views from the course participants

The above are only perceptions of likely impact. However, the e-survey produced more solid data from the course participants. And, compared with the perceptions of the Core Group members and Subgroup leaders, their views on impact perhaps weigh more importantly. Figure 7.1 below illustrates to what extent 63 course participants in Train4Dev's training activities found that this produced lasting learning effects on them.

Figure 7.1: Lasting learning effects on course participants

The responses from the course participants show a remarkably high degree of self-assessed lasting learning effects as the result of Train4Dev activities. When consideration is given to the fact that most of the learning activities took place several years ago, these responses show a real ex-post impact.

When asked whether they had applied any of the learning from the training they attended, 35 out of the 63 course participants answered "yes" and 18 answered

"no" (10 indicated not applicable/don't know). As the responses cover the experiences of all the JLEs in all the countries since 2003, it is impossible to be precise with regard to how the course participants applied the learning. However, their comments generally indicate that the learning from the JLEs has been applied in the daily work processes of the course participants, and that it has strengthened their abilities to perform.

In one case, one of the African course participants (Economic Adviser to the Minister of Planning) made recommendations to the government to duplicate the training from the JLE for decision makers and international partners operating in his country. In another African country, the insights and tools from a JLE on Managing for Development Results led to the development of a new, comprehensive jointly funded M&E strengthening initiative in the health sector. The SWAP sub-group has been approached by Asian Development Bank, National Planning Commission Secretariat in Namibia and AusAID/NZAID in connection with other SWAP initiatives.

In our separate assessment of JLEs on Managing for Development Results, participants were asked to what extent the JLE had an impact on their work performance; two-thirds replied that this happened to a high to a very high extent, and 23% stated to some extent. The main impact on work performance was making use of MfDR methods/tools and improved planning and evaluation of activities.[12]

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[12] "Assessing the outcomes of Joint Learning Events on Managing for Development Results in 2009/2010"

8   Conclusions

Overall conclusions

Train4Dev has provided an effective response to the call for enhanced donor harmonisation in the field of competence development and training.

Over the period 2003-2010 Train4Dev has delivered 77 Joint Learning Events in more than 30 countries for approximately 3,000 participants from member (donor) organisations, partner governments and NGO/civil society/private sector. This is a substantial and very tangible output, not least when one considers that these results have been delivered by a voluntary network of donor organisations.

Conclusions on the evaluation criteria

Train4Dev's activities have been highly **relevant**, both in relation to the series of High Level Meetings and the specific needs of the partner countries. Train4Dev has also been an asset to especially the small member organisations, which have had access - through Train4Dev - to training resources that would otherwise have been hard to get.

Train4Dev's governance structures have stood the test of time and served the network well. While Train4Dev is highly dependent on personal interest and the strong engagement of individuals, a clear majority of the Core Group members and Subgroup leaders see this – overall – as a benefit. The evaluation team agrees that the advantages from the current set-up outweigh the disadvantages.

Knowledge and experience sharing mainly happens within the subgroups and the modality of certain subgroups is especially focused on this. Annual meetings, information bulletins from the core group, the website and activities from cross cutting groups as e.g. the Knowledge Management subgroup also serves as important platforms for networking and exchange of information across the subgroups, but there are indications that there is a need to improve the knowledge and information sharing in Train4Dev.

With regard to **effectiveness**, the evaluation team finds that the network is achieving satisfactory progress towards its stated role and objectives. The evaluation team finds that Train4Dev's track record with regard to delivery of JLEs merits a positive assessment. This assessment is, among others, based on the fact that there has been an *increase* – and diversification – in the annual number of JLEs between 2008 and 2010, after the total number of JLEs peaked in 2007. Moreover, the governing structure of the network is conducive to effectiveness.

Regarding the **efficiency**, there are several indications that Train4Dev is cost effective and to some extent saves money and time for its members. It's informal structure is reported to be conducive to efficiency. However, it appears that the potential economies of scale from the multiplication of JLEs are not fully reaped and that knowledge-sharing could be increased between subgroups.

With regard to **sustainability**, there is little evidence that the network and its activities are sustainable. Standard training packages are available on the network's website, but JLEs have only in a few cases been scaled up (replicated) without the direct involvement of Train4Dev. It is also questionable whether up-scaling is really possible given the special joint-donor aspect of the JLE mechanism.

Train4Dev does not monitor the **impact** of its activities and there is limited hard evidence that there has been an impact. However, there are several indications of likely impact. In this connection, the e-survey indicated a remarkably high degree of lasting learning effects as a result of Train4Dev activities. A high percentage of course participants report that they have applied the learning from the training in their daily work processes and that it has strengthened their abilities to perform.

9   Recommendations

Core Group and
Subgroup leaders'
own recommenda-
tions:

… increasing mem-
bership

Core Group members were asked how active membership could be increased. One view is that this is not a priority since the majority of the relevant organisations are already members. Another view is that "new" member states like Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary should be approached more intensively, and that one member of the Core Group could assume the responsibility to do this. The same would be the case for the regional development banks and some bilateral donors such as Japan, Italy and Spain. A third view addresses the need to "activate" the existing members a bit more. This could be done, for instance, by setting some rules for contributing to common tools (e.g. web page). An option could also be to broaden membership by opening up to Foundations (which are large development donors e.g. the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Aga Khan Foundation.

9.1   From the members

… making the net-
work more effective

In the course of undertaking this work, the evaluation team has heard the following suggestions from Core Group members and Subgroup leaders about what can be done to make the network more effective. The following recommendations stand out most clearly:

Train4Dev organisation
• Promotion of more and better internal communication within the member organisations on what Train4Dev has to offer and its advantages (especially the JLEs). To a large extent, there is the perception that the awareness of Train4Dev is confined to the HR and training department staff of the member organisations. Those already involved in Train4Dev work should act as "ambassadors" on behalf of the network and inform their colleagues on especially the open course offerings available through the network and the JLEs and the opportunities they offer for networking.

• Increasing communication and exchange of activities at the subgroup level.

• Strengthening of the subgroups by including agency decision-makers and representatives from the technical divisions in some of the subgroups.

• Establishment of a longer-term strategy and objectives for each subgroup, while retaining their flexibility.

- Better clarification of the specific mission of Train4Dev and the sub-groups.

- Member organisations could provide a personal capacity for special tasks within Train4dev (as done by LuxDev, the current Chair of Train4Dev), and invest more personnel and financial resources in Train4Dev more generally.

- Appointing a high level coach to the Core Group. Not on a permanent basis, but a number of days per year to support with strategic guidance and planning.

- Paying a membership fee towards the establishment and operation of a secretariat.

Train4Dev's relations with its stakeholders
- Effectiveness is to a large extent linked to relevance. Therefore, the more the network can operate based on real and expressed needs from those it is supposed to serve, the more effective it will become.

- Increase the number of JLEs. They should be more demand-driven, and initiatives from the "field" (embassies / representations) should be encouraged. The use of in-country lead-donors should be re-emphasised.

- Discussing within Train4Dev on what is meant by 'effectiveness'. Just delivering more JLEs may not be the answer. To increase the outcome of courses, to increase cooperation with other networks, to establish partnerships etc. might be the best way to increase the level of 'effectiveness'.

- Improved communication. Some members and stakeholders still believe there is room to make the Train4Dev website more user-friendly. Results of Train4Dev activities should be better communicated to external stakeholders, including donor agencies that are not yet members of Train4Dev.

- Distribution of more information at partner country level in order to make the network and its advantages known. Further dissemination of information/advantages about Train4Dev through international discussion fora (EU, OECD, etc.)

- Closer links with the OECD-DAC and Working Party on Aid Effectiveness.

9.2 From the evaluation team

We believe that the above recommendations, which reflect the insights of Train4Dev members, are relevant and worthy of further consideration by the network. However, based on the evaluation work that we have undertaken, we would like to offer a few recommendations of our own. They should be seen as a modest supplement to those of the network members in the preceding section.

Train4Dev organisation
- Train4Dev should retain its informal network structure. The evaluation team fully supports the previous decision of Train4Dev not to establish a secretariat or introduce membership fees. We believe this may impact negatively on the network's flexibility and efficiency.

- Subgroup leaders should be obliged to maintain key documents in electronic archives (e.g. intranet portals or cloud-computing) that are handed-over when new Subgroup leaders take over.

- In the future, new subgroups should be established with a timeframe (e.g. 3 years) in which all its activities should be undertaken. The time frame should be negotiable every year according to the successes and work of the subgroup. This may make it easier to close subgroups that do not deliver as expected and allow the network to focus on areas of current priority at all times.

- Make some effort to revitalise the discussion Board on the website e.g. by requesting Subgroup Coordinators to start up, manage and refresh new discussion topics.

- Add a "sticker board" section on the website, where members can add announcements, up-coming events, photos and other relevant information to make the website more attractive and interactive.

- The access to open courses offered by other donors is a major motivational factor for participation in the network and further attention is needed to offer and promote the availability of open courses throughout the network. We recommend that members be encouraged to use the newly established "alert system" to ensure the appropriate distribution of information and announcements of open courses and other Train4Dev information.

- Members should endeavour to ensure that open courses offered through Train4Dev are taken into consideration in their organisational staff development plans or policies, including securing access for other Train4Dev members in internal courses and e-learning opportunities.

- Monitor the range and number of open courses and to which extent these opportunities are used by Train4Dev member personnel.

Train4Dev's relations with its stakeholders
- In those cases where partner country participation is a major feature, more attention should be given to ensure the active involvement and coordination with the national and local authorities in the partner countries, especially during the pre-JLE planning and selection process. In order to maximise the institutional up-take in the partner countries of learning from JLEs, it is essential that high-level government buy-in is guaranteed before a JLE is delivered.

- In order to ensure a better degree of participation from high level government officials, it should be considered to offer different learning modules depending on the level and experience of the course participants. For example, a half day session should be arranged for high level participants (Directors and Permanent Secretaries) separate from – or as an integral part of – the existing JLE. This was actually done in many of the JLEs in the area of SWAp; it should be replicated in other areas.

- Local resource persons have been used with success in the JLEs on MfDR. But even in that subgroup, where this has been emphasised, a better match with local needs and hence the relevance of the JLEs can be ensured by strengthening the involvement of local resource persons in the planning and implementation of JLEs. For all future JLEs, careful attention must be given to the selection of local resource persons and how to get a maximum involvement from them, and to the development of locally relevant case examples.

- Instituting a regular practice of follow-up activities to the JLEs is likely to increase the impact (personal learning and institutional up-take) of the courses. This could take place either through the establishment of JLE participant networks to facilitate sharing of experiences after the JLEs or, perhaps more effectively, through the delivery of follow-up events, e.g. a half day each, planned and implemented by the in-country donor in collaboration with the involved Train4Dev Subgroup and ministries in the respective countries.

The MfDR survey exposed that the main need does not seem to be to make improvements on the course content or its delivery, but rather to increase focus on implementing the learning outcomes and ensure they are endorsed and fully backed up by the political leadership and top management echelons where it is to be implemented.