Lessons learned from evaluations

Series 4

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Planning, Performance Monitoring, and Evaluation Unit

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Acronyms and abbreviations

EMS	Events Management System
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
LNOB	Leave no One Behind
OECD-DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee
PPME	Planning, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Unit
REA	Rapid Evidence Assessment
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UNOSAT	United Nations Satellite Centre

Executive Summary

The lessons learned series provides valuable insights for learning and improved decision-making related to future programming. This paper uses the rapid evidence assessment (REA) methodology to analyse and synthetize lessons learned from past UNITAR independent and self-evaluations undertaken between January 2016 and November 2024.

This fourth edition focuses on lessons related to beneficiary selection, data availability, political and security concerns, and visibility and awareness. Thirty-three lessons were analysed, resulting in 12 meta-lessons.

The following meta-lessons were derived:

Beneficiary selection

1. A thorough approach to target participants is imperative to reach the objectives of capacity development interventions.

2. Leaving no one behind requires intentionality, including a dedicated mechanism and clear selection criteria.

3. Merit-based selection criteria can support buy-in from leadership and increase attendance rates.

4. The richness of participant profiles may create better engagement through mutual learning and sharing, but attentive planning needs to be done for any potential challenges arising from divergent participant learning needs.

Data availability

1. Maintaining high-quality institute-wide management information systems should present benefits for both programmatic and functional units.

2. Sharing and working with data in training facilitates participants' utilization in their jobs.

Political and security concerns

1. In politically unstable countries and communities, a variety of online learning methodologies, as well as constant communication and consultation with stakeholders can be critical to ensure programmes' smooth implementation.

2. In politically unstable environments, it is essential to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the national and sector context before starting a project to ensure a deep understanding of the political, social and security environment.

3. In complex political environments, setting realistic goals and project scopes, and tapping into the local knowledge and experience in navigating local contexts of the coaches and local staff could help training participants to conduct needs assessments effectively.

<u>Visibility and awareness</u>

1. It is important to consider the costs of awareness raising campaigns and advocacy work particularly when decisions about scaling are taken.

2. Continuous efforts on clear visibility and communication to donor, partners and beneficiaries can strongly influence sustained funding and the impact of the initiative.

3. A strong branding strategy is essential for well-known organizations working on global level and can increase trust from the beneficiaries.

Introduction

Evaluations should enable the incorporation of lessons learned into decision-making processes (OECD, 2023). They should be utilization-focused and contribute to broader organizational learning and decision-making. Consistent with this perspective, these paper series aim to contribute to the management and dissemination of knowledge generated from previous evaluations to inform future programming.

In May 2024, the Planning, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (PPME) administered a survey on the use of its knowledge products and found that the lessons learned database has been used by 6 per cent of respondents and the lessons learned paper series by only 3 per cent of the respondents. The results highlight the importance of promoting better the use of lessons learned that can contribute to organizational learning.

Using the REA methodology, the series looks into the past and captures lessons learned from UNITAR's independent and self-evaluations across its programmes from January 2016 to November 2024. Each issue of the series contains lessons from different categories. This fourth issue focuses on lessons related to beneficiary selection, data availability, political and security concerns, and visibility and awareness. Thirty-three lessons were analysed, resulting in 12 meta-lessons.

The meta-lessons contain insights on targeting approaches for beneficiary selection, including selection criteria, considerations on training/learning methodologies for programming delivered under contexts with political and security concerns, and considerations to promote visibility, communication and awareness efforts.

Methodology

The guiding questions of this study are the following:

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

To answer these questions, this study analyses lessons learned from independent and self-evaluations available in the UNITAR repository of lessons learned as of 9 December 2024, covering the period from January 2016 to November 2024. For this exercise, lessons learned are understood as:

> Generalisation or extrapolation of findings and translation of analysis into relevant knowledge that supports decision making, improves performance and promotes the achievement of better results in other settings (beyond the intervention being evaluated).

> Frequently, lessons highlight strengths or weaknesses in the preparation, design, and implementation of interventions that affect performance and results. A lesson may be positive, neutral or negative. (OECD, 2023, p.39).

The analysis follows the REA methodology, which provides a balanced assessment of what is known (and not known) from evaluations about an intervention/programme/project by using a systematic methodology to search and critically appraise evidence (Barends, Rousseau, & Briner, 2017). A two-step procedure was applied: first, lessons under each category were reclassified in sub-categories; and second, meta-lessons were derived from their respective subcategory.

Excluding duplications, 33 lessons under four categories were analysed for this issue (Table 1). The full list of lessons with their respective categories and sub-categories is provided under Annex 1.

Table 1 - Number of lessons per category

Category	Number of lessons
Beneficiary selection	16
Data availability	5
Political and security concerns	4
Visibility and awareness	8
Total	33

Limitations

Two main limitations were encountered during the exercise. In order to be 'rapid', an REA necessarily needs to compromise on the breadth, depth and comprehensiveness of the search and, in this case, it does not allow for an in-depth study of the context of each project in which a lesson learned was formulated (Barends, Rousseau, & Briner, 2017). However, the evaluation reports served as background documents for understanding the interventions.

Another limitation is the unequal distribution of lessons learned by UNITAR divisions, with only a few lessons drawn from the People and Planet divisions (Table 2).

Table 2 – Lessons per Division

Division	Number of lessons
Prosperity	11
Peace	5
Multiple	5
Satellite Analysis and Applied Research	7
Planet	3
People	2
Total	**33**

Findings: Lessons Learned

Beneficiary selection

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The sixteen lessons learned recorded under this category generate four meta-lessons capturing the importance of updating and applying a thorough selection criteria and the benefits and challenges of participants' profile diversity.

1. A thorough approach to targeting participants is imperative to reach the objectives of capacity development interventions.

Capacity development interventions aim at changing capabilities, attitudes and behaviours of actors to generate certain results. An adequate definition of the results chain was identified as a lesson from evaluations in the first issue of the series, including defining well the assumptions of the causal pathways. At the center of these assumptions are the actors that will bring about the expected changes. Thus, a careful targeting approach that accounts for participants positions of power, opportunities to apply the gained knowledge, skills and attitudes; access to other actors; and contextual matters such as staff turnover and evolving international environment, is key to generate change. In other words, the targeting approach should account for the three levels of capacity development (Table 1), even if the programme only aims at influencing capacities at the individual level.

"In SIDS with small populations, government officials even at lower ranks have more power or leverage to influence institutional change and processes"

Reaching "the right" participants may also require a dedicated information campaign through direct invitation or targeted communications campaigns.

"Targeted information campaign allowed the organizers to reach-out to the right beneficiaries and received a considerable demand from the region"

Table 3 - Capacity areas within the three dimensions

Dimension	Areas and examples	
Individual	Skills levels (technical and managerial skills) Competencies	Essential knowledge, Cognitive skills, Interpersonal skills, Self-control, Attitude towards behaviour, Self-confidence, Professional identity, Norms, Values, Intentions, Emotions, Environmental barriers and enablers (among others)
Organizations	Mandates Horizontal and vertical coordination mechanisms Motivation and incentive systems Strategic leadership Inter/intra institutional linkages Programme management Multi-stakeholder processes	Organizational priorities Processes, systems and procedures Human and financial resources Knowledge and information sharing Infrastructure
Enabling environment	Policy and legal framework Political commitment and accountability framework Governance	Economic framework and national public budget allocations and power Legal, policy and political environment

2. Operationalizing the principle of leave no one behind requires intentionality, including a dedicated mechanism and clear selection criteria.

The second principle of the 2030 Agenda calls for leaving no one behind (LNOB) and reaching the furthest behind first. Respecting this principle when defining a programme's beneficiaries needs to be intentional, either by setting a selection criteria that includes populations that face persistent forms of discrimination and exclusion or by taking into account their needs. Yet, dedicated funding might need to be assigned to strictly and intentionally incorporating these.

"Reaching first the furthest behind (e.g. disadvantaged communities) requires strategizing, regular monitoring, disaggregating by categories of countries and explicit targeting of those, including choosing locations/partners according to those criteria. This might involve designing and enabling different incentives and operating conditions (e.g. differentiated affiliation fees)."

3. Merit-based selection criteria can support buy-in from leadership and increase attendance rates.

The wide research in the educational sector linking selection procedures and student's motivation (Seyfried, Hollenberg, & Heße-Husain, 2023; Ashaeryanto, Kristina & Hadianto, 2017) resonates in the training industry. Lessons from evaluations indicate that merit-based selection criteria generate greater buy-in from particpants' supervisors and increase their motivation which may result in greater attendance and programme completion rates.

Box 1 – UNITAR Hiroshima South Sudan Fellowship Programme
The UNITAR Hiroshima South Sudan Fellowship Programme started in 2015 and was still active in 2024. This long implementation period has allowed the project team to learn from past experiences. One of these lessons learned has been the buy-in gained from leadership when a competitive nomination and selection process take place.

The team identified that "merit-based nomination and selection of potential participants generated a positive response and buy-in from the top leadership of ministries and institutions. […] The nomination and selection process encourages healthy competition among nominees from a single organization. A written test was introduced in the 2018 cycle in the form of essay writing to further augment the interview and document screening process. Special attention was paid to individuals previous achievements, performance, and qualifications including English language skills, both written and spoken, during the selection process".

"Merit-based nomination and selection of potential [f]ellows generated a positive response and buy-in from the top leadership of ministries and institutions."

4. The richness in participant profiles may create better engagement through mutual learning and sharing, but attentive planning needs to be done for potential challenges arising from divergent participant learning needs.

The second issue of these series highlighted the importance of multidisciplinary groups to establish diverse networks and deepen the learner's experience. The lessons analysed under this category also confirmed this but add the need to cautiously plan for cases where participants learning needs are divergent. A proper planning of these divergences could facilitate project management efficiency in managing the programme, e.g., by reducing the time dedicated to this if only tackled at the time of project implementation and improve participants overall satisfaction with the programme, e.g., by attending a programme that covers their learning needs.

"Targeting diverse stakeholders was critical in light of the programme's focus on engaging citizens in the fight against corruption, but posed the challenge of meeting different and diverse learning needs."
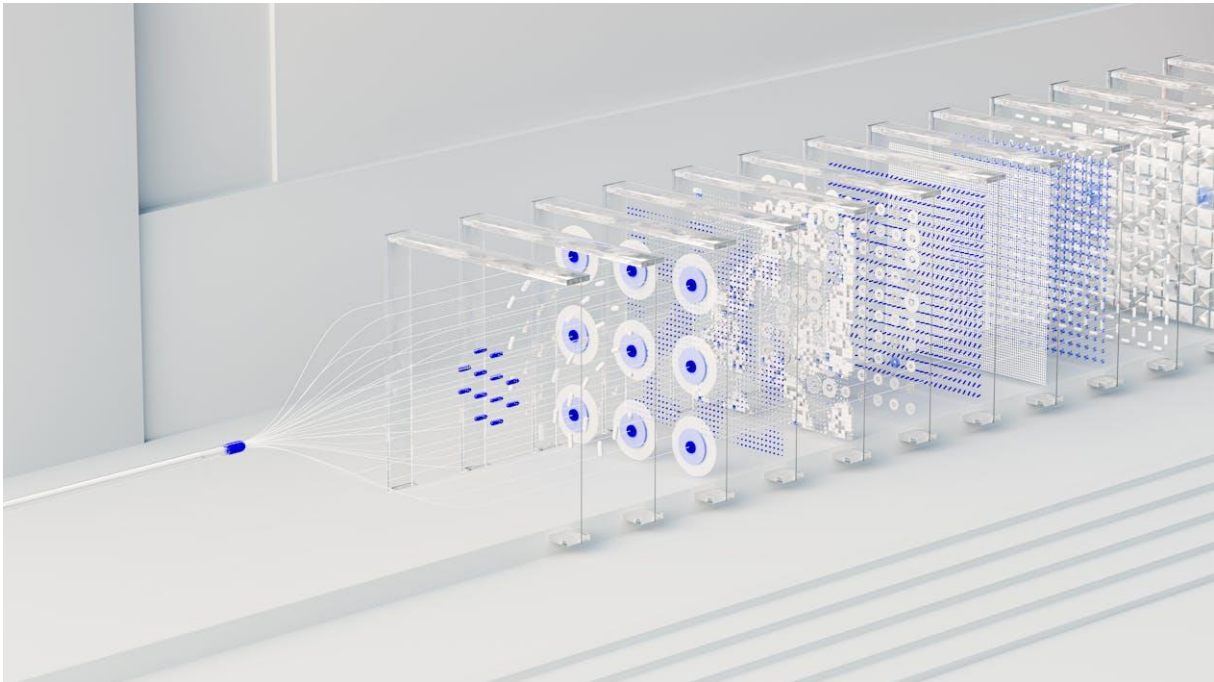
Data availability

Photo credit: Open source picture from Pexels.com

The five lessons recorded under this category led to two meta lessons applicable at the organisational level and for training conceptualisation purposes.

1. Maintaining high-quality Institute-wide management information systems should present benefits for both programmatic and functional units.

The UN Data Strategy recognizes data as a strategic asset to better deliver on the UN's mandate and highlights the importance of building a strong data ecosystem that maximizes the value of data. As such, management information systems play a critical role in linking the different nodes of this ecosystem, including data collection with data use. An accurate data collection process is as important for maximizing data usage as it is a data management system that properly stores, organizes, governs, integrates and shares[1] the collected data.

Besides data use for institutional monitoring processes, such as monitoring of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and preparation of corporate reports, organizational data can also serve decision-making at the programmatic level, such as project conceptualization, defining target audiences, programme delivery, among others. Management information systems should facilitate both purposes and demonstrate the benefits and create incentives for more accurate and timely data collection by itself.

"It is crucial to underscore the value of high-quality institute-wide management information system to ensure accurate data recording. Data management and entry processes should offer benefits to both programmatic and functional units."

Beyond organizational-level management information systems, such as those stored in the Event Management System (EMS) for UNITAR, the data ecosystem should also link and foster

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[1] Principles and instructions on the sharing and use of data at UNITAR: https://unitaremail.sharepoint.com/unitarnet/UNITARnet/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Funitarnet%2FUN ITARnet%2F2023%2D03%2D28%5FPrinciples%20and%20instructions%20on%20the%20sharing%2 0and%20use%20of%20data%5F7eb2504ac3971536687b815cb17a2e85%2Epdf&parent=%2Funitarn et%2FUNITARnet

use of other decentralized data for example, insights from lessons learned and evaluability assessments.

2. Sharing and working with data in training facilitates participants' utilization in their jobs.

Aside from organisational decision-making, the virtues of data accessibility and data use have also been perceived by UNITAR's training participants. Participants who have incorporated data manipulation and analysis as part of their content highly valued this practice as they considered this facilitated bridging the new hands-on skills with on-the-job application, including cases where open-source software has been combined with practical examples adapted to their contexts.

"Data shared in the discussions was highly valued and appreciated by the participants as they can use it easily in their professional work."

Political and security concerns

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The five lessons learned from this category contain one duplicate, making four unique lessons learned in total, from which three meta-lessons learned are formulated.

1. In politically unstable countries and communities, a variety of online learning methodologies and constant communication and consultation with stakeholders is critical to ensure the smooth implementation of programmes.

In the *UNITAR Hiroshima Developing Dreams: Entrepreneurship and Project Design in South Sudan 2019 cycle* project, online sessions and recorded video presentations and e-learning material proved to be effective as they allowed participants who were not able to join the in-person sessions to equally benefit from the training and also for all participants to review the materials at their chosen time and pace.

In the same project, political, tribal and ethnic tensions that erupt from time to time force people to flee and take refuge in camps and rural areas and consequently interrupting contact with training participants. Therefore, it was essential to maintain continuous communication and consultation with training participants to make sure programme implementers can prepare and plan for alternative solutions. Robust engagement and communication with participants have also proved to be effective in the *UNITAR Hiroshima Transforming the Future: Empowering Social Entrepreneurs and Youth Leaders for Iraq 2020* project given the equally challenging political context of Iraq.

2. In politically unstable environments, it is essential to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the national and sector context before starting a project to ensure a deep understanding of the political, social and security environment.

An important factor contributing to the positive outcomes of the *Strengthening the capacity of the judicial system and promoting the rule of law in Mali Phase II* project was the considerable consultation and engagement with a broad range of relevant stakeholders including ministries, NGOs and other judicial stakeholders in the previous phase. The project's second phase received full support from these key stakeholders, especially the Minister of Justice in Bamako, to reform the justice sector, without which the project would not have been able to materialize. The project team's local knowledge also played a key role as they understood the mindset of political actors. These factors were essential to ensure the strengthening of the judicial system amid the politically unstable situation in Mali following the military coup in 2020 and the subsequent establishment of a transitional government.

Not only before starting a project but maintaining timely assessment of the political and security contexts during the project implementation is also important in politically unstable environments, as demonstrated through the *UNITAR Hiroshima Developing Dreams: Entrepreneurship and Project Design in South Sudan 2019 cycle* project.

3. In complex political environments, setting realistic goals and project scopes, and tapping into the local knowledge and experience in navigating local contexts of the coaches and local staff could help training participants conduct needs assessments effectively.

Visibility and awareness

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From the eight lessons under this category, three meta-lessons were formulated.

1. It is important to consider the costs of awareness raising campaigns and advocacy work particularly when decisions about scaling are taken.

Budgeting for awareness raising and advocacy work can be included in projects' budgets and awareness raising activities can be included in project documents and in results frameworks. Particularly when upscaling is intended, associated costs need to be considered carefully.

The Independent Evaluation of the "Strengthen National Decision Making Towards Ratification of the Minamata Convention and Build Capacity Towards Implementation of Future Provisions" project formulated a lesson on the need to provide funding for awareness raising campaigns: *"Scaling and sustainability of a national inventory and awareness raising campaign remain bound to complementary funding."* The project included one outcome on awareness raising on the environmental and health impacts of mercury. The evaluation found that project countries indicated that increased direct funding would have helped to conduct additional field audits to improve the accuracy of the inventories and awareness raising campaigns to reach larger numbers of communities.

The self-evaluation of the UNDP-UNITAR Joint e-Learning Course on Regional Approach to Skills Development: Climate Policy and Public Finance in Asia and the Pacific formulated a lesson learned illustrating a case where resources for advocating were not required thanks to strong participant interest, partner motivation and political commitment: *"Participants seemed eager to confront the climate policy and public finance conundrum. This was expressed in repeated requests for more and longer trainings on the issue. Therefore, the programme did not have to spend resources on advocating for the issue."* This was particularly visible in Cambodia, where high level political commitment and existing policy frameworks were

conducive to building sustained interest in skills development for climate finance. Both the Economics and Finance Institute staff and workshop participants seemed eager to confront the climate policy and public finance conundrum and take part in national discourses on climate change and possible responses to it.

2. Continuous efforts on clear visibility and communication to donor, partners and beneficiaries can strongly influence sustained funding and the impact of the initiative.

The UNITAR Strategic Communications Strategy 2022-2027 is key to achieving UNITAR's strategic communication objectives. The Institute aims to increase the visibility of UNITAR as a recognized centre of excellence in training and learning, further strengthen exchanges with UN entities for the sharing of good practices, create a more interactive and collaborative environment and educate staff and other personnel on the importance of disseminating coherent and compelling content to external audiences.

UNITAR communicates to various audiences, including UNITAR personnel, donors, partners and beneficiaries. As part of the Independent Midline Evaluation of the CommonSensing Project, one of the lessons learned summarized the importance of communications: *"Both internal and external communication is key for project success."* Consulted stakeholders, including staff from governments, felt that the information about project progress and results was not sufficiently shared, which might hinder the ownership and sustainability of the project. This is why the evaluation recommended that the project further strengthens information-sharing, including information about what each partner is doing and how this is done between the partners implementing the project and external communication and visibility of the project's results.

The Midterm Evaluation of the UNOSAT Emergency Mapping Service – evidence-based information support to humanitarian assistance, peace and security using satellite imagery and geospatial techniques project highlight a lesson underscoring the importance of visibility amongst potential donors and partners: *"Continuously work on raising awareness and visibility among potential donors, partners, and users can help to ensure sustained funding and effective utilization of services."* To improve visibility, users of mapping analysis of the project could better reference the products in their own publications and hence lead to more awareness about the use of the products for humanitarian, peace and development work.

3. A strong branding strategy is essential for well-known organizations working on global level and can increase trust from beneficiaries.

All publicly available UNITAR documents and publications must comply with the UNITAR branding guidelines. Moreover, UNITAR provides branded templates on a dedicated branding website. Though most of UNITAR's programmes have communication personnel, a centralized Communication Working Group and a Communication Unit can advise on the use of branding, including when working with partners or when UNITAR Divisions use their own branding.

When contacting participants as part of interview requests for independent evaluations, they sometimes share that they are not aware that the course/event they participated in was delivered by UNITAR. This is due to the fact that branding may not have been as clear as possible as illustrated by the below lesson learned that was formulated as part of the Evaluation of UNITAR learning-related event certifications:

"Prioritizing strong UNITAR branding for joint initiatives. A strong branding strategy is essential for the successful delivery of joint initiatives. Enhanced UNITAR branding plays a crucial role in elevating recognition of the UNITAR logo and averting participant confusion, notably in initiatives like UN CC:Learn or UNOSAT learning courses where the connection to UNITAR might not be readily apparent. Strengthening UNITAR's branding efforts can effectively communicate its involvement and contribution to collaborative endeavors, ultimately increasing the visibility and impact of its initiatives". UNOSAT is indeed recognized by the Economic and Social Council as the United Nations Satellite Centre, yet it is part of UNITAR, which may not always be clear for beneficiaries and mapping product users.

"Branding allows you to build relationships with your audience, which can eventually turn them into loyal […]"[2] participants. As highlighted, partnerships with other UN partners can further lead to create trust and build a relationship with participants such as in the joint FAO/UNITAR e-Learning Course on "Trade and Food Security" in 2020.

"The FAO/UNITAR partnership has created a network of development practitioners who are relying on the joint initiative as their trusted source of knowledge and information relating to trade and food security."

Key Take-Aways

The present study has led to the following take-aways:

- Targeting "the right people" is key for achieving a programme planned objectives, including a diverse range of beneficiaries and groups that faced persistent forms of discrimination and exclusion. Yet, it is important to plan ahead for any potential implementation challenges that may arise from applying such targeting approaches.
- Data management should be an integral part of an organization's work. A well-established management information system is key for data-informed decision-making, but providing training participants with data insights is also a highly valued practice.
- Efforts on awareness-raising, branding and internal and external communication can be resource-intense and depend on the project's context, but are important for visibility purposes and project success.
- Conducting comprehensive assessments of the political and security environment and securing key stakeholders' support before starting a project is key to achieving projects' intended outcomes, especially in politically unstable contexts.

The Way Forward

As next steps, the following actions are foreseen:

- PPME will communicate the results of this series to UNITAR staff and will organize a brownbag event at which colleagues are invited to share their lessons.
- The Lessons Learned database and this series shall inform new programming development.

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[2] The Importance of Branding in Business

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Annexes

Annex 1. Lessons compilation

Lessons	Category	Sub-category
Merit-based nomination and selection of potential Fellows generated a positive response and buy-in from the top leadership of ministries and institutions.	Beneficiary selection	Selection criteria
The context and nature of training needs in the international field evolve over time. Adaption [with regard to the criteria for selecting participants] is key.	Beneficiary selection	Selection criteria
Targeting diverse stakeholders was critical in light of the programme's focus on engaging citizens in the fight against corruption, but posed the challenge of meeting different and diverse learning needs.	Beneficiary selection	Participants diversity
Reaching first the furthest behind (e.g. disadvantaged communities) requires strategizing, regular monitoring, disaggregating by categories of countries and explicit targeting of those, including choosing locations/partners according to those criteria. This might involve designing and enabling different incentives and operating conditions (e.g. differentiated affiliation fees).	Beneficiary selection	Reaching the furthest behind first
The training needs in the most vulnerable low-income countries may require a dedicated funding mechanism from the private sector and developed countries.	Beneficiary selection	Reaching the furthest behind first
Targeted information campaign allowed the organizers to reach-out to the right beneficiaries and received a considerable demand from the region THE MULTI-SECTOR APPROACH PROVIDED A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTICIPANTS TO COLLABORATE	Beneficiary selection	Targeting participants
Participants came from various organizations and sectors and brought diverse knowledge and experiences to the programme. The programme presented an opportunity to work together for a common goal of mutual learning and sharing that created a unique, nurturing environment for Participants to equally benefit. The multi-sector approach enriched the entire programme and proved effective in building trust, friendship, and a network of like-minded South Sudanese. The programme's multi-sector approach also contributed to a better understanding between diverse sectors, institutions, and people. Cooperation and coordination between the public and private sector is necessary to create an environment in which entrepreneurs and leaders, and by extension employment and economic opportunity, can have a tangible positive impact on the socio-economic development of South Sudanese society as a whole.	Beneficiary selection	Participants diversity

A COMPETITIVE NOMINATION AND SELECTION PROCESS IS WINNING SUPPORT AND BUY-IN FROM THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Merit-based nomination and selection of potential Participants generated a positive response and buy-in from the top leadership of ministries and institutions. As merit-based selection is not so rare in South Sudan, given the application of such practice for the past 5 years. The nomination and selection process encourages healthy competition among nominees from a single organization. A written test was introduced in 2018 cycle in the form of essay writing to further augment the interview and document screening process. Special attention was paid to individual previous achievements, performance, and qualifications including English language skills, both written and spoken, during the selection process	Beneficiary selection	Selection criteria
In SIDS with small populations, government officials even at lower ranks have more power or leverage to influence institutional change and processes	Beneficiary selection	Targeting participants
The suboptimal focus on women, vulnerable populations and countries in special situations shows the importance of applying, or even enforcing, the SFF selection criteria. The systematic use of the criteria of leaving no one behind and programming focusing on gender equality is required to have allocations support programming benefiting these groups.	Beneficiary selection	Reaching the furthest behind first

DIVERSE RANGE OF PARTICIPANTS

A key element in the design of the Programme was the incorporation of people from various backgrounds, not only from their affiliates but also the inclusion of representatives from other cultures and regions, which served to encourage dialogue and engagement on a national level. Much of the discussion focused on the challenges faced by participants related to common issues: communication, misogyny, funding, etc. However, the ways and means in which participants sought to solve these issues differed significantly across the group, leading to significant engagement and cross-fertilisation of ideas.	Beneficiary selection	Participants diversity
Including mid-level career participants in the joint programmes allows for sharing work- related perspectives and experiences and extending networks, including peer-facilitated learning. This adds much value and brings a unique element to the joint programmes.	Beneficiary selection	Targeting participants
Conducting admission interviews before participants are selected further encourages better attendance.	Beneficiary selection	Selection criteria
Training - More technical capacity building is needed, including reaching subnational authorities and organizations at the provincial, district and community levels.	Beneficiary selection	Targeting participants
Addressing personnel movement challenges: Develop strategies to address challenges related to personnel movement within justice institutions to ensure continuity of training and institutional support.	Beneficiary selection	Targeting participants

It is important for training of trainers to include at least one module on trainers' skillset and training methods such as the ADDIE model and making trainer selection in a way that they are likely to train afterwards	Beneficiary selection	Targeting participants
Evaluability assessments are useful when engaging in a new programming area.	Data availability	Data to inform new programming area
Data shared in the discussions was highly valued and appreciated by the participants as they can use it easily in their professional work.	Data availability	Data in training activities
Effective dissemination of early warning data Participants also highlighted the importance of the effective dissemination of early warning data. While the large amount of data and high-tech dissemination channels available in Japan may not have exact parallels in participant countries, the pre-planning with regard to both primary and secondary distribution channels, including those with gender specific aspects, was seen as a positive planning and engagement measure	Data availability	On the job use of data
Recognizing the importance of enhancing information management. It is crucial to underscore the value of high-quality institute-wide management information system to ensure accurate data recording. Data management and entry processes should offer benefits to both programmatic and functional units. A user-friendly platform should aid in streamlining the processes. Standardizing event nomenclature is essential for proper event classification and data recording.	Data availability	Data recording
Open-source software and other tools • Utilizing open-source software, such as QGIS, is effective. It is likewise essential to customize the tools to suit specific country requirements. Prioritising enhancement of data availability and accessibility is paramount.	Data availability	Data availability and accessibility
THE FLUID AND CHANGING HEALTH, POLITICAL AND SECURITY SITUATION IN IRAQ AND THE WORLD		
During the implementation phase of the programme, a number of challenges arose such as, total shutdown and curfew in Iraq which coincided with the timeline of Workshop-II (Oct 2019), and the global COVID-19 virus pandemic outbreak (Mar 2020) during workshop-IV. These challenges while enormous and beyond the control of the programme, however the programme managed and overcome the negative impacts of such events by resourceful solutions, collaboration and adaptability of the Participants. For instance, the workshop-IV as the final event of the 2019 programme was conducted online to eliminate the health risks if participants were to gather. Robust engagement and communication with participant allowed for the smooth implementation and identifying alternative solutions. Participants showed high level of commitment through completing assignments and video recording their Pitches which were submitted on time as the final assignment.	Political and security concerns	Learning methodologies, Communication with learners

UNITAR STAFF WORKED TO COMPENSATE FOR CHALLENGES STEMMING FROM THE POLITICAL AND SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

While the September 2018 Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS), and subsequent formation of the transitional government, generated hopes for peace and stability in South Sudan, however the political and security environment is constantly changing and difficult to predict. Security-related incidences can potentially delay the implementation of Juba-based workshops and online sessions. Online sessions are Skype-based sessions delivered online and facilitated by UNITAR to follow-up on Participants' progress and provide them with knowledge on specific themes relevant to completing their assignments. However, as the online sessions are dependent on the internet quality, speed and bandwidth, recorded video presentations and e-learning materials were provided as a backup and to maintain quality. Thiswas found to be very effective, allowing for deeper review of presentations at a convenient time, but also enabling those Participants who were not able to physically join the session to equally benefit from the online training.

Similarly, political, tribal, and ethnic tensions can flare up from time to time, sometimes forcing people to flee and take refuge in camps or rural areas. When such incidents occur, it can be difficult for UNITAR Staff to contact Participants affected by the situation. To ensure that the programme runs as safely and smoothly as possible, vigilance, flexibility, and accurate and timely assessments of the political and security climate are necessary. Maintaining robust communication and consultation with stakeholders and partners is important to get up-to-date information to prepare and plan for unwanted situations. Thanks to the efforts of UNITAR's Hiroshima- and Juba-based Staff, Coaches, and other partners, the 2019 Cycle was completed successfully, to the great benefit of all involved, despite an occasionally adverse environment.

Political and security concerns

Learning methodologies, Communication with learners

THE POLITICAL AND SECURITY ENVIRONMENT MUST BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT AS PARTICIPANTS COMPLETE THEIR ASSIGNMENTS

As part of their first assignment, Participants undertook an Environmental Analysis, which examines an organization's environment with regard to the broader political, economic, social, technological, legal, environmental and sectoral conditions that help or hinder the organisation's goals and mission. One of the key conditions Participants identified was the deteriorating political and security environment. In particular, Participants felt discouraged from undertaking needs assessments in areas that were considered unsafe or politically sensitive: such as issues related to corruption, refugees, prostitution, questioning political nepotism, etc. Although these issues can complicate Participants' work, they can be addressed through realistic goals and effectively scoped projects on the part of the Participants, as well as close communication with Coaches and local Staff who are familiar with the situation in South Sudan and have experience navigating it.

As part of their first assignment... close communication with Coaches and local Staff who are familiar with the situation in South Sudan and have experience navigating it.	Political and security concerns	Support for learners
Contextual assessment: Before initiating a justice sector project, it is essential to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the national and sector context, to ensure understanding the environment, including political, social, and legal aspects.	Political and security concerns	Assessment prior to implementation
It is important to consider the costs of awareness raising campaigns and advocacy work particularly when decisions about scaling are taken.	Visibility and awareness	Costs of awareness raising and advocacy
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Continuous efforts on clear visibility and communication to donor, partners and beneficiaries can strongly influence sustained funding and the impact of the initiative.	Visibility and awareness	Importance of visibility and communication for funding and impact
A strong branding strategy is essential for well-known organizations working on global level and can increase trust from the beneficiaries.	Visibility and awareness	Branding can lead to trust
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